

Performativity, Positionality, and Relationality: Identity Pathways for a
Feminist Rhetorical Pedagogy

by

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation posits that a relationship between a feminist rhetorical pedagogical model and autobiographical theoretical tenets engage students in the personal writing process and introduce them to the ways that feminism can change the approach, analysis, and writing of autobiographical texts. Inadequate attention has been given to the ways that autobiographical theory and the use of non-fiction texts contribute to a feminist pedagogy in upper-level writing classrooms. This dissertation corrects that by focusing on food memoirs as vehicles in a feminist pedagogical writing course. Strands of both feminist and autobiographical theory prioritize positionality, performativity, and relationality (Smith and Watson 214) as dynamic components of identity construction and thus become frames through which this class was taught and studied. I theorize these “enabling concepts” (Smith and Watson 217) as identity pathways that lead to articulation of identity and experience in written work.

This study posits that Royster and Kirsch’s four feminist rhetorical practices—Critical Imagination, Social Circulation, Strategic Contemplation, and Globalizing Point of View (19)—taken together offer a model for instruction geared to help learners chart identity pathways in the context of one semester of their undergraduate rhetorical education. This model is operationalized through a writing classroom that focused on feminist ideals, using a food memoir, *The Language of Baklava* by Diana Abu-Jaber, as the vehicle of inquiry. This study offers a starting point for analysis of food memoirs in university writing classrooms by focusing specifically on the ways that students understood and applied the framework, model, and vehicle of the study. This dissertation prioritizes the composition and valuing of individual and communal lived experiences

expressed through the articulation of identity pathways. Teachers and scholars can use the knowledge and takeaways gained in the study to better support and advocate for the inclusion of the students lived experiences in writing classrooms and pedagogy.

DEDICATION

For Wade. You are “the butter to my bread and the breath to my life.”

Thank you for helping me be brave.

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INTRODUCTION

Overview: Framework, Model, Vehicle

The first time that I ever learned about feminism and feminist theory was in a college course that I took while earning my undergraduate degree in English at a small, private liberal arts school just south of Chicago. In a course called Theory of Literary Criticism, my professor taught us about Virginia Woolf and *A Room of One's Own*. Up until that point, I knew that I loved writing, and I knew that I loved English, but I had never found a body of theory where I felt at home and where I felt hope and care in the very foundation of the theory. After being introduced to feminist criticism and theory, I did. So, when I was offered the opportunity to teach Writing Reflective Essays at Arizona State University, I knew that I wanted to use feminist history, theory, and rhetorical practices as my pedagogical model for teaching writing, and I knew that I wanted to study and discuss my students' reactions to this work. I wanted to do this for two reasons. First, as evidenced by my discussion in the literature review in Chapter One, there has been very little work published specifically about teaching writing through a feminist pedagogical model. I wanted to further explore that subject area and contribute to the published knowledge in the field of Rhetoric and Composition. My second reason was more personal: I wanted to teach writing through a feminist pedagogical model because I wanted students to have the opportunity to learn more about feminism, each other, and themselves through the focus of the course and perhaps, like me, find a historical movement and body of theory where they felt hope, care, and a sense of being at home.

Autobiographical theorists Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson put forth a theory that can be foundational for a dynamic rhetorical education. Strands of both autobiographical

theory and feminist rhetorical theory prioritize positionality, performativity, and relationality as principles of identity construction. In their autobiographical theory, Smith and Watson specifically label these three components as “enabling concepts” (217), which I discuss as enabling conversations and compositions about identity and identification. This dissertation takes the commitments of these three concepts as a starting point—as a *framework*—for including autobiographical theory in a feminist writing pedagogy. Furthermore, this study posits that Royster and Kirsch’s four feminist rhetorical practices— Critical Imagination, Social Circulation, Strategic Contemplation, and Globalizing Point of View (19)— taken together offer a *model* for instruction geared to help learners chart these pathways in the context of one semester of their undergraduate rhetorical education. I discuss the framework and model in more detail in the “Understanding of Terms” section. The model is operationalized through a writing classroom focused on feminist ideals, using a food memoir, *The Language of Baklava* by Diana Abu-Jaber, as the *vehicle* of inquiry.

Identity Pathways

When defining identity, I draw on Diana Fuss’ articulation from *Identification Papers* and Smith and Watson’s definition from *Reading Autobiography*. Fuss says, “we tend to experience our identities as part of our public personas--the most exposed part of our self’s surface collisions with a world of other selves--we experience our identifications as more private, guarded, evasive” (2). Smith and Watson’s articulation of identity focuses on that fact that “there is no coherent ‘self’ that predates stories about identity, about ‘who’ one is” (61). What these definitions of identity point to is the way

that identities are created not in a vacuum but in response to lived social, cultural, and historical realities.

Fuss then discusses in even more detail the conception of identification. For Fuss, identification sets identity into motion and questions it (2), as “identification is, from the beginning, a question of *relation*, of self to other, subject to object, inside to outside” (3). She says that “identification is the physical mechanism that produces self-recognition. Identification inhabits, organizes, instantiates identity” and that it “sets into motion the complicated dynamic of recognition and misrecognition that brings a sense of identity into being” (2). I ground my definitions of identity and identification in this scholarship. When I use the term pathway, I am drawing on the commonly understood definition of a pathway as a “course of action” or a “route” (*Merriam Webster*).

From these definitions, I theorize that identity, the part of the self which emerges in relation to outside forces and interactions with others, is the origin point for identity pathways which are the routes to the naming and the understanding of the ways that identity relates a person to history and culture. In this study, I use the “enabling concepts” (Smith and Watson 217) of performativity, positionality, and relationality to enact my theory of identity pathways and to highlight the fact that all conceptions of identity are never static and always changing.

In recognition of the importance of relating identity to history and culture, Royster and Kirsch talk about how “more feminist scholars are now paying attention to writing of the everyday, to rhetorical and literate activities that might be considered mundane, routine, and most certainly ordinary” (62). Articulation of identity pathways focused on everyday activities relates identity to lived experience. My analysis focuses

on identity pathways through the ways that students do the work of moving from identity to identification, from exposition to articulation.

Study Contribution

This dissertation analyzes student data from a non-fiction personal writing class, ENG 217: Writing Reflective Essays, that I taught in the fall of 2015. In particular, I look at the ways that students interpret and employ Royster and Kirsch's four feminist rhetorical practices through a series of writing assignments that ask them to see and re-see, enact and re-enact, promote and project their own and others' capacities for positionality, performativity, and relationality. Royster and Kirsch's practices were taught as the impetus for the four writing projects, were explicitly discussed in relationship to feminism, and were woven into the in-class work and discussions. The problem that this dissertation addresses is that there has not been adequate attention given to the ways that autobiographical theory and the use of non-fiction texts contribute to a feminist pedagogy in upper-level writing classrooms, as the inclusion of autobiographical texts, specifically food texts, have mostly been explored in relationship to literature classrooms. This study posits that a relationship between feminist pedagogy and autobiographical texts and theories is a way to better engage students in the writing process by focusing on their identities and lived experiences, as exemplified by a food memoir, and the ways that feminism can *change* the way students approach the analysis of the text and the writing that is undertaken as a result.

Thus, this dissertation explores and works to advance the deliberate use of feminist rhetorical pedagogy using the framework, model, and vehicle discussed above. This model of grounded pedagogy enacts the dynamism of feminist rhetorical practices.

This is done through linking identity pathways to positionality, performativity, and relationality and exploring the influence of those pathways on students in their writing. I argue that attention to students' positions as peers with other students and as authors performing identity pathways in class reveals truths about student engagement with the written work and their own identifications. Moreover, the relationships formed in the classroom and discussed in the written work can be catalysts for richer narratives and attention to lived experience, which are feminist goals. In order to conduct this analysis and make these arguments, I look to scholarship that focuses on feminist rhetorical practices, feminist pedagogical scholarship and practice, and autobiographical theory that underlies the reading and use of memoir in the field of rhetoric and composition in my literature review. I do this work because these strands of autobiographical theory and feminist scholarship have not been brought into discussion in this way previously. By looking at this intersection I work to expand ongoing conversations about feminist pedagogy to include conceptions of valuing lived experience from the reading, theorizing, and teaching autobiographical work in upper-level writing classrooms.

The limitations of this study include a small sample size of students, as the student data is drawn from only one class on one campus. Also, the study includes the use of only one primary autobiographical text of analysis, *The Language of Baklava*, although shorter works of nonfiction were also read and discussed in the class. Finally, this study is limited in scope as it interrogates the reactions and responses of only sophomore to senior students. The results cannot be generalized to first-year writing classrooms without further study, though they do respond to a call within the field of composition studies that argues strongly for the need for localized studies.

My Personal Identity Pathways

I study women's published food memoirs because I believe that they offer insightful, revealing, and tangible examples of women's intersectional identities and identifications. Stenberg writes that we "learn much about the values, assumptions, and social and political contexts" of writers and readers based on the "rhetorical practices" in which they engage (19). In my dissertation and teaching work, I specifically engage *feminist* rhetorical practices because I believe they reflect the values and sociopolitical realities that I want to embody and ask students to recognize. One reason that I am specifically analyzing Abu-Jaber's food memoir is because my father's family comes from Lebanon and her family comes from Jordan, so I can relate to many of her cultural, food, and familial experiences. I also think that Abu-Jaber's food memoir speaks to lived experience in a way that prompts discussions of identity construction, negotiations of personal writing, and feminism. Her memoir follows her personal and familial experience living and loving in both Jordan and America.

I am interested in the ways that feminism informs the reception and understanding of a food memoir in a college writing classroom, and the ways that feminism changes how students approach these texts and compose their own work based on that analysis. My interest in the chronicling of lived experience and the agency that is offered to women through this publication venue has led me here. I worked to incorporate this interest into my classroom instruction as well. Stenberg writes that as feminist rhetoricians and teachers, we must "consider how identities emerge" and ask "to what ends do we teach writing?" (55). To that question, my inquiry seeks to examine the ways that a feminist pedagogy asks students to engage with identity pathways. This feminist

pedagogy centers on the notion of “considering how identities emerge” (55) and asks students to do the same.

Understanding of Terms

I ground the framework for my dissertation study in Smith and Watson’s exploration and discussion of what they call “a third wave of autobiography criticism” (213). Like scholars who discuss the nuances of the waves of the feminist movement, Smith and Watson are careful to note that the label of third wave “will not capture [the] richness and complexity” (213) of the moves within autobiographical criticism and theory since the 1990s. What the third wave autobiographical label does establish is the importance of the expansion of “the range of life writing and the kinds of stories critics may engage in rethinking the field of life narrative” (Smith and Watson 211). This focus is linked to the ways that “feminist critics and theorists turned their attention to the long tradition of women’s life writing” (Smith and Watson 210). These two understandings of third wave autobiographical theory are foundational to the work of engaging students through discussion of identity pathways and asking them to re-see their own identities and identifications through feminist theoretical and pedagogical tenets. This wave of theory has responded to discussions of identity to capture the vivacity of the genre of autobiography. Smith and Watson outline three theoretical concepts as key components of this third wave understanding. These components are: “performativity, positionality, and relationality” (214). I am tying the three concepts, which I am calling identity pathways, to the work I am doing in relationship to feminist theory and Abu-Jaber’s memoir as they speak to the interplay between author and reader and acknowledge and

examine the “mysterious sense of identification” (Karr xvii) that is quite complex in relation to identity.

Performativity is defined as examining “autobiographical occasions as dynamic sites for the performance of identities” (Smith and Watson 214), positionality is understood as “how speaking subjects take up, inhabit, and speak through certain discourses of identity” (Smith and Watson 215), and relationality shows that “much autobiographical narration is relational... that is, the narrator’s story is often refracted through the stories of others” (Smith and Watson 216). Paul John Eakin, an autobiography theorist, discusses the intricacies of the genre of autobiography. He writes, “autobiography, I discovered, is not only a literary text but much more: a daily identity practice, and even an expression of the rhythms of consciousness” (“Autobiography” 21). These daily lived performances and explorations of discourse and relationships lead Eakin to ask questions like: “are we diminished as persons, I wondered, when we can no longer say who we are?” (“What” 123). Autobiography provides a space for us to speak to who we are. Eakin discusses the way that autobiographical acts are nuanced in relationship to how they reify, record, and even create lived experiences. The exploration of this genre opens up “the utmost limits of experience” (Eakin “What” 211) in the way that the texts not only perform lived experience through discourse but also create the lives that they attempt to record.

Food memoirs are so potent and important because they represent “*living autobiographically*, of our *making* the lives we say we are living” (Eakin “Autobiography” 27 emphasis original). Of food memoirs, or gastrography, Smith and Watson write, “the food memoir incorporates food-laced memories that feed readers’

desire to redefine themselves by both imagining pleasures and cooking them up, as a way of enacting the life chronicled” (149). In this way, food memoirs represent the performance and living of autobiography by asking readers to engage both with the narrative, as well as with the food experiences through recipes in the memoirs. Smith and Watson go on to say that “the narrative gesture of including recipes offers a kind of gift to readers... [that] may index a shift in subjectivity” (149). Food memoirs offer a new way of becoming and exploring identifications to both authors and readers.

The connections I am drawing between the conceptions of performativity, positionality, and relationality in autobiographical studies and feminist rhetorical practices are not one-to-one to one comparisons. Instead, my goal is to show how the understandings of those three terms, as defined by Smith and Watson, can be understood through feminist ideologies, theories, and practices, even as they are not coming from an explicitly feminist framework. I draw these connections between the two sets of research because there is value that emerges from the layering of the two different instantiations of the same terms. The value assumes that by asking students to articulate and reflect on their own identity pathways, they will more clearly see the way their identifications respond to, counter, or reify social and political realities in the world. By asking students to be aware of their identifications in their reading and writing, and then pairing that with discussions of feminist rhetorical practices, I am working to offer students the opportunity to “reexamine their lived experiences in light of wider social and political realities” (Stenberg *Composition* 71). Also, by grounding my use of these autobiographical theoretical tenets in feminist understandings, I am implicitly and explicitly attaching greater significance to the terms by linking them to the work that

feminist scholarship does to dismantle patriarchal and hegemonic constructions of power, agency, and material relations by positing that researchers examine their identities, as well as those portrayed by their research participants through the three concepts.

The pedagogical model this study takes up is adapted from Royster and Kirsch's four feminist rhetorical practices: Critical Imagination, Social Circulation, Strategic Contemplation, and Globalizing Point of View. I used these tenets to frame the four course projects that I taught. There was a focus on Critical Imagination in the first project. I then grouped Social Circulation and Strategic Contemplation as the focus of the second project. For the third project, the focus was on Globalizing Point of View. And then drawing on the feminist understanding of revision that focuses on "reflection, rethinking, and rewriting, so that feminist knowledge, writing, and classrooms are ever-evolving" (Stenberg *Composition* 102) paired with the "emphasis on... student choice" (Ede 90), I framed the fourth project on revision, asking students to choose and revise one of the three previous projects through the lens of an outside literacy narrative. I will discuss the specifics of each of these projects in Chapter Two.

Research Questions

The following questions drive this study:

1. How might Smith and Watson's articulation of third wave autobiographical theory relating to "positionality, performativity, and relationality" inform a feminist *framework* for configuring a feminist pedagogy that focus on memoirs, specifically a food memoir?

2. How could Royster and Kirsch's feminist rhetorical tenets provide a *model* for a feminist pedagogical approach?

3. In a particular writing classroom, how does a feminist food memoir—in the context of a carefully articulated assignment sequence--serve as a *vehicle* commending feminist rhetorical practices as means for constructing identity pathways toward positionality, performativity, and relationality?

4. How do students interpret and employ Royster and Kirsch's practices (that are taught in the course projects) over the course of a series of writing assignments that ask them to see and re-see, enact and re-enact, promote and project their own and others' capacities for positionality, performativity, and relationality?

These questions are connected by offering inquiries into the specific space of the writing classroom and by the way that these theories and pedagogical plans influence students' composition of identity pathways.

Chapter Summaries

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. In the sequencing of the chapters, I work to first establish my study's foundation by reviewing the literature and methods that I drew on in the first two chapters and then analyze and explicate the text, data, and implications of the work, respectively, in the remaining three chapters.

Chapter One

This chapter presents the review of literature. The chapter is organized around the three guiding principles discussed in my research questions: the framework, model, and vehicle of this work. The literature review of the framework focuses on Smith and Watson's autobiographical theory of performativity, positionality, and relationality and discusses how that theory can be understood as feminist. This chapter then examines the model of inquiry, which is based on Royster and Kirsch's four feminist rhetorical

practices: Critical Imagination, Strategic Contemplation, Social Circulation, and Globalizing Point of View. This section links those practices to my research methods and establish a value for the four tenets to set up a model for the pedagogical work. The third section looks at the vehicle. The vehicle is the memoir that helps get at identity pathways in ways that other texts do not, and it discusses the pivotal role that food memoirs play.

Chapter Two

This second chapter discusses the methods used in the class to collect, analyze, and report data. This section also draws a distinction between methods and methodologies and grounds the work specifically in feminist methodologies through an analysis of feminist epistemological assumptions. I discuss the way I set up the class through a detailed description of the four major assignments. I also articulate the methods of data analysis used as a lead in for the discussion of the data collected in the class and from student interviews.

Chapter Three

This chapter provides an in-depth textual analysis of Diana Abu-Jaber's food memoir, *The Language of Baklava*. This chapter explores not only the nonfictional narrative that Abu-Jaber composed, but the way that the four feminist rhetorical tenets (Royster and Kirsch) and the autobiographical theories (Smith and Watson) enabling identity pathways are represented in the memoir. This chapter also discusses the way that food memoirs, using John Trimbur's theory of popular literacy, asks students to engage with social and theoretical truths. This analysis of the food memoir dramatizes a way of using a feminist rhetorical pedagogy that values situated embodiment without reducing discrete content learning.

Chapter Four

This fourth chapter specifically discusses the data collected from the ENG 217: Writing Reflective Essays student work, as well as the interviews conducted with four students. I theorize the identity pathways discussed and created in this work by identifying and discussing key themes that emerged by looking at the ways that the individual students make sense of their experiences. In this chapter, I provide quantitative data reflecting the genre choices of the students in the course in order to evidence the way that they exercised agency over their compositions and explored notions of genre conventions, rhetorical audience, and feminist application. I then discuss the interview responses of four students from the course using thematic analysis in order to help readers to see the students' academic and ideological thematic takeaways from the course content and work. Through the use of both quantitative and qualitative data, I work to illustrate the influence of Royster and Kirsch's four feminist rhetorical practices and the impact of the three enabling concepts drawn from Smith and Watson's theory.

Chapter Five

This final chapter serves as my dissertation conclusion, and it includes reflections on and a discussion of the implications of the work discussed in the previous chapters. In this chapter, I discuss five other categories of memoirs that are related to food memoirs. I also interrogate how the framework, model, and vehicle tie together to call for future research and practice in other classrooms and in the larger community.

My first dissertation chapter, the review of literature, provides a foundation for the way I am using the framework, model, and vehicle of this study.

CHAPTER ONE

Literature Review of Scholarly Texts Informing the Framework, Model, and Vehicle of Inquiry

Overview

This literature review consists of two distinct but connected strands of inquiry that form the basis of my study and my primary sites of interrogation in this dissertation work. In this overview section I discuss my study's theoretical framework pulled from life writing theorists Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson's autobiographical theory outlined in their 2001 book *Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives*. As I discussed in the introduction, Smith and Watson articulate the theory of positionality, performativity, and relationality (214) as a foundational to autobiographical theoretical conceptions. I discuss autobiographical theory in relationship to memoirs in the second part of this literature review. I am positing that Smith and Watson's three notions serve as enabling concepts for articulating identity pathways that instantiate a feminist pedagogical model using a woman's food memoir as a vehicle for the three following reasons: first, the use of this autobiographical theory is fitting in this project *because* I am drawing on a life writing text as the vehicle of articulation and interrogation in my writing classroom. Second, this autobiographical theory intersects with feminist theories and methodologies. Finally, the articulation of these three concepts gives language to the work that my students did in the writing classroom and serves as an accessible and multi-layered coding schema for my student data analysis. The choice of this framework is grounded in my understanding of feminist research methods and feminist methodology, which I discuss in Chapter Two.

The first part of this literature review focuses on the pedagogical model that I am drawing from Royster and Kirsch's four feminist rhetorical practices. These practices were the basis for my feminist pedagogical plan used and discussed in the ENG 217: Writing Reflective Essays course that I taught in the fall 2015 semester. In relation to these four practices, I discuss foundational feminist theoretical and pedagogical principles to explicate the way that I see Royster and Kirsch's practices working pedagogically. The second strand of inquiry that I discuss in this literature review is related to the texts that interrogate the vehicle of inquiry, the food memoir. This portion of the review examines Smith and Watson's theoretical perspectives in more depth, and I also look at other texts that inform my understanding of how to use and understand both memoirs and food texts, specifically food memoirs, in academic settings.

Model: Feminist Rhetorical and Pedagogical Practices

The model of inquiry that I adopted as a teacher/researcher and asked my students to participate with was Royster and Kirsch's feminist rhetorical practices, discussed in-depth in their 2012 text of the same name. These four feminist rhetorical practices are Critical Imagination, Strategic Contemplation, Social Circulation, and Globalizing Point of View. Each of these four practices lines up with tenets of feminist methodologies, of which I am arguing the autobiographical theory is representative. These four feminist rhetorical practices put forth by Royster and Kirsch were not intended to be pedagogical; however, Royster and Kirsch's text argues for "rescue, recovery, and (re)inscription" (14) of traditional rhetorical structures by and for feminist scholars and scholarship in the field of rhetoric and composition. The first practice is labeled "critical imagination." Royster and Kirsch posit critical imagination as a way to "account for what we 'know'" by

“gathering evidence” (71). The second practice is called “strategic contemplation” and Royster and Kirsch define this as the “processes of meditation, introspection, and reflection” (84). They define the third practice, “social circulation” as “understanding rhetorical interactions across space and time” (98). The final practice, “globalizing point of view,” “acknowledges the presence of others globally” (Royster and Kirsch 110). Although these four rhetorical practices were not initially put forth as pedagogical, there is great value in using the practices as a pedagogical frame. Royster and Kirsch’s practices align with foundational feminist pedagogical scholarship in the field of rhetoric and composition.

In this section of the review I focus on feminist theoretical and pedagogical discussions that specifically advance feminist goals while reflecting the historical exigency of the movement. Among other rich implications and articulations, I have identified six key tenets of feminist pedagogy and theory that align with Royster and Kirsch’s four feminist rhetorical practices: valuing personal experience as a form of knowledge and meaning making (Bloom 534), using inclusive language in scholarly and pedagogical practices (Bauer 352; Moore 470), addressing gender as an intersectional marker (Royster and Kirsch 134; Logan 426), taking historical and current marginalization because of gender as a starting point (Sullivan), seeking connections between ideas, people, and places in order to build bridges of understanding and relationship (Royster & Kirsch 134), and countering histories of erasure in spaces and texts where women’s voices are excluded or ignored (Ritchie 91).

Drawing from the multiplicity of possibilities, these six elements of feminist pedagogy are especially important to pay attention to because they are the factors that

thread through the work of key feminist pedagogy scholars. These six notions serve as the frame for my analysis of my model of inquiry in this chapter. These six components are foundational to feminist pedagogical understandings because they are highly valued by feminist pedagogy scholars and because they shape the way feminist scholars and teachers conduct themselves and interact with their students, compose assignments and their classrooms spaces, and assess students learning and work in order to create specifically feminist pedagogies in writing classrooms.

Valuing Personal Experience

One of the most basic elements of feminist pedagogy is the valuing of the experience of both the instructor and the students. In many traditional writing classrooms students are asked to leave their experiences out of their texts in order to engage primarily with academic research. While there is value in researching and using academic sources for support, feminist pedagogy recognizes that there is value and knowledge building in the lived experiences of the students as well (Bloom 534). All of our research is understood through personal experience; we just hide it if we do not discuss experience in our compositions. In a historically patriarchal academic culture, where experience is deemed as inferior to “objective” knowledge, authors are often taught to exclude their personal experience in favor of including “real” research. This bias is one of the main notions that Royster and Kirsch object to, as they write, “we accept the notion that there is indeed value to be recognized and appreciated in the lives, words, participation, leadership, and legacies of women” (18). This premise returns to the fundamental valuing of the female gender and responds to histories of erasure where women's experiences are not valued within and outside of the classroom. They say, “we have the habit of choosing

for ourselves symbols from our past experiences that help us translate and align new experiences and to transform them into knowledge and insight” (15). This claim shows that feminist theory it is not just about valuing women’s lived experiences but also about learning how to identify, express, and align those experiences with the expectations of any given rhetorical situation. Realigning experience does not devalue it; it simply recognizes that the strategic identification of lived experience can be very powerful. It counters the patriarchal expectations described earlier, but this valuing work depends on instructors teaching students how to represent their experience in their work.

As Elizabeth Flynn discusses feminist scholarship more generally, her ideas can be applicable to this conception of feminist pedagogy as she writes: “finally, women at the phase of constructed knowledge begin an effort to reclaim the self by attempting to integrate knowledge they feel intuitively with knowledge they have learned from others” (247). Feminist scholars like Flynn and Royster and Kirsch push against this devaluing of experience by evidencing the power and constructive value that comes from recognizing lived experience, especially as it is experience that has not been historically recognized as valuable. In the introduction to their edited collection, Amie A. Macdonald and Susan Sanchez-Casal write about the importance of not only valuing personal experience but globalizing it. They write, “in feminist classrooms where teachers encourage students to activate their ability to know through experience, the pursuit of truth is immediately politicized by the various and often competing assertions that students advance about their shared identities and our shared social world” (2). They say that the teacher needs to model the pursuit of truth through experiences in order to help students and other scholars learn to value and share their experiences in productive ways.

In their text, Royster and Kirsch claimed their own stories as useful, powerful, and constructive. They say that their “goal is to enhance our capacity to build a more richly endowed knowledge base, carry out a more inclusive research agenda, and generate greater, more inclusive interpretive power” (134). They speak to location, various social realities, and celebration of agency. In the introduction to their edited collection, Laura Gray-Rosendale and Gil Harootunian discuss the ways the fractured (a term used in their book title) understandings of feminist theory and pedagogy impact notions of location, social realities, and agency. They write about how the various approaches to feminism have “led to a deeper exploration of how feminism might function in women’s daily lives with an eye to shared structural subordination and marginalization across other cultural differences” (4). They go on to say that “such strategies make a case for the centrality and validity of women’s experiences and ideals over those imparted by patriarchal culture” (5). These feminist theoretical conceptions can be applied to feminist pedagogical plans as it is within lived, positioned experiences that--these authors argue--we, including students, find value and common ground.

Ritchie draws on the agency of women by emphasizing that intellect and emotion; reason and experience; and theory and practice shouldn’t be set against each other (79). She discusses how one feminist teacher opened her class by giving her students an article that she had written in order to make her subjectivities clear from the outset, as well as access to several other works written by women (81). Ritchie said that this class examined the quintessential question, “what is a woman?” (83) and spent considerable time conducting an “analysis of contradictions” (87) within the definitions used and texts examined. Valuing experience means valuing all of the types of experience that a person

may face using both reason *and* emotion. And, as Royster and Kirsch emphasize, it also means working with perspectives and experiences that we might find troubling or not agree with. Again, this is a shift from more traditional pedagogical models where reason is valued much more highly over emotional responses or experiences.

Using Inclusive Language in Scholarly and Pedagogical Practices

Part of the valuing of experience is realized in the recognition of the power and value of language inside and outside of the writing classroom. In the introduction to her interest in the work of *Feminist Rhetorical Practices*, Kirsch says that she has a “long-standing interest in and concern” for the way that “women’s voices, visions, and experiences” are represented in work, without the imposition of outside “values, views, and judgements” (4). Applying these ideas pedagogically requires instruction that values the experiences of both the teacher and students. This shift in the classroom is important as experience and individual voices can only be fully valued when the language used to describe, write, and assess is inclusive of all groups and recognizes value assumptions and historical lineage. Moore addresses this same interest and concern for the representation of individual voices and values while directly discussing assessment in her article “Changing the Language of Assessment.” She draws on feminist theory to enact this feminist pedagogical model, and she identifies the need to shift the *meaning* of the words used in writing assessment in feminist classrooms. Moore says, “like other contemporary critical theories, feminist theory demands an awareness of the complex connections between language and thought, language and sociopolitical tradition, and language and current power dynamics” (470). This awareness of complexity is apparent in terms of the language of writing assessment, but it can also be applied more broadly in

terms of texts used in the classroom, experiences that are discussed and valued, and the level to which we invite our students to engage with the material. As teachers, we need to be aware of these complexities of lived experiences, values, and language used in our feminist scholarship and pedagogy and work to better invite lived experience and more clearly define the terms with which we are assessing student work.

Shari Stenberg writes about how, in the pursuit of recognizing the value of individual language patterns, one might hear “discourse that might ‘sound’ different from other academic writing, drawing from narrative and experience as a resource for knowledge” (*Composition 3*). This claim ties explicitly to the previous point about the need to recognize the value of experience. Valuing experience changes the way that language is used and responded to in feminist scholarship and pedagogy.

Moore’s ideas also relate closely to those expressed in Shirley Wilson Logan’s article, “When and Where I Enter,” in terms of acknowledging language used in the classroom and not focusing on the terms themselves but looking closely at the inscribed meanings and values within the discourse. Logan addresses the way that the multiplicity of identity for any individual can create tension within the classroom. She recognizes, though, that these issues must be addressed in the classroom in a way that “encourages the free expression of ideas even when they may be unpopular” (429). This openness and awareness in language and dialogue is not an easy call, especially if a student makes an inappropriate, sexist, or racist comment, but Logan states that “rather than keep silent, we need to engage in democratic conversations about divisive topics like race and gender, and in a variety of public spaces, especially in classes designed to enhance effective communication” (431). The writing classroom is a prime example of such space, and this

challenging call rings true on many levels. After all, if we will not or cannot discuss a thorny matter in a writing classroom, where can we discuss it? Logan emphasizes that the focus of this feminist pedagogical work is not to simply get students to agree, but to help them develop an authoritative, informed, and reasoned voice.

Nedra Reynolds see aspects of inclusivity as important, but she also discusses the importance of agency, which she says is “not simply about finding one’s own voice but also about intervening in discourses of the everyday and cultivating rhetorical tactics that make interruption and resistance an important part of any conversation” (59). Her article focuses on interruption as feminist goal. She sees value in this by saying that “interruption emphasizes discontinuities” (Reynolds 71). To think of this idea pedagogically, she says “we can also model interruption for students, both as tactics of resistance and as overlapping support for a speaker” (Reynolds 71). Interruption serves, then, not to disrupt without a purpose but to actually highlight the way that some voices are privileged far above others, and help make students aware of those discrepancies. This can happen through the reading of sources that value and highlight the narratives of historically marginalized speakers and through the discussion of those texts and insights in classroom or small group discussions.

The notion of recognizing language is not just about recognizing the right to one’s own language; it is also about recognizing the possible disruptions or developments of language in a variety of contexts, as Royster and Kirsch emphasize (*Feminist Rhetorical Practices* 37). Wendy Hesford writes, “feminists should develop writing pedagogies that reflect the experiences and languages of traditionally oppressed groups and simultaneously bear witnesses to social constructions of whiteness and to the way such

constructions shape reader-writer and student-teacher relations” (148). Hesford advocates for the making of new, more inclusive language that stems from a recognition of the importance of language and begins to make real, tangible change by making students feel heard and become agents of change in the classroom. Susan Jarratt also discusses the way that feminist pedagogy needs to make change by talking about “women as a group-- women teachers, women students--but also to notice differences within gendered categories” (117). She goes on to say that “feminist pedagogy, to my mind, is not about forcing all the students to subscribe to a particular political position but rather engaging with students on the terrain of language in the gendered world we all currently inhabit” (Jarratt 118). Recognizing the value of language is not about indoctrination but about opening communication that recognizes and welcomes positive change.

With this emphasis on the recognition of the value of language, there is acknowledgement that not all discourses are going to be beneficial to class work. Jacqueline Rhodes writes about this as she says, “it is therefore important that any transformative, student-centered pedagogy take into account the diverse and often conflicted discourses of the writing classroom, particularly if that pedagogy professes to be nonracist and nonsexist” (78). With the aim and responsibility of creating transformative classrooms, there must be acknowledgement of the possibility of conflict and difference. In relation to this idea, Logan says, “difference can be a force for change” (434), as long as professors are willing to acknowledge that difference in the classroom. Royster and Kirsch emphasize the “dialogic relationships between points of focus and processes of critical evaluation” (16), and this includes points of difference or rub between individuals and groups. The way that difference and intersectional identities are

enacted in writing and discussions relies heavily on these points of focus through language norms, values, and policies accepted, enacted, and discussed within a feminist classroom space and within feminist scholarship.

Addressing Gender as an Intersectional Marker

Intersectionality, as understood as the intersection between systems of oppression and various identity markers, influences almost all of the texts synthesized in this essay and thus significantly influences feminist pedagogy. Carisa Showden provides a clear and explicit definition of intersectionality: “seeing how race, sex, gender, and class *intersect* (rather than work additively and as discrete categories) to produce both identities and political needs” (182). Kirsch and Ritchie address intersectionality by saying that instructors and students must position themselves in terms of their own intersectional identification markers in the classroom by being open and honest about the ways that they identify. One of the most fundamental pieces of intersectional learning and progress is recognition of the various groups and systems of marginalization that one has been influenced, dominated, or privileged by. Kirsch and Ritchie posit this as an understanding as a politics of location that begins with “researchers who recognize their own subjectivity” (148). This critical and self-reflexive attitude towards feminist thought and theory not only enacts feminist values but also seems to be essential in grounding our theory and our pedagogy in feminist ideologies.

Engagement with one another’s experience will serve as an impetus for recognizing intersectional identities and locations. Kirsch and Ritchie argue that as feminist scholars we “need to recognize the impossibility of ever fully understanding another’s experiences and to question their motives in gathering, selecting, and

presenting those stories” (145). Although they note that we are not able to fully understand one another’s experience, they also assert that we should try to engage with others’ experiences and try to put ourselves in dialogue with them. They emphasize and recognize the value of historical sources and historical women to a great degree. This awareness of not only our own location within the field and in the classroom, but also the awareness of our students’ and other stakeholders’ positions is paramount because knowledge is not constructed or disseminated in a vacuum; it is dependent upon interaction and relationship. Kirsch and Ritchie also say that a “feminist politics of location would require the learning about self to be as *reciprocal* as possible” (147). There has to be a give and take relationship in the classroom that would extend to discussions, valuing of experience, and engagement with the texts that are being read and composed.

Intersectionality is crucial to a successful feminist pedagogical model. This is not an easy call for feminist pedagogues to enact in the classroom when we don’t know what our student’s backgrounds are. However, we may not need to know that. As teachers, we must face each classroom with determination and commitment to valuing and addressing intersectional identification markers in the classroom. Rhodes says that an “engaged pedagogy calls for the creation of classrooms as participatory spaces in which students and teachers connect classroom knowledge with lived experience” (81). That connection cannot happen without the locating of intersectional identity and located experience by both individuals and groups.

This locating of personal experience is represented in both Lynn Bloom and Dale Bauer’s articles as well. Bloom discusses the trajectory of her career and the ways that

she had both metaphorically and literally been silenced. She traces the silencing of her voice through her moves as a part time and then full time professor in various institutions, with the attempts of silencing coming from “a range of Prominent Male Critics” (535), a phrase she uses to describe the theories that she was teaching to her students, but also seems applicable to the men she encountered at various institutions who did not seem interested in, or were actively against, hearing her voice. She locates her intersectional identity as a woman, wife, mother, and professor, among other identity markers that she does not explicitly discuss. She tells “life-saving stories” (534) that explicitly locate her in times, places, and institutions where she experienced violence, harassment, and silencing. The field of Composition Studies has always been more open to these kinds of approaches in presenting one’s writing and thinking than other studies, and Bloom models the kind of intersectional locating that each instructor and student must participate in in a feminist pedagogical classroom to show the inherent value in this work.

Bauer says that feminist instructors need to question our own reasons and motives for bringing feminism into the classroom and cites the classroom as a space where intersectional identifications need to be explored. She doesn’t want instructors to simply advocate for feminist ideals such as inclusivity or valuing experience, but to explore their own motivations and experiences in relation to the pedagogical model that they use. Bauer sees great value in feminist pedagogy, and she states that grounding the classroom in this way causes students to experience “conflict with their previously held norms,” (358) which she sees as useful and productive.

Asking students to locate themselves does valuable work inside the classroom, but Bauer emphasizes the way that this kind of location also pushes students to actively

acknowledge the way that feminist politics are built on and directly reflect social realities outside of the classroom, in many cases, even more so than realities within the classroom. This relates to the tenet of locating experience because it asks students to reconceptualize how and what they think about composing. It invites them to share their lived experiences instead of just their book knowledge. In the introduction to their edited collection, Jennifer Gore and Carmen Luke speak about the ways that difference “that extends beyond the sociological trinity of class, race, gender (usually in that order)” can make room “for difference in subject location, identity, and knowledges” (7). In this way, difference is not seen as a negative entity, but one that allow for relocating of thoughts and experiences. Gore and Luke go on to say: “by locating our work in particular sites and with attention to specific practices, the possibilities for genuinely reshaping discursive and embodied relations in pedagogy seem within reach” (10). The intersectionality and locations described here are embodied realities, and Gore and Luke speak to the value of those sites and the possibilities that they offer for both students and teachers.

Molly Blackburn acknowledges both the value and risks of recognizing and valuing intersectionality in the classroom. She writes: “I argue that each of us possesses not one true self, but multiple and variable selves... Doing this kind of work lays the foundation for feeding these students intellectually, imaginatively, and more wholly. And, yes, this is risky work, but it is also generous work; as such, it is work worth doing” (268). It is important to recognize the multiplicity of the self and of individual identities for all involved. Stenberg writes, “It is this view of the student as a whole person and this vision of education as a complex, emotional, recursive process that listens to those at its

center--teachers and learners--that serve as the fulcrum of responsible education” (*Repurposing* 150). The emphasis on the students as whole persons acknowledges their lived backgrounds prior to entering any given writing classroom. Blackburn’s emphasis on the generosity of this work intersects with Stenberg’s assertion that this kind of pedagogy is the most responsible way to interact with our students. Royster and Kirsch discuss how their text, specifically the four rhetorical practices, “is demonstrating a capacity to enhance our understanding of rhetoric as an embodied social experience” (131). This embodied experience is intersectional in nature because it shows the importance of the recognition of intersectional identities in feminist pedagogy. Each individual is located at an intersection of their identities and from there, the richness of experience can be brought into the composition process.

Taking Historical and Current Marginalization Because of Gender as a Starting Point

In light of the discussion of the importance of acknowledging and addressing intersectionality and location, some scholars feel a hesitance to propagate feminist pedagogical ideas as being *based* on gender marginalization. This comes out of a legitimate concern of erasing or ignoring the other aspects of the intersectional identities of the students and instructors. I argue, however, that gender must be understood as the foundation for these pedagogical notions for two reasons. First, if feminist theory and pedagogy is responding to every history of marginalization then it would have neither a unified ideal nor goal. By citing gender as the starting place, the feminist movement has a focus and a history to react to. Second, taking gender as a starting point does not diminish or dismiss other parts of students’ and instructors’ intersectional identities, as these various “isms” inherently work together and layer upon one another. With this

understanding, though, for a certain purpose in certain spaces, individual aspects of one's identity can be highlighted *in order for work to be done reacting to that identity*. That does not mean that a black, queer, feminist, woman needs to *choose* her gender over her sexuality or race, but that she *highlights* her gender in certain circumstances in order to enact political, cultural, or social change. Royster and Kirsch see gender as foundational to their work, writing that progress comes with increased attention and value specifically to “women’s practices and contributions” in the field of rhetoric and composition, and in relation to the four rhetorical practices. There is, of course, a danger in focusing on gender only as different intersections call forth different kinds of obstacles. There is also danger, though, ignoring gender because gender has historically marginalized women.

Stenberg discusses the importance of recognizing gender marginalization in both of her recent books. In *Composition Studies*, she writes of the history of this issue: “women have historically been denied public speech, education, and literacy-- and in fact, in some cultures, are still denied—making it difficult, and sometimes nearly impossible, to speak and to be heard” (20). She recognizes the current and historical realities of marginalization stemming from gender. In *Repurposing Composition*, she discusses the implications of this marginalization in the academy. She says, “feminist scholars shed light on the contradiction borne by a tradition at once upheld as ‘universal’—a sphere into which anyone, presumably, can enter with equal potential to speak and to be heard—and at the same time decidedly male centric and exclusive” (20). Stenberg’s work is particularly insightful because it traces realities of marginalization and shows how those realities correspond and/or contrast with conceptions of privilege and progress.

This place of recognition is where we need to start when bringing these issues into the classroom, and we need to do this work with sensitivity and caution. Shelley Peterson's research adds another layer to this complexity as she studies case studies of student writing in the classroom. She states: "writers of all ages construct gender identities through their writing... this research supports contemporary views of writing as a social practice that is inevitably and profoundly influenced by gender" (320), although gender is not the only identity that they construct through their writing. This provides current, factual research that highlights the claims and nuances of taking gender as a starting point in feminist pedagogy.

Both Blackburn and Bauer discusses how the classroom must be used as a space to explore resistances and identifications. Bauer states that students need to be comfortable to explore the various components of their identifications and objections in the classroom (353). Likewise, Blackburn says: "in order for teachers to create a context in which gender trouble can happen without violent consequences, we need to recognize our own prejudice against LGBTQ people and reflect on the ways that these prejudices impact our teaching" (264). Blackburn highlights these specific marginalized groups in her article because she sees a great need to do so, but also because she experienced discrimination and harassment due to her own status as a lesbian academic. She goes on to say, "we know, however, that the classroom is only one of the many contexts in which gender nonconforming students experience abuse" (Blackburn 267). By addressing gender marginalization as a starting point and a crucial aspect of understanding and valuing intersectional identities, we can begin to change the culture of our classrooms, and perhaps then, the academy. As Blackburn points out, that doesn't mean that

discrimination will no longer happen in other spaces, but we can provide one space in which our students can begin to explore their individual identity constructions in productive and valuable ways. The valuing of recognizing intersectionality in teaching and rhetorical studies recognizes that “rhetoric is a human enterprise variously practiced around the world” (Royster and Kirsch 39), and Royster and Kirsch’s text and four practices focus on the way that we must “recast our whole ways of thinking and doing” (39) in relationship to the work that we take up in the current local and global field.

Seeking Connections Among Ideas, People, and Places

Royster and Kirsch also talk about the importance of seeking connections among people, places, and ideas in order to build bridges of understanding and relationship (134). Although identity constructions are individual and personal, no meaningful work can be composed if those identity constructions are explored in a vacuum. Flynn writes, “connected knowing is rooted in empathy for others and is intensely personal” (248). Making bridges in research, pedagogy, and discussion is not antithetical to personal ways of knowing and composing. On the contrary, the understanding of community value and input can only bolster and augment individual ways of knowing.

Macdonald and Sanchez-Casal name this community structure. They write, “*communities of meaning* are also *communities of knowing*, places where people discover some commonality of experience through which they struggle for objective knowledge” (emphasis original) (11). They discuss the way that difference can bring people together as it “provides a contextual frame that allows the multiple identities” (Sanchez-Casal and Macdonald 7) that both students and teachers can then “struggle” within. The value of

shared and compounded knowledge is crucial to recognize because it offers a framework for learning and discussion.

Hesford sees this bearing witness as being necessary to participatory feminist classrooms. She states: “I urge feminists to develop activism-oriented pedagogies that recognize the intersections of social differences and links between classroom and community rhetorics... that they enable their students to better understand how institutions function so that the students can be more active in the history and transformation of those institutions” (148). She sees these connections and communities of knowing as being capable of making real change in academic institutions. She does not see their value as symbolic or arbitrary but as necessary to feminist progress within the academy. In seeking these connections, Royster and Kirsch aim for an enhanced “capacity to build a more richly endowed knowledge base, carry out a more inclusive research agenda, and generate greater, more inclusive interpretive power” (134) through the valuing of the rhetorical work of women through the four rhetorical practices.

Countering Histories of Erasure

The enactment and combination of valuing experience, using inclusive language, addressing gender as an intersectional marker, acknowledging gender marginalization, and seeking connections begins to counter histories of erasure in the academy. Spaces where women’s voices have been overlooked, talked over, or just completely disregarded within the academy can begin to shift. Royster and Kirsch’s four notions of feminist researcher become “critical for understanding the actual dynamics of feminist rhetorical inquiry in its capacity to function as the lever for achieving substantive insights” (68).

There is the potential for this notion to be used pedagogically as well, as a way to invite analysis of personal experiences.

Stenberg writes, “feminist scholars, alternatively, have long promoted a different means to agency--one that involves embracing a marginal position as a source of knowledge and authority” (*Repurposing* 99). This position of marginality ties in with the other tenets of feminist pedagogy discussed in this chapter but also posits the value for every student to be introduced to feminist pedagogy. This recognition and respect of *each* person’s voice and experience will lead to a more inclusive, rich, and diverse academic landscapes, following feminist pedagogical models. Only then will we establish “a steadier, more well-balanced gait to build a more comprehensive knowledge and understanding of rhetoric as a global enterprise” (68). Rhetoric is not a limited practice; there is room for all voices that speak to more “well-balanced” practices of teaching and composing in a feminist rhetorical model.

These six elements, while not comprehensive or exhaustive in representing feminist theoretical and pedagogical values, represent ideological and methodological frameworks in Royster and Kirsch’s practices which can be used in composition classrooms to further feminist goals and better instruct our students. Feminist pedagogy may be contested in some academic and nonacademic spaces and discourses, but as Bauer emphasizes, the impact that feminist pedagogy can have on students, instructors, and the academy at large is extremely important because it reconceptualizes how we relate to students, what counts as knowledge, and who gets to make knowledge. Again, this is very general as some pedagogies can do this better than others. By applying Royster and Kirsch’s practices to a writing classroom, I argue that these six tenets *can*

begin to be enacted. Susan Jarratt says: “the payoff comes in recognizing that as we teach our students how to shape their words, we’re working together to reshape our world” (127). I believe this to be true in the study and application of feminist pedagogy, specifically through the model of Royster and Kirsch’s four feminist rhetorical practices.

The sources discussed here speak to that work and represent the value of enacting feminist pedagogies within and outside of the classroom through this model. I draw on both feminist theoretical scholarship and feminist pedagogical research in order to best understand the work of feminism in academia generally and to work to enact those core principles and values within my own teaching and scholarship. This review of feminist theory and pedagogy cannot serve as the only foundational literature for my dissertation, though, as I use a food memoir in my pedagogical model and data analysis. In the next section of this review I examine autobiographical theoretical tenets in relationships to memoirs and teaching memoirs, as well as the origins and use of food memoirs specifically.

Vehicle: Food Memoir

There is a lot of scholarship and negotiation around the understanding and use of memoir in the academy. Bestselling memoirist and English professor Mary Karr writes that “memoir as a genre has entered its heyday, with a massive surge in readership the past twenty years or so. But for centuries before now, it was an outsider’s art—the province of weirdos and saints, prime ministers and film stars” (xiii). This “heyday” of memoir has been preceded and will be followed by careful intellectual thought and attention to the work of the genre within and outside of the academy. Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson are life writing theorists who label life writing as “a moving target” (1). I

rely heavily on Smith and Watson's text *Reading Autobiography* in my understanding and articulation of memoir theory as they are known as the most established, well-cited theorists in the field of memoir and life writing. They have also done substantial work in their text that not only addresses the current status of the memoir within academic conversations, but they have outlined and made sense of the history of this "wiggly" (Karr 5) genre in a way that no other theorists have.

Smith and Watson outline six foundational components of life writing as follows: "memory, experience, identity, space, embodiment, [and] agency" (21-2). These six components of life-writing are listed as "concepts helpful for understanding the dynamic processes of autobiographical subjectivity" (21). I agree Smith and Watson's articulation of the importance of these six components, and I have found each of them as central and revelatory in my study of women's memoirs. Specifically, as my study draws on the feminist foundational tenets of experience, identity, and agency. I see this discussion of memoir theory as matching very closely with claims of feminist theory; indeed, Judith Butler is listed as a very influential individual in the understanding and valuing of life writing in the academy.

Memoir is *one* type of life-writing. The genre of memoir is understood under many other genre umbrellas. The widest genre identifier is nonfiction. Nonfiction work is then subdivided into many components. One subdivision could be labeled as "modes of narrating a life" (5). This definition could apply to both biography and autobiography; however, the term life writing, as Smith and Watson define it, applies *only* to autobiographical works. Smith and Watson define life writing as a genre in which "subjects write about their own lives predominantly" (5). There are, of course, mitigating

factors of what it means to write about one's own life, but the specific work that this definition does is to establish what counts as life writing and what does not. Memoir is one category of life writing. So, according to Smith and Watson, genre definitions move from nonfiction to narration of life to autobiography to life writing to memoir. The richest body of theory is labeled as autobiography theory, and as autobiography an umbrella term over the genre of memoir, I feel comfortable drawing on autobiographical theory in understanding the genre and theoretical underpinnings of memoir.

So, what does autobiography consist of? It consists of autobiographical subjects, the authors, and autobiographical acts, as well as the texts and "nature of memory" (Eakin "Autobiography" 21). The relationship between the texts and the author are intimate and thus one of the most highly contested aspects of autobiographical writing. These contestations tend to "reveal how complex questions of the authenticity of experience and the integrity of identity can become" (Smith and Watson 37). It is these complex questions that I think are so crucial to explore, specifically in terms of food memoirs. In my study, I ask questions such as: what types of experiences and identities are constructed and represented through food texts? Although, there can be no concrete answer to this question. Smith and Watson write, "to theorize memory, experience, identity, space, embodiment, and agency is to begin to understand the complexities of autobiographical subjectivity and its performative nature" (61). Through this positioning, all life writing is performative in unique ways as the performance constructs the text.

Much like the theoretical and historical understandings of the feminist movement, autobiographical theorists see the positioning of the genre of autobiographical theory developing in three intersecting but separate waves. The first wave of "modern criticism"

resulted from the publication of Georg Misch's text *A History of Autobiography in Antiquity*. In this text, Misch argued that "the normative generic characteristics of autobiography and the criteria for the success of any particular life narrator rest in the writer's relationship to the arena of public life and discourse" (Smith and Watson 195). In this first wave, the theory and criticism of autobiographical texts focused very much on the "auto"—the self represented by the individual. This was the main source of understanding and critiquing autobiographies through the "reawakening" of the genre "in the academy in the late 1950s" (Smith and Watson 197). This was followed by an establishing of canonical autobiographies that "served to legitimate the field of autobiography studies" in the 1960s (Smith and Watson 198). This first wave focus on the individual author brought with it the issues of individual authors becoming representative figures of the groups with which they were associated but individual experiences within larger groups must be recognized and accounted for, especially in published texts.

The second wave of autobiographical theoretical formulations occurred in reaction to the publication of articles like Georges Gusdorf's 1956 article "Conditions and Limits of Autobiography" and Francis R. Hart's 1970 article "Notes for an Anatomy of Modern Autobiography" (Smith and Watson 199-200). The most notable theoretical shift happened as a push against the first wave focus on the "auto" in autobiography. The second wave theorists looked instead to the "bios" understood within the term autobiography in way that addressed how the representations of the self are not always transparent, as might be assumed. There was a shift in understanding "autobiographical representation" and emphasis on "the forms of self-presentation" (202). This

understanding of the texts not as “sites of the truth of a life but as creative self-engagements” (Smith and Watson 203) bolstered the canonical genre of autobiography.

The third wave of autobiographical theory is considered to be most current wave of thought. This wave of theory has responded to discussions of subjectivity to capture the vivacity of the genre through theoretical understandings. It is in relationship to this wave that Smith and Watson outline the three theoretical concepts that I am using as the framework for this study: “performativity, positionality, and relationality” (214). As discussed above, these concepts and understandings are intricately tied to the work I am doing in relationship to feminist theory and Abu-Jaber’s memoir as they speak to the interplay between author and reader and acknowledge and examine the “mysterious sense of identification” (Karr xvii) that is often quite complex in relation to subjectivity. I discuss each of these components in relationship to the feminist pedagogical framework that I am using in the introduction to the dissertation, as well as in Chapter Two.

Moving from the broad category of “life writing,” I have established how the categorization narrows to “autobiography” and then “memoir.” Even more specifically, under the category of memoir, are food memoirs. Food memoirs are pivotal to the work I am using here because they represent the gendered space of the kitchen, which is apparent in food memoirs written by both men and women. Food memoirs written by feminist women allow a published avenue for renewed agency over the space of the kitchen by women themselves. Food memoirs also speak to the shared experience of eating in a way that students can relate to but also can see their own histories and traditions. Food memoirs are a genre of text that can be revelatory to scholars, students, and everyday readers alike because they offer a glimpse into the life of an author as well

as an embodied “taste” of their lived experience through the description and inclusion of food experiences and recipes. It is from the basic belief that I ground my research report, as I am very interested in studying these memoirs as cultural texts that construct, impact, and represent identity construction and that have a place in academic scholarship.

I draw my scholarly definition of food memoirs from Arlene Avakian’s article “Cooking Up Lives: Feminist Food Memoirs.” Avakian writes, “contemporary food memoirs put food at the center of their narratives, but they are more systematically autobiographical, chronicling the author’s lives through cooking and eating rather than narratives about food that include personal anecdotes” (279). I like Avakian’s definition because she recognizes the complexity of defining this term, the historical precedence attached to it, and she grounds the use of the term in current, feminist research and theory; however, I also think that the notion of authorial identity is a crucial part of why food memoirs are written and read. I would then add this definition from Massimo Montanari’s book *Food is Culture* to Avakian’s definition: “through such pathways food takes shape as a decisive element of human identity and as one of the most effective means of expressing and communicating that identity” (xii). It is to Avakian’s definition of food memoirs as texts with central narratives about the authors *and* food and Montanari’s definition of food texts as identity pathways that I specifically refer when I say food memoirs.

Avakian is careful in explicating and analyzing the term food memoir in its historical precedence. She writes:

While the term “food memoir” has only recently become part of that lexicon of food and autobiographical writing, the genre of gastronomic writing began in

1825 with the publication of *The Physiology of Taste Or Meditations on Transcendent Gastronomy* by Jean Anthelme Brillat-Svarin... Its most notable translation into English was in 1949 by the US food writing M.K.F. [sic] Fisher. Fisher is the author of many books about food, including a number of what might now be called food memoirs... Since Brillat-Savarin and Fisher, hundreds of food memoirs have been published. A wide variety of authors, including chefs, cookbook writers, food critics, novelists, farmers, and even a few scholars have used the form Rosalia Baena has recently termed “gastography.” (279)

I like the rhetorical work of Avakian’s following definition of gastography:

“contemporary food memoirs put food at the center of their narratives, but they are more systematically autobiographical, chronicling the author’s lives through cooking and eating rather than narratives about food that include personal anecdotes” (279). I particularly like this definition because it details how this term is used today in literary, academic, and popular culture.

As Avakian notes, M.F.K. Fisher is often considered the first food memoirist, but it was primarily Julia Child’s fame through her cookbook, TV show, and memoir that established an interest in food memoirs in the United States. What makes food memoirs unique is the way that the authors employ food and food experiences when describing relationships or life events. Food is used in a variety of ways within food memoirs, but often it is discussed in correlation with a specific close relationship (father/ daughter, romantic, etc.), and the memoirists include actual recipes within their texts.

In rhetoric and composition studies, one of the first robust treatments of food writing was published as a special focus in the journal *College English* in March 2008.

This special focus edition of the journal contains five articles dealing with the rhetoric of food in various venues. The significant element of this journal publication is the way that food is addressed in an academic, analytical way, and yet the subjects of the articles are so varied. I can see obvious connections with food memoirs and analysis in three of the articles included in the collection, but the other two articles are focused not on the analysis of food in texts, but on food systems and trends.

These three *College English* articles address food writing in memoir as it can be applied to teaching in classrooms, specifically literature classrooms. Jennifer Cognard-Black and Melissa Goldthwaite's article "Books that Cook: Teaching Food and Food Literature in the English Classroom" contains insights and careful analysis of not only how to teach food literature in classrooms, but why to teach it. They write, "to teach food as a written art form is to teach a part of what it means to be human" (422). They go on to discuss the nuances of this instruction and what the analysis can and does do for students. This article covers a great breadth of subjects including cultural and gender constructions, transformations of the self through interaction (physical and mental) with the text, and the way that memory effects analysis.

Cognard-Black and Goldthwaite's article addresses the teaching of food memoirs in a more general sense, while both Barbara Waxman's article "Food Memoirs: What They Are, Why They are Popular, and Why They Belong in the Literature Classroom" and Lynn Bloom's article "Consuming Prose: The Delectable Rhetoric of Food Writing" offer several reasons why non-fiction food memoirs are valuable in classrooms. Bloom highlights several reasons why food writing needs to be analyzed in an academic sphere. She discusses the contexts in which food is made and eaten and why that makes such a

difference in our perception of food itself (353). She focuses on “the pleasure and the humanity of the experience” (358) of thinking, reading, and writing about food. She advocates teaching these texts because she believes that food writing is “a genre well within the grasp of teachers and students” (347). The accessibility of the texts is something that she champions throughout her article, and is one of the driving reasons that she advocates using food memoirs in the classroom.

Waxman looks more specifically at the pedagogy of food memoirs in literature classrooms, but she also discusses some of the “whys” about food memoirs and the analysis and teaching of them. She links the popularity of food memoirs to the basic “olfactory system” and the “links among smells, tastes, strong emotions, and keen memories” (363), which is a specific way to try to get at why these texts are currently so popular. She does work in defining, contextually theorizing, and then thematically discussing food memoirs, which shows them to be texts that stand up under careful examination and analysis.

The *Feminist Studies* 2014 special issue is another full issue of a journal devoted to work done on food texts in the classroom and academy as a whole. Arlene Avakian uses the term “food memoir” throughout her article and she looks at the “feminist food scholars [that] have made significant inroads into a field that once ignored gender and race” (279). This focus leads Avakian to examine four different food memoirs to find out how these feminist scholars do their work in individual texts. She concludes that by basing their overall narratives in food stories, these women are complicating the reader’s understanding of “the interaction of social locations” and the way that “food can provide a reliable means to understand the world” (302). This focus on understanding the world is

something that could be taught, although Avakian is not focusing on pedagogical elements of food memoirs, like Waxman, but on specific ways that these authors represent feminist ideologies.

A second article published in this collection is entitled “Where Are the Women in Contemporary Food Studies? Ruminations on Teaching Gender and Race in the Food Studies Classroom” by Psyche Williams-Forsen and Jennifer Cognard-Black. This article, like Cognard-Black and Goldthwaite’s, focuses on student voices in response to the food text that are being taught in university classrooms but within a feminist framework. Williams-Forsen and Cognard-Black write: “women are getting their hands dirty- both literally and metaphorically--working in the trenches while still consigned to the margins” (304). The authors pay attention to the “gendered structures” in the texts that they are teaching, and their students’ responses to those texts. These two articles from the *Feminist Studies* are foundational in the current understandings of food memoirs in the field of rhetoric and composition.

Conclusion

Together, the many sources listed here are the theoretical and scholarly foundation on which I build my analysis of the model and vehicle of inquiry for my study. From the review of the literature that informed my model of analysis, I am able to see specific intersections between feminist theory and feminist pedagogy. The six tenets that I discussed inform my thinking on integral conceptions of feminist scholarship that need to be applied to my own composition work and that I worked to use in my pedagogical plans for the study featured in chapters two to four. The review of the vehicle of inquiry showed me how the variety of facets of autobiographical theory and

memoir usage and helped me to better situated my own reading and teaching of Abu-Jaber's food memoir. I use the review of all of these texts as the groundwork for my analysis of the student data collected in the ENG 217: Writing Reflective Essays course that I taught in the fall 2015 semester, using Royster and Kirsch's four feminist rhetorical practices as the model of inquiry and Abu-Jaber's food memoir as the vehicle. In Chapter Four, then, I examine the threads of Smith and Watson's three theoretical tenets of performativity, positionality, and relationality in my students' work to interrogate the effectiveness of this pedagogical model.

The next chapter, Chapter Two, builds on this review of literature by discussing the feminist methodological approach that I took to my course plan and data analysis, as well as the qualitative methods that I used in collecting and analyzing the student data. I also discuss the course plan in much more depth, as I see the course planning as intricately linked to the methods that I chose for data collection.

CHAPTER TWO

Food Memoir Rationale, Methods Description, Course Plan, & Student Work Example

Overview

The Writing Programs at Arizona State University serves “more than 10,000 students annually” through at least 19 different writing classes. The Writing Programs, under the direction of the Writing Program Administrator, Shirley Rose, focuses on “student individuation,” “promoting individual feedback,” “fostering community building,” and acting “as a site of inquiry and research” (“Writing Programs”). There are four types of 200-level courses offered through the Writing Programs. In the fall semester of 2015 I taught the 200-level course titled ENG 217: Writing Reflective Essays. The listed course description for ENG 217 says that this course will focus on “theories, methodologies, and issues of composing non-fiction prose” as well as “practice and study of selected biography, autobiography, reading and transcribing of oral narrative” (“ENG 217: Writing Reflective Essays”). Even with this overarching description and seven specific learning outcomes, there are many ways that the course can be taught. Some of my colleagues have focused on online genres or have asked students to think specifically about audience. I wanted to bring a food memoir in as the basis of discussion for this course because of the way that it invokes and invites discussion of lived, material experiences, namely with food. The food memoir that I chose to use as a foundational course reading was Diana Abu-Jaber’s 2005 memoir, *The Language of Baklava*. I used this memoir as a *vehicle* of analysis, meaning that in written and oral class work, the students and I would discuss the way that feminist and nonfiction writing ideals and principles appeared (or didn’t appear) in the memoir. The students were not asked to

write food texts, but they were asked to explicate and analyze this memoir and shorter food essays. The food memoir was a vehicle for discussing the pedagogical model-- Royster and Kirsch's four feminist rhetorical practices-- in this writing classroom.

I started the class with twenty-five students, the max capacity for a Writing Programs course. Nineteen students successfully completed the course. These nineteen students created a dynamic and engaging classroom experience for me and for themselves through their questions, discussions, presentations, and compositions. In this chapter, I provide a brief rationale of the food memoir that we read and discussed in the course, discuss my methods and methodological influences in creating and teaching the course, outline the course plan that I used to teach ENG 217, and briefly analyze student reactions to the course material in relation to my study framework. I analyze the student reactions through Smith and Watson's autobiographical theory of performativity, positionality, and relationality because these concepts align with Royster and Kirsch's practices and are a good foundation through which to understand the memoir.

Food Memoir Rationale

My students' responses and understandings about this course were very important to me. I wanted to know what, if anything, they were gleaning from the course plan, and if or how that knowledge stayed with them after the completion of the course. I chose to teach Diana Abu-Jaber's memoir *The Language of Baklava* because I could relate to many of the food and family stories that she told in the memoir.

My grandfather, George Joseph Koury, is full blooded Lebanese. His parents immigrated to the United States from Lebanon in 1915. They did not know each other prior to arriving in Boston, but they met in Boston, got married, and had seven children.

My grandfather is the sixth of the seven children. He grew up in Boston and attended Northeastern University in Boston for a short time after graduating high school. At the age of nineteen he joined the United States Air Force and went to boot camp in New York. After boot camp he spent a semester at Pennsylvania State University, then went on to Edwards Air Force Base in California, and then to Biloxi, Mississippi to assist in the building of hydrogen bombs. After he finished the assignment in Biloxi, he moved to Manzano Base in the Sandia Mountains in Albuquerque, New Mexico. He eventually transitioned from federal work to running his own real estate business in Albuquerque. He met and married my grandmother in Albuquerque, and they raised my dad and his three sisters in there. My dad attended New Mexico State University in Las Cruces, New Mexico after high school. He met my mother while they were both attending graduate school at Regent University (formerly Christian Broadcasting Network University) in Virginia Beach, Virginia. My parents married in 1987, and they moved from Virginia Beach back to Albuquerque that same year. I was born in Albuquerque two years later.

Although Grandpa was born in the United States, has traveled and lived in many different parts of the United States, served in the United States Air Force, and has never traveled to Lebanon, he is very proud of his Lebanese heritage. At every family wedding, birthday, and reunion we feast on pita, hummus, baklava, dolmades, and kibbe. The food traditions are what keep that part of our family history alive, although my great-grandparents, the ones who actually immigrated from Lebanon, have long passed away. In conversations with my friends growing up and following my own wedding, there were lots of comments like: “That food is so interesting!” “What was *in* those grape leaves?” “You eat hummus all the time?” I knew that I was culturally different by the food that my

family eats; however, it wasn't until I read Abu-Jaber's food memoir that I read a food story like my own. Abu-Jaber grew up eating pancakes, pizza, and ice cream with her American family; but on other occasions, she feasted on seasoned meat, varieties of hummus, and baklava for dessert, just as I did.

The recognition of mutual identifications and seeing my own familial and food traditions in Abu-Jaber's memoir drew me actively to *this* food memoir, over all others. Abu-Jaber's food narrative was very much like my own, and I wanted to share her story with my students. I also felt that if I were intimately engaged with the memoir that that would hopefully translate to my students and encourage them to engage with the text as well. As findings from this project's research indicate in the fourth chapter, I have reason to believe that my students could strongly identify with Abu-Jaber's narrative style and stories. The memoir is rich with discussions of feeling outside of tradition or marginalized due to experiences, but then Abu-Jaber weaves those experiences together with recipes that invite readers to participate in the experience, if they are willing to cook.

If readers are willing to cook up some of the recipes, they will experience this text in multi-sensory ways. Other than the reading, there is seeing, smelling, tasting, and touching of the actual recipes that Abu-Jaber is discussing. Food memoirs are unique in the way that they invite and value the inclusion of all five senses. Kirsch and Royster "recognize the senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, intuition) as sources of information in rhetorical performance and in the analysis of performance" (94). The invitation to "recognize" the senses in the narrative is vital in the writing and reading about food. Authors like Abu-Jaber intentionally use the senses to discuss and represent individual and communal identifications.

Abu-Jaber describes her position as a writer in the forward of her memoir. Abu-Jaber is a Jordanian-American, and though she was born in Jordan and lived there for periods throughout her life, she grew up primarily in the United States. She writes, “I believe the immigrant’s story is compelling to us because it is so consciously undertaken. The immigrant compresses time and space” (1). Abu-Jaber uses this memoir as her space to tell her story and process her immigrant experience. In this, I saw my own familial immigration story reflected in the text. She recognizes that immigrants are often marginalized as their identities may not seem cohesive to outsiders, and thus their stories are often considered to be fragmented as well. Abu-Jaber writes, “I learn early: We are Arab at home and American in the streets” (5). She outlines the physical and emotional hunger that is inherent in this kind of split identity, and the need to tell the immigrant story. She writes, “they’ll be hungry because everyone who ‘comes over’ is hungry: for home, for family, for the old smells and touches and tastes” (6). The socially understood identity of one who ‘comes over’ to Abu-Jaber’s new home is often a marginalized position; however, Abu-Jaber utilizes the memoir text as a space in which to represent her and her family’s stories.

Royster and Kirsch’s practices respond to marginalized identities explicitly. Historically, personal and experiential realities have been considered less valuable than scholarly or text-based knowledge, and feminist theory pushes against that understanding by valuing and privileging the lived experience of women in theoretical and scholarly spaces. Royster and Kirsch believe that lived participation shows that “there is evident the capacity also to propel general knowledge-making processes in the field at large--if not forward--at least to another, better-informed, more inclusive conceptual space” (18).

Their knowledge-building practices help to propel this conceptual space, offers a theoretical perspective, and serves as a model to exercise the vehicle of the memoir.

Methods & Feminist Methodology

Scholarly Foundations

In this study, I drew on feminist methodologies and qualitative methods. While methods and methodologies are related, there are substantial differences between the two that accomplish different work towards my stated goal. The methodology is the theory behind the method. I grounded my work specifically in feminist methodologies, as they are the most applicable methodologies for my theoretical, epistemological, and pedagogical foci.

Specifically, I considered the notions of pushing back against marginalizing forces in a way that invites the sharing *and* learning from both emotion and experience to be very important (Ede, Glenn, Lunsford 441; Reynolds 9). It must be noted that not all of my students came from historically marginalized backgrounds, although some did. The fact that they were in a classroom at Arizona State University in the United States of America is evidence of several ways in which they were and had experienced and exercised their privilege. With this understanding, though, I asked my students to explore the ways that they had been granted or denied privilege in their lives and how these positionings implicate them in a culture of inequality. In one writing project, a student discussed coming out to his father and his father rejecting and disowning him because of his sexual orientation. Another discussed her Ghanaian-American cultural roots and the conflicts that that caused for her. Another discussed how her family blamed her for getting sexually assaulted years before the class. Others, specifically the white, straight,

men began to recognize for the first time, I believe, based on evidence I present in the following chapters, the extreme amount of privilege that they had operated within their whole lives. I would offer, though, that my students' positions as student writers has caused academic marginalization for some in quarters where their written work is deemed as not as valuable or not as important as other academics.

Amy Robillard discusses this reality saying that in typical discussions of student work, "composition studies remain far more interested in the *how* of teaching writing than in the *what* of the writing" (*Young Scholars* 257). I do see value in studying how students write, but I think the marginalization of student voices occurs when academics and scholars focus *only* on how students write. I argue that what students are writing is equally as valuable and important to make note of as how they are writing it. Narratives included in personal writing and food memoirs, specifically, do not have any kinds of capital (cultural or monetary) if individual experiences and emotions are not valued. It is important to recognize the relationship between emotion and experience, and this relates to both the work being researched, the research participants, and the researcher. We each need to be able to tell our own stories.

Within the social sciences in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, and even more specifically in the field of rhetoric and composition, there are many different definitions of the term "methodology." This term is understood to be distinct from the term "method" in definition and practice, but the term methodology does still relate to understandings of both method and epistemology (Harding 2). Several foundational feminist methodological scholars have defined methodology in the following ways: "a theory and analysis of how research does or should proceed" (Harding 3), "concerned

with procedures for making knowledge valid and authoritative... [and] specifies how social investigation should be approached” (Ramazanoglu and Holland 9, 11), and “a shared account of truth” (Hawkesworth 5). These definitions define methodology in terms of how it is understood in the social sciences, and they also begin to get at the work of feminist methodologies more specifically. In the introduction to their edited collection, Gesa Kirsch and Patricia Sullivan discuss the differences between the terms methods and methodology. They write that methodology looks at the “underlying theory and analysis of how research does or should proceed,” and they define methods as the “techniques or ways of proceeding in gathering evidence” (2). I grounded my understanding of methodologies in these definitions.

While it is very difficult to try to definitively define the term *feminist* methodologies, the literature does point to the work that feminist methodologies do. Mary Hawkesworth writes, “feminist scholars have rocked the foundation of academia by challenging long-established beliefs, contesting dominant research paradigms, and identifying new strategies of analysis” (1). A foundational tenet of feminist methodologies, then, is countering marginalization and histories of erasure within the academy and making sure our research benefits participants and not just the researcher.

My work is grounded in this belief, as I argue for the intersection of strands of inquiry that counter the sole valuing traditionally hegemonic voices and texts. Smith and Watson’s three autobiographical theoretical concepts, similarly, invite the valuing and sharing of experiences. Alison Jaggar’s assertions about the work of feminist methodologies focuses on emotion and knowledge. Jaggar writes, “just as appropriate emotions may contribute to the development of knowledge, so the growth of knowledge

may contribute to the development of appropriate emotions” (388). This is especially true of memoir writing, as emotional attachments and relationships are often a central focus. I understand her argument here for a reciprocal relationship between emotion and knowledge, but as Caroline Ramazanoglu and Janet Holland write, “valid general knowledge of gendered lives would only be possible if the knowing self could reliably distinguish truth from falsity” (44). I think that what Ramazanoglu and Holland point out here is that distinctions between knowledge and emotion are not entirely distinct, or easy to extricate from one another. There is value, though, in recognizing both the individuality and intersections between the two, which is something that I asked my students to pay attention to and discuss in their compositions and justification letters.

In my pedagogical planning and implementation, I discuss the intersections between scholarly knowledge and lived experience. For many students, they are asked to check their experiences at the door, so to speak, in traditional writing courses. In contrast, I wanted to discuss the ways that experiences help to create knowledge with my classroom. Many students in the course grasped this concept and were careful to consider the way that knowledge and experience complement each other in their compositions, as findings presented in the subsequent chapters show.

In deciding how to plan and implement my data collection, I took these definitions and understandings into account. As I was interested in personal experience and narrative, I knew that qualitative methods would be the best choice for my data collection and analysis, as qualitative methods tend to include: attention to the lived experiences of the research participants (Kirsch 161), a commitment to exploring areas of inquiry that have been previously overlooked or disregarded (Auerbach and Silverstein

127), and recognizing researcher positionality and subjectivities (Mortensen and Kirsch xxii). These are all values that align with my scholarly, pedagogical, and ethical goals and practices.

Initial Course Planning & Data Collection

Although I outline the project assignments in detail in the next section, I want to cover some of the course specifics (see Appendix B: Syllabus) here. The class that I taught met on Tuesdays and Thursdays for an hour and fifteen minutes each day. I taught in a computer-mediated classroom, so we used online sources and Blackboard (the learning management system at ASU) frequently in the class. The course shell on Blackboard contained project descriptions, as well as readings, links, and videos that we would discuss in the class or that students could explore on their own. Each week the students would read a chapter from the assigned textbook and a chapter from the food memoir. They would then write a one-page reading response and submit those responses to a Discussion Board on Blackboard. We would then use those responses as a jumping-off point for the class discussion, as students could easily refer to their work in the class.

Other than the weekly reading and response work, there was also a student presentation each week. I called these presentations Narrative Discussions, and the students would present individually or in teams of two. I gave them an edited collection of food essays to choose from, and then they would read and explicate a chosen essay for the class. Each text related to food in some way--chosen to reflect the narrative "symbol" (Royster and Kirsch 15) selected for the course. The Narratives Discussion assignment description offered this explanation for the purpose of this work: "to help your peers understand the way that published authors frame texts, relate life experiences, and

incorporate food into their texts. The discussion can include quotes, questions, summary, or whatever you would like in order to spark discussion about how this text works.”

These presentations often sparked productive and engaging conversation regarding food traditions and experiences, effective storytelling, political and power relations, and relational experiences.

The Narrative Discussions often corresponded well with other inside and outside class activities. In-class activities included reflections, group brainstorming, reading and discussion of texts, and watching videos. For example, we watched Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s TedX Talk, “We Should All Be Feminists,” Emma Watson’s speech at the UN about HeForShe, an interview of Diana Abu-Jaber, and clips from an episode called “Pie-Mary” of the show *Parks and Recreation*. Each of these videos spoke to feminist movements and realities by addressing stereotypes, speaking to marginalizing experiences, and/or calling viewers to action towards feminist goals. They, too, sparked engaging conversation in the classroom and helped to demonstrate the work and necessity of feminism in multiple ways. We also did two out-of-class activities over the course of the semester. The first was a writing activity at Hayden Library, the main library on the ASU Tempe campus. The second outside writing activity was at the Arizona State University Art Museum. Both of these activities were based on the idea that “anything that takes you out of the realm of what you already know is research” (Miller and Paola 128). I asked students to walk around and observe the space and then write a short narrative focusing on how they felt they were positioned within that space.

On the final day of the Writing Reflective Essays course, I asked my students to sign a consent form for an IRB study to quote and publish their work (see Appendix C:

Consent Form). According the IRB stipulations, I made it very clear to them that the forms would not be read, nor the envelope in which they were collected opened, until *after* the submission of final course grades. The students were also able to check off the items that they *did* wish to give consent to use, and there was a space for them to write any notes or stipulations. After submitting final grades, I opened the envelope and took note in a spreadsheet saved on an external hard drive of the fourteens students who gave me permission to use *all* of their work with no exceptions or stipulations. Five students marked “no” to all of their work being used. I then went into Blackboard and downloaded all of the work of those fourteen students who gave consent and organized the downloads into folders based on projects, saving the documents with the students’ last names. I saved all of this work on the same external hard drive as the spreadsheet.

The next step in the data gathering process was to ask the fourteen students who gave consent for the use of all of their work to participate in a one-hour Skype interview with me. I obtained a second IRB for this interview process, and made it clear that by agreeing to be interviewed, the students were giving me consent to quote and publish their answers and discussions within the interview. The interviews took place eight months after the class ended, so there was no grade or extra credit incentive, but I did offer the incentive of being part of a raffle for one of four \$25 Amazon gift cards. Four students agreed to be interviewed, and I conducted sixty-minute verbal interviews with three of them and the other answered the questions via email. The prompts and questions used in the interview can be found in Appendix D. In the following section, I discuss the implementation of Royster and Kirsch’s pedagogical framework and Abu-Jaber’s memoir

as a vehicle of inquiry, as well as specifically explaining the course projects and other major assignments.

Course Plan

Framework & Vehicle Implementation

In the description for their proposed feminist informed organizational framework for rhetorical practices used in research and writing, Royster and Kirsch discuss the importance and power of choosing symbols around which to shape narratives and research. They write:

We have the habit of choosing for ourselves symbols from our past experiences that help us translate and align new experiences and to transform them into knowledge and insight. By such transformative connections, we can see more clearly where and how we stand, how we interpret what we see, and consequently how we make sense out of the chaotic effect of various encounters and observations in creating new knowledge. (15)

Choosing symbols, like Royster and Kirsch describe, enables writers to better “translate” their lived experiences into written texts (15). Focusing on specific symbols, like food, helps writers to “make sense” of various past experiences (Royster and Kirsch 15). I was interested in helping students to identify the past experiences that were most influential in their identity constructions and then compose written projects based on those past experiences in ways that speak to a variety of audiences. I asked students to write to a variety of audiences because we tend to privilege different parts of our identity and experiences depending on the audience we are addressing. I wanted the students to have experience shifting their focus and experiential narratives based on various audiences that

they might encounter in their everyday lives. Royster and Kirsch exemplify the power of “classroom narratives” (50) that speak back to realities of racism, sexism, etc. I agree with this argument and worked to enact it within my classroom.

In the forward to her memoir, Abu-Jaber writes: “each of us has a right to tell our stories, to be truthful to our own memories, no matter how flawed, private, embellished, idiosyncratic, or improved they may be” (1). Abu-Jaber argues for the power of individual lived narratives in published form, and this argument, along with Royster and Kirsch’s valuing of symbols and stories as means of communicating and shifting experiential knowledge constructions, formed the basis of my course pedagogy and solidified my decision to use Abu-Jaber’s memoir and Royster and Kirsch’s rhetorical practices as the primary pedagogical foundations. Abu-Jaber specifically addresses why she sees *food* memoirs as being important catalysts for communicating these stories by saying that “memories give our lives their fullest shape, and eating together helps us to remember” (1). My students were not asked to write food texts but to use the food memoir as a model for writing stories focused on material elements. In the flyer created for the class prior to registration, I wrote the following course description:

This is an advanced interdisciplinary writing course emphasizing theories, methodologies, and issues of composing non-fiction prose. Practice and study of selected: biography, autobiography, reading and transcribing of oral narrative. Following an introduction to appropriate theories and methodologies, the course focuses on writing and response to the chosen form in a workshop atmosphere. The course focuses on asking questions about past experience and how those experiences can shape identities, specifically thinking through experiences with

food. Through in class discussion, workshops, written and oral reflection, and the reading of a food memoir and supplemental texts, students will begin to identify revelatory and meaningful patterns and processes in nonfiction writing.

This flyer was meant to foreground the notion of interrogating and choosing symbols of identifications as a primary focus of this course in the projects and major assignments.

Course Projects & Assignments

In the course, I used the four projects as scaffolding to help me to meet the goals stated here and provide students with the tools to successfully think and write through lived, personal memories. The four projects coincided with one another by asking students to think about shifts in purpose and audience but kept the focus on the lived experiences of the student. The following table (Fig. 1) exemplifies this focus on lived experiences and identifications as it provides the name of the project, the foundational tenet of Royster and Kirsch’s feminist rhetorical practice that serves as the model of inquiry for each project, the specified audience and purpose of the project, and a sampling of proposed genres that the students in which the students could choose to compose the project.

Project Name	Royster & Kirsch	Purpose & Audience	Proposed Genres
Writing Project One: Critical Imagination	“the idea is to account for what we ‘know’” (71)	Explore the self-constructed through familial histories, relationships, and/or stories for family members	Personal Journal, Diary Entry, Scrapbook Page, Personal Letter, Birth Stories

Writing Project Two: Social & Strategic Contemplation	“social circulation enables us to see metaphorically how ideas circulate... [strategic contemplation is] a <i>lived process</i> ... how [we] moved back and forth between past and present” (101, 87).	Explore the self as socially and strategically performed for friends, coworkers, neighbors, partners, or unknown audiences and produce texts that have intended interactions	Scholarship Essay, Application Personal Statement, Podcast Script, Professional Letters, Written or Video Blog, Article
Writing Project Three: Globalizing Point of View	“we are pressed to acknowledge the presence of others globally” (110)	Explore the self that inhabits a global space for an unknown audience and produce texts that can be accessed globally	Memoir Chapter, Nonfiction Narrative Essay, Documentary Scene Script, Podcast
Writing Project Four: Revision	“to enhance our capacity to build a more richly endowed knowledge base, carry out a more inclusive research agenda, and generate greater, more inclusive interpretive power” (134)	Explore the self through the reading of an outside literacy narrative that corresponds in some way with one of their previous projects and revise that project based on this “re-seeing” of their own experience	Podcast, Memoir Chapter, Online Article, Video Blog, Personal Letter --- Any genre that they had not previously composed in <i>or</i> a new take on a repeated genre

Figure 1: Writing Reflective Essays course project overview

The textbook that I chose for the course was Brenda Miller and Suzanne Paola’s 2004 text *Tell It Slant: Writing and Shaping Creative Nonfiction*. This textbook offered insights into the variety of personal nonfiction writing purposes, audiences, and genres. I worked to address those differences and create genre awareness that leads to transfer through the project scaffolding, as well as the inclusion of Abu-Jaber’s memoir.

When I use the term genre in this dissertation, I am drawing on Anis Bawarshi and Mary Jo Reiff's definition of genre as "a powerful, ideologically active, and historically changing shaper of texts, meanings, and social actions" (4). This moves far beyond the term genre being used "as a classificatory tool" (4) to "a commitment to the idea that genres reflect and coordinate social ways of knowing and acting in the world, and hence provide valuable means of researching how texts function in various contexts and how to teach students to act meaningfully in various contexts" (5). This conception of genre as way of knowing and acting is drawn from Carolyn Miller's foundational idea that "a rhetorically sound definition of genre must be centered not on the substance or the form of discourse but on the action is used to accomplish" (152). Miller argues that the focus on genre is not just about distinguishing between different genres themselves but distinguishing between methods of action (154). The exigence of creating genres in social settings is a major component of Miller's article, although to make this claim she does not clearly address the many material realities that affect the work of creating in different genres.

Bawarshi and Reiff's conception of genre builds on Miller's understanding by grounding genre as social action in lived material situations, such as teaching genre in the classroom. I discuss genre and analyze my students use of various genres in detail in Chapter Four. In that analysis, I focus on the ways that my feminist pedagogical plan asks students to reconceptualize what constitutes genre as "social action" outside of the classroom and compose work that addresses those concerns within the classroom. For some students, this meant focusing on feminism, for others white privilege, and for others the impact of eating disorders within the genre choices they made. What this study does

not explicitly account for is the testing of these genre compositions in other activity systems, such as in published formats, libraries, or health clinics.

At the beginning of each writing project, I lead the students through a genre analysis of a few select genres that would fulfill the purpose of the assignment. For the first project, we talked about birth stories and journal entries. For the second, we looked at scholarship essays, personal statements, and online articles. And for the third, we talked about podcasts and online blogs. The genre analyses consisted of looking at a few different versions of each genre and then discussing the affordances, conventions, audiences, and purpose of each genre composition. The students were free to choose one of the genres that we analyzed in which to compose, or they could choose a different genre that still worked to complete the specific project assignment.

A primary impetus for this pedagogical focus, text selection, and project scaffolding described above was the notion of transfer. I was very interested in helping my students not only acquire knowledge about nonfiction writing and genre grounded in feminist pedagogy but helping them better understand and articulate their own experiences, specifically those grounded in marginalized identities because those are the stories that are often untold or ignored. In class, we discussed the political feminist movements in relationship to understanding marginalizing identities and experiences. Transfer is not inherent, even in some of the best pedagogical plans, but I felt a great responsibility to give my students tools through which to be able to take the discussions and lessons from the classroom into their everyday lives. I am using the term transfer to mean that students recognize that the narrative and composition skills they developed in the class could be useful in constructing and sharing narratives outside of the classroom.

I worked to facilitate “high-road transfer,” defined by Mary Jo Reiff and Anis Bawarshi as requiring “reflective thought, and such reflective thought require metacognition-- an ability to reflect on one’s cognitive processes-- as well as the related ability to seek connections between contexts and to abstract and draw from prior skills and knowledge” (315). Working towards this kind of transfer is beneficial and necessary to classroom pedagogy grounded in feminist ideals. I asked students to reflect on their own “cognitive processes” (Reiff and Bawarshi 315) through assignments like peer review and justification letters. The notion of situated embodiment, where experiences transform in ways that can be recognized and reconstituted by the author and reader, became very important in our discussions. I asked my students to share their work, not only with me and each other, but with outside audiences in order to dramatize the rhetorical work they were doing and practice situating these representations of self in different contexts and situations. The work of high-road transfer where students are able to draw knowledge from past experiences and apply it to their in-class writing exercises was important to me and in my pedagogical goals and plans.

At the end of each writing project, I asked my students to write a letter to me “justifying” the work that they did in the project in relation to the assignment description and grading criteria. I use the word justify instead of reflection because I want students to critically analyze and consciously represent their decision making in composing their projects not repeat or reflect on the finished product. As I previously mentioned, this was the primary way that I asked students to reflect on their own “cognitive processes” (Reiff and Bawarshi 315). I asked students to do this work of justifying their decisions in writing their compositions because an explicit awareness of how and why decisions are

made in the composition process for both me and the student. This practice draws on feminist methodology by offering a new procedure for establishing what “knowledge is valid and authoritative” (Ramazanoglu and Holland 9) and opening up a new “account of truth” (Hawkesworth 5) in regards to the ways that students are invited to share their knowing and knowledge building. The work that the justification letters do is feminist in that it invites the sharing of experience and knowledge production in the student’s own words, as well as valuing the connections students have made to other individuals, components of their own identities, and recognition of their place with the classroom and the academy.

My aim in asking my students to write justification letters to me is to keep conversations open and productive, as well as to provide a space for exploring “connections between contexts” of composing (Reiff and Bawarshi 315). Kathleen Ryan writes, “feminist pragmatic rhetors are responsible knowers who practice a willingness to believe others (until evidence proves otherwise), aim to keep conversations productive, acknowledge subjectivity matters in discourse, and recognize rhetors enter discourse with an openness to changing their own mind” (83). I’ve found that the letters facilitate more productive conversations with the students as I respond to their work and give them numerical grades on their final projects. As I read their justifications, I am able to understand what the students value, see their thinking process more explicitly, and better understand the connections they have made in their narratives. I offer one example of the way that the justification letters helped me to gain perspective into my students’ decision making processes in representing specific identifications in the next section.

Example Interpretation of Student Work

The fourth writing project that is grounded in the notion of expanding our research agendas and capacity through revision asked the students to revise one of their earlier projects *and* incorporate an outside literacy narrative from the Ohio State University Online Digital Archive of Literacy Narratives that resonated with the experiences they were writing about. The intention in this assignment was not to find arbitrary similarities between the students' compositions and the outside narratives, but to explore intersections and divergences in experience or understanding of lived experiences through reading narratives that in some way reflected their own. The assignment description for this portion of the project positioned the students "to explore this online space, begin to understand how people outside yourself--people you don't know and probably wouldn't have contact with otherwise--impact your constructions and compositions and understanding of the world around you, and to practice rhetorical listening" (see Appendix A: Writing Project Four Assignment Description). The exploration, understanding, and practicing of rhetorical listening invited in this assignment was met in a variety of ways and through a variety of interpretations.

In the Writing Project Four: Revision Project work, I did see implicit traces of discussions about performativity, positionality, and relationality, the framework I used to analyze the student work and the efficacy of the rhetorical practices model and memoir vehicle, that evidenced productive conversations and the rhetorical power of the authors. These findings will be further developed in Chapter Four. The way that framework themes manifested in the student work exemplified the facts that students are interested in bringing their experience into the classroom and find value in it, both for course work and

future self-expression, and are willing to investigate *how* to do so. I present the following table as an explanation of my coding scheme. This table shows the way that I interpreted the students' writing in relations to the theoretical concepts enabling identity pathways from the justification of their Writing Project Four composition decisions.

Identity Pathway	Smith & Watson	Interpretation	Student Response Example
Performativity	The discussion or analysis of performative aspects of identity that are “dynamic” (214)	Genre choice based on knowledge of genre conventions and audience expectations & discussions of identifications are significantly impacted by genre constraints and allowances.	“I had planned to do a vlog for this remix. But when it came down to make it, it just didn’t feel right. Many vlogs are entertaining and deeply personal, and that’s not exactly what I felt my piece was. I then realized that many podcasts are informational and educational, but also entertaining. So, I switched and started the podcast” (Gabriel).
Positionality	“discourses of identity” (215)	Discourses becoming particularly important to students when they are enacting sites of identification performance, specifically for outside audiences.	“to insert myself in the topic of hip-hop music I attempted to explain how I came to love it and how I feel somewhat conflicted for loving it” (Jack).
Relationality	“refractions” of others’ stories through which narrators see their own stories (216).	Students exemplified the way that their stories were refracted through the reading and incorporation of a literacy narrative from the Digital Archive of Literacy Narratives.	The literacy narrative “really spoke to me and reminded me of the passion that I have for singing” (Ashley).

Figure 2: Writing Project Four Justification Letters Instructor Interpretation

This table shows how I understood and linked Smith and Watson's theoretical identity pathways to the students' compositions. As I discuss in depth in Chapter Four, the tenets of genre theory are foundational to my understanding and coding of the student work in the course and thematic analysis to the coding of student interview answers.

Each of the three aspects of autobiographical theory were represented in the analysis of just this one assignment, the Writing Project Four Justification Letters. I use these aspects as a framework for analysis because, as I have stated previously, I see autobiographical theory adding insight and accuracy to analysis of a feminist pedagogy. Although "revision" was not explicitly stated as one of Royster and Kirsch's four practices, I see the final revision course project as meeting their aims of recovery in regards to traditional rhetorical practices through feminist goals and practices. The students were asked to draw on one of the previous three projects that did come explicitly from Roster and Kirsch's rhetorical practices and "re-see" the work through the narrative of another. In this way, the texts became representative of more than just their own experiences, as they worked to engage in dialogic thinking without textual narratives.

Stenberg writes about how "feminist scholars carve new possibilities for constructing and representing dialogic and multivocal scholarship" (*Composition* 93). In their revision project, I asked the students to consider the experiences of other people in their work, like bell hooks and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie exemplify. The students were encouraged to see that, through revision of ideas, genre, and audience, the work could be carried outside of the classroom and not just have value within.

Conclusion

This overview of the memoir choice rationale, scholarly foundations for the methods and methodologies, course plan, and initial coding scheme of student work serves as a foundation for the next two chapters. In the next chapter, Chapter Three, I analyze Abu-Jaber's food memoir in much more detail through the lens of John Trimbur's theory of popular literacy and discuss the ways that I see Smith and Watson's autobiographical theory and Royster and Kirsch's four feminist practices applied to the memoir narrative. From these findings and analysis of the memoir, Chapter Four then offers an analysis of the ways that my students' interview answers and compositions represented or negated the framework of the identity pathways that Smith and Watson detailed in relation to autobiographical theory. I also discuss the ways that the pathways relate to Royster and Kirsch's feminist rhetorical practices as a model of pedagogical inquiry and Abu-Jaber's food memoir as a vehicle for discussion and understanding.

CHAPTER THREE

Food Memoir Explication: Linking Feminist Rhetorical Practices, Identity Pathways, and Narrative Nonfiction Writing

Overview

This chapter provides a textual analysis of Diana Abu-Jaber's 2005 food memoir, *The Language of Baklava*, arguing that food memoirs serve as a representation of popular literacy in the writing classroom. One of the reason that I chose a food memoir as the primary vehicle of inquiry in my writing classroom was because it is a text that invites students to engage, as most students can relate to food experiences in one way or another. And memoirs are a popular genre; they are texts that a person can pick up in an airport bookshop or watch discussed on daytime news channels. This chapter explores not only the nonfictional narrative that Abu-Jaber composed, but the ways that the four feminist rhetorical tenets (Royster and Kirsch) and the autobiographical concepts (Smith and Watson) are represented through the memoir. These rhetorical and theoretical tenets are not explicitly discussed within the memoir, but by analyzing the text and the implications of the text, I draw conclusions about the ways that these components can be discussed in relationship to this food memoir. The conclusion of this chapter discusses the way that food memoirs, using Abu-Jaber's memoir as an example, ask students to engage with lived experiences and truths through the reading and writing of personal nonfiction texts. This analysis of the food memoir dramatizes a way of using a feminist rhetorical pedagogy that values situated embodiment without reducing discrete content learning. This chapter, as a whole, explicates the *vehicle* of learning, the food memoir, in the nonfiction narrative class. As is discussed in Chapter Two, this memoir served as the

foundational text in the classroom for discussions of feminist rhetorical practices, identity pathways, and nonfiction narrative writing.

Textual Analysis

Diana Abu-Jaber is primarily known as a fiction author. Prior to writing and publishing her food memoir in 2005, she had published two novels. Since publishing her memoir, she has written and published two more novels, and then in 2016 she published her second food memoir titled *Life Without a Recipe*. Abu-Jaber teaches writing and literature at Portland State University, although she “divides her time between South Florida and Portland, Oregon” (“About”). As is detailed in her first food memoir, *The Language of Baklava*, Abu-Jaber grew up partly in New York and, for brief stints, in Jordan. Abu-Jaber’s past experiences are still a dominant force driving the narrative in the memoir.

In the introduction to his edited collection *Popular Literacy*, John Trimbur discusses how texts “are meant to speak in the voice of experience, to give a popular account from people who have not been consulted by the policy makers-- some of whom are about to be driven from their familiar places, pleasures, and livelihoods” (3). Abu-Jaber’s family was not driven from Jordan--her father chose to come to the United States--yet he brought the family back to Amman, Jordan several times before he finally “comes back from Jordan, announces to himself for the hundredth or thousandth or millionth time that he really and truly lives in this country, this Amerikee” (Abu-Jaber 324). But, Abu-Jaber’s father, was one not consulted by policy makers and yet is given a voice of experience in Abu-Jaber’s memoir. The struggle to identify with Jordan and America is

paramount in this text, as it represents Abu-Jaber's own struggles to make sense of her own lived experiences.

Abu-Jaber did not write an explicitly feminist text, but her valuing of past experience and identifications, identifying herself as "an in-between" (Avakian 289), corresponds with feminist ideologies as Abu-Jaber exercises agency over her own experience as a marginalized woman by tracing multiple identity pathways throughout her narrative. Avakian discusses how "women's issues and vivid representations of strong women permeate Abu-Jaber's memoir, subverting the stereotype of Arab women as subservient to men" (285). This subversion happens both by including and focusing on strong women characters in the memoir, like her Aunt Aya, but it also happens through Abu-Jaber's agency over the food and cooking traditions that her family has engaged in for many generations. Throughout the text, she begins to make *choices* about what she will eat, what she will cook, and with whom she will eat. These discussions speak to the "ownership of cultural forms" (Abu-Jaber 286) of food, and show her taking ownership over those practices.

Abu-Jaber's memoir is divided into 24 different chapters. Although the chapters are arranged chronologically, each one focuses on one memory or specific period in her life. The first chapter, titled "Raising an Arab Father in America," details her experiences as a six-year-old living in upstate New York with her family, including her Jordanian father who she refers to throughout the text by his nickname, Bud. The reason for this nickname is that "he flags down men and women alike with the same greeting: 'Hey, bud!'" even though, Abu-Jaber points out, "my father's name is Ghassan Saleh Abu-Jaber" (4). This difference in naming is just one way that Abu-Jaber sees her family as

“Arab at home and American in the streets” (5). The assimilation is not easy for her family, specifically not for her father.

The final chapter of the memoir is called “The First Meal,” and it describes Bud opening a restaurant--the realization of his lifelong dream. The restaurant does not feature Jordanian classics as he had once envisioned, but he serves “rows of burgers, sizzling French fries, blistering hot dogs, and grilled cheese sandwiches” (324). Bud realized his dream in America but in a very different way than he had once imagined. He now has a new name as well, used by his American grandchildren. They cry out, “*Jiddo! Jiddo! Grandpa!*” when they see him (326 emphasis original). There is still a sense of “the in-between, the borderlands” for both Bud and his family who “live their lives in the air” going back and forth from Jordan and America, and also for Abu-Jaber herself (326). She identifies herself as “a reluctant Bedouin--I miss and I long for every place, every country, I have ever lived” (327). Abu-Jaber concludes her book with the sense that the “comingover” is never quite complete (6). She feels that she has pieces of herself left in all of the places where she has spent time. She identifies with two very different cultures and with cities all over the world.

These two chapters bookend her memoir, but the chapters in between cover a wide variety of subjects and memories. Abu-Jaber tells stories from both her childhood and adulthood in the United States and in Jordan. She talks about an abusive uncle, a strict but naive grandmother, a homesickness that leads to an eating disorder, failed marriages, and finding a man that she wants to take to her “amazing country” and show her “beautiful history” (323). These 24 chapters are interspersed with 43 different recipes. There are recipes for “Gram’s Easy Roast Beef” (109), “Lost Childhood Pita Bread”

(136-7), and “Spinach-Stuffed *Fetayer* For Those In Search Of Home” (261-2). These recipes, though completely usable as recipes alone, correspond with the subjects of the chapters and offer the readers a chance to not only better see the work of the narratives, but, if they choose to actually make the recipes, offers a literal taste of the struggles or joys that Abu-Jaber is describing.

Analysis Through Popular Literacy

The seeing, tasting, and experiencing of Abu-Jaber’s text in these multisensory ways offers a new kind of literacy to students. I see Trimbur’s four-part conception of popular literacy offering a lens through which to view Abu-Jaber’s text. Trimbur’s theory is not explicitly feminist, so I tie this analysis with the feminist rhetorical practices later in the chapter. Trimbur defines popular literacy as the way that authors “*make literacy popular* by using the available means of communication for their own purposes... to claim an interpretive space... to speak in the voice of experience” (3). Abu-Jaber’s text does that through her coming-of-age stories and identity negotiation that happen around food. Trimbur outlines four notions of popular literacy that I believe will help me to articulate some of the rich nuances of identity construction and feminist representation happening in Abu-Jaber’s memoir in relation to teaching this book in my classroom.

The first notion of popular literacy that Trimbur articulates, that I quoted previously, is that authors “are meant to speak in the voice of experience, to give a popular account from people who have not been consulted by the policy makers--some of whom are about to be driven from their familiar places, pleasures, and livelihoods” (3). Abu-Jaber’s family was not driven from Jordan, her father chose to come to the United States, but some of Abu-Jaber’s family did not come willingly. Her cousin, Sami, is

forced by his father and uncles to come to the United States--they say because he is a "poet," but they are actually trying to "cure" him of his homosexuality. Sami is not eating and is obviously miserable, so Abu-Jaber recounts: "I pluck a morsel [of lamb] from the plate and run to him while it burns my fingertips. To my mind, this is the best way to show love--to offer food from your own hand" (8). Sami initially refuses the food, but then ultimately decides to take it: "he says quietly, 'it's good'" (9). Sami was one not consulted by policy makers or even his family, in his choice to come to America, yet through Abu-Jaber's food memoir and this food experience Sami is given a voice in this popular account of literacy that she has written. The struggle between Jordan and America, represented by a struggle to eat or not eat, evidences the different ways that individuals can hunger.

Abu-Jaber recounts another moment of "comingover" (6) as a little girl after her grandmother takes her to see the Japanese opera *Madama Butterfly* at the opera house, and then they go to eat Chinese food. Abu-Jaber's grandmother proudly tells the waiter that they had just seen "a won-der-ful performance, all about your people!" (99). The waiter is electrified by this claim, and he says: "yes, the Chinese opera very important, very ancient art form. Center of cultural life" (99). Abu-Jaber's enjoyment of the fantastic meal is ruined as she waits for the waiter to discover that they actually saw a Japanese opera, not a Chinese opera. Her grandmother is completely unconcerned with the difference between the cultures, countries, or traditions as she talks to the waiter. Abu-Jaber recalls: "our small connection seems to mean too much to Chen. We simply cannot disappoint him. And this is too much responsibility; I can't imagine getting away with it" (105). Chen talks about how "in the Cultural Revolution, opera is the only kind of art we

are allowed. Chairman Mao says it is not bourgeois” (100) and how “the chef here... he was one of the cooks for the Chinese emperor” (102). Abu-Jaber recognizes the historical, cultural, and political traditions that this waiter embodies, even if her grandmother cannot. Back in China, this waiter and the chef were not consulted as policy makers during the Cultural Revolution; they were forced to conform to policies made by others. In this text, though, Abu-Jaber gives them a voice in this popular, published genre. Through her own perspective, she discusses the ways that culture and identity can be so easily represented--or misrepresented--in lived experiences, and she bears witness to people’s engagement with one another and their differences.

Secondly, Trimbur says “the relationship of popular literacy to systems of valuing, however, cannot be understood simply as a categorical one of occupying the underesteemed and disparaged term in a familiar cultural hierarchy” (4). Systems and ways of valuing based on cultural hierarchy also provide a dominant thread that runs through Abu-Jaber’s narrative. She discusses the ways that she must adjust and then readjust to these systems of valuing every time they move or go back to Jordan or encounter new familial and friend groups. Abu-Jaber recalls the time that her father took her and her family to see the Bedouins in the desert where her uncle lived. Abu-Jaber writes, “the men and women eat separately... I cannot separate the eating from the food itself” (60). As her father prepares them to go on this trip, Abu-Jaber learns about her own family history and the stories, beliefs, and dissension of values and debates over the best food in Bud’s family as well. She learns to question “whether people have to decide exactly who they are and where exactly there home is” (69), as she feels drawn to this Bedouin lifestyle and the life she knows in America. Trimbur’s idea shows that popular

literacy has a relationship to these types of values that stem from cultural heritage and hierarchy, which includes a gender hierarchy; I think that Abu-Jaber evidences that clearly through the discussion of her own ingrained familial and cultural food values.

Food memoirs can sometimes be disparaged as texts that are not worth studying or are not serious enough to study in an academic context. Just because memoirs can be purchased in airport bookstores does not make them any less worth studying than texts that can only be found in prestigious libraries or through extensive research. Identity pathways can sometimes be articulated and understood *better* through more narrative texts than through more abstract scholarly texts, especially in college classrooms. Abu-Jaber writes about experiences that many students may be able to relate to, such as pressure from her parents, fears of failure, and she details an experience in college where she is “living on candy” (216). In college, she only really eats when she goes home and “Bud prepares big special meals... roasted chicken, shish kabobs, grape leaves,” but then inevitably she wakes up in the night “by molten nausea... it comes with a dreadful disorientation-- the sense that something is deeply wrong yet completely unidentifiable” (217). This continues throughout her first semester at college, and she realizes that though her “body is physically rejecting the food” it is also “a rejection of something more powerful than food” (227). It is not until she begins to find a balance between her identities as a student *and* daughter, an American *and* a Jordanian, a person who lives in the suburbs *and* the city, that the nausea stops and she sleeps “soundly and dreamlessly” (229). Abu-Jaber has to reconcile her own systems of valuing in this text, and I argue that memoir texts themselves should be reassessed to consider the value that they offer students in helping them find their own balance.

A third aspect of Trimbur's conception of popular literacy is its emphasis on making. In the hands of Abu-Jaber, this aspect means that text can be discussed on multiple levels: e.g., how the text itself is materially produced, and then how the material aspects within the text (food, specifically) are being produced. Trimbur says "people [who] make literacy popular put a particular emphasis on the *making*" (5). In virtually any food memoir, the focus on making food in particular brings the reader in even more directly, because food memoirs provide recipes, so readers can actually "participate" in the story in a way by making and eating the food discussed and provided through recipes in the book. This idea of making is, again, multilayered in food memoirs like Abu-Jaber's. She writes about making pancakes in Amman: "we mix and stir, enduring all sorts of unsolicited opinions from the neighborhood spectators—who all seem frankly dubious about today's undertaking" (37). This is one of the countless examples of material making that happens in this text. This scene takes place in a Jordanian kitchen with Abu-Jaber's American mother attempting to make American pancakes. Popular literacy speaks to that kind of "productive art" as valuable to consider and study.

The making of pancakes in Amman, a distinctly American food made in Jordan, is contrasted with the making of Jordanian food in America. At sixteen years old, Abu-Jaber invites her friends over to her house, including her boyfriend Jay. Bud is initially intensely wary of Jay, but when Jay mentions hummus "Bud and Jay form an instant food connection" (209) and they "make dinner that evening. They make hummus, rice, olives with chili paste, and a lightly braised chicken with thyme and onions" (209). Jay is the first "non-family American boy" that Bud has ever invited to their dinner table, and Abu-Jaber realizes "with some regret" that because of this acceptance she "can never have

anything to do with Jay Franklin again” (210). The multiple types of making in this story include emotional making--love, distrust, acceptance, rejection--but also the making of food and friendships. This popular literacy component of making is one that resonates with students, as findings in the next chapter indicate.

Trimbur’s last notion of popular literacy asks readers to think through a cultured lens. He writes that “instead of positing a direct correspondence between production (the message encoded) and consumption (the message decoded), cultural studies of literacy have created an opening for variable responses and social uses that resist or evade preferred readings” (6). Again, the notions of production and consumption are multilayered when thinking about memoir texts that discuss food production. Abu-Jaber’s text is produced for the popular genre of memoir, yet the ways that it can get taken up or “consumed” by the readers is multilayered and does not have a clear trajectory. Abu-Jaber remembers a conversation with her Aunt Aya focused on various meanings behind production and consumption: Aunt Aya says, “‘You ate some *baklava*?’ She curls her hand as if making a point so essential, it can be held only in the tips of the fingers. ‘I looked. I tasted, I spoke kindly and truthfully. I invited’” (190). This consumption of baklava (or baklava) is representative of being an assertive woman in America and not just conforming to a father or husband’s desire or wishes. Food, like stories, are *meant* to be consumed, and this multilayered correspondence between production and consumption that Trimbur addresses as a part of popular literacy reveals that dual purpose of food memoirs to be both produced and consumed in multiple ways.

Aunt Aya is the most explicit feminist in the memoir. Abu-Jaber’s mother is strong; she’s the “voice of sanity” in the family (237), but she serves as more of a quiet

presence in Abu-Jaber's memoir, which indicates she may have been so in her life as well. Aunt Aya visits Abu-Jaber's family both in Jordan and in America and both times she is able to clearly and succinctly affect change through her actions and her words. She teaches Abu-Jaber to make baklava, a food that Abu-Jaber previously hated, and more so, she teaches her how to affect change. When Bud is duped by his cousin into purchasing a run-down building in Amman to open a restaurant in Jordan it is Aya who "drove him through the sueded [sic] hillsides of Amman to look at real estate--building after building, each one brighter, larger, and cheaper than the one before, all of them nicer and less expensive than Frankie's building" (304). Aya tells Abu-Jaber, "well, I cured him, I cured him of the family" (305). In the namesake chapter of the memoir, "The Language of Baklava," Bud is threatening to send Abu-Jaber from New York to Jordan because, "in the end, the cause of the fight is always the same: the astonishing fact that I'm growing up" (182). This is when Aunt Aya steps in and tells Bud over dinner, "you know, eating is a form of listening, and I have something to tell you... if you ever say anything more about sending your daughter back to Jordan to live-- oh! I will honestly never speak to you again" (192). For Bud, and for Abu-Jaber, this "is a moment of recognition" (192) brought about by Aunt Aya. The encoded and decoded messages of these seemingly simple acts have significant revelatory impacts on both Bud and Abu-Jaber. Abu-Jaber looks up to her aunt, and she serves as a strong, feminist role model. This enactment of cultural literacy contributes to the understanding of the memoir through a popular literacy lens.

Pedagogical Application

So, what does this mean as far as teaching this text, or actually using it in a writing classroom? I think one thing Abu-Jaber's memoir does concretely but not in an overbearing way is shows the ways that connections are made. This conception is grounded in the feminist tenet of using inclusive language in scholarly and pedagogical practices (Bauer 352; Moore 470) as that invites sharing and connection through the articulation of experiences. Most of the time these connections are stories about food, but sometimes they are about a shared interest in a scooter, or a look across a table, or a feeling of enchantment upon entering a restaurant. What Abu-Jaber does is tell her own story while inviting the reader to watches as bridges are built, borders are crossed, and food is eaten. Literacy, at times, is viewed as a boundary that cannot be crossed, or as a border that not enough people are crossing (Enoch 57). Abu-Jaber's text evidences the ways that borders *can* be crossed as long as all parties apply the narrative tools, such as the focuses on materiality, agency, and culture, gleaned from Abu-Jaber's text. I discuss the intersection between these tools and Royster and Kirsch's four feminist rhetorical practices in the following section.

Rhetorical Analysis: Feminist Rhetorical Practices

This coming-of-age food memoir may not be an obvious contender for the exemplification of Royster and Kirsch's four feminist rhetorical practices, but I argue that Abu-Jaber's narrative can be understood through these four practices and serves as a model of personal nonfiction writing that values interrogation of identity pathways because it invites engagement. In the first section of their text, Royster and Kirsch write that their four feminist rhetorical practices of "*critical imagination, strategic*

contemplation, social circulation, and globalization” (19 emphasis original) are “critical terms of engagement” because they “make the familiar strange and the strange familiar in order to call forward what we believe now constitutes a more clearly articulated vista of feminist rhetorical practices” (19). I argue that Abu-Jaber’s memoir does some of this same work. Abu-Jaber takes growing up experiences and food experiences that many people may be able to relate to, and she places them in a new terrain--a space that investigates identifications and familial relations.

I argue that each of the four feminist rhetorical practices are present in Abu-Jaber’s work as well, which is why this text was appropriate to teach in a feminist writing pedagogy that uses the rhetorical practices as a model. In the overviews of each of the rhetorical practices that Royster and Kirsch outline, they ask a series of questions that “clarify the scope, nature, and principles of our work” (20). In this section, I will show examples of Abu-Jaber’s narrative that answer some of the specific questions that Royster and Kirsch ask in relation to each of the four feminist practices.

The first of the four feminist rhetorical practices is critical imagination. In defining and clarifying this term, Royster and Kirsch, ask the following questions, among others: “When we study women of the past, especially those whose voices have rarely been heard or studied by rhetoricians, how do we render their work and lives meaningfully?” and “How do we make what was going on in their context relevant or illuminating for the contemporary context?” (20). I believe that Abu-Jaber does this work of meaningfully rendering the context of real women’s identifications as important and worthy of attention. As the four notions of popular literacy point to, one way to do this work of illuminating context is through sharing narratives in popular formats. Abu-Jaber

does this and works to make the women's lives of the past have significance and meaning to current audience by sharing her own experiences. In the chapter called "Native Foods," the Abu-Jaber family travels to visit the Bedouins in the place that Bud calls "the source of the winds, at the center of the valley. This is where our family started" (60). As they travel and stay in this place, Abu-Jaber senses, sees, tastes, and smells the history of her family. In a place where "the whiteness of the sky separates itself from the pale earth" and there are "baby goats and blating lambs" hanging around the tents and open spaces (61), Abu-Jaber begins to understand her familial history. She focuses her recollections on one woman named Munira, a Bedouin woman who works for them in the city and travels with them to the desert. When the other Bedouin women ask where Abu-Jaber comes from, Munira says "She is mine!... She belongs to me" (62). They eat and dance in this place, and to Abu-Jaber it seems that "there is so much food that it seem limitless" (66). Munira asks Abu-Jaber "in the city Arabic" if she would like to stay there with her forever (66) and she says yes. It is Abu-Jaber's mother who finally breaks the revelry and asks "you ready to go?... I think it's time" (67). Abu-Jaber represents her ancestors by painting beautiful pictures of their world with her words. By describing the endless sky, food, and laughter, she describes lives that, too, seem endless. Indeed, she says "if I had stayed by Munira's fire for one more moment, I might never have left at all" (68). Abu-Jaber critically imagines the life of a Bedouin, basing her reflection in a way that invites readers who have never experienced anything like this to understand and rest in her past experiences.

The questions asked of the second feminist rhetorical practice, strategic contemplation, connects with those asked of critical imagination, but considers the way

that “new research questions emerge” from visits and research into the past. Royster and Kirsch ask, “What do we notice when we stand back and observe?” and “What can our own lived experience teach us?” (22). Abu-Jaber does this work of learning from lived experiences by establishing much of her narrative in the past. Some of the memoir is written in present tense, but there is a sense that all of this has already happened. She has already loved and lost and cooked and eaten food. This book, in a way, is an observation. An observation of her cultural and familial history, as well as an observation of her own identifications over the years. To answer the question of what lived experiences can teach us, I think there are elements of that included throughout her narrative. In the chapter “HTML” Abu-Jaber offers specific reflections and dives into the lessons that she has learned from the variety of her past experiences. This isn’t necessarily an easy process, though. She writes, “I get lost. I am set loose in a wilderness. Jordan has torn me open, and inside this opening are pictures of light and dust-scrubbed air and flowering jasmine” (317). During this time of reflection, her first novel, *Arabian Jazz*, was published and she reads in a newspaper how the novel “is the first mainstream novel about the Arab American experience” (318). Abu-Jaber considers this might not be true, but she still feels “a great weight of responsibility” (318) as readers begin to tell her that her experience does not match with their own (318). The way to learn from our own lived experience is to realize that it is just that, simply our own. In this time, Abu-Jaber feels “impossibly alone,” although she knows that she is not the first person “ever to be unmoored between countries” (318). This loneliness is a feeling that is ever more present in the United States and around the world, and strategic contemplation asks us to consider what that means for our research and our lives.

The third feminist rhetorical practice is social circulation. Of this practice, Royster and Kirsch ask: “Are affection and admiration possible with sentimentality?” and “How do we locate both writers and readers in relation to new textual forms?” (23-4). In Abu-Jaber’s case, it may be impossible to separate her love from her family from her memories of them. As we consider social connections, though, I wonder if it is totally possible to separate sentimentality from admiration of subjects or individuals. Abu-Jaber seems to certainly describe her relatives and memories in terms that may not always be the most flattering or sentimental, which adds a sense of authenticity. For example, she writes that her abusive uncle has a “glassy and amphibious” quality that “seems to surface from beneath his skin” (261). In terms of location of writers and readers, Abu-Jaber directly addresses her readers in the forward to her book. She writes, “my childhood was made up of stories... the stories were often in some way about food, and the food always turned out to be about something much larger: grace, difference, faith, love” (1). She writes of the struggle of the immigrant saying, “it’s a sort of fantasy--to have the chance to re-create yourself. But it’s also a nightmare, because so much is lost” (1). In reconfiguring writer/ reader relationships in new textual forms, those that popular literacy often speaks to, it may be much like the plight of the immigrant that Abu-Jaber identifies. Much is lost while much is gained.

The final of the four rhetorical practices is globalizing point of view. Royster and Kirsch don’t ask specific questions about this term of engagement, but they do articulate how a globalizing point of view is about “connecting the dots” of many components, including the “history of rhetoric for women’s participation, contributions, and leadership,” as well as “highlighting and magnifying connections and disconnections

between the classical traditions of Greece and Rome” (24-5). Abu-Jaber’s text, as is evidenced throughout this chapter, is all about connecting the dots. She connects the dots of her own familial history, including the women in her past, as well as highlighting connections between her own Arabic past and history. In relation to social circulation, Royster and Kirsch ask: “What makes the consideration of such questions *feminist*?” (24 emphasis original). I offer that that question needs to be asked of all the questions asked of the four terms, and I think that one way to begin to answer that question it is to consider the ways that connecting the dots *happens*. It happens through agentive action, as well as through consideration of the strong women of our past who have influenced us and given us life. Abu-Jaber discusses this work of connection of her own experiences and identifications in her final chapter as she writes, “*come back*, I want to say to my second self, *there is tea and mint here, there is sugar, there is dark bread and oil*. I must have these things near me: children, hometown, fresh bread, long conversations, animals; I must bring them very near” (327 emphasis original). The feminist element of this narratives comes in *choosing* to bring these things together, as generations of women who have come before us have done.

The next section details how I see Abu-Jaber’s memoir through the lens of Smith and Watson’s autobiographical theory. This theory is not a feminist theory, but I see it linking to Royster and Kirsch’s feminist practices by providing a heuristic to analyze the data that I collected in response to the feminist pedagogy and memoir usage and providing a way to connect the dots.

Theoretical Implications: Identity Pathways

The implications of Smith and Watson's theory speak to the way that autobiographical texts, including memoirs, are currently conceived and the work that they can do within the university. Smith and Watson write of their three autobiographical theoretical tenets, performativity, positionality, and relationality, that they are "enabling concepts of recent theory [that] energize and redefine the terms of life narrative by calling formerly established critical norms into question" (217-8). Like Royster and Kirsch's four feminist rhetorical practices, I see these three theoretical elements as asking researchers, teachers, and students alike to further *engage* with the material that they are writing and studying on a personal level. Indeed, Smith and Watson say, "as we consider the complex ways in which new genres and new subjects may energize one another, these concepts enable more flexible reading practices and more inclusive approaches to the field of life writing" (218). This quote exemplifies my reason for choosing to use Abu-Jaber's memoir in the classroom. I wanted to use a text that would ask students to engage in ways that allowed them to see their *own* stories as valuable.

The first of the three concepts of the autobiographical theory is performativity, which Smith and Watson discuss as the way that "autobiographical subjects" perform identities that are "provisional and unstable" (214). I don't think unstable is meant to have a derogative connotation here; I think that the use of the word unstable simply indicates the ways that identities are "not fixed or essentialized" (214) but are dynamic and ever evolving. Smith and Watson say that this notion counters the idea that autobiographical texts only produce a "prediscursive identity" (218). In relation to Abu-Jaber's text, I think that the notion of performativity is represented in complex ways. On

one hand, this is a published text. In that sense, the experiences, memories, and identities that she performs on the page are set on the page forever. What Abu-Jaber does so well within her text, though, evidences the way that her identity performances changed based on her location, age, and desires. Again, this is not to say that she was unstable in a negative sense, but that her identifications shifted throughout her life, and thus, as readers we can assume that they continued to shift during and after the publication of the memoir. In the forward to the memoir, Abu-Jaber writes, “to me, the truth of the stories lies not in their factual precision, but in their emotional core” (1). Consistently throughout the text, she returns to this grounding of experience and identity in emotion.

The second notion of autobiographical theory is positionality. Smith and Watson write that positionality looks at the “effects of social relations whose power is distributed unevenly and asymmetrically across difference” (215). The awareness of power structure through difference is a very feminist notion, and Smith and Watson specifically say that “feminists [have] incorporated this psychosocial approach in analyzing life writing by women and men” (216). They also say that positionality is fundamentally tied to “geographics of identity” in terms of “de/colonization, immigration, displacement, and exile” (215) and that positionality speaks back to “the notion that there is a universal and transcendent autobiographical subject” (218). I discuss this briefly in the conclusion of this chapter and do so in more depth in the conclusion of the dissertation, but I think that the awareness of the way that *each* individual’s story differs from others is very important to maintaining the integrity and value of studying life writing. In Abu-Jaber’s text, she works hard to speak only from her own experience. Even as she includes a variety of other people in her text, she consistently speaks from her own understanding

and experience. Again, in the forward, she writes: “I offer my deepest gratitude to the friends and family I write about in these pages and give thanks to everyone who knows that each of us has a right to tell our stories, to be truthful to our own memories, no matter how flawed, private, embellished, idiosyncratic, or improved they may be” (1). Some people make take issue with this interpretation of life writing, but in terms of positionality and the ways that power is distributed (or withheld) across difference, this is a very important concept to understand.

Finally, Smith and Watson discuss relationality. They say that relationality “indicates how the subject is always in process and thus involved with others, not autonomous” (217). Relationality builds directly on the notions of performativity and positionality but recognizes that no person’s experience occurs or develops in a vacuum. Even as each individual’s story is their own, the people, cultures, and histories around and before us directly impact who we are and the way that we experience the world. Relationality, then, speaks back to the concept that “self-narration is a monologic utterance of a solitary, introspective subject that is knowable to itself” (218). As is typical in the acknowledgements, Abu-Jaber discusses those who have helped her. She writes, “many people have helped me with this book, helped me to think about how to write it, how to feel about it, how to cook for it” (329). And, as I have said, throughout the memoir, Abu-Jaber weaves her own story with the stories of her family and those around her. She includes the stories of many who have “comeover” (6), including herself, in many different ways, but *always* through her own perspective and recollections. The final section of this chapter looks at the work food memoirs more generally because it is important to consider all narratives, including this one, within context.

Conclusion

This chapter has specifically examined Diana Abu-Jaber's food memoir, *The Language of Baklava*. I have offered an overview of the text through the lens of John Trimbur's conceptions of popular literacy, and then I have linked the memoir to the feminist rhetorical practices outlined by Royster and Kirsch and the three autobiographical tenets put forth by Smith and Watson. This chapter considers just *one* food memoir, though, out of the myriad of memoirs available. I detailed my reasons for choosing this memoir specifically in Chapter Two, but I do recognize the power in recognizing the different types of memoirs and experiences available to all readers. I will discuss this more in the conclusion chapter of the dissertation, but I want to mention here the work that I see memoirs doing more broadly. The genre of memoirs offer a space for careful consideration, crafting, and sharing of personal experience.

In an August 9, 2013 review of Michael Paterniti's book *The Telling Room* in the *Chicago Tribune* reviewer Martha Bayne makes the assertion that "food fanatics and idle eaters alike would be hard-pressed to ignore the past decade's apparently limitless explosion of interest in stories about food and its cast of characters- its growers, its makers, its foragers, its cooks. It's an explosion that has in turn led to a correspondingly limitless explosion of food memoirs." Bayne begins her article this way and then discusses the way that the general public is probably "skeptical" or experiencing "dread" in response to this "explosion" of food writing and food memoirs, but I would approach this trend in a completely different way. I think that this explosion in food memoir is saying and doing something significant in our current cultural and societal climate. I believe that the work that food memoirs are doing in the field of life writing is significant

in three ways. The first is the way that writing about food can help the author and the reader process experiences and memories by giving them a tangible object on which to focus thoughts and emotions. The second is that food memoirs legitimize these everyday personal and communal experiences, and reveal that the truths of those situations are worth being communicated to a larger audience. The third is that food memoirs challenge different cultural scripts than other texts such as: pleasurable experiences are not valuable experiences to study, or experiences of food do not significantly impact our constructions of self and the world, or women in the kitchen means that they take a subservient role. The way that food memoirs help readers, specifically students, process, legitimize, and challenge their own experiences, identity pathways, and cultural scripts is significant because few texts allow this kind of exploration in such a seemingly familiar space that readers can relate to.

In the following chapter, I discuss my students' specific reactions and discussion of this food memoir, as well as to the feminist writing pedagogical model more generally. I look first at the ways that I saw the students responding to the pedagogical model through the lens of genre theory in the written work that they produced in my class. In the second half of the chapter, I use thematic analysis to discuss the answers given by four different students in individual interviews reflecting on their experience in the class, the feminist rhetorical pedagogical model, reading the memoir, as well as asking them about the ways that they saw (and currently see) the enabling concepts of positionality, performativity, and relationality working through their experiences with the subject matter of the course.

CHAPTER FOUR

Analysis of Student Work & Interview Responses

Overview

In this chapter, I discuss briefly the context of the course, data collection, and data analysis. Following this contextual information, I analyze the work that my students produced in my Writing Reflective Essays course in the fall of 2015 through the lens of genre studies. I focus on genre as my primary analytic tool for the student data because through genre studies, we are able to study “different rhetorical conventions and what they reveal” as well as the way that “these different conventions position [students] as writers” in order to compose, define, and reproduce identifications in their written work (Bawarshi 164). The subsequent section of the chapter details the interviews that I conducted with four students where they reflect on various parts of the course. Our conversations about the course offered insights regarding the ways that feminism, components of the food memoir, and articulation of Smith and Watson’s theory can influence a person’s writing and lived experiences. I trace thematic elements through these responses and then tie these themes to feminist tenets in order to contextualize my students’ responses and connect my student’s voices with feminist theoretical and pedagogical scholarship.

Context

In Chapter Two of this dissertation, I discuss the specific methods and methodologies that I drew upon in my data collection and analysis of student work and interviews. In this section of my chapter, I reiterate key influences for the decisions I

made in my data processes and procedures to provide specific context for my analysis. I also introduce the participants in the study.

Procedures

For the analysis described in Chapter Two, I drew on the following qualitative data theoretical components to inform my thinking and coding. In his book discussing qualitative data and the different methods and methodologies that can be used for analyzing qualitative data, Johnny Saldana says that qualitative data analysis is “is not just labeling, it is linking” (8). In this chapter, I do the work of labeling components of my students’ work and discussion and then creating links between their discussion and the work of the class. I do that initially by analyzing my students’ written work through the lens of genre analysis which I defined in Chapter Two. In the student interview analysis, I do the work of finding links in my students’ assertions and the course content. To do this I conduct a thematic analysis, which “provides a purely qualitative, detailed, and nuanced account of data” (Vaismoradi, Turunen, and Bondas 400). I chose to focus on the themes that reoccur in my students’ answers because this method of analysis seems particularly suited for examination of oral accounts of lived experience. Thematic analysis consists of “analytically examining narrative materials from life stories by breaking the texts into relatively small units of content and submitting them to descriptive treatment” (Vaismoradi, Turunen, and Bondas 400). In this chapter, then, I offer analysis of the genre choices that my students made in their written work and of the themes specifically related to the course content that I heard in my students’ interview answers to better exemplify and evidence the enactment of the feminist rhetorical method and food memoir vehicle of inquiry I used in teaching Writing Reflective Essays.

Participants

I taught 19 students in my ENG 217: Writing Reflective Essays course. Of those 19 students, 14 students granted me permission to analyze and draw conclusions from all of the work composed and collected from the course. In the section below, I discuss and analyze the written work of those 14 students by focusing on the genre that they composed within the course. Of the 14 students who gave consent for drawing on all of their written work, four of those students also agreed to be interviewed regarding their reflections and recollections about the course, and I introduce them with more detail below. I share this information about my students because I have the benefit of knowing them as people. Like I have argued throughout this dissertation, the value in reading nonfiction work is understanding more about the person behind the work that the completed text itself and then hopefully understanding more about oneself. All of the information I share has been self-identified by each student and is done with consent.

In class discussions, I defined feminism using bell hooks definition of feminism as “a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression” (xii). Building on this definition, I defined the word feminist by using Chimamanda Adichie’s definition of a feminist as “a person who believes in the social, political, and economic equality of the sexes” (*We Should*). As a class, we talked about these definitions, their intersections and diversions, and what the word equality meant to us individually and as a group. I do think that these conversations and the feminist videos that we watched impacted my students’ conceptions and understandings of feminism. By asking the students if they identified as feminists, I was asking them if they were willing to “set into motion the complicated

dynamic of recognition and misrecognition that brings a sense of identity into being” (Fuss 2) in relation to the definitions that we discussed.

As I note previously, of the 14 students in the course, I interviewed four students. The ten students that I did not interview are Nolan, Annah, Noah, Naomi, Dave, Laura, Martha, Andrew, Anthony, and Joyce, and their ages ranged from the 18-24 age category to the 35-44 category. Five of these students identified as female and five identified as male. Out of the ten of them, nine of them identified as feminists but only four of them identified as writers. I found this interesting because at the outset of the class, they signed up for a writing course, not knowing it would be taught with a feminist pedagogy. Of the ten students, six identified as white, although Nolan and Martha also identified themselves as Hispanic, and Anthony identified himself as white and Native American. Laura identified as Hispanic, Andrew identified as Asian, and Naomi identified as black African. The mix of genders, ages, ethnicities, and viewpoints brought diverse and differing opinions into the classroom and reflected into the students’ written work. I am not claiming generalizability here, simply sharing intersectional identification markers of the students in my course in order to provide context.

Of the four students who agreed to be interviewed, two were female and two were male. All four identified as writers, although only three identified as feminists. The four students chosen pseudonyms are Jack, Amber, Gabriel, and Ashley. Of the four, Jack was the only one who marked that he did not identify as a feminist; however, he filled in the following field with this note: “definitely believe in gender equality though.” All four students identified as white, and three of the four identified in the 18-24 age bracket while Amber chose the 25-34 age bracket.

In the next two sections, I discuss specific student work and responses related to the course pedagogical focus. I first look at the written work done by my students in the course and discuss their genre choices and composition, and then I examine themes from the four interviews, drawing conclusions about the larger theoretical and/ or pedagogical tenets those themes point to.

Written Student Work

Discussion & Implications

As is outlined in Chapter Two, the ENG 217: Writing Reflective Essays course plan was divided into four major projects. The first three projects were centered on Royster and Kirsch's four feminist rhetorical practices, and the fourth project centered on the feminist conception of revision that most highly values "ever-evolving" knowledge construction (Stenberg *Composition* 102). I discuss the course work here by presenting qualitative data that reflects the genres composed in each project, as well as the ways that those genre choices use conceptions inherent to the work of the identity pathways, performativity, positionality, and relationality, though I did not teach these explicitly.

As I discuss in Chapter Two, I draw my definition of the term genre from Caroline Miller, Anis Bawarshi, and Mary Jo Reiff, who are foundational theorists in the defining of genre and genre studies. In *Genre & the Invention of the Writer* Bawarshi focuses on the "role that genres play" in the reproduction and actualization of "socio-rhetorical actions and identities" (13). Bawarshi discusses genre as one way that authors both represent *and* construct identity pathways within and outside of the classroom. He posits that "genres are dynamic discursive formations in which ideology is naturalized and realized in specific social actions, relations, and subjectivities" (7-8) and that genres

“are ideological configurations that are realized in their articulation” (9). This discussion shows that genres are much more than just categories or formatting requirements. Genres represent and construct agency, ideologies, and social action.

Bawarshi’s theory about the way that genre helps writers to invent themselves and the ways that writers invent genres ties in with Smith and Watson’s discussion of identity pathways. Indeed, in Bawarshi’s text he addresses points directly related to performativity, positionality, and relationality in ways that link genre studies to exploration and articulation of identity pathways in students’ written work.

In regards to performativity, Bawarshi writes: “we cannot understand genres as sites of action without also understanding them as sites of subject formation, sites, that is, which produce subjects who desire to act in certain ideological and discursive ways. Genres are defined as much by the actions they help individuals perform as by the desires and subjectivities they help organize, which generate such performances” (78). This conception of genre as being formed by individual performances of identity, as well as helping authors to perform the identities themselves shows the reciprocal relationship between genre and identity. While genres are much more than categories, they do offer assistance and direction in the appropriate ways to perform one’s identity in specific situations. As is evidenced by the discussion of the projects below, students’ chosen identity narratives are directly influenced by the genre in which they chose to write, and the genres are shaped around the students’ narratives.

Bawarshi also addresses positionality in relation to genre. He says, “writing takes place. It takes place socially and rhetorically. To write is to position oneself within genres-- to assume and enact certain situated commitments, identities, relations, and

practices” (14). Genres link to positionality by showing that they are both dynamic, not static performances of text or identity. Genres change, and they often change based on the positionality of the writer and the way that the writer chooses to express themselves within their written work.

To link to relationality, Bawarshi discusses the ways that relationships shift within genre productions. He writes, “we are constantly in the process of shaping our environments as we communicate within them, speaking and writing our realities and ourselves. Within these rhetorical constructs, we assume different subjectivities and relations, and we perform different activities as we negotiate our way from one environment to the next, often balancing multiple, even contradictory, subjectivities and activities at the same time” (80). The choosing of subjectivities and relationships to represent and articulate in written work is not always an easy decision, and like the performance and positionality of identity, relationality is often represented by the genre choice. This conception of relationality involves what is discussed within the text, but perhaps even more directly, it addresses the audience of any given genre. Genres are only effective if the intended audience can understand *what* is being communicated and *why* it is being communicated. Composing in certain genres means composing for a certain audience. Choosing the relationships to represent and the ways to relate to audiences is essential in both exploration of identity pathways and genre analysis and composition. As I discussed in Chapter Two, my students and I analyzed several genres during each project in order for the students to understand the ways that genres represent relationships and appeal to various audiences. I explore these conceptions of genre in more detail in relation to the genre choices that my students made for each of the projects in the course.

Critical Imagination

The critical imagination unit was the first major project in the course. In this unit, I asked students to consider their identity pathways in relation to their familial history. Their compositions could focus on culture, ethnicity, relationships, or any component of their familial history that they wanted to examine. Royster and Kirsch discuss critical imagination as “a critical skill in questioning a viewpoint, an experience, an event, and so on, and in remaking interpretive frameworks based on that questioning” (19). Kirsch goes on to say that through critical imagination we can “encourage students to go out into the world, explore unlikely sources, be open to chance discoveries, and consider the relevance of seemingly irrelevant documents, artifacts, and encounters” (79). This going out and exploring unlikely sources was exactly what I wanted my students to focus on in the first project. By asking them to explore aspects of their familial history or stories, they couldn’t rely on traditional academic sources or research as I encouraged them to interview family members for information. Part of the assignment description read: “this project will ask you to think about very specific audiences. As you decide on the genre that you feel will best suite your representation of yourself through familial history, you must also decide who you would like to write your story to.” So, the students had to decide not only *what* to write about but how and to whom they were writing.

In this first project, each of the 14 students composed in one of four genres. The line graph below shows the specific genres and the number of compositions composed in each genre.

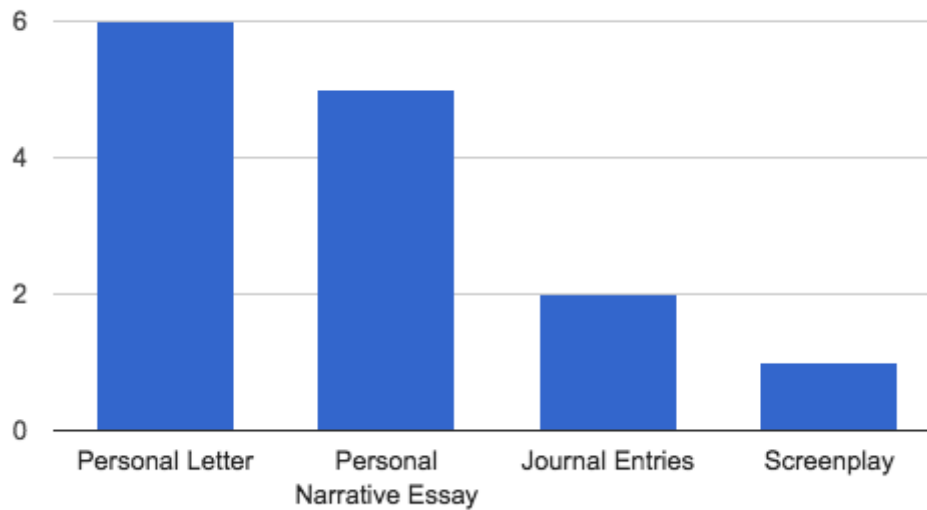


Figure 3: Writing Project One Genres

The most popular genre choice was that of a personal letter. Of the six personal letters composed, five were written to future children and one was written to a nephew. Andrew wrote to his nephew saying, “the most important thing you should know is that you are loved.” He talks about family history, tells funny stories, and even explains: “you’re half-Mexican, half-Vietnamese... this is part of the reason why you know a little Spanish, a little Vietnamese, and a little English.” This sharing of family history as well as speaking to future generations was an affordance that this genre offered. Nolan wrote his letter to his future child saying, “I chose this particular genre of a personal letter to my future child because it gave me the most freedom to say what was on my mind and I got to reflect on a lot of my life and important moments in it with this format for a paper.” Nolan said writing the letter helped him to articulate occurrences and memories he may not have been able to communicate in a different genre.

Related to affordances in specific genres, Bawarshi writes, “genres are places of articulation... as they are used by writers (and readers)” (9). The articulation affordances in specific genres offers opportunities for writers to research and write in ways that are new and foreign to them, like Laura saying of her letter: “when I thought about writing this story the first person I knew I had to talk to was my dad.” This first-person knowledge was valued in this project and genre composition. Genres like the letters were also very accessible to outside audiences, like the students’ family and perhaps future generations.

Two students wrote a series of journal entries for this assignment, exploring family stories, generational histories, and their own places within those stories. These compositions were unique as their intended audience was the author themselves. Naomi said, “since this piece was a journal entry to myself recalling my experiences I was able to incorporate my personal experience with my family histories.” This incorporation of family history and personal experience and identification was taken up effectively through the journal entry writing, as well as the other genres. The students submitted justification letters, which are discussed in Chapter Two, with the final drafts of their projects in which they discussed the considering and exploring of past histories and personal subjectivities. This is the kind of work Royster and Kirsch call for when addressing critical imagination as a feminist rhetorical practice.

Strategic Contemplation & Social Circulation

For the second project, I combined the focuses of Royster and Kirsch’s second and third feminist rhetorical practices of social circulation and strategic contemplation, as I saw them intersecting enough that the students could compose in genres that could

address both. Royster and Kirsch say that strategic contemplation is about “taking the time, space, and resources to think about, through, and around our work as an important meditative dimension of scholarly productivity” (21). Their discussion of strategy is about taking the space to consider the multifaceted individual, historical, and cultural components of any given composition. Social circulation builds on this focus of taking space and time to consider embodied reactions and realities by drawing attention to the “domains” in which women operate (98). Social circulation works specifically “to indicate the social networks in which women connect and interact with others and use language with intention” (101). I asked my students to focus on discussions of connection and interaction in their project. In relation to audience, I wanted my students to consider audiences from within their social networks to whom they would want to present themselves strategically, like “a potential boss, a college admissions committee, or a non-profit organization board.” This audience focus asked the student to consider their own identity pathways in different ways than the previous project.

In this project, the students composed in nine different genres, most with just one student composing in each. I taught the genres of scholarship essay, personal statement, and online article explicitly in the course. The breakdown of the genre compositions can be seen here:

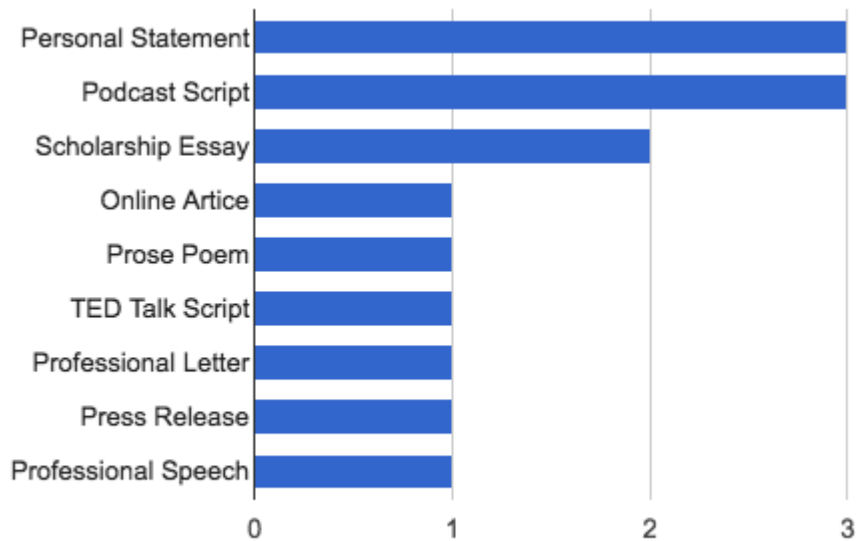


Figure 4: Writing Project Two Genres

The students composed in more genres for this project than any other, and I was surprised by the diversity in genre choice. These genre productions speak to the various identity pathways represented in each and the audience for whom each genre is composed.

Bawarshi writes,

Genres, thus, are localized, textured sites of invention, the situated topoi in which communicants locate themselves conceptually *before* and rhetorically *as* they communicate. To begin to write is to locate oneself within these genres, to become habituated by their typified rhetorical conventions to recognize and enact situated desires, relations, practices, and subjectivities in certain ways. (114)

This project asked students to do this locating of themselves in a way where they have taken the time to consider the social construction and strategic representation of their identity pathways.

One of the two students who chose to write a scholarship essay, Dave, discussed his choice of genre saying, “I chose this genre of a scholarship essay because I feel it is important to be proficient in professional writing especially being a college student; there is a lot of this type of writing in our futures that actually are going to apply to real life situations.” The applicability of this genre in future composing situations appealed to Dave, as did the way it allowed him to “describe my personality and my drive as an individual through my musical career and the obstacles I have had to overcome to make myself a better person today.” Joyce’s choice of genre was also represented by factors from her past, as she is a traumatic brain injury survivor. She writes, “I wrote a speech as my genre. It has been something presented, asked of me previously. I couldn’t form thoughts collectively enough to even imagine doing this. Recently, it has become possible.” Presenting herself strategically within this genre was a victory for Joyce,

In sixteen week semesters, there is often not a lot of time to sit back and consider one’s individual identity pathways, formation, and cultural and historical legacies. I tried to build that time into this assignment by asking students to first consider their own social histories and constructions before working to present themselves strategically to outside audiences. For some, this consideration did lead to specific feminist reflections. Laura wrote a scholarship essay. In her essay, she discussed the way that “hispanic [sic] women actually have the least amount of benefits. Throughout the past couple years alone I’ve seen how much hispanic [sic] people and women are ignored. Because of this I felt especially connected to the piece.” Her connection to the topic through considering her social and cultural background as a Hispanic woman led her to the genre choice and composition focus. In this project, like the other three, the audience and feminist

rhetorical project focuses were inherently tied in with conversations of genre because we discussed the genre options as representing or fulfilling the purpose of each writing project which were explicitly based on feminist rhetorical practices. We would discuss the feminist components of each project and then tie that to each genre analysis and composition for every project.

Globalizing Point of View

Royster and Kirsch's discussion of globalizing point of view is the most conceptual in nature, as it is the practice that has the largest geographical reach and takes the most people into account. This conception asks scholars, rhetors, and students to understand "rhetoric as a transnational" a "global phenomenon rather than a Western one" (25). Globalization asks writers to consider more than just a Western viewpoint or just Western conceptions of lived experiences. Royster and Kirsch suggest "seeking more deliberately to gain experience in connecting internal globality (the world in us) to external globality (us in the world)" (128). This seeking of connection is what I asked my students to focus on in the third writing project. I asked them to account for their own lived identifications by considering how their viewpoints and experiences were formed in a global reality and how those experiences may differ from others in different contexts. In the prompt I wrote, "what you need to take into account with this project is how you fit into a global citizenship. Think about your own positionality culturally, socially, racially, religiously, etc. As you decide what aspects you want to focus on, choose the genre that best fits that choice and that speaks to a broad, global audience." As is shown here, I wanted students to choose genres that could be accessible to and appeal to a broad global audience.

For Writing Project Three, my students chose to compose in one of five different genres. Graph Three below shows the breakdown of the number students who chose to compose in which genre.

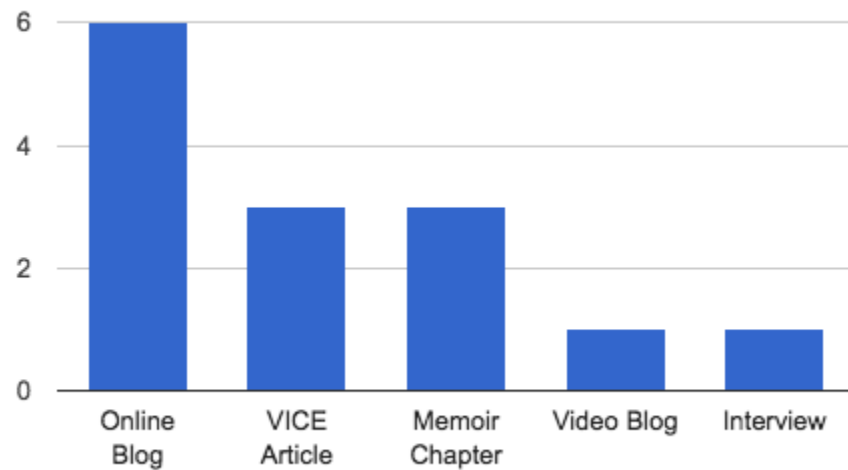


Figure 5: Writing Project Three Genres

The majority of students chose to write online blogs. One student chose to compose a video blog, or vlog, and I have classified this genre as a separate one from the written blogs because it uses a different kind of modality that may not be accessible to the exact same audience as a written blog. The topics of the Writing Project Three compositions ranged from perceptions of God, to living with bipolar condition, to women in wrestling and leadership. One of the six students who wrote a blog, Annah, said that she chose to write a blog because she wanted to do a project that “centered on the views of a woman in American society and how they relate to global and historical beliefs of ethics.” Noah chose to compose a video blog because “it was a genre I did not have very much experience with, and I thought that it would be a unique opportunity to [do] something a

little different.” He also said that because he posted the video on YouTube, there was potential for the vlog to be seen all over the world.

Bawarshi discusses the ways the intention and invention shape the genres in which writers compose. He says, “genres change, among other reasons, because writers, over time, challenge the genre positions and relations-- gendered, racial, class-based, ethnic-- that constitute writers’ experiences” (97). By producing a product that is intentionally global in subject and audience choice, the genre positioning is important. In choosing to compose an article for the online magazine *VICE*, Gabriel writes, “I chose to write for *VICE* because it’s an outlet that I love and read daily. I love the no-holds-barred kind of journalism that *VICE* authors present, and how they do it in a way that’s entertaining yet persuasive and professional.” Gabriel chose to compose in this genre because he recognized and appreciated the way the genre was generally positioned.

Ashley writes that she struggled a little with the conventions in the blog and figuring out how to position herself in relation to the genre saying, “there were a couple aspects of this blog that I struggled with. One in specific was tying in my specific personal experiences without making it too dense for the reader to read.” Keeping her audience in mind, Ashley pushed back against the genre positioning of online blogs by “giv[ing] the reader insight into what I am talking about, and then went further into detail about my subject in order to make sure that the point I was attempting to make was thoroughly emphasized.” These genre choices were important in the realization and consideration of the feminist rhetorical practice of globalization, as I asked students to join “in the effort to recast perspectives” (25) that Royster and Kirsch stress by first looking within and then looking around.

Revision

This final writing project breaks away from Royster and Kirsch's four feminist rhetorical practices, but it extends many of the conversations of feminism for which Royster and Kirsch advocate and conversations that we had in the course. This project focuses on two things: first, revising a significant component of an earlier project, whether it be the content and/or the genre production, and second, incorporating perspectives, writing styles, or consideration of the experiences of another person by drawing from the Ohio State University Online Digital Archive of Literacy Narratives. The focus on revision aligns with claims like Royster and Kirsch's pedagogical connection of strategic contemplation where they write: "we expect to develop rhetorical expertise and high-quality analyses... as we observe--read/make intelligible, not just words but actions and situations; sort through and sort out details, problems, concerns; touch the world, inhabiting places with a sense of the ecologies of those places; and listen actively to and for the presence and voices of others" (94). They talk about drawing on the five physical senses to do this work, but this kind of observation and analysis is exactly the kind of work I was asking my students to do in revising a previous project. I wanted them to go back through one of their projects with this fine-toothed approach that considers all of these areas of analysis in relation to their own work and the histories and people represented in their work. The work of revision was about much more than editing or even re-formatting; it was more about the kind of "rescuing, recovering, and (re)inscribing" (25) of women's rhetoric that Royster and Kirsch discuss because it asked the students to explicitly include the stories and considerations of other people.

The second focus of the project was drawing on conceptions, quotes, or references from an outside literacy narrative. Royster discusses the importance of accounting for outside voices, saying: “defying the gravity of such disciplinary boundaries in order to pursue inquiries and to form provocative, innovative, cross-disciplinary perspectives and connections” (9). The literacy narratives that the students were drawing from were not scholarly texts. As the archive is a publicly available collection, the caliber and types of writing within it differed. Bawarshi, though, discusses the power of the genre of literacy narratives saying, “literacy narratives, like all genres, are not merely communicative tools; they actually reflect and reinscribe desires and assumptions about the inherent value and power of literacy” (128). Literacy narratives often do the very work that Royster and Kirsch call for-- the reinscription of previously held beliefs, conceptions, and common places. Literacy narratives are about far more than acquiring types of knowledge or literacies. They represent lived experiences that are informed and mediated by past histories, culture, ethnicity, race, and gender.

Some of my students liked working within the digital archives while others were frustrated by it because they couldn't find one narrative or group of narratives that spoke to or aligned with their experiences. Jack enjoyed drawing from the archive saying,

I used a Literacy Narrative I found by a girl who was learning to play piano but didn't want to play the music her teacher thought was appropriate. The girl, who was Japanese, did not identify with European classical music as much as Japanese classical music. She felt out of place in the music that she was surrounded by, like I did to a degree in the whirlwind of music that surrounded me as I grew up and in a culture that I thought was mostly black.

In his exploration of the online archive, Jack was able to find a narrative that reflected his own experience of being immersed in a music culture that represents ethnic, cultural, and racial expectations and relations. Amber also found a narrative that aligned with her composition, saying: “I found a similar piece of writing in the archive where a writer incorporated quotes from her favorite author. I felt like I could do this by adding video, which also makes my piece multi-modal.” The reading and discussion of the narrative impacted her composition choices within her chosen genre of a podcast.

Prior to choosing their genres for this writing project, I asked the student to conduct a genre analysis of a few genres of their choice. Bawarshi says, “genre analysis encourages students to identify and examine the situated desires, subjectivities, relations, and practices that are rhetorically embedded in disciplinary and professional genres” (156). All of these components give students a basic familiarization with different genres, which helps them to make more informed decisions about the genres they wanted to compose in for each project. This genre analysis seemed especially useful in this project because the students were being asked to remix genres they had used previously or remix information composed previously into a new genre. Also, there was no specific audience focus for this project like there had been for the first three, so the genre choice really determined for whom this project was being composed. In this project, the students composed in one of six genres. Five students composed podcasts, which is a genre that was not used in any other project:

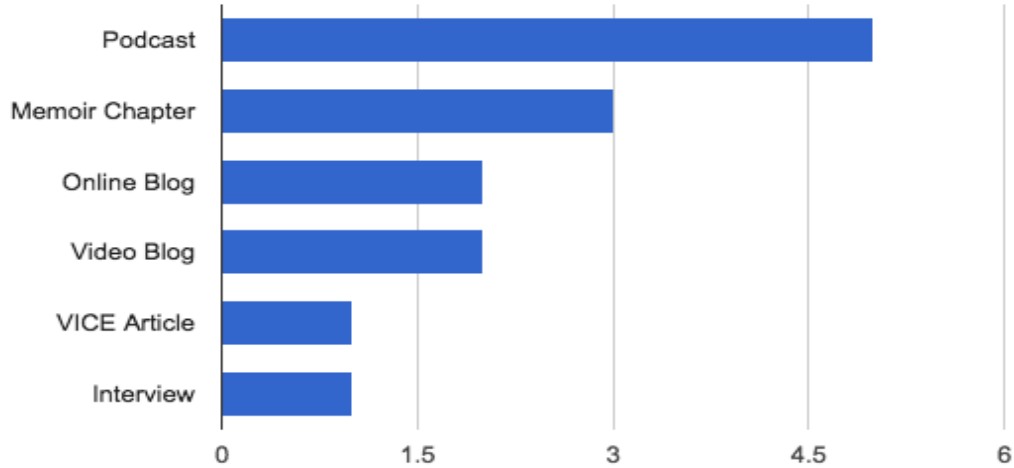


Figure 6: Writing Project Four Genres

The five people who composed podcasts were some of the ones who chose to revise the genre instead of focusing on revising the content. Noah revised his second writing project and said he chose to do so because he felt like it “had the most potential for growth and to explore my own experiences and personal narrative.” He also brought in the literacy narrative to the podcast “by flat out mentioning what it was and paraphrasing a text from it.” Ashley also chose to revise her second project into a podcast, saying: “I chose to remix this one because my Writing Project Two was a transcript. Therefore, as my remix, I chose to turn my transcript into a podcast... I also changed the focus of the podcast from my original Writing Project Two transcript. My first transcript focused on many of the negatives of my [acapella] group, [but] in this revised podcast, I focused more on the positive aspects of the group that have impacted myself and who I have become.” She brought in the literacy narrative “by mentioning to my interviewee that I had just previously read an essay about listening to the lyrics of the songs, instead of just hearing

the song. I loved this idea.” She felt a connection to the sentiment portrayed in the narrative and brought that into her remixed genre.

Other students chose to work within the same genre as their previous project but revised the content by addressing a new audience or approaching the content with a different focus. Anthony chose to revise his third writing project, which he composed as a memoir chapter. He kept the same genre because “I don’t think there is one that would have better fit the story I was trying to tell.” He did shift his focus by “addressing religion personally through my own story.” Of the literacy narrative, he said, “I found a really great essay from a student in some 300 + English class that I just enjoyed the hell out of. The only thing left to do was find a way to incorporate it, and doing that through a foreword that introduced the memoir worked perfectly.” His revision was a shift in focus, then, partly by incorporating the literacy narrative as a framing piece for his chapter. Jack also worked in the same genre as his previous project, and said he did so because he felt “there is enough change in focus and personal elements to not change the genre of the piece. I also think that I managed to focus on my perspective while not diluting the outside voices that I already had and maintain the broader audience.” For Jack, the primary shift was in relation to audience and narrative focus, where he “wanted to focus more on my perspective as a listener and the power of hip-hop music and culture in a broader sense.” His use of the literacy narrative informed this focus, even as the genre stayed the same.

For the revision project, three students, Martha, Annah, and Laura, chose to revise the first project. Five students chose to revise the second project, and six students chose to revise the third project. I was glad to see the range of choices in projects to revise, as

well as the various ways that the students chose to do so, as it showed the students were exercising agency over their projects and taking ownership of their work. In a personal writing class, it can be easy to focus solely inward, and while exploring individual identity pathways was a foundational component of the course, I wanted the students to also consider the experiences of other people. Part of my reasoning in choosing to form the pedagogical plan around Royster and Kirsch's feminist rhetorical practices was to combine that exploration of self with considerations of other people. Whether it be distant ancestors, close family members, or strangers across the globe, I didn't want my students to simply explore their own subjectivities without a consideration of those important impacting factors. In the conclusion to their book, Royster and Kirsch discuss "an ethics of hope and care" (146). They describe this as a "commitment to engage as directly as we can manage with the issues... the commitment is to learn to listen deeply to texts and images and for voices and sounds in order to better understand both what is happening and what is going on; to listen to their views and ideas instead of just our own, to their stories, rather than ours" (147). *This* was the kind of shift that I was hoping my students would embody through this course, the feminist pedagogical focus, and the reading of the food memoir. This commitment to hope, care, and listening was fundamental to my course planning, instruction, and interactions with my students. As I asked my students in the interviews about the themes they saw from the course and the ways they saw their identity pathways being enacted, formed, or solidified, and I saw this commitment represented in their reflections.

Limitations

The main limitation of this analysis of student data is that it is simply my response and reading of the students' work, and I have represented only a small portion of the written work produced in the course as I chose to include a limited focus. I do realize the value of having multiple opinions and readings of the same data set, as other readers can assist with the work of "questioning and positioning with respect to their own research and the research of others" (Mortensen and Kirsch xxii). I also recognize the small sample size of the data. 14 students is a not a large enough number for generalizable conclusions to be drawn, even as I worked to fairly and accurately represent the students' experiences individually and as a whole class. What can be accomplished through my analysis, though, is an in-depth account of the ways that the content of the course was taken up and represented in written student work.

Student Interview Responses

Discussion & Implications

The interview questions (see Appendix D), like the course pedagogical plan, focused on discussions of feminism, identity, and the food memoir, and the students offered many insights and memories related specifically to those topics. I conducted three of the interviews via video conferencing on Google Hangout, Skype, and Facetime, and one of the interviews over email. In the interviews, I also asked about the identity pathways of performativity, positionality, and relationality (Smith and Watson 214). We did not use these terms explicitly during the course, so in the interviews I explained my understanding of each term and asked the students if they could think of any connections from the course to those terms. In relation to positionality, the conversations focused

around dynamism and materiality. For performativity, there was a focus on revision, and for relationality a focus on location. In terms of the discussions of feminism and food memoirs, the two main themes that arose from the discussions with all four students were those of dynamic representation and rhetorical style influenced by materiality, respectively. I discuss and unpack the responses and themes below, as well as work to tie the thematic groupings to feminist theory and pedagogy.

Feminism

When I asked each of the four students to tell me what they remembered about feminism in the course, the first memory for both Amber and Jack was about one specific, heated discussion about feminism that arose in the classroom. In this discussion, a male student questioned the need for the feminist movement because he had personally never seen a need for it, and the majority of the students in the class verbally opposed his claims. Jack recalled: “we had... a pretty heated discussion... that’s my most vivid memory.” Amber says,

Adichie’s TED Talk stands out in my memory, because there was a (white) male in our class who was brave enough to suggest that the misogynistic experiences that Adichie discussed were not true. His justification was that since he had never seen or experienced the misogyny she talked about, that it does not exist. He was unable to see the irony of his statement, or recognize his own male privilege, so he inadvertently ended up proving Adichie’s argument-that we need feminism now more than ever.

While Jack remembers the discussion in somewhat vague terms, Amber comes to a critical point in her recollection that the student proved the very point he was refuting.

Peter Mortensen and Gesa talk about the ways that we need to be aware of the “provocative range of questions about power and representation that are manifest in the field and on the page” (xxi). Questions of power and representation were certainly present in this discussion that my students alluded to, as Adichie’s TedTalk brought up these specific issues, and then the students debated the issues in response to the one student’s rejection of Adichie’s claims.

In the interviews, the students discussed specific instances or individuals with which they now equate feminism after taking the course. Ashley said, “I distinctly remember a lot of the videos you showed us. I loved the Amy Poehler interview, the TED Talk we watched, and I loved the Emma Watson UN speech.” Gabriel also said that he was struck by Emma Watson’s speech and found it exciting because “there could have been someone in the classroom who thought all feminists were... that trope like, the ugly, man-hating” but he thought that she showed that “it’s OK to get politically involved no matter what you do, and it’s good to stand for something and to represent... something you stand up for.” The different ways that feminism is represented was a striking and memorable component for both students.

The theme of dynamic representation was present in the majority of my conversations with my students in relation to people they view as representing feminism, as well as the various ways that they feel they can now represent feminist ideals in their own lives. The discussions of dynamic representation asked students to question conceptions of power and representation. Ashley shared that as a member of an all women acapella group,

Women groups have a harder time projecting themselves because men have sometimes more people, or they just have better ranges because... you have men that go way lower than girls can, and then, if you have guys that go just as high as our girls, then they already have two times better ranges than we do. And, so, it just always feels like girls have to prove themselves in acapella.... maybe from an outside point of view it wouldn't seem that way because girls... singing might be more equivilated [sic] with women than men, but.... when you're inside the acapella community, it's not like that at all. It's very... male driven... surprisingly enough.

Ashley said that because of this experience, it was very easy for her to identify with the feminist themes in the course “because, you know, even just as women... we just want to shine just as bright as everyone else.” Gabriel, likewise, said that the discussions of feminism impacted his everyday life as he said, “learning stuff like... the whole structure of feminism definitely affects... everyday conversations... you know, slut shaming... and stuff like that...because you know... I catch myself... and I'm like: ‘what?? You don't believe that, that's not what you stand for.’” These individual instances bring in larger conversations about representation and awareness of unequal power and representation in everyday conversations.

All four students talked about the ways that discussions of feminism impacted their writing in this course and writing they have done since. Amber said,

Often times feminist's [sic] were used as examples for the current unit, even if the work we created wasn't technically feminist... I presently find myself reflecting on the process. I felt like the main question in this class was “Who is your

audience?” Before this class I never cared to consider who would be interested in my work, and how I could shape it to better appeal to a particular interested party. Now I find myself considering it much more, which I feel has strengthened my writing and made it more mature.

Amber’s awareness of the way that she represents herself in the writing, as well as the way that others connect to her writing was impacted by conversations of feminism because much of our discussion around feminism focused on audience, reception, and application. For Jack, discussing the waves of feminism helped him to see the various groups and histories that are inherently a part of feminist history and feminist rhetoric. He says that the conversations in the course “definitely changed my view on feminism in general. I wrote a little bit about feminism in my third project... just thinking about it with a more accurate perspective... we talked about... the phases that it’s gone through. I guess I had not thought about it as that complex before... seeing different versions of feminism, too. Not just the one-track thing.” For Jack, this impacted his project writing as he considered the waves of feminist history and brought feminist scholars and discussions into his written work. This was notable for him specifically because feminism and feminist scholarship were not areas of study he had previously been familiar with.

Ashley said that she learned the most about feminism and representation by “having open discussions with us all about feminism and really covering what it means... [it] kind of helped me to explore what that truly meant and whether or not some of the stigmas and connotations I’ve heard about feminism are correct.” She went on to say that

Having those kind [sic] of politically charged discussions in class helped you to speak more freely in your writing... because it generates thoughts that maybe you

wouldn't think would be OK to discuss it in your papers or something like that... having free will to discuss about it in class makes you feel more comfortable to discuss however you feel, whatever you're truly thinking, in your writing, giving you the highest form of self-expression.

This self-expression is a part of feminist dynamic representation. For Gabriel, discussions of feminism led him to consider "how I've been affected by my privilege, and how I've been treated differently than I think other people would because I'm a white male." The majority of his writing centered around notions of checking privilege and being aware of the ways that gendered and racial prejudices and conceptions in the world affect lived experiences.

These conversations bring up what Royster and Kirsch call an "an operational framework" that is "informed by intersections of feminist studies and rhetorical studies" (17) that give a "conscious awareness" (72) of the ways that feminism intersects and represents lived experience. In just these interviews alone, the students discussed various points of intersection with their own lived experiences and feminism. Whether the conversations focused around gender, singing, rap music, or race, these four students were able to use feminism and the discussions of feminism from the course as an operational framework within their writing. In addition, the students discussed ways that this operational framework was then applicable to their lives outside of the classroom as they had much more of an awareness of the ways that they could represent feminism ideals in their everyday lives. The intersections of feminist studies and rhetorical studies are also where the focus of conversation landed in relationship to reading and discussing *The Language of Baklava* in the course.

Food Memoirs

In their interviews, all four students were eager to discuss *The Language of Baklava*. As I have discussed, in assigning the memoir I was hoping that students would see the importance of sharing personal stories in an accessible way. In his interview, Jack said that through reading the memoir he realized the “the value of reading other people’s stories and writing your own stories.” Amber said the memoir “stands out to me because of my interest in writing a memoir someday, and it gave me inspiration and an idea of how to focus on a unifying theme.” Ashley said that the food memoir also served as an exemplar for her:

It gave me kinda ideas on how I would want, like what I would choose to represent my life and how I might go about introducing that... looking at the words she used, and how she uses them, and the context she uses them within, overall, gave me a better understanding about how I might go about choosing a topic to discuss. And, I was able to come upon singing as an aspect of my life that I would discuss.

The discussion about food memoirs in the interviews focused on the value of people’s stories, as evidenced by these quotes, as well as ways that rhetorical style impacts the reading and writing of nonfiction texts.

In “Border Crossings,” Lisa Ede, Cheryl Glenn, and Andrea Lunsford theorize style as a gatekeeping mechanism. They write, “inherent in rhetoric’s internalized ambivalence about style in general is an anxiety about rhetoric’s relationship with audience in general, particularly popular audiences” (422). As I discussed in Chapter Three, food memoirs appeal to an audience of the general public, as well as those within

the academy. What discussions of style and other rhetorical dimensions in a feminist classroom lead to is “a renewed responsibility for our professional and personal discursive acts” (Ede, Glenn, and Lunsford 422). In his interview, Gabriel focused specifically on style in the memoir, saying: “I really liked her style. I remember every chapter kind of being almost like an essay on that time in her life.” He then made connections to his own compositions by making the decision to identify “something from that period that you can write *around*.” By writing around something, Gabriel was discussing the way that materiality was intrinsic to the stylistic choices Abu-Jaber made in writing the memoir. He practiced this later when he wrote several pieces in another class around one song. The awareness of the way that style affects diction and format and is affected by outside forces, like materiality, helped many of my students to think through how, what, and why they were writing, which made them assume more responsibility for their work.

The food memoir was not the only food text that we talked about in the class, but it was the primary source. We also discussed multiple essays from Brooke Rollins and Lee Bauknight’s 2010 edited collection *Food*. In the Narrative Discussions assignment, pairs of students would choose one of the essays from the collection and present on the author, content, genre conventions, and intended audience of their chosen essay. Talking about food stories and food experiences in relation to the memoir and the essays gave the class some common ground to discuss past experiences, and it was also something that they could go back to a model to “identify stories around that” (Gabriel). Amber talked specifically about the food part of the food memoir, saying: “while reading her rich culinary descriptions I was able to recall times in my own life where food brought family

and friends together... food is often the centerpiece of community, no matter what background we come from.” Jack said, “it was interesting to see her memories about food and then go back and think if I have any of those,” and Ashley said, “I love food, so incredibly much, and for her... writing was not only beautiful, but the way she was able to mend food and experience together to create a complete story of loss and love and joy and defeat... it was awesome.” The shaping of the narrative around one material element is what sets food memoirs apart from other types of memoirs and other types of nonfiction writing. Students already have a relationship with food as a material reality and bringing food narratives into published texts and classroom discussions adds layers of intrigue and asks students to take responsibility, or account for, their own stories about food or materiality. Accounting for food stories, though, was just one way that the course asked students to take responsibility for their own discourse or their own stories. One of the other main ways was asking students to explore familiar and new identity pathways in order to compose stories that were meaningful to them and that could be meaningful to outside audiences.

Identity Pathways

As I discussed, the first three course projects were oriented around Royster and Kirsch’s four feminist rhetorical practices and the final project asked students to revise an earlier project. I was drawing on the idea that “a feminist pedagogy that takes learners’ experiences as central to the classroom enterprise, and operates on a realist conception of personal identity, will necessarily push us toward a collective struggle for knowledge in the feminist classroom” (Macdonald and Sanchez-Casal 18). In the interviews when I asked students to recall discussions or impressions of personal identity in the classroom, a

lot of the discussion focused around the ways that students were able to include or enact identity pathways through the projects and other written work.

When discussing identity pathways, Amber said: “I gained insight into my own self and society as a whole” that she “chose to incorporate” into her writing. Ashley said, “we all have self-identifiers, so when you asked us to pinpoint an identifier that is significant to us, it’s not necessarily difficult.” She said that she saw a “pattern... from the beginning project to end projects” that asked the students to get “more narrow” in terms of the ways that they were representing parts of their individual identities. She concluded her thoughts by saying, “I just love that I can carry the stories that I wrote in your class... I have them down on paper, and that’s something I never had before your class, so now I carry those around.” The personal and collective knowledge construction when there is a push to focus on conceptions of personal identity seem to have impacted my students in ways that they can take with them.

Jack feels better equipped to ask questions of himself, the texts that he is reading, and his audiences for his writing as he continues on in the Writing, Rhetorics, and Literacy undergraduate major. When reading texts, he asks: “Why is this person saying this to me? And how should I respond?” Gabriel relates to this kind of questioning as a result of exploring personal identity through the justification letter assignment that we did in the course, which was described in Chapter Two. He says, “it’s important to go back after you’ve written something and make sure that you are proud of... what you’ve written.” He says the course was “the first time I was introduced to any kind of concept of self-examining [of] identity.” While this was useful for him to acknowledge, he also found great value in reading the assigned published work, literacy narratives, and other

students' work because "it's so important to hear those stories and to hear other people's narratives. Because, if you just have one idea of how the world works based upon your personal view-- or the view of people who are just like you-- I feel like... there's something really dangerous about that." The value of collective knowledge making through individual examination of identity pathways stands out so much here. This was also set against the backdrop of a feminist pedagogy, and it led to the ability to ask about the specific enabling concepts of identity pathways of performativity, positionality, and relationality in the interviews. I explained each of the three concepts to the students and then asked them to offer reactions or reflections based on the coursework and experience.

Performativity

Smith and Watson define performativity as "dynamic," as offering multiple "sites" for the "performance of identities" (214). The dynamism inherent in the definition of performing identity is apparent in the variety of responses that my students gave in the interviews when asked specifically about performing their identity in the course work. For Amber, it was about making "a point to include sensory descriptions of food and family into my work because of the power" of those descriptions. She saw this as a creative way to include her ethnic and familial identity in her written work, as she discussed her Jewish family's potlucks from her childhood. For Jack, the way he related to performing his identity was not about being creative in his written work but about being uncomfortable. He said wrote about how he's "really into clothes" in a prose poem for the first project, and he said the goal was to discuss "something that I'm uncomfortable talking about in a way that I'm uncomfortable working in." Of this experience of writing about his identity in relation to clothes, he said: "I tried really hard

to do it well,” and that effort stemmed from performing his identity in ways that he was uncomfortable doing so. He recalled positive feedback from a student who pulled him aside at the end of the class who Jack paraphrased as saying: “it started out about clothes, I was like, oh, this is gonna be really dumb, and like, it turned out to be super cool.” Jack deemed that performance of identity to be worth the risk because of the positive response from his peer.

The response from her peers had a similar effect on Ashley, as she talked about her personal narrative about her wrestling career. She said: “I loved taking my time to be able to talk in first person. And I thought that was a lot easier than normal narratives. That was my favorite. And then when we got a chance to share them with everyone else in the class. I thought that was a really good way of making students connect on different levels about things that we were incredibly interested in or attached to.” The actual, literal, performance of their texts in front of their peers is something that stood out to these students and boosted their confidence in the ways that they identify.

When discussing the composing process, Ashley said, “all my writing was about performing, whether it was performing like, singing performing, or wrestling performing, or just putting on a performance of real life occurrences and emotions.” Ashley saw the performance aspect being enacted in a variety of ways in the class and her writing. For Gabriel, the performativity was less about actual occurrences of performing and more focused on pushing back against patriarchal and damaging stereotypes or mindsets. He said he saw performativity as “studying your own identity and how things in the world have affected you” as well as pushing back against things like “toxic masculinity” and “socially constructed attitudes” that demean or marginalize individuals or groups. He

concludes by saying it is important to consciously choose and study preconceived attitudes because if not, “you could be performing this [negative] thing and you don’t even realize that you’re doing it.” These various conceptions of performativity do show the dynamism to the term in the ways that even these four students have taken it up. The performance of identity is multifaceted and has effects on both the person performing and the audience viewing those identifications being performed.

There was a thematic focus on materiality that emerged from this work and discussion of dynamic performativity. Whether it was the material compositions that the students produced or the material objects that they tied their writing to, this focus on materiality drew the discussion back to feminist theoretical conceptions. Eileen Schell says, “studying material practices is useful for feminist rhetoricians as it will allow us to examine how women’s texts and voices have been ‘culturally silenced’ or muted” (129). This reclamation wasn’t the focus of the work that my students did, but by discussing materiality through performativity these feminist themes emerged.

Positionality

Smith and Watson’s conception of positionality focuses on the way that speakers and writers inhabit and use “discourses of identity” (215) in their written work and other lived experiences. Since my students had freedom to choose the genres that they composed in for all four projects, the discourses and tone of the writing shifted for each project. When thinking about discursive rhetoric, both the audience and the speaker must be taken into account. Amber focused on the audience component of positionality when asked about the term. She said: “I’ve realized there is wisdom in writing towards a specific audience. It shows consideration for the reader and is a testament to one’s

willingness to share their ideas, because it takes courage to structure personal writing in a way that is accessible to the masses.” Positioning oneself and one’s identity in ways that are accessible to an outside audience is paramount to successful communication.

Establishing one’s position in a text can be a difficult experience, but it can also be a very rewarding experience. Ashley experienced the latter, and she said: “I literally identify myself through my wrestling career. So, when I wrote that narrative... I remember finishing it and thinking, ‘oh my God, I just epitomized my life.’” Ashley compared nonfiction writing to fiction writing or literary analysis as said that she appreciated the freedom to express herself and intentionally position herself in the way she wanted in her nonfiction work. She says, “I know that I portrayed that exactly how I felt. Exactly how it looked in my eyes. Like you can’t tell someone their idea of something is wrong, and I love that. You can’t tell someone their personal experience is incorrect.” Positioning her identity as a wrestler was productive for Ashley because she felt it represented a part of herself that she highly values.

For Gabriel and Jack, positionality was most evident in their recollections in relationship to justifying the choices that they made in their compositions. Jack said: “we talk about different choices that you can make and why you’d make those choices in writing, so, I think justification letters were a first step in thinking strategically about how I write.” Justification letters, again, were an assignment that each student completed at the end of each project. Jack saw the justifying of his work as a way of positioning himself and his identity in the course. He went on to say that through the course he had “given more thought to the positions that I had and developed them more... been able to justify them more” and “in any nonfiction writing that I read, now, I try to think about

why people have the position that they take.” Jack saw the discourse of identity applying both to himself in his own writing but also to other authors. Gabriel also talked about reconsidering previous work as a way of positioning oneself. He talked specifically about the fourth revision project saying, “in my revision, my ideas were more streamlined and I think my message was clearer than it was... before.” He sees this kind of positioning and reconsidering of one’s previous claims as another way to “unpack your privilege and how everything ties into that.” As a white male, Gabriel talked in detail and listed specific examples about the privilege that he knows that has experienced in his life. For him, taking account of that privilege and recognizing where and how he can intercede in situations where people are being treated unfairly is very important.

In the textbook we read in the course, the authors describe revision this way: “revision, perhaps, is an acquired taste, but you may find that revision actually becomes the most ‘creative’ part of creative nonfiction. At this stage, you’ve already produced the raw material; now you have the opportunity to dig into it with your sleeves rolled up, all your tools sharpened, and at the ready. It is in revision that the real work begins” (Miller and Paola 165). This is similar to Stenberg’s conception of revision that I referenced earlier: revision should focus on the “reflection, rethinking, and rewriting” of texts in order to better position oneself in the world and in relationship to other people (*Composition* 102). Gabriel discussed the way that thinking about these concepts revision in the globalization project led him to ask: “[Is] global citizenship one way to kind of position ourselves in our world? Or how we position ourselves in the world?” These questions led him to think about the importance of “realiz[ing] where you are in the world and who you are in the world and how your story is affected because of that.”

Thinking globally to consider positionality brings in considerations of audiences and discourses that one might not always consider. Positioning oneself or parts of one's identity does not happen in a vacuum. The awareness of audience and revision are very important to positioning oneself. Discourses consider relationships with other people, like those some of my students discussed.

Relationality

Relationality focuses on the ways that individual stories are refracted through the “stories of others” (Smith and Watson 216). Like the other components of Smith and Watson's theory of identity pathways, the reflection and representation of one's identity cannot happen without consideration of the historical, cultural, and familial contexts in which that identity was formed. Relationality considers those influences and asks rhetors to be aware of the way that their stories have been and will be impacted by the people and stories around them. For my students, relationality became important in a number of ways. They discussed the idea in terms of connecting with their peers, but also in terms of representing other people's stories in their written work.

Location of identity is theorized in feminist studies. Jessica Enoch says that we must attend “to questions of location” (55) in our work. Kirsch and Ritchie also discuss the importance of location in feminist work, saying a “feminist politics of location would require the learning about self to be as reciprocal as possible” (147). In the discussions of relationality in the interviews, each student focused on the importance of relationality through location in one way or another. They recognized the value and importance of understanding how our individual identity pathways are constructed and understood through the narratives of others.

Ashley and Amber found the opportunity to discuss and share their work with their peers to be rewarding, and thus felt they were able to express themselves more openly in their work because of this comradery in the classroom. Of the course, Ashley said, “it was really just hands-on, like, I feel like all the group work was so cool. I liked going back to high school peer editing and stuff like that. I thought it just was a better way to go about writing essays and interacting with one another.” Amber enjoyed the interaction as well, saying: “I found the peer review process to be affirming. I met another classmate who had gone through similar experiences and we bonded over our individual histories. It was inspiring and motivating to feel like we were in the same boat.” Through the openness experienced with their peers, these two students felt more at liberty to discuss and write about their personal stories.

For Jack and Gabriel, the discussion of relationality focused more on what they had written in the text and how they located themselves both within the text as well as within other social groups. Jack found that positioning himself within his family helped to complete the first project, as he said: “my dad makes waffles every Sunday. And in that project I wrote about how that day, though it’s remained the same—you just go over and he makes waffles—but the conversation has shifted and the people around have shifted.” Jack found he was able to focus on waffles in his text and by doing so could better make sense of both his parents’ divorce as well as the way that he related to his family.

For Gabriel, relationality meant figuring out how to relate to the people around him. He said, “there’s that whole thing about not wanting to speak for other people, you know, I don’t want to speak for anyone.” For him, relationality was about figuring out

where he fits in larger conversations, as he careful to speak only from his own experience. He saw relationality weaving through all the projects as he focused on different components of his identity, saying, “your local identity, your familial identity, and then... strategic/ social and how your identity is in your social circle, your community... and then building on top of that and going to a global scale.” Gabriel worked throughout the semester to locate components of these different identity pathways with consideration to his own familial and social relationships.

Limitations

In this analysis of the interviews with my students, I worked to focus on the ways that their responses align or differ with one another and draw thematic connections between the responses. Gesa Kirsch warns that “we need to recognize that we may not be able to avoid speaking for others, that we are always implicated in the social and cultural hierarchies we study and seek to transform” (85). I recognize those realities in my analysis of my students’ interviews, and I have worked to honor the intent and meaning of the responses that my students gave in my discussion here. I also recognize that this is a very small sample size. These are the reactions and responses of only four students, so I realize that these attitudes and opinions cannot be generalized past these four experiences, even to the other students in the class. Finally, while recognizing that each story is unique and important, I must note that these four students came from similar ethnic backgrounds and age brackets, as was indicated in their demographic surveys. I hope each of these limitations is understood in the analysis and reading of my student interviews. What can be gleaned from analysis is a careful consideration of the impact of the course content on these four students both within and outside of the classroom.

Conclusion

In each subsection of this chapter, I worked to present themes that I found in the analysis of my students work and interviews. When I found a theme, I worked to offer multiple examples from student work as well as tie that theme in with scholarship. At times, this thematic analysis meant literally using words from the students' work or responses, and at times it meant assigning ideas to the overall impression that I got from the students. When discussing feminism and doing feminist research, it is important to note that "all researchers are positioned whether they write about it explicitly, separately, or not at all" (Chiseri-Strater 115). I recognize my positionality as a teacher who knows these students and has a vested interest in their well-being, as well as in the success of the course that I taught. By focusing on the thematic elements of the data, I hope I stayed away from qualitative judgements of the students, their work and responses, and the course itself. The way that the feminist rhetorical practices, food memoir rhetorical style, and autobiographical identity pathways were discussed and taken up were not always as I expected or planned as students often chose genres that we had not discussed in class, or they focused on material elements, such as clothes, that I had not initially thought they would. I am excited by the ways that my students responded to this work and how that was represented in their written compositions and interview responses.

CONCLUSION

Reflections and Implications for Food Memoirs in the Classroom and the Community

Overview

In this dissertation, I employed the framework of autobiographical theory put forth by Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, applying it to the feminist rhetorical model outlined by Jacqueline Jones Royster and Gesa Kirsch. I taught a food memoir as the vehicle of inquiry in a writing class using the feminist rhetorical model. In the introduction to the dissertation, I discussed Smith and Watson's tenets of their autobiographical theory and the ways that it is situated within the field of autobiographical scholarship. I also specifically discussed my research questions driving this dissertation study in relation to the ENG 217: Writing Reflective Essays course that I taught at Arizona State University in the Fall 2015 semester. The research questions are:

1. How might Smith and Watson's articulation of third wave autobiographical theory relating to "positionality, performativity, and relationality" inform a feminist *framework* for configuring a feminist pedagogy that focus on memoirs, specifically a food memoir?
2. How could Royster and Kirsch's feminist rhetorical tenets provide a *model* for a feminist pedagogical approach?
3. In a particular writing classroom, how does a feminist food memoir—in the context of a carefully articulated assignment sequence--serve as a *vehicle* commending feminist rhetorical practices as means for constructing identity pathways toward positionality, performativity, and relationality?

4. How do students interpret and employ Royster and Kirsch's practices (that are taught in the course projects) over the course of a series of writing assignments that ask them to see and re-see, enact and re-enact, promote and project their own and others' capacities for positionality, performativity, and relationality?

In Chapter One, I focused on the first research question. Smith and Watson's autobiographical theory framed my literature review and research study of feminist pedagogy, feminist theory, and memoir theory. I looked at congruencies and disparities between the scholarly sources to show the way that my work built on this scholarship.

In Chapter Two, I answered the second research question as I examined the way that Royster and Kirsch's four feminist rhetorical practices of critical imagination, social circulation, strategic contemplation, and globalizing point of view served as a model for enacting a feminist pedagogical approach. I did this by discussing the four tenets in more depth, detailing both the methods of research that I used in my study, and describing the specific pedagogical plan that I employed in my classroom.

In the third chapter, I turned to the third research question that focused on using Diana Abu-Jaber's food memoir, *The Language of Baklava*, the vehicle of inquiry in a feminist class. I discussed the memoir by examining it in depth through the lens of popular literacy. I also looked at the ways that Royster and Kirsch's four tenets were represented, and then traced the themes of positionality, performativity, and relationality through the memoir. I linked these analyses with the use and discussion of the memoir within my classroom.

In Chapter Four, I responded to the fourth research question that asks how my students took up the work of the model and vehicle by examining their classroom

compositions through genre theory and the individual interview answers through a thematic analysis. In this chapter, I provided both qualitative and quantitative data reflecting the choices of the students in the course and interviews in order to evidence the way that they exercised agency over their compositions and explored notions of genre conventions, rhetorical audience, and feminist application.

In this fifth and final chapter, I move beyond the research questions to discuss the use of food memoirs in more general terms. My dissertation focused specifically on the work of the one food memoir within the course that I taught, but in order for this work to be applicable to a wider audience, I want to position my analysis in a larger context and suggest implications for future work with food memoirs. I see value in the discussion and analysis of multiple food memoirs in multiple contexts, as food memoirs add layers of intrigue and meaning as they are examined in relationship to one another. I first discuss the possibilities of the work of these components within the classroom, and then I propose their use in the larger public community. I conclude by grounding my study in Royster and Kirsch's ethics of hope and care that I discussed in the introduction.

Classroom Use

As Avakian mentioned, there has been a “veritable flood” of feminist attention to food texts over the past two decades, but food writing has been around much longer than that (277). The honor of the first food memoir belongs to *The Physiology of Taste: Or Meditations on Transcendent Gastronomy* by Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin and was published in 1825 (Avakian 277). The author generally considered to be the first woman food memoirist, however, is M.F.K. Fisher. This French author's food memoir *The Gastronomical Me* was published in 1943 and translated into English in 1949. Although

this was not her first book, *The Gastronomical Me* has been very influential in both the genres of memoirs and cookbooks. Julia Child, who is probably the most well-known woman chef of all time, admired Fisher and her writing very much. Since 1825 hundreds of food memoirs have been published and have enticed their readers through recipes *and* descriptions of lived experiences surrounding food.

There are issues, though, with representation of diverse authorship in food memoirs. Of the hundreds of food memoirs written, few are written by women of color or by women outside the “mainstream.” I discuss here a few notable examples of diverse memoirs as a way to demonstrate the richness of these memoirs. The stories that are told, the voices that are heard, and the recipes that are shared reveal much about the identity constructions of the memoirist and culture and community in which the authors are writing. Although these memoirs are rich in many different ways, I use each one as an exemplar for one of five categories of food memoirs that I can see being useful to discuss in writing classrooms, as they cover a range of human experiences and focuses in subject. These five categories are: travel, history, identity, community, and culture, though there are, of course, many other categories that could be examined and other memoirs that could be included as examples. These categorizations are not set in stone as some texts could be classified under more than one category.

Travel

Travel memoirs are one of the most well-known types of memoirs. Fuchsia Dunlop’s 2008 travel memoir is also a food memoir, focusing on her eating and cooking experiences in the country of China. Her memoir is titled *Shark’s Fin and Sichuan Pepper: A Sweet-Sour Memoir of Eating in China*. Reminiscent of Michael Ruhlman’s

food memoir, *The Making of a Chef*, Dunlop finds herself enjoying learning about food so much that she just has to learn how to make it. She is a British citizen, but her memoir focuses primarily on traveling, eating, and cooking in China. She writes with an awareness of her status as a foreigner, or “*lao wai*” as her classmates called her (77). She knows that these food traditions are not her own, yet she enjoys them with all of her senses, and seemingly, all of her being. She writes of one noodle dish call Dan Dan noodles: “well, they were undoubtedly the best in town, the best anyone had ever tasted... as soon as you stirred them with your chopsticks, you awakened the flavours in the slick of spicy seasonings at the base of the bowl, and coated each strand of pasta in a mix of soy sauce, chili oil, sesame paste, and Sichuan pepper. The effect was electrifying” (25). This passage, as do most others in the memoir, focuses on food, but like all food memoirs, there is also more at play.

For example, in the epilogue to her memoir, Dunlop describes how she has crossed lines she never expected to cross when she decides to eat a caterpillar in her mother’s house in Oxford, England. She realizes that she “couldn’t really feel shocked at the idea of eating it” (311), and so she did. In this reflection, she notes that “inside me, there is someone who is no longer entirely English. I’m not even sure if I know, anymore, precisely where the cultural boundaries lie” (310). This crossing over is represented in so many memoirs, and travel memoirs detail literal crossings over from place to place as well as metaphorical ones, like the identity crossovers that Dunlop describes.

In a classroom, this food memoir would be a wonderful one to teach. It is historically accurate, weaves in many facts about Chinese culture, and is tantalizing in the descriptions of the food. But more than that, it asks readers to consider places or times

where they may have crossed over literal or metaphorical boundaries. Students may not have considered that they are not “entirely” one identity. This text invites readers to consider the cultural, historical, and individual components that make up who they really are, and the recollections of both the food and traveling invites those reflections.

History

Cleora Butler’s text *Cleora’s Kitchen: The Memoir of a Cook & Eight Decades of Great American Food* was first published in 1986. Butler was born in North Tulsa, Oklahoma in 1901, and she lived until 1985, passing away just a few days after she completed her memoir text. In a February 27, 1986 article in the *Chicago Tribune* titled “Cleora Butler’s Recipes Pay Tribute to Artist Who Loved Her Work,” test kitchen director JeanMarie Brownson writes, “most Northerners have never heard of Cleora Butler. But for many Tulsans her name conjures up fond memories of date nute [sic] cake, butternut squash bisque and burnt sugar ice cream.” Butler’s text is a lovely collection of decades of black food history, and the text is composed primarily of historical recipes, her own recipes, and her family’s recipes. Of the 200 page text, only 43 pages fall under the category of what we would consider a memoir today. Butler’s words are a prosaic and wonderful representation of her life and her family’s food history. The text is still marketed as a memoir, but the focus on recipes over personal nonfiction writing situates this text kinds of “in between” the genres of cookbook and memoir.

In a classroom, this text could be examined as a hybrid genre of food memoirs and cookbooks. Butler’s discussion of southern tradition woven into the recipes themselves can also serve as a jumping off point for discussion of the ways that traditions are integrated into recipes and the ways they freeze moments in time.

Identity

Ntozake Shange's memoir, *If I Can Cook/ You Know God Can*, was published in 1998- about 13 years after Butler completed her memoir. Shange's memoir is episodic in nature with each chapter focusing on a specific place in which she has lived which could also categorize this memoir as a travel memoir. Shange has one daughter and she writes often about her friends and acquaintances, but the memoir also brings in Shange's complex history as an African-American woman who descends from slaves. Shange's memoir is moving and poignant. She speaks directly and honestly to histories of erasure and misconceptions about individual and communal identity in relationship to food. Shange writes about a myth that makes her "madder than a wet hen," which was that "slaves brought foods with them during the Middle Passage" (xiii). To this erroneous claim, she responds: "yes, certain foods did travel the Middle Passage to the Americas but they were not carried in the ears or baggage of kidnapped Africans (xiii). She later clarifies that these foods were "a direct import, like we were, from the coast of Angola" (38). This awareness and eloquence in speaking back to infuriating and damaging patriarchal and colonial narratives are woven through this text in powerful ways.

Shange also discusses shifts of individual identity by saying that she has a "dual identity, black and American" that is now "a blending or continuous adjustment of our many identities" (98). Her awareness of the shifts in her own identity, and in the identities of those within her community is compelling, especially as she relates that consistently and artfully back to place and food. She ends her recipe for fish curry by saying, "serve with rice. And don't fret. There are so many stories to tell" (86). For

Shange, eating and telling stories are inseparable as she sees the “breaking of bread” (80) as an essential and powerful tool of community building.

The way that this text is organized would serve as a strong foundation for discussing the different ways that food memoirs can communicate time and place. This memoir weaves in historical facts with present realities. The discussion of food ties these components together in a way that contextualizes both Shange’s experiences and the experiences of her ancestors whom she references. Shange’s strong, agentive voice rings out through the memoir, and the way that she organizes the text contributes to that impression. Students can learn how the choice of organization can reflect much about who the author is and why they make the decisions to communicate the parts of their identity that they do.

Community

Maya Angelou’s 2004 memoir, *Hallelujah! The Welcome Table: A Lifetime of Memories with Recipes*, is another truly lovely memoir that speaks to history, tradition, identity, and community. Angelou opens her text with a story that her grandmother, whom she called Momma, would tell to her and her brother Bailey. The story involved an old woman named Mrs. Townsend who would lure young men from church into her home with her legendary Lemon Meringue Pie. Angelou concludes the story by writing, “my grandmother laughed until tears flooded her cheeks. I think she knew Mrs. Townsend or someone very much like her. Here is the recipe. In fact, here are the recipes for Mrs. Townsend’s entire Young-Man-Catching Sunday Afternoon Dinner. Best wishes” (6). Angelou then includes recipes for the pie in the text. This story represents not only a part of Angelou’s history, but shows the reader something about the way that

she sees herself and the world. The first part of the memoir is not about her upbringing, or even about her grandmother, it is a *story* her grandmother would tell. Angelou's familial community structure shaped her most personal experiences and understandings. Angelou's vibrant descriptions and intricate stories that weave community with tradition, culture, and location are compelling throughout the memoir.

The diction used in Angelou's memoir is worth examining in classroom discussions. As with her other written work, her text flows beautifully from one story or recipe to the next. The memoir is not organized as a single narrative, but the prose that is included is intentionally chosen and weaves together a historical account. Students can examine this text as an exemplar of the way to weave the stories of others in with their own stories to create one composition.

Culture

The 2013 memoir *Mastering the Art of Soviet Cooking: A Memoir of Food & Longing* by Anaya Von Bremzen speaks to a childhood and food traditions brought to America from the former Soviet Union. Von Bremzen's memoir references historical origins as she details realities of Soviet life and Soviet food traditions with an understanding of the shift of identity that occurs as one moves from one place to another. Unlike Shange, who does return to her ancestral roots in Cuba for a time, Von Bremzen can literally never go back to the Soviet Union, as it no longer exists. Many of the food stories within the memoir speak to the tasks of reclaiming and accurately remembering life in the Soviet Union. Von Bremzen says that in the Soviet Union, "food equaled utilitarian fuel, pure and simple" (38), whereas when she and her mother try to replicate the recipes, they are doing so for a party and out of nostalgia rather than necessity. This is

a fascinating glimpse into a food tradition that is not much discussed. Von Bremzen has a clear awareness of the way that her identity and culture as an American was shaped by her cultural norms, values, and challenges growing up in the Soviet Union.

Although not every student will be able to identify cultural norms and food traditions as stark as the ones that Von Bremzen discusses in her text, each student will be able to identify parts of their growing up experiences that may differ from other people's. This text exemplifies the ways that culture and upbringing can be discussed in relation to food, even if that culture or upbringing only seems unique in retrospect.

Each of these memoirs speaks to the fundamental notions of food memoirs that I am addressing in terms of travel, history, identity, community, and culture. I discuss these memoirs in particular to show the richness, complexity, and diversity that is represented in a variety of women's food memoirs. I see great value in using and discussing texts like these in writing classrooms. Food memoirs written by women cannot be automatically classified as feminist but using these memoirs *with* a feminist rhetorical pedagogical model can open up conversations and opportunities for composition that examine both the "production and consumption" of the memoirs themselves (Smith and Watson 148).

Study Conclusions

As I discussed in the introduction, there are limitations to the study that I conducted for this dissertation. They include: a small sample size of students, the use of only one primary autobiographical text of analysis, and the interrogation of only upper level writing students' reactions and responses. The results cannot be generalized to other writing classrooms or first-year writing classrooms without further study; however, in doing this work I am responding to the call within the field of Rhetoric and Composition

to analyze localized practices. This localized analysis draws from multiple theoretical bases, enacts a specific pedagogical model, and reports on the student production and recollection of the course. Although these results cannot be generalized, they do provide one model of pedagogical planning, enactment, and analysis.

What this study offers, then, is a starting point for analysis of food memoirs in university writing classrooms by discussing the theoretical framework, pedagogical model, and vehicle of inquiry in relation to student responses about each. I admit to still being deeply fascinated with food memoirs as a published genre that represent the lives of the authors in unique, inviting, and complex ways. Food memoirs are quite versatile in terms of the ways that they can be read, researched, and used as examples of autobiographical narratives. As I show in this dissertation, they can be examined through feminist rhetorical theory, autobiographical theory, and popular literacy theory. There are countless other ways that they can be taken up in academic study or recreational use.

Food memoirs do not just contain stories about food; they address history, culture, race, ethnicity, gender, spirituality, sexuality, and many other intersectional identification markers. I argue that taking up food memoirs as texts of rich intrigue and value in the academy will open new avenues of discussion and naming of identity pathways with students. Examining food memoirs in theoretical and analytical ways brings up questions like: What are these texts *doing*? How are they doing that work? Why did the authors choose to represent their narratives in this way? Working to answer these questions will bring up new topics of discussion and interrogation in writing classrooms.

My study specifically examines one food memoir in relation to autobiographical theory that values positionality, performativity, and relationality. I see those three tenets

as being particularly salient for the examination of food memoirs because they ask researchers and students to examine the way that “life writing embodies materiality” (Smith and Watson 148) by linking those components of identification and representation to the materiality of food. Smith and Watson assert that food memoirs “offer readers tasty pleasures and ‘food’ for self-revision” (148). Reading and writing about food is about so much more than simply sharing meals or recipes. It is about sharing culture, heritage, and individual experiences.

I also discussed the use of the food memoir in relation to a feminist pedagogical approach based on four tenets of Royster and Kirsch’s feminist rhetorical practices. Studying women’s food memoirs through a feminist rhetorical lens seems particularly appropriate to me, as it offers the opportunity to examine the narratives through a theoretical lens that highly values the histories and lived experiences of women. In *Homeward Bound*, Emily Matchar writes:

Though restaurant kitchens are still heavily male (93 percent of executive chefs are men) ... women continue to cook the vast majority of home meals, as they’ve done since time immemorial--American women cook 78 percent of dinners, make 93 percent of the food purchases, and spend three times as many hours in the kitchen as men. (99)

Matchar references realities of gendered history and culture in her discussion, but she also expressly notes that “the new cooking culture is incredibly empowering” (99) as “for modern women, old-fashioned symbols of household drudgery have become playful expressions of modern femininity” (100). These claims must be understood through the American cultural lens that she is applying, but I would argue that this shift between

cooking as “drudgery” and cooking as “empowering” comes often from being able to share cooking and food stories. This happens in cookbooks, blogs, social media, and it also happens in food memoirs. Matchar discusses the “power of food to create community” (102), and I see this as true in both the “fast-paced, high-tech” places that she describes (102), as well as in places and countries that take things a little slower and enjoy their cooking and eating experiences. Food memoirs help present those experiences to outside readers and provide a place for cooks and chefs to share their stories.

With these conclusions in mind, I propose others take up this initiative to teach a class similar to the one that I taught that examines food memoirs by asking students to identify the positionality, performativity, and relationality of the author’s identification within the text, and that applies that practice to examining their own lives in their written compositions. I would also suggest reading several food texts within the class, such as multiple food memoirs like the ones discussed previously, food blogs, and cookbooks. Each of these genres of food text are ripe for discussions of identity, culture, history, and ethnicity, among other intersectional components. Asking students to read texts based around the materiality of food gives them a common starting place from which they can examine and compose texts based on identification components, material objects, and historical and lived realities in their own lives.

Future Research

The reading and discussion of food memoirs in ways that highlights constructions of identity, discusses ethnic and cultural heritage, and invites the sharing of experience and sharing of food should not just be confined to the classroom. Smith and Watson write that by including recipes in texts, “traditional foods become part of the cultural folklore

that gastrophy revives and revalues in calling people to their cultures of origin and educating the dominant community about historical adventures occluded in urban life” (149). In this way, they discuss food memoirs as texts that reintroduce and revise narratives around food and food traditions. Memoirs interrupt traditional conceptions of food and food traditions and ask people to consider what it is they are cooking and eating. For future research and use of food memoirs, I would propose the reading of food memoirs and composing memoirs based on reading food memoirs in community groups, as a way to interrupt and reconsider traditional conceptions of food. I could see the reading and discussing of these memoirs as ways to counter patriarchal constructions of gender, as well as racial and cultural inequalities within local communities. The reading, sharing, and composing of food memoirs in community groups could also offer rich opportunities for analysis and comparison between the ways food memoirs are taken up within and outside of the classroom.

The reading of food memoirs in community groups would not change the world, but like using food memoirs in writing classrooms, it would ask a small group of people to examine their commonplaces, identity pathways, and relationships with others and with food as they read. This would then open the door for the sharing of food, experiences, and perhaps even personal compositions based on that reading and discussion. There is value in the work of food memoirs because they can alter “rhetorical domains--not just public ones but those that might be considered private or social” (Royster and Kirsch 134). The work of women’s food memoirs could grow exponentially if they are recognized in multiple contexts and rhetorical domains in order to begin to impact rhetorical decision making and perhaps make changes in constructions and

conversations of intersectional identification markers. I am excited about the possibilities present in the further exploration of food memoirs within and outside of the academy.

Conclusion

Throughout this study, I was working towards “an ethics of hope and care” (Royster & Kirsch 146) through the recognition and articulation of students’ identity pathways, as realized through attention to performativity, positionality, and relationality in congruence with the enactment of a feminist rhetorical pedagogical model and engagement with the food memoir. An ethics of hope and care is a “commitment to engage as directly as we can manage with the issues... the commitment is to learn to listen deeply to texts and images and for voices and sounds in order to better understand both what is happening and what is going on; to listen to their views and ideas instead of just our own, to their stories, rather than ours” (Royster & Kirsch 147). This ethics of hope and care was the basis of my interest in the pedagogical model that I worked to enact hope and care by listening to my students in the course, through their work, and in the interviews. The ethics of hope and care also represent the shift that I was asking my students to embody through the work of this course, the understanding feminist pedagogical focus, and the reading of the food memoir. In the student interviews, I heard reflections on this idea by students saying they are more willing to consider others’ ideas, question their own stereotypical assumptions, and more readily engage in conversations with people who may think differently. The commitment to hope, care, and listening was fundamental to my interactions with my students as well as my analysis of their written work and interview responses. I plan to continue to enact this commitment and ask others to do the same.

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APPENDIX A

COURSE ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS, FALL 2015

Writing Project One: “Critical Imagination”



WHAT: This composition will look at the part of the self through family history. This composition will need to meet the genre format, and will also need to reflect back on some way on your family history- this may be historically or your parent’s stories, or even your own birth story. Your familial and cultural heritage should be addressed in some way in your genre production.

WHY: This project will ask you to think about very specific audiences. As you decide on the genre that you feel will best suite your representation of yourself through familial history, you must also decide who you would like to write your story to. Think about writing specifically for yourself or a specific person- perhaps a family member or a future family member or a close friend. Chose the genre that best fits this audience and relates your stake in your family history appropriately. This project may include images and/or other multimodal components and should have the equivalent of about 4 double-spaced pages of text.

SUGGESTED FORMAT: Personal Letter; Journal Entry; Scrapbook Pages

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. What racial identity does your family inhabit?
2. What cultural identity does your family inhabit?
3. What are your family's “origin stories”?
4. What is your “birth story”?
5. What positionality or stake do you have in your family history?
6. How does your family history shape your identity and understanding of self?
7. How does food affect your family history?
8. What kinds of foods are important to your family history?

Writing Project Two: “Strategic Contemplation & Social Circulation”



WHAT: This composition will look at the part of the self that is presented “strategically,” and the part of the self that is socially constructed- think about the “self” that you enact in front of friends or peers or coworkers or your significant others. This composition will need to meet the genre format, and will need to analyze how you construct yourself in social situations and how that construction makes up a part of your identity. in whatever way you find to be most productive. This composition will need to meet the genre format, and will need to discuss how you present yourself strategically to an unfamiliar audience, most likely in relation to an issue.

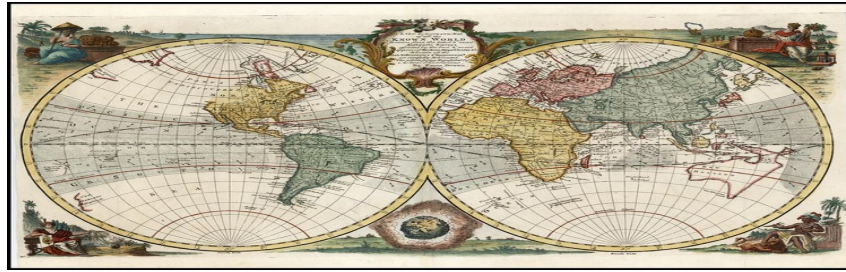
WHY: For this project, you will have the opportunity to practice presenting yourself strategically and socially. For this project, you will want to choose a genre that you could see yourself composing in someday and that represents a part of you to an audience where you need to be strategic. For this genre choice and audience, you could think about a potential boss, a college admissions committee, or a non-profit organization board.

FORMAT: Scholarship Essay; Application Personal Statement; Podcast Script

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- What parts of yourself did you choose to highlight strategically?
- What parts of yourself or your identity did you choose not to highlight?
- Why did you choose the aspects that you chose, and not choose the others?
- What contexts you imagine your genre being successful in?
- What tone and language choices did you choose to employ?
- How specific of an audience are you creating your genre for?
- Would food play into your strategic representation of yourself in any way?

Writing Project Three: “Globalizing the Point of View”



WHAT: This composition will look at the part of the self that has a global perspective. This will be an assignment that asks you think about yourself as a citizen of a particular country (probably America for most of us), and how that citizenship is influenced by global realities and rights. This composition will need to meet the genre format of your choice, and it will also need to take multiple audiences, perspectives, and worldviews into account.

WHY: For this project and genre options you will need to think much more broadly. The direct audience for your genre cannot be known, however, you can create *for* a specific publishing venue (*HelloGiggles*, *Vice*, etc.). What you need to take into account with this project is how you fit into a global citizenship. Think about your own positionality culturally, socially, racially, religiously, etc. As you decide what aspects you want to focus on, choose the genre that best fits that choice and that speaks to a broad, global audience.

FORMAT: Memoir Chapter; Online Blog; Online Article; Video Blog

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- What aspects of your identity has been most impacted by your positionality?
- What aspects of identity do you feel like best reflect the global economy in which you live?
- What aspects of your identity do you feel focus on the smaller groups or individuals addressed in the other projects?
- What aspect or narrative of your life will you choose to portray in this global, wide reaching genre production?
- How do you think food affects this aspect or can be communicated to a global audience?
- Where do you “come from”?
- Where would you like to go?

Writing Project Four: Revision Project



WHAT: This final project will be a revision of a previous project from this class of your choosing. The previous project will be edited or readjusted: 1) Based on narratives found in the Digital Archive of Literacy Narratives, or DALN, put together by The Ohio State University and Georgia State University 2) In a new genre or format than the previous project. Since this project will draw on one of the previous projects, you will have had the chance to workshop it even more substantially and hopefully after you leave this class you will have a polished piece of writing that takes a significant part of both your story and how that fits into a personal, social, and/or global worldview. If you have not yet included a multimodal element in one of your projects, you *must* do so in this project.

WHY: Sometimes in academic writing we can get so caught up in finishing a project on time and according to instructions that we don't have time to make the project exactly what we want or consider the more overarching purpose. This project will ask you to reconsider one of your three previous compositions based on the exploration of other people's narratives. The reason for this invitation is to explore this space is for you to begin to understand how people outside yourself- people you don't know and probably wouldn't have contact with otherwise- impact your constructions and compositions and understanding of the world around you and to practice rhetorical listening.

FORMAT: The format choices are going to be completely yours for this revision project. You can keep your project in the same format that it was in previously, but I will need to be able to see *significant* change to the order and structure of your work, as impacted by one or both of the experiences listed above. Thinking about inclusion of multimodal components is a good way to shift the genre production, among others.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- What project do you feel could be revised to best include outside viewpoints?
- What aspects of yourself do you think are most influenced by the world around you?
- What type of revisions do you think would be serve your piece: structural, subject, format, audience?
- What does it mean to revise a part of your own conception of yourself?

APPENDIX B
COURSE SYLLABUS, FALL 2015

ENG 217: WRITING REFLECTIVE ESSAYS

{Arizona State University: Fall 2015}

“Now, when I pass through a corner of town or ride a rural highway, my head may flood with the voices and experiences of people who have lived and died there. Their enlargement of my life will be a lasting source of gratitude”
-- Deborah Brandt

“Each of us has a right to tell our stories, to be truthful to our own memories... eating together helps us to remember”
-- Diana Abu-Jaber

Instructor: Ms. Kayla Bruce	Email: kayla.bruce@asu.edu
Tue/ Thur.	12:00-1:15pm
Line: 71139	Room: VBHAL G112
Office Phone: 480-965-3853 (messages ONLY)	Office: LL 341

Office Hours:	Tuesdays: 10:30-11:45am 2:50-4:20pm	Thursdays: 10:30-11:45am	<i>Always let me know before you come to my office. I am also available by appointment.</i>
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Course Description:

This is an advanced interdisciplinary writing course emphasizing theories, methodologies, and issues of composing non-fiction prose. Practice and study of selected: biography, autobiography, reading and transcribing of oral narrative. Following an introduction to appropriate theories and methodologies, the course focuses on writing and response to the chosen form in a workshop atmosphere.

The course focuses on asking questions about past experience and how those experiences can shape identities, specifically thinking through experiences with *food*. Through in class discussion, workshops, written and oral reflection, and the reading of a food memoir and supplemental texts, students will begin to identify revelatory and meaningful patterns and processes in nonfiction writing.

You will be expected to read and write a lot. Be prepared.

The goals for this course are:

- 1) To examine how published or public authors represent their lived experiences in nonfiction texts.
- 2) To discuss what is privileged or valued about personal experience.
- 3) To analyze how personal experience is constructed and represented in nonfiction texts.
- 4) To explore how feminist theory may help us understand these texts.
- 5) To unpack how our individual past experiences impacted who we are and how we successfully translate those experiences for readers.
- 6) To decide what genres best represent our lived experiences and how we can thoughtfully and articulately format our ideas into those genres in order to be effective pieces of nonfiction writing.

Note:

In this class, we may be discussing sensitive and/or controversial topics. Please make sure that, in both writing and discussions, you are conscious of what you are writing and the effect it could have on other people. Be respectful of other people's opinions and beliefs. You are encouraged to express your own opinions and beliefs, even (and maybe especially) in disagreeing with other ideas presented (by the reading, myself, or your peers), but be certain you are doing so in a manner that does not infringe on other people's right to feel comfortable and confident expressing their ideas. Be considerate of the contributions of your peers. Treat all perspectives with an open and attentive mind.

Email Policy:

Please keep in mind that, while I check my email multiple times in a day, I may not always check it when I am home in the evenings. Last minute emails may not be returned before an assignment is due. I receive a lot of email in a day; therefore, my goal is to respond to your email within 24 hours of receiving it, or if sent on a weekend then by the end of the business day on Monday.

Required Texts:

* *Tell It Slant: Writing and Shaping Creative Nonfiction*. Miller & Paola, McGraw-Hill, 2004.

* *The Language of Baklava*. Diana Abu-Jaber, Anchor Books (Random House), 2006.

* Daily access to a computer and the internet

* An ASURITE ID and password to access MyASU and Blackboard

* A flash drive or way to save work remotely

Please Read & Understand:

* Writing Programs Goals and Policies. Available at:
<http://english.clas.asu.edu/writingprograms>

* ASU Student Code of Conduct. Available at:
<http://www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/studentlife/srr/index.htm>

Major Projects:

“We will spend the first part semester talking about ourselves in a sneaky way (by talking about history) and the second part of the semester talking about ourselves pretty directly, and the last third of the semester talking about each other. Get cozy. Get noseey.”

There are four writing projects in English 217, and there is a final reflection rather than a final exam. You must submit all writing projects to pass the course. All projects must be ready for collection by the due date listed on the syllabus. Each project will include a letter of justification in addition to the assignment. Computer and printer problems are not valid excuses for late work. I will hand out more detailed assignment sheets and schedules prior to each assignment. Each assignment will look at a part of the self- both past and present. Food will be a way to start thinking about parts of the self, but food does not need to be incorporated into any or all compositions. You will be required to compose approximately **20 pages of written work** by the end of the semester. The work that falls under the 20-page requirement is any work that is peer reviewed (or supposed to be submitted to peer review).

All assignments are due so that I am able to OPEN them BY class time, except for the final projects which are due and openable BY 11:59pm. If you are concerned about me not being able to open it, please come see me in my office hours, make an appointment, or email me at least 24 hours prior to the deadline to check. Note that if you do not have copies of your Writing Project final projects submitted by the assignment deadline, you will NOT receive credit or feedback for that assignment if you submit it after the deadline, but you WILL receive credit for the course in terms of not automatically failing the class (see point 8 below) IF the assignment still meets the requirement of the assignment. Reading logs, midterm, and final reflections will NOT be accepted OR count for the class after the time of the due date. Although I reserve the right to make exceptions to this policy, this is both rare and unlikely, and is only possible after a meeting with me. All drafts and submissions will be electronic. No work will be accepted via email or hardcopy.

Four Project Descriptions:

1) Writing Project One: “Critical Imagination”

This composition will look at the part of the self through family history. This could take the form of a personal letter, journal entry, or scrapbook pages. This composition will

need to meet the genre format, and will also need to reflect back on some way on your family history- this may be historically or your parent's stories, or even your own birth story. Your familial and cultural heritage should be addressed in some way in your genre production.

2) Writing Project Two: "Strategic Contemplation & Social Circulation"

This project will look at the part of the self that is presented "strategically," in whatever way you find to be most productive. This means examining the part of the self that is socially constructed- think about the "self" that you perform in front of friends or peers or coworkers or your significant others. This composition could take the form of scholarship essay, an application personal statement, or podcast script. This composition will need to meet the genre format, and will need to discuss how you present yourself strategically to an outside audience, how you construct yourself in social situations, and how that construction makes up a part of your identity.

3) Writing Project Three: "Globalizing the Point of View"

This project will look at the part of the self that has a global perspective. This will be an assignment that asks you think about yourself as a citizen of a particular country (probably America for most of us), and how that citizenship is influenced by global realities and rights. This composition could take the form of a memoir chapter, a nonfiction narrative essay, an online blog or article, a video blog, or a documentary scene script. This composition will need to meet the genre format, and it will also need to take multiple audiences, perspectives, and worldviews into account.

4) Revision Project: Feedback & Experience

This project will be based on a project from this class of your choosing. This project will be edited or readjusted based on a particular experience- options will be offered in the class- and in a new medium that the previous project. This project will be workshopped and revised more substantially than the others, and hopefully after you leave this class you will have a polished piece of writing that takes a significant part of both your story and how that fits into a global worldview.

In addition to the major projects, you will complete the following work over the course of the semester:

Class Work:

Weekly Reading Responses:

There will be readings assigned every week. If there are two sets of readings assigned for one week (one on Tuesday and one on Thursday) you can choose *one* set of readings to respond to (i.e. every week you only need to submit one reading response). Your responses should take the form of one page (double spaced) journal responses in Times New Roman font.

Narrative Discussions:

These presentations will be done individually or in partners and will help the class grasp the way that nonfiction writers construct prose, relate life experience, and ground their experiences in food. This presentation will consist of you reading the essay or chapter of your choosing (from a selection I will provide), creating a handout on the essay to be passed out to the class, and for presenting and leading a discussion about the essay you read with the class.

Final Reflections:

This reflection will be based on your experience in the course and will be composed in a memo to me. This reflection will occur at the end of the semester and be used by you and me to assess the knowledge you have gained in this course as a whole.

Participation:

Participation will be a portion of your grade. You will be expected to have completed the reading and any assigned writing assignments by the beginning of the class period. This class will rely *heavily* on participation in conversation and workshopping. This does not mean that you may always agree, or are supposed to agree, with what is being discussed or written, but that you are willing to engage with your classmates and instructor in thinking about the issues at hand and responding respectfully and appropriately.

Course Grading

Final grades in the course will be based on the plus/minus system. Below is the grading scale for this course:

A	1000-940	Exceptional work
A-	939-900	Outstanding work
B+	899-870	Strong work
B	869-830	Thoughtful work
B-	829-800	Intentional work
C+	799-770	Average work
C	769-730	Complete work
C-	729-700	Semi complete work
D+	699-670	Problematic work
D	669-630	Sloppy work

D-	629-600 work	Careless work
E	599 or below	Incomplete work

Course grades will be determined by the accumulation of points for various assignments. Below is a general breakdown of the class projects and their point values:

Projects	Points
Project One: Critical Imagination	100
Project Two: Strategic Contemplation & Social Circulation	150
Project Three: Globalizing Point of View	150
Project Four: Revision	200
Reading Responses	150
Narrative Discussions	100
Final Reflection Letter	50
Participation	100
Total	1,000

Standard Writing Programs Policies:

1. Policy on class attendance

Students are expected to attend all class sessions. Because Writing Programs courses incorporate frequent small- and large-group activities into lessons, students who are absent affect not only their own learning, but that of their fellow students. Therefore, only *two weeks'* worth of absences (see below) will be allowed for the semester, *regardless of reason, including documented illness or emergency*. Students who exceed two weeks' worth of classes will fail the course, unless they withdraw (see <http://students.asu.edu/drop-add>). Be on time to class and remain for the whole class period: If you are more than five (5) minutes late to class, or if you leave class more than five minutes early, you will be counted absent for that class period, and this will count towards your two weeks worth of absences.

For Fall and Spring semesters, for classes that meet two days a week, the maximum number of absences is four (4). Once the student has accumulated five (5) or more absences they will automatically receive an E (a failing grade) in the course. Three tardies count as one absence. I mark a student tardy if they arrive to class after I have taken attendance. Repeated offenses will warrant a meeting with me and may result in an absence being accrued every time a student late.

Note: Students who participate in **university-sanctioned activities** and/or who will be unable to meet the attendance requirements for a particular section should move to another section where their activity schedules will not interfere with their classroom obligations (students can freely switch sections during the first week of the semester). To accommodate students who participate in university-sanctioned activities, ASU Writing Programs offers sections of many courses online and at various times of the day and week. We have asked advisors across campus to help students enroll in appropriate sections. If you think that this course may conflict with a university-sanctioned activity in which you are involved—athletics or the debate team or another—please see me immediately.

Note: Writing Programs is sensitive to the religious practices of the various religious faiths represented in the student body of the university community. Writing Programs' standard attendance policy listed here provides reasonable accommodation for individual religious practices. Students who anticipate absences due to religious reasons should plan their absences in the course accordingly. To accommodate students' religious practices, ASU Writing Programs offers sections of many courses online and at various times of the day and week. We have asked advisors across campus to help students enroll in appropriate sections. If you think this course may conflict with your religious practices, please see me immediately.

2. Attendance: first week of classes

According to university policy, students who are registered but do not attend any of the first week of classes may be dropped.

3. If I am absent

If I need to cancel class for any reason, I will contact you via e-mail. If possible, I will also try to get someone to post a sign. However, if you come to class and I have not arrived by the time 15 minutes have elapsed (from when class is to start), please assume that class is cancelled, and check email frequently afterwards for further instructions.

4. Grading

Grading is based on specific assignment criteria, and will follow English Department standards for content, organization, expression, and mechanics. Please refer to the table above to understand what scale I will use to grade your work, and what I expect in order for you to earn a specific grade. *Only* if your grade falls at .5 or above will I round up to the next whole number.

5. The public nature of writing and discussions

Please consider every piece of writing you do for this class to be "public property." Remember that you will often be expected to share your writing with others, so avoid writing about things that you may not be prepared to subject to public scrutiny, or things you feel so strongly about that you are unwilling to listen to perspectives other than your own. This does not mean that you are not entitled to an opinion but that you adopt positions responsibly, contemplating the possible effect on others. This course may contain content (assigned readings, in-class discussions, etc.) deemed offensive by some students. If you have concerns about any course content, please bring these concerns to the attention of your instructor.

6. Technological Distractions

Please refrain from any unauthorized usages of technology during our class sessions. In this usage, 'unauthorized' means unrelated to the tangible learning activity or activities taking place during the class period. Please put all hand-held electronic devices away. I will expect computers and laptops to be used for classroom activities only. Failure to abide by these guidelines may have a negative impact on a student's participation grade. Repeat offenders may be seen as disruptive and asked to leave class.

7. Late Writing Projects

Note that if you do not have copies of your Writing Project final projects submitted by the assignment deadline, you will NOT receive credit or feedback for that assignment if you submit it after the deadline, but you WILL receive credit for the course in terms of not automatically failing the class (see point 8 below) IF the assignment still meets the requirement of the assignment. Reading logs, midterm, and final reflections will NOT be accepted OR count for the class after the time of the due date. No work will be accepted via email or hardcopy.

8. All writing for this class must be written for this class

To pass this class, all major writing assignments must be submitted, and note that all writing for this class must be written for this class. Resubmitting a paper from another class or elsewhere constitutes academic dishonesty. If you wish to further pursue a project begun in another class or develop ideas you have written about in another class, please discuss your plans with me first.

9. Academic Dishonesty

Academic honesty is expected of all students in all examinations, papers, laboratory work, academic transactions and records. The possible sanctions include, but are not limited to, appropriate grade penalties, course failure (indicated on the transcript as a grade of E), course failure due to academic dishonesty (indicated on the transcript as a grade of XE), loss of registration privileges, disqualification and dismissal. For more information, see <http://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity>.

10. Disruptive, Threatening, or Violent Behavior

Students, faculty, staff, and other individuals do not have an unqualified right of access to university grounds, property, or services. Interfering with the peaceful conduct of university-related business or activities or remaining on campus grounds after a request to leave may be considered a crime. A disruptive student may be withdrawn from a course with a mark of “W” or “E” when the student’s behavior disrupts the educational process. Disruptive classroom behavior for this purpose is defined by the instructor and includes talking over another student, talking over the teacher, not listening to instructions, not doing as they are told, etc. may result in the student being asked to leave the class, and if the behavior continues, withdrawn from the course (as outlined above). Disruptive behavior in any form (see <http://www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/safety/definitions.html>) will not be tolerated, and students are expected to be familiar with all relevant university policies. ASU Student Rights and Responsibilities are located at <http://students.asu.edu/srr/code>.

11. Sexual Violence and Harassment Based on Sex

Title IX is a federal law that provides that no person be excluded on the basis of sex from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity. Both Title IX and university policy make clear that sexual violence and harassment based on sex is prohibited. An individual who believes they have been subjected to sexual violence or harassed on the basis of sex can seek support, including counseling and academic support, from the university. If you or someone you know has been harassed on the basis of sex or sexually assaulted, you can find information and resources at <https://sexualviolenceprevention.asu.edu/faqs/students>.

12. Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Qualified students with disabilities who will require disability accommodations in this class are encouraged to make their requests to me at the beginning of the semester either during office hours or by appointment. **Note:** Prior to receiving disability accommodations, verification of eligibility from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) is required. Disability information is confidential.

Establishing Eligibility for Disability Accommodations: Students who feel they will need disability accommodations in this class but have not registered with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) should contact DRC immediately. Their office is located on the first floor of the Matthews Center Building. DRC staff can also be reached at: 480-965-1234 (V), 480-965-9000 (TTY). For additional information, visit: www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/ed/drc. Their hours are 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday.

13. End-of-Semester Portfolio Collection

All students will submit a portfolio of their work at the end the semester. This portfolio will consist of the final drafts of **all** major writing projects. This portfolio will be

submitted as an e-portfolio. Additional information and instructions for submission will be provided before the end of the semester.

14. Disposition of Papers/Grade Appeals

Students should keep *all* graded assignments for this course until the term is officially over and final grades are posted. If students believe their final grade is inaccurate or unfair, they must present all graded work in order for the grievance committee to review their case. Students should not solely rely on the documents remaining electronically available on Blackboard, if submitted there, but should also maintain their own digital copies.

COURSE SCHEDULE

You may find the following Topics and Assignments chart useful for planning your semester and keeping track of major assignments. Please note the abbreviations for the texts that you are supposed to be reading: *The Language of Baklava* will be abbreviated as *LOB*, and *Tell It Slant* will be abbreviate as *TIS*. This course schedule is subject to revision during the semester, and I will announce any changes to you in class.

NOTE: Assignments are due on the day they are listed, i.e. the readings and assignments listed for Tuesday, August 25, are to be completed before the beginning of class on that day.

Date	Topics & Activities	Due
Week 1		
Th 8/20	Course Overview & Introductions Introduction: Reading Responses Activity: Watch Amy Poehler Interview Discuss: What are memoirs?	
Week 2		
T 8/25	Introduction: Critical Imagination Discuss: What is feminism? Activity: Watch Adichie's TED Talk Activity: Course Survey	Read: <i>LOB</i> ch 1-2 Read: <i>TIS</i> p. 173-185 Reading Response One

Th 8/27	Discuss: What are food texts? Introduction: Peer Review Questions Activity: Peer Review “Birth Story” by Amy Poehler	
Week 3		
T 9/1	Introduction: Narrative Discussions Activity: Brainstorm/Feedback/ Discussions	Read: <i>LOB</i> ch. 3-4 Read: <i>TIS</i> p. 25-30 Reading Response Two
Th 9/3	Activity: Peer Review Activity: Justification Letter	
Week 4		
T 9/8	Guest Speaker: Jennifer Conlon	Read: <i>LOB</i> ch. 5-6 Read: <i>TIS</i> p. 147-159 <u>Reading Survey</u>
Th 9/10	Guest Speaker: Amilynne Johnson	WP1: Critical Imagination & Justification Letter DUE by 11:59pm in “Assignments”
Week 5		
T 9/15	Introduction: Strategic/ Social Discussion: Senses & Memory	Read: <i>LOB</i> ch. 7-8 Read: <i>TIS</i> p. 11-20 Reading Response Three
Th 9/17	Narrative Discussion One Discussion: <u>Podcast</u> Genre Exploration Activity: Genre Analysis	
Week 6		
T 9/22	Discussion: Letter Genre Exploration Activity: Genre Analysis	Read: <i>LOB</i> ch. 9-10 Read: <i>TIS</i> p. 83-99 Reading Response Four
Th 9/24	Narrative Discussion Two	

	<p>Watch: <u>Emma Watson's UN Speech</u></p> <p>Discussion: Representations of self</p> <p>Activity: Topic & Genre Brainstorm</p>	
Week 7		
T 9/29	Outside Writing Activity: Café Biblioteca in Hayden Library	<p>Read: <i>LOB</i> ch. 11-12</p> <p>Read: <i>TIS</i> p. 127-139</p> <p>Reading Response Five [Please be aware that ch. 11 deals with a suicidal death]</p>
Th 10/1	<p>Narrative Discussion Three</p> <p>Peer Review</p>	Drafts of WP2
Week 8		
T 10/6	<p>Individual Discussions</p> <p>Activity: Write justification letter</p>	WP2: Strategic & Social & Justification Letter DUE by 11:59pm in "Assignments"
Th 10/8	NO CLASS	<p>Read: <i>LOB</i> ch. 13-14</p> <p>Read: <i>TIS</i> p. 33-46</p> <p>Reading Response Six</p>
Week 9		
T 10/13	FALL BREAK	
Th 10/15	<p>Narrative Discussion Four & Five</p> <p>Introduction: Global Citizenship</p> <p>Discuss: Readings</p> <p>Activity: Midterm KQS</p>	<p>Read: <i>LOB</i> ch. 15-16</p> <p>Reading Response Seven</p>
Week 10		
T 10/20	Discuss: Feminist Pedagogy	<p>Read: <i>LOB</i> ch. 17-18</p> <p>Read: <i>TIS</i> p. 101-112</p>

	Activity: Topic Brainstorm	Reading Response Eight
Th 10/22	Outside Writing Activity: <u>ASU Art Museum at Mill Ave. & 10th St.</u>	
Week 11		
T 10/27	Narrative Discussion Six & Seven Discuss: Genre Exploration Discuss: Inclusion of outside voices	Read: <i>LOB</i> ch. 19-20 Read: <i>TIS</i> p. 69-76 Reading Response Nine [Please be aware that ch. 19 deals with dark, unhealthy relationships]
Th 10/29	Peer Review {Organized by Groups Outside of Class}	WP3 Draft
Week 12		
T 11/3	Individual Discussions Activity: Write justification letter	Read: <i>LOB</i> ch. 21-22 Read: <i>TIS</i> p. 163-170 Reading Response Ten
Th 11/5	Narrative Discussion Eight Introduction: Revision Discuss: Revision of Genres; Inclusion of outside voices Activity: Sign up for garden service or literacy exploration	WP3: Global Citizenship & Justification Letter DUE by 11:59pm in "Assignments"
Week 13		
T 11/10	Discussion: End of Book Activity: Literacy Narratives	Read: <i>LOB</i> ch. 23-24 <u>Reading Survey</u>
Th 11/12	Discussion: Genre Remixing Activity: Sign up for conferences	
Week 14		
T 11/17	Conferences	Submit: <u>Literacy</u>

		<u>Narrative & WP4 Planning</u> BY noon to “In Class Submissions” in “Discussions”
Th 11/19	Conferences	
Week 15		
T 11/24	Narrative Discussion Nine Peer Review Sign Up: Readings & Snacks	Draft of WP4
Th 11/26	THANKSGIVING BREAK	
Week 16		
T 12/1	Individual Discussions Activity: Write justification letter Activity: <u>Course Survey</u>	
Th 12/3	<u>Final Reading & Snacks</u>	WP4: Revision Project & Justification Letter DUE by 11:59pm in “Assignments”
Week 17		
Su 12/6		<u>Final Reflection Letter</u> DUE by 11:59pm in “Assignments”

To help guide the planning of your course readings from *Tell It Slant* during the semester, below is a summary of chapter readings by class date with the corresponding class project.

CLASS DATES	READINGS	CLASS PROJECT
8/20		Critical Imagination
8/25 & 8/27	<i>LOB</i> ch. 1-2	Critical Imagination

	<i>TIS</i> p. 173-185	
9/1 & 9/3	<i>LOB</i> ch. 3-4 <i>TIS</i> p. 25-30	Critical Imagination
9/8 & 9/10	<i>LOB</i> ch. 5-6 <i>TIS</i> p. 147-159	Strategic/ Social
9/15 & 9/17	<i>LOB</i> ch. 7-8 <i>TIS</i> p. 11-20	Strategic/ Social
9/22 & 9/24	<i>LOB</i> ch. 8-9 <i>TIS</i> p. 83-99	Strategic/ Social
9/29 & 10/1	<i>LOB</i> ch. 9-10 <i>TIS</i> p. 127-139	Strategic/ Social
10/6 & 10/8	<i>LOB</i> ch. 11-12 <i>TIS</i> p. 33-46	Strategic/ Social/ Global
10/15	<i>LOB</i> ch. 13-14	Global
10/20 & 10/22	<i>LOB</i> ch. 15-16 <i>TIS</i> p. 101-112	Global
10/27 & 10/29	<i>LOB</i> ch. 17-18 <i>TIS</i> p. 69-76	Global
11/3 & 11/5	<i>LOB</i> ch. 19-20 <i>TIS</i> p. 163-170	Global
11/10 & 11/12	<i>LOB</i> ch. 21-22	Revision
11/17 & 11/19	<i>LOB</i> ch. 23-24	Revision
11/24		Revision
12/1 & 12/3		Revision

APPENDIX C

STUDENT CONSENT FORMS, FALL 2015 & FALL 2016

ENG 217 Permissions Form

Fall 2015

Course Information:

Instructor Name: Kayla Bruce

Course and Section Number: ENG 217: Writing Personal Essays

Personal and Contact Information

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Permissions

I give my permission to reproduce writings and *quote anonymously* from the following list course materials for ENG 217: (*Check ALL that apply*)

- Project One drafts and final submission ____
- Project Two drafts and final submission ____
- Project Three drafts and final submission ____
- Project Four drafts and final submission ____
- Weekly responses to reading assignments ____
- Final reflection letter ____
- Handouts created for the Narrative Discussion ____
- Narrative Discussion presentation and responses ____
- In-class & outside of class handouts/ peer review/ activities ____
- Surveys on the class, demographics, and *LOB* from the beginning, middle, and end of the semester ____

Certification

I have appropriately documented all outside sources used in these texts, and the work submitted is my own; the work included in these materials does not violate the policies concerning cheating and intellectual dishonesty as stated in the ASU Code of Student Conduct. I approve the use of all *checked* items in the list above for professional and publication use.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

ENG 217 Student Interviews Permission Form

Fall 2016

I am a Ph.D. candidate under the direction of Dr. Patricia Boyd in the Department of English at Arizona State University. I am conducting a research study to determine what effective teaching practices look like and how to apply feminist theory in writing classrooms that shape cultural identity and construction.

I am inviting your participation in one Google Hangout interview to discuss your learning experiences in ENG 217: Writing Reflective Essays in the Fall 2015 semester. The interview will take place in August 2016. The interview would take no longer than 60 minutes. You have the right not to answer any question and to stop participation at any time.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty. You must be 18 or older to participate in the study.

Your answers to the interview questions could be used in my dissertation work, and/or academic publications. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to your participation. If you do participate in the interview, you will receive a \$25 Amazon gift card. The gift card will be emailed to your desired email account no more than one week after the interview is conducted.

The data will be collected and all names or identifying material will be immediately removed before the documents or recordings are saved. The data and work will be saved on a hard drive used only for this study and the use of the work will be pulled only from this hard drive (not Blackboard) after it has been saved. Your responses will be anonymous. The results of this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications, but your name will not be used.

I would like to audio record the interviews. The presentation will not be recorded without your permission. Only I will have access to the recordings. The recordings will be deleted immediately after being transcribed and any published quotes will be anonymous. To protect your identity, please refrain from using names or other identifying information during the interview. Please let me know if you do not want the interview to be recorded; you also can change your mind after the interview starts, just let me know.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact the research team at: kayla.bruce@asu.edu (Kayla) or patricia.boyd@asu.edu (Dr. Boyd). If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at (480)

965-6788. Please let me know if you wish to be part of the study by verbally agreeing to participate.

Your verbal agreement indicates your consent to participate in this study and agreement with the terms above.

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS, FALL 2016

Interview Outline

Dissertation Study Overview

Diss Thesis: This dissertation argues for the deliberate use of feminist rhetorical practices as a grounded pedagogical construct (using a framework, model, and vehicle) that enacts the dynamism of rhetorical practices through linking identity pathways to positionality, performativity, and relationality and exploring the uptake of those pathways to enact change.

- Identity pathways: Enact a re-valuing of writing as a knowledge-building enterprise
- Performativity: “Dynamic sites for the performance of identities” (214)
- Positionality: “Take up, inhabit, and speak through certain discourses of identity” (215)
- Relationality: “Narrator’s story is often refracted through the stories of others” (216)

Research Questions:

1. How might Smith and Watson’s articulation of third wave autobiographical theory relating to “positionality, performativity, and relationality” inform a feminist *framework* for configuring rhetorical education?
2. How could Royster and Kirsch’s feminist rhetorical practices provide a *model* for enacting feminist composing practices?
3. In a particular writing classroom, how does a food memoir—in the context of a carefully articulated assignment sequence--serve as a *vehicle* commending feminist rhetorical practices as means for constructing identity pathways toward positionality, performativity, and relationality?
 - a. How do students interpret and employ Royster and Kirsch’s practices over the course of a series of writing assignments that ask them to see and re-see/ enact and re-enact/ promote and project their own and others’ capacities for positionality, performativity, and relationality?

Framework (S&W)	Model (R&K)	Vehicle (Abu-Jaber)
Performativity	Critical Imagination	<i>The Language of Baklava</i>
Positionality	Social Circulation	“Writing Reflective Essays”
Relationality	Strategic Contemplation	Student uptake of feminist pedagogical principles

	Globalizing Point of View	
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Interview Plan

Interview Purpose: Identify identity pathways that students made in and/or through the work done in ENG 217 to enacted awareness, engagement, and contextual consideration of performativity, positionality, and relationality. I would use these answer in my dissertation work to understand the three conceptions better as to forward thinking about rhetorical education and practices. Overall, the answers given here will work to inform Research Question 3A.

Planned Chronology:

Thank students for meeting with me; review consent form.

Ask: What is your preferred pseudonym?

In this interview, I am interested in your recollections and narratives from ENG 217. I will use prompts to ask you to tell me about certain instances, and if you can't supply one then just let me know. I am interested in the ways you remember or currently perceive your subject position in the class and the work, as well as "performance" of identity, and the relationality between you and the others in the class, and between yourself and the subjects you were discussing in the work.

Ask: Do you have any questions before we jump in?

Ask: We're talking about ENG 217. What's a moment or a story you remember from the class?

Say: I'm gonna send you the link to the [course schedule](#). I'd like you to read through it and stop when you see a topic or subject that was interesting or sparks a specific memory or moment for you. Tell me about that moment when you see it.

Ask: What's a moment that you remember were discussed in relation to feminism in the class?

- Follow-Up: Tell me about a link that you saw between feminism and the class work
- Follow-Up: Tell me how this link influenced your composition decisions

(Q3) Remind: In the class, we read a food memoir by an author named Diana Abu-Jaber. She is a Jordanian-American food memoirist, fiction writer, and professor. She wrote of her food experiences both in Jordan and America, and she often related these experiences to cultural expectations or deviances, relationships with her family members, especially her father, and her coming-of-age from childhood to adulthood.

Ask: How did you identify with Diana Abu-Jaber?

- Follow-Up: How did you identify with any of her specific narratives?
- Follow-Up: Tell how the reading of her memoir influenced your composition practices

(Q2) Remind: In the class, we completed four writing projects: Critical Imagination, Social & Strategic Contemplation, Globalization, and Revision. Each project focused on representing a different identification pattern for a different audience. The self for a known audience, the self for an unknown audience, and the self in global audience. You also had a chance to revise one of those projects through the lens of an outside literacy narrative.

Ask: Which project do you remember most vividly? Why?

- Follow-Up: How did you understand the project scaffolding in relation to the discussions of feminism?
- Follow-Up: How did you understand the project scaffolding in relation to reading and discussing the food memoir?

(Q1) For the revision project, you chose to revise the [BLANK] project. The original project was in the genre of [BLANK] and you revised the project in the genre of [BLANK]. You also seemed to focus much more explicitly on [BLANK] in the revised version.

Name	Original Project	Original Genre	Revised Genre	Revised Focus
Jack	WP3	Online Article/ Blog	Online Article/ Blog	Perspective as a listener of Noname Gypsy's music, including hip-hop, culture, and feminism
Amber	WP2	Personal Statement	Multimodal Podcast Transcript/ Blog	Personal history as driving force for career goals
Ashley	WP2	Podcast Script	Podcast	Positive aspects of acapella group and personal impact of the community

Gabriel	WP3	Article	Podcast Script	Personal aspects of the issue of white privilege, while bringing in discussions of popular culture and feminism
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Ask: Walk me through your thought process in shifting your composition from the initial project to the final revised project.

- Follow-Up: What interesting rubs or complexities did you find in doing this revision?
- Follow-Up: What moments of identity marking or shifting did you find in revising the projects?

Ask: In your WP4 final project, you write [BLANK]. Walk me through your thinking in writing this.

Name	Quote
Jack	“So... Kendrick Lamar and Noname Gypsy bring their experiences to their music and use their music to tell stories, spark conversation, and raise awareness of societal problems. The question remains: am I supposed to listen to this music? I think it depends on who you ask. Regardless, the reality is that I can listen to the music—I have access to it. What matters then is how I react, how I allow the ideas to reach me, and how I use secondary knowledge of the societal problems like racism, gang violence, sexism, etc. to contribute to possible solutions.”
Amber	“I’ve long used my writing to explore my internal struggles, family and personal history. When I write the world makes more sense to me, you know? It’s like it hasn’t even happened until I’ve written it down. I still don’t even know if I am any good. All I know is that I have to do it!”
Ashley	“I think it’s because that song [“Light Em’ Up” by Fall Out Boy] is so empowering. We’re a group of girls and connected to this song so powerfully and completely because it practically screams the word ‘strength.’ We are independent and strong women, and we can reflect our true selves through this song without having to hold back, while,

	at the same time, sounding like the talented and professional group of musicians that we are.”
Gabriel	“The first time that I was challenged to truly examine my own life and the manner in which my “whiteness” has afforded me with privileges – whether I realized it or not - was in my “Black Popular Culture” class at Fordham. After studying narratives from Black Americans and White Americans alike, I arrived at a deeper understanding of how the world actually works around me and where and how I am positioned, in great part, due to my race.”

Ask: Tell me about your positionality, performativity, and relationality in the course.

Ask: What overarching understandings, narratives, or identification patterns did you take away from this course?

- Follow-Up: How has this course been “used” in your scholarly or daily life?
- Follow-Up: What perspective shifts, if any, did this course provide for you?

Thank students for time; ask for ideal way to contact them with any clarification questions. Ask for email address to send gift card.