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CONSTRUCTING AN ETHOS IN THE BORDERLANDS

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

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Table of Contents

Introduction 1

Chapter 1: Classical Rhetoric and Contemporary Scholarship in Composition 9

Classical Conceptions of Ethos 13

The Importance of Ethos in Classical Rhetorical Training 14

Being and Seeming: The Construction of Ethos in Classical Rhetoric 15

Ethos in Contemporary Composition and Rhetoric Instruction 38

Chapter 2: Ethos in First-Year Composition 54

Postmodern Sensibilities and the Good, the True, the Self 55

Student Subjectivity in First-Year Composition 65

Where First-Year Students Are: Considering Erikson's Fifth Stage 68

Our Students in the World of Digital Communications 72

Chapter 3: Locating Ethos in the Borderlands 84

Ethos of the Borderlands and the Absence of Universal Values 95

Ethos of the Borderlands and Postmodern Fragmentation 99

Ethos of the Borderlands and Contemporary Technology 100

Ethos of the Borderland and the Developmental Stage of College Students 104

Ethos of the Borderland and Resistance to Postmodern Constructions of Subjectivity 105

The Power of Border Ethos in Composition Pedagogy 111

Chapter 4: Locating Border Ethos in Composition Pedagogy 113

Works Cited 133

List of Tables

Table 1: Top Three Composition/Rhetoric Textbooks and Handbooks in Each Category for 2005 43

Table 2: Top Selling Argument and Persuasion Textbooks 44

Abstract

Since the 1960s, classical rhetoric has been a significant site for theorizing composition pedagogy in the United States, informing scholarly work in the field and generating textbooks and teaching practices for first-year composition classes. Despite the influence of ancient rhetorics, seen especially through the appropriation of Aristotelian argument, little attention has been given in composition studies to theorizing ethos, though the ancients found it a significant element of persuasion and even a purpose of rhetorical education.

This study investigates classical conceptions of ethos as demonstrated through the texts of Isocrates, Aristotle, Plato, Cicero, and Quintilian; suggests reasons why contemporary scholars and teachers minimize or exclude ethos; and argues that ethos is a valuable concept to teach in composition classes. Postmodern sensibilities, student subjectivities, and digital communications, however, complicate any theory of ethos today: a reconception must include multiple contexts, multiple sites for ethos performance, and multiple ways of being in those locations.

Border studies and theories provide a useful trope for conceptualizing a new ethos. Reconceiving of ethos as located in borderlands opens up possibilities for helping students think critically about discursive contexts and the power relations inherent in them; provides opportunities for analyzing, evaluating, and creating persuasive electronic and print texts; and, following Henry Giroux, allows enactment of critical pedagogy within the composition class.

Introduction

In *On the Peace*, Isocrates berates the citizens of Athens for being taken in by their current leaders, "depraved orators" who flatter in order to bolster their own power. Concerned about the reputation of Athens, Isocrates reminds his audience that they "shall be judged by the character of those who represent us at the head of the state" (43). Isocrates accuses these leaders of designing their discourses to please rather than to tell the truth and, more important, of being disreputable characters in their daily lives. He points out that they have misled the people of Athens and damaged its good name. At the heart of Isocrates' argument lies the claim that the state is in peril because its people have been blind to the character of their leaders, taken in, instead, by appearances and language designed to seduce.

Isocrates is calling for deeper critical thinking. He wants the citizens of Athens to look carefully at various points of view and to determine what has influenced their decisions. He is asking them to think about how they have been convinced that war is the best path to follow. He contends that they have been too willing to accept the words of disreputable leaders because of their own self-interest, too willing to accept the appearance of character, and incapable or unwilling to look at the complexities of character display. In this discourse, Isocrates provides for us a lesson in the importance and the complications of ethos, the apparent character of the rhetor. The people of Athens have allowed themselves to be influenced by their uninterrogated perceptions of ethos, and the result is damage to the state.

Isocrates' concerns about the people of Athens apply to people in twenty-first century United States: we, too, are deceived by what we perceive as appealing character. Highly publicized events within the United States have been guided by the public's perception of character, but too often, just as in ancient Athens, displays of character are left uninterrogated. Recent events in the public view provide us with significant examples of the power of ethos as perceived by the public: the impeachment of President Bill Clinton, the popularity of President George W. Bush, and, on a different note and scale, the outrage over James Frey's representation of his book, *A Million Little Pieces*. In each case, ethos, the apparent character of the man, has been a major factor in determining public opinion.

Regardless of the political machinations and motivations behind Clinton's impeachment, it is clear that the public view was focused on the character of the man, on what people considered his "moral" being. Commentators, politicians, and people on the street were given media time to remark on the failures of Clinton's character: he was an unfaithful husband, and he tried to hide that fact. That his dalliances and personal dishonesties took precedence over policies and presidential acts in the public eye is testament to the important role of ethos in dominant U. S. culture today. Americans want to have leaders whose lives appear to be spotless or who seem adequately repentant.

Likewise, the American public seems to respect leaders who give the appearance of strength. Throughout his terms as president, George W. Bush has gained support from people who see him as "saved," "rehabilitated" from his drug and alcohol abuse,

and stalwart in his insistence that the US will not be bullied. At the same time, much of his appeal comes from the "good ole boy" ethos he has projected from the beginning of his political career. Despite his privileged upbringing, many people in the U. S. think of him as "one of us." For both of our most recent presidents, character—the ethos created by the men either deliberately or inadvertently and received by the public—has strongly influenced the support they have gained and, as a result, the processes and policies of the country. The general population of the United States seems to place great value on character, yet the concept is accepted as uncomplicated common sense. The result is that ethos disciplines silently and powerfully throughout popular culture as well as politics.

A recent example in popular culture of the importance placed on ethos is James Frey's deception about the fictional nature of his book. At issue is the creation of his ethos as a confessional writer telling the sordid details of his past and the subsequent revelation that this was an ethos constructed with exaggerated and manufactured details. This deception grew into a public flogging because Oprah Winfrey (an accepted and trustworthy public ethos, to be sure) was embarrassed that she had promoted him as an autobiographical rather than a fiction writer. Frey's crime was creating an ethos that was obviously deceptive, something Oprah and her public could not tolerate. Had Frey claimed his text was fiction, only to have the public learn that it was autobiographical, there would have been no scandal. It was his representation of himself—the ethos he created for a specific purpose—that offended the public.

Too often today public response to character weighs more than actions, despite the common knowledge that public personae are crafted, oftentimes by people who earn their money "handling" politicians and movie stars, creating images of their characters for popular consumption, other times by political opponents who focus on specific traits they can publicize as examples of bad character. The attention given to President Clinton's tawdry affair with his intern funneled tremendous amounts of energy—by politicians, media, and the general population, through sound waves and digital images and office conversations—into one man's sexual behavior, and all the energy was devoted to debate over whether his behavior was moral or not, whether it was telling of other aspects of his character or not. Clinton's sexual life became far more important than his leadership in budget, international issues, and national stability. Likewise, Bush's ethos has driven his popularity more than his stewardship of the country's economic situation or its international reputation.

We live in a culture of appearance that damages us on national and international levels but also in our personal lives. The drive to own and to *become* or *appear to be* controls private as well as public economies: people spend enormous amounts of money on cars, houses, electronics, and clothes that create desired appearances. They buy cars that portray, or stand in, for themselves; they wear sporty clothes that make them seem to be athletes despite their never setting foot on a tennis court or jogging track. We have become so accustomed to the emphasis on appearances that we scarcely question it. As a result, *being* and *seeming* become conflated for people ill equipped to distinguish the two.

A recent, widely distributed email message is evidence of how entangled *seeming* and *being* have become. Known as "Dr. Phil's[1] Test," this message is a series of questions that promised to let its respondents know how other people perceived them, with the endorsement that "[t]his is a real test given by the Human Relations Dept. [sic] at many of the major corporations today. It helps them get better insight concerning their employees and prospective employees."[2] The questions focus on personal feelings, preferences, and behaviors, such as "When do you feel your best?" and "Which of the following colors do you like most?" The test asks about walking stride and posture, type of laugh, position for sleep. Though the questions and answers address individual, personal, and often interior life, the score scales refer solely to how "others see you"; for example, people who score in a particular range are told, "Your friends see you as painstaking and fussy." The assumption is that if people adopt certain behaviors and preferences, then they will be perceived in a particular way. It follows, then, that if we want to change how others perceive us, all we need to do is change our color preference, stand taller, laugh more loudly, or sit with legs crossed. The assumption, too, is that the general population desires this information and believes it to be important. Indeed, this "test" appears on over a hundred websites and blogs with wide-ranging purposes: while it appears on joke and comedy sites, as well as on two (Break the Chain.org and snopes.com) that debunk it, the "test" is also seriously

[1] Dr. Phil is Phillip McGraw, a psychologist who became a media figure after helping Oprah Winfrey win a lawsuit against Texas cattle ranchers. Because of her work with him in that case, Oprah scheduled him to appear regularly on her television show. His popularity allowed him to produce his own daily television program, which is still in production at the time of this writing. Though his dramatic, homegrown, pop psychology is scorned by many, he remains a popular media figure.

[2] Like many email texts forwarded widely, this one has no attribution. I first received it from a student who had simply forwarded it to everyone on her mailing list.

presented on websites ranging from The Multiple Sclerosis Resource Centre of the U. K. (www.msrc.co.uk/index.cfm?fuseaction=show&pageid=529) to Tundra Solutions (tundrasolutions.com/forums/off-topic/18161-dr-phils-test/), a site "[w]here you can research, discuss, and repair your Toyota, Scion, or Lexus." The appeal of this misdirected interest in ethos can also be found on Senior Bachelor.com, a Viggo Mortensen fan site, a forum for discussing boxing, a site for British expats, and the DST Technical Services Corporation website, among many others. The point is that the idea behind this fraudulent test appeals to a wide range of people. Clearly, within popular culture, as well as in politics, people view ethos—character as it is revealed to others—as significant.

This uninterrogated power of ethos in public and private life today suggests an area of concern for those of us who study and teach rhetoric. With the emphasis on appearances, one would expect the dominant culture in the U. S. to insist that an educated public understand that appearances are created, to insist that the public know how appearances can deceive or benefit us and understand the ethical dimensions of creating appearances. By observing political and popular culture today, we can discern that ethos matters, but it is also easy to see that the public is not intellectually prepared to interrogate ethos created for public consumption. Those of us who teach composition and rhetoric at the college level should take the cue, revising our curricula to include attention to ethos—what it is, how it is created, and how to interrogate it. As teachers of composition, our role is to help our students become more effective writers, of course, but in order to do that, we must also assist in educating them for their lives as

citizens and help them become less susceptible to and naïve about what influences their thinking. Just as Isocrates pleads with the citizens of Athens to think carefully about how their political decisions have been created by deceptive ethos, we need to help our students understand the power of ethos, so they can interrogate it in displays by others and use it ethically in their own discourses.

To create a pedagogy of ethos, we need a conceptual framework for designing course work, one which is responsive to constructions of ethos as they are made manifest today. I set out on this project to learn more about ethos—how it might be defined, interrogated, and theorized for application in composition classes. In the following chapters, I provide a brief review of classical conceptions of ethos; address some of the difficulties of teaching ethos in a postmodern, image-saturated, digital culture; argue that instruction in ethos is relevant, even important, to composition courses, and, drawing on Gloria Anzaldua and Henry Giroux's theories of border cultures, I examine borderlands as a relevant metaphorical site for developing a new conception of ethos. Finally, I propose a theory of borderlands ethos, one that is more responsive to contemporary demands than previous conceptions of ethos, and suggest pedagogical possibilities for it.

Throughout the project, I have become more convinced of the importance of making ethos a significant part not only of composition instruction but of instruction in other humanities courses as well. Looking at how writers, speakers, and artists represent themselves through their work is an important key to understanding how their creations of words and images affect their audiences, and students who understand such

possible effects can learn to perform their thinking, writing, and reading at a more conscious, responsible, and effective level.

Chapter 1: Classical Rhetoric and Contemporary Scholarship in Composition

Since the 1960s, a resurgence of interest in theories and applications of classical rhetoric has been central to the development of composition studies. Edward P. J. Corbett's 1963 presentation at the Conference on College Composition and Communication, "The Usefulness of Classical Rhetoric," and the subsequent (1965) publication of his *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student* mark a serious investigation of the ancients' approaches to teaching and theories of communication. Looking primarily to Aristotle, various twentieth-century scholars adapted classical notions to their theories of teaching and learning rhetoric. Stephen M. North, in *The Making of Knowledge in Composition: Portrait of an Emerging Field*, suggests that linking composition to rhetoric was a way to prove composition as a valid discipline and credits Corbett, Richard E. Hughes, Gayle B. Price, James C. Raymond, and Frank D'Angelo, among others, for initiating the turn back toward the ancients (64-68). Regardless of the reason for appropriating classical rhetorical theories, scholarship in that area flourished.

The interest in classical rhetoric as a site for theorizing composition was not a momentary trend; rather, in the 1980s, scholarship in classical rhetoric grew in depth and breadth, initiated by the publication of George A. Kennedy's *Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times* (1980), a detailed history which traces developments of classical rhetoric over centuries. Later in the decade, scholarship in classical rhetoric widened, as evidenced by the publication of two collections of essays on the subject, one by James J. Murphy, *The Rhetorical*

Tradition and Modern Writing (1982), the other by Corbett's former students, Robert Connors, Lisa Ede, and Andrea Lunsford, *Essays on Classical Rhetoric and Modern Discourse* (1984).

In the 1990s, studies of classical rhetoric reached another peak, with the publication of Kathleen Welch's *The Contemporary Reception of Classical Rhetoric: Appropriations of Ancient Discourse* (1990), Susan Jarratt's *Rereading the Sophists* (1991), Richard Leo Enos's *Greek Rhetoric before Aristotle* (1993), Cheryl Glenn's *Rhetoric Retold* (1997), and Sharon Crowley's *Composition in the University* (1998). These studies are expansions and revisionings of the historical approaches of previous decades. They situate classical theories in time and place and include voices, primarily of women and the Sophists, previously ignored; they challenge the dominance of Plato and Aristotle; and they implicitly (if not explicitly) call into question traditional applications of classical rhetoric. Basically, these scholars of the 1990s opened the door to reinterpretations of classical rhetoric and provided models for the production of knowledge about the relationship between the teaching of composition and classical rhetoric.

This brief sketch of the integration of classical rhetoric into composition studies serves to underscore the relevance—indeed, the importance—of classical rhetoric as a site for thinking about how we teach composition. Interest in the ancients has most definitely influenced how many of us think about and teach composition. In the late twentieth century, in fact, several textbooks focusing on classical rhetoric were published for use in first-year composition classes. In addition to *Corbett's Classical*

Rhetoric for the Modern Student, initially published in 1965 with its fourth edition published in 1999, Sharon Crowley and Debra Hawhee's *Ancient Rhetorics for Contemporary Students* has been available since 1994 and is now in its fourth edition, published in 2008. Although the titles of these textbooks call attention to their reliance on classical rhetoric, other textbooks, though not titled as such, draw upon ancient theories, especially Aristotle's, within their pages. The influence of Aristotelian argument can be seen in composition textbooks from all the major publishers. A sampling of argument textbooks based on Aristotle includes the following:

- from McGraw-Hill, Dorothy U. Seyler's *Read, Reason, Write*, 8th (2008); Timothy Crusius and Carolyn Channell's *Aims of Argument*, 5th (2006); William Vesterman's *Reading and Writing Short Arguments*, 5th (2006); Barbara Fine Clouse's *The Student Writer: Editor and Critic*, 7th (2008);
- from Bedford-St. Martin's, Rise Axelrod, Charles Cooper, and Alison Warriner's *Reading Critically, Writing Well*, 8th (2008); Sylvan Barnet and Hugo Bedau's *Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing*, 6th (2008); Barnet and Bedau's *Current Issues and Enduring Que|tions*, 8th (2008); Annette Rottenberg and Donna Haisty Winchell's *Elements of Argument*, 8th (2006);
- and from Pearson, William Palmer and Dean Memering's *Discovering Arguments: An Introduction to Critical Thinking and Writing*, 2nd (2005);

and John D. Ramage, John C. Bean, and June Johnson's *Writing Arguments*, 7th (2007).

Each of these textbooks includes one or more of the following characteristics that identify them as Aristotelian in their conception and presentation of rhetoric: focus on persuasion, instruction in formal logic, attention to enthymeme and to deductive and inductive reasoning, introduction to rhetorical triangle, instruction in the technical means of persuasion (logos, pathos, ethos). In most cases, these textbooks do not present a "pure" version of Aristotle's rhetoric but have adopted Stephen Toulmin's[3] version, expanded from Aristotle's. Still, the basis for current instruction using these textbooks derives from ancient Greece, whether it is identified as such or not. The point is this: rhetorical theory as formulated by the ancients, especially Aristotle, impacts how composition is taught today, at least in selective ways[4]. While it is not unusual to find composition textbooks that instruct in Aristotelian rhetoric, especially those books which focus on argumentation, it is difficult to find more than a cursory mention of ethos as one of the technical triad, usually with greater emphasis given to logos and pathos. One has to wonder why, especially since other aspects of ancient rhetoric have been adopted and followed enthusiastically. But before speculating about the reasons for the minimization or exclusion of ethos, we should examine how the

[3] In *The Uses of Argument*, Stephen Toulmin proposes an elaboration of Aristotelian argument. Less formal and more easily adaptable to contemporary rhetorical situations, the Toulmin schema places greater emphasis on rhetor-audience relationship and interaction.

[4] Susan Jarratt emphasizes Aristotle's dominance in contemporary composition instruction, pointing out that Corbett and Kinneavy, two theorist teachers with wide-spread influence "rely directly on Aristotle in making available for the first time to twentieth-century composition teachers a fully developed history and a theory of rhetoric. Even when Aristotle is not the center of a work, the application of tools such as the tripartite division of persuasive techniques (logos, ethos, and pathos) or the communication triangle index his influence" (xvii).

ancients thought about it, what they had to say about what ethos is and its relevance in persuasion.

Classical Conceptions of Ethos

The conception of ethos, even in antiquity, has not been stable. Although the major rhetoricians who wrote or spoke about the character of the rhetor—Isocrates, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian—agreed that ethos is important and agreed that it had something to do with the character of the speaker or writer, they did not agree about its constitution. This review outlines the dominant early conceptions of ethos and their distinctions in order to both stabilize the term and introduce contradictions and problems in conceptualizing ethos.

In general, conceptions of ethos in classical rhetoric have the following similarities:

1. Ethos is a means of persuasion located in the character of the rhetor.
2. Ethos is important in effective discourse.
3. It may be constructed for the moment of discourse, but true character resides in a person and is more than a momentary construction.
4. The idea of ethos, its deployment, and its reception are connected to the *polis*.
5. Ethos can be developed through education.

The Importance of Ethos in Classical Rhetorical Training

In his plan for educating the perfect orator, Isocrates emphasizes the importance of good character in the man[5] who desires to be persuasive. His plan for educating the boys of Athens, outlined in *Against the Sophists* and more fully articulated in *Antidosis*, includes training of mind (philosophy) and body (gymnastics). At the heart of Isocrates' pedagogy is instruction in the art of discourse, not simply training to make speeches but training to "think right," for "the man who wishes to persuade people will not be negligent as to the matter of character" (*Antidosis* 278). This concept initiates the notion realized most famously by Quintilian=s requirement that an orator be a good man speaking well. Both George Kennedy (33) and Kathleen Welch (123) attest to the evolution of this idea from Isocrates through Cicero to Quintilian.

Aristotle, within the same century as Isocrates' *Antidosis*, systematized rhetoric and classified ethos as one of the artistic *pisteis*, a means of persuasion "prepared by method and by 'us'" (Aristotle I.2.2 1355a). He explains: "[There is persuasion] [sic] through character whenever the speech is spoken in such a way as to make the speaker worthy of credence; for we believe fair-minded people to a greater extent and more quickly [than we do others] [sic] on all subjects in general and completely so in cases where there is not exact knowledge but room for doubt" (I.2.4 1356a). In *De Oratore*, Cicero, too, addresses the power of the apparent character of the rhetor: "It is of peculiar advantage that indications of good-nature, of liberality, of gentleness, of piety, of grateful feelings, free from selfishness and avarice, should appear in him" (II. 43).

[5] "Man" here is not intended to be the androcentric but universalized "man" identifying both male and female humans; it is limited here as it was in ancient Greece and Rome to mean a male citizen.

Quintilian claims in *Institutio Oratoria* that his interest is in "the education of the perfect orator"[6] and claims that "[t]he first essential for such an one is that he should be a good man, and consequently we demand of him not merely the possession of exceptional gifts of speech, but of all the excellences of character as well" (I.9-10). In the case of our four key classical rhetoricians, then, there is agreement about the importance of the speaker's apparent character. What is not made clear by the previous quotations taken out of context, however, is the variation in how these four see the constitution of character.

Being and Seeming: The Construction of Ethos in Classical Rhetoric

Although Isocrates, Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian contend that the character of the rhetor is an important means of persuasion, their beliefs about how character is constituted and deployed differ, not in substance but in degrees, and these differences raise interesting questions about what ethos is, whether it is constructed for the moment of discourse or is derived from the virtue (or lack of virtue) of the rhetor. Must a rhetor *be* or simply *seem* virtuous, trustworthy, credible? For Isocrates, ethos is constituted by the actual character of the rhetor, not by the apparent ethos created for the moment of the discourse but the consistent character of the speaker as he lives his life. Indeed, Isocrates asserts that the "argument which is made by a man's life is of more weight than that which is furnished by words [. . .]" (*Antidosis* 278). Isocrates demonstrates a

[6] The idea of educating the "perfect" orator is not new with Quintilian. We can see the same in Isocrates' plan for training the perfect orator and in the interest Cicero expresses in the subtitle of *De Oratore: On the Ideal Orator*.

model ethos in *Antidosis*, his autobiographical oration.[7] This text is an appropriate site for investigating Isocrates' views on ethos for several reasons: first, because its stated purpose is to reveal his character--Isocrates writes that his intent is Ato compose a discourse which would be, as it were, a true image of my thought and of my life@ (*Antidosis* 7); second, because within *Antidosis*, Isocrates includes passages from several of his other texts, providing us with a broad range of his work over time; third, because in this text he lays out his beliefs about education, his primary area of concern and the activity into which his ethos is most characteristically applied; fourth, because this text, though written, is crafted as a speech, so Isocrates's voice is clear—this is not a distant ethos proclaiming from on high but the voice of a human speaking to other humans. Beginning with the opening passage of this text, he reveals his character, making his audience fully aware of his presence:

> If the discourse which is now about to be read had been like the speeches which are produced either for the law-courts or for oratorical display, I should not, I suppose, have prefaced it by any explanation. Since, however, it is novel and different in character, it is necessary to begin by setting forth the reasons why I chose to write a discourse so unlike any other; for if I neglected to make this clear, my speech would, no doubt, impress many as curious and strange. (*Antidosis* 1)

[7]Werner Jaeger observes that *Antidosis* is the Afirst real example of autobiography@ (133). Although this text is considered autobiography, it is a defense Isocrates wrote to a fictional situation he created in response to "mistaken ideas" about him (*Antidosis* 6).

From the first sentences of this text, we are aware of the voice Isocrates has constructed, through his use of first person pronouns, of course, but also through the ethos he communicates. Even in this short passage, Isocrates appears to be knowledgeable about rhetoric—he understands the demands of various rhetorical situations, and he makes clear that this situation is different from others. And he is concerned about audience reception—he does not want them to find his style inappropriate. Throughout *Antidosis*, Isocrates presents himself as a humble, elderly man confronted with a difficult task, more than once drawing attention to his advanced age, pointing out that he is Ano longer in the prime of youth but in [his] eighty-second year,@ asking forgiveness for his speech appearing Aless vigorous@ than it was in the past (9), and expressing concern that he cannot, at his advanced age, do justice to the important subjects of this defense: "to protect myself from my accuser and to champion the cause of liberal education@ (176, 178). His references to age here both demonstrate his modesty and establish that he is to be respected because of his advanced maturity.

Isocrates crafts an ethos that may be characterized as reasonable, even-handed. This can be seen especially in his treatment of the Sophists. While he distances himself from them, he defends them as well, pointing out that they have had good results: their students, he says, Ahave not been duped nor affected as [the detractors] claim, but that some of them have been turned out competent champions and others able teachers@ (204). A reasonable ethos, such as this one crafted by Isocrates, has persuasive capabilities that a less even-handed and simplistic presentation would not in this circumstance. Isocrates points out that he is humble, reasonable, consistent, and

honest— all characteristics that suggest a model, an ideal, persuasive character for this moment of discourse. Still, his purpose is to defend himself against his detractors, and the subject of *Antidosis* is his character as he lives his life. Isocrates models character construction for a specific discourse, making clear that he is fashioning his character to the demands of the rhetorical situation, even though the situation is manufactured, but he also provides ample examples from his life to demonstrate the worthiness of his character. The significance of Isocrates' application of his ideas about character is that while he is able to construct an ethos appropriate and appealing to the rhetorical situation, he not only argues but demonstrates that character resides within the rhetor, that the character on display is a representation of the virtue developed within the person.

The question of whether ethos is a surface construction or the result of moral development apparently interested Cicero as well. In *De Oratore*, there are instructions on how to demonstrate character but also exhortations about the importance of virtue. The following passage is an excellent example of how Cicero sees the relationship. First, Cicero's Antonius explains the value of the rhetor's actual character:

> It contributes much to success in speaking that the morals, principles, conduct, and lives of those who plead causes, and of those for whom they plead, should be such as to merit esteem, and that those of their adversaries should be such as to deserve censure; and also that the minds of those before whom the cause is pleaded should be moved as much as possible to a favorable feeling, as well toward the speaker as toward him

> for whom he speaks. The feelings of the hearers are conciliated by a person's dignity, by his actions, by the character of his life; particulars which can more easily be adorned by eloquence if they really exist, than be invented if they have no existence. (II.43)

He goes on to describe the manner a persuasive speaker must adopt:

> But the qualities that attract favor to the orator are a soft tone of voice, a countenance expressive of modesty, a mild manner of speaking; so that if he attacks any one with severity, he may seem to do so unwillingly and from compulsion. It is of peculiar advantage that indications of good-nature, of liberality, of gentleness, of piety, of grateful feelings, free from selfishness and avarice, should appear in him; and every thing that characterizes men of probity and humility, not acrimonious, nor pertinacious, not litigious, nor harsh, very much conciliates benevolence, and alienates the affections from those in whom such qualities are not apparent. (II.43)

Cicero addresses the distinction between seeming and being by alternating between the two. He emphasizes the value of being, yet he returns to instructions on what kinds of voice, countenance, and manner are persuasive. As the passage continues, Antonius explains how to describe the people whose causes the orator represents—"just, full of integrity, religious, unpresuming, and patient of injuries"—and claims that "such a description [. . .] has so much influence, if it is agreeably and judiciously managed, that it often prevails more than the merits of the cause" (II. xliii. 133). Cicero understood

the power of appearances. Indeed, according to James M. May in "Ciceronian Oratory in Context," the character of the orator was a powerful influence for the people of Rome:

> A people who built their history on the deeds of great forebears, a people for whom traditional virtues and the *mos maiorum* had become almost a kind of religion, a people who were bound by the close ties of the client-patron relationship, and to whom personal authority (*auctoritas*) was of utmost concern, were certain to be influenced in their decisions by the force of individual character. Cicero well-appreciated the great potential that proof based on character (ethos) offered the orator for persuading a Roman audience [. . .]. (60)

Just as Isocrates demonstrates the ability to create an appropriate, appealing character for the moment of discourse, Cicero instructs rhetors to consider how they will appear to their audiences, but that is not all: for Cicero, eloquence is not possible without knowledge and good judgment. Crassus tells Antonius that "eloquence is one of the most eminent virtues" and that "the greater is its influence, the more necessary it is that it should be united with probity and eminent judgment for if we bestow the faculty of eloquence upon persons destitute of these virtues, we shall not make them orators, but give arms to madmen" (III.15). For Isocrates and Cicero, then, ethos includes both being and seeming, yet this final passage from Cicero points up a serious concern: is it possible for a disreputable, even evil, person to be eloquent and persuasive? Crassus

indicates that it is and expresses his concern about teaching someone without virtue to be eloquent.

This dilemma of educating someone with less than virtuous character towards persuasiveness is articulated later by Quintilian as well. Although he reiterates throughout *Institutio Oratoria* the importance of the character of the rhetor and the necessity that character reside in the person rather than in the moment of discourse, he seems, like Cicero's Crassus, to be troubled by the question of whether a person without virtue can be eloquent. Although he addresses this question earlier in the *Institutio*, he struggles with it in the last chapter, where he admits that it "is by far the most arduous portion of the task which I have set myself to perform" and contends that "there can be nothing more pernicious than eloquence to public and private life alike" (XII.i.1). He deals with this idea of pernicious eloquence basically by dismissing it. He says quite simply that a person without virtue cannot be an orator. His practical reason is that people with evil desires, because they are so busy following their passions, cannot find the time to devote themselves to the study necessary to becoming orators. His argument falters, though, as he progresses through the passage, when he strikes out at those who might raise the question: "let me assume the existence of a man so obstinately blind to the truth as to venture to maintain that a bad man equipped with the same talents, industry and learning will be not a whit inferior to the good man as an orator; and let me show that he too is mad" (XII.i.10). If we are looking to Quintilian—and well we should since he addresses ethos at length, more than Isocrates, Aristotle, or Cicero—to resolve for us the issue of whether ethos resides in discourse or in the person of the

rhetor, we will not be rewarded. This happens (or fails to happen) for several reasons. First, Quintilian contradicts himself. He goes so far as to say that the man is the argument. In fact, he declares that a good man making false statements is more convincing than a bad man can be, and he argues that even bad men who masquerade as good are eventually exposed, that they cannot maintain the manufactured ethos. Interestingly, though, he addresses the ethos of Cicero and Demosthenes, pointing out that they were both believed by many to be less than virtuous. Although he begins by saying that he does not believe the claims against them are strong enough to take seriously, he ends his judgment of Cicero by locating his character in his words, not in his lived life: "the best answer to these critics is to be found in his own words [. . .]" (XII. i. 14). This faltering argument loses additional credibility when Quintilian reminds us that his subject is the "perfect orator" and that, though he has said and will continue to say that Cicero was a perfect orator, he hedges, saying that

> had [Cicero] been granted longer life and less troubled conditions for the composition of his works, [he] would doubtless have spoken better still. I shall not lay myself open to the charge of ungenerous criticism, if I say that I believe that he failed actually to achieve that perfection to the attainment of which none have approached more nearly [. . .]." (XII.i.22)

Finally, Quintilian reminds us that his task is molding the perfect orator, not simply an eloquent rhetor, and reiterates that even if a bad man could be eloquent, he could not be considered an orator.

One interesting element of this last chapter of the *Institutio* is the dissolution of Quintilian's carefully constructed ethos. As he presents his instructions for rhetorical education earlier in the text, his ethos is characterized by his generous consideration of the rhetoricians who have come before him, his concern that his methods be fully understood, and his careful attention to the details of his concepts. In this final chapter, however, Quintilian's distress is made obvious by the multiple failed attempts to arrive at a reasonable conclusion about the relationship between the actual character of the rhetor and the ethos constructed for the moment of discourse. In *The Electronic Word: Democracy, Technology, and the Arts*, Richard Lanham notes Quintilian's dilemma and how he dispatches it, side-stepping the issue and indicating that of course oratory must be good because he has dedicated his life to it:

> [H]e reflects that if oratory serves only to empower evil (*si vis illa dicendi malitiam instruxerit*) then what has he spent his life doing? And not only that, what has nature done to us, if she allows something like that? Turned language, man's best friend, into a potential enemy? To confront this question honestly would imperil his entire endeavor and so, with that genial resolution which illustrates his sweet nature throughout the *Institutio*, he assumes the answer he wants and then goes on to bolster it with inventively adapted Platonism. (155)

Despite his lack of resolution on this issue, Quintilian placed great faith in the process of rhetorical instruction and study, seeing this process itself as a way to improve the man. Such faith in rhetorical instruction is not new with Quintilian. Isocrates

especially valorizes instruction in speaking well, for "when anyone elects to speak or write discourses which are worthy of praise and honour, it is not conceivable that he will support causes which are unjust or petty or devoted to private quarrels, and not rather those which are great and honourable, devoted to the welfare of man and our common good" (*Antidosis* 337 - 39). It is in the *desire* to persuade that Isocrates locates virtue in discourse, for this interest in persuasion necessitates the rhetor's use of the best materials, "those examples which are the most illustrious and the most edifying" (*Antidosis* 339). And the process of learning the examples and working with them in order to persuade improves the rhetor himself: "habituating himself to contemplate and appraise such examples, he will feel their influence not only in the preparation of a given discourse but in all the actions of his life. It follows, then, that the power to speak well and think right will reward the man who approaches the art of discourse with love of wisdom and love of honour" (*Antidosis* 339). Isocrates, Cicero, and Quintilian clearly wrestled with a crucial dilemma in understanding ethos—the problem of being versus seeming. Their lack of resolution in this matter is testament to the difficulty of the issue.

In this discussion so far, I have held Plato in abeyance. His works do not reference the character of the rhetor in the same ways as the works of the four thinkers included so far. On the surface and with limited reading of Plato, one might dismiss his thoughts on rhetoric as simply immaterial to any consideration of ethos. I contend, though, that through Plato's works, specifically *Gorgias* and *Phaedrus*, the problems of being and seeming are both heightened and eliminated, a paradox for certain, but one

which underscores the dilemma that has confronted and continues to confront rhetoricians. Plato's concern is the perfection of the soul. His distaste for rhetoric, in fact, derives from those concerns: he sees the men who call themselves rhetoricians more interested in persuasion than in the search for truth. In both *Gorgias* and *Phaedrus*, his Socrates vigorously condemns rhetoric for what he sees as its neglect of the soul.

Plato's strongest condemnations of rhetoric appear in *Gorgias*, where Socrates claims that it is a "knack" like "cookery" which simply produces "gratification and pleasure" (462). In this dialogue, Socrates bases his distaste for rhetoric on the ability of orators to speak persuasively without knowledge: they can create the appearance of knowledge and create belief in their audiences. The distinction between belief and knowledge parallels our dilemma in defining ethos, the distinction between seeming and being. Plato clearly endorses knowledge and being, rejecting any value in believing and seeming. Even though Plato sustains the emphasis on knowing and being, his discussion of rhetoric in *Phaedrus* is less polemical. While in *Gorgias* he suggests that dialectic is so far superior to rhetoric that they cannot be compared, in *Phaedrus*, he treats rhetoric with greater respect, acknowledging that it can be related to philosophy. Ramsey Eric Ramsey, in "A Hybrid Techne of the Soul" provides an interesting reading of *Phaedrus,* asserting that "[f]rom a certain hermeneutic position, the whole of the *Phaedrus* can be read as Plato's dealing with the ramifications of the relation between philosophy and rhetoric" (256). He claims that *Phaedrus* suggests the importance of rhetoric, that "Plato recognizes that he cannot do without rhetoric any more than

rhetoric can do without philosophy [. . .] . [He] recognized that his metaphysics and his concerns for justice mean little in the silence of a world without discourse, regardless of how many dangers rhetoric might raise in its wake" (257). Indeed, it is difficult to take Plato's disdain for rhetoric or writing too seriously since he excelled in using them. George Kennedy calls Plato a "consummate rhetorician" and says that "[n]o dialogue of Plato is untouched by rhetoric [. . .]" (*Classical Rhetoric* 42). Indeed, Plato's means of instruction towards perfection of the soul relied heavily on the use of rhetoric.

For Plato, there would never be a question about the location or development of ethos; such a consideration would be of no use because, for him, true discourse resides in the desire for wisdom, the understanding of beauty and justice. As Socrates and Phaedrus discuss the difference between rhetoric and dialectic, Socrates characterizes rhetoric as formal, merely a set of devices and arrangements learned in the service of persuasion, and points out to Phaedrus that these practices can be used for good or ill, to "make trifles seem important and important things seem trifling through the power of [. . .] language" (267). He asserts that for rhetoricians, "a man who is going to be a competent speaker need have nothing at all to do [. . .] with truth about just or good conduct, or indeed about just and good men, whether they are so by nature or by education. In the courts, they maintain, nobody gives a damn about the truth in these matters; all they care about is what is plausible—that is to say, what is probable [. . .] ." (272). We can surmise, then, that Plato's view is that ethos constructed artificially for persuasive purposes is evidence only of the immorality of rhetoric. For Plato's Socrates, the key to the "true art of rhetorical persuasion" is "knowledge and practice"

(269), and this practice requires a "loftiness of mind that by all means and at all times strives to attain perfection" (270). Without a desire for wisdom and an understanding of the soul, no discourse is worthy of consideration.

The purported point of this dialogue between Socrates and Phaedrus is to evaluate a speech by Lysias. At the end of the dialogue, to sum up, Socrates says he and Phaedrus, in their discourse about the speech, have made clear how speech might be considered art: it must, according to Socrates, meet a high standard regarding knowledge: "[a] man must first know the truth about every single subject on which he speaks or writes." He goes on to give advice to

> Lysias and all the other prose writers, and Homer and all the other poets who write to be recited or sung; and, in the third place Solon and all the other writers who compose political tracts under the name of laws: 'If a man composes his work with the full knowledge of the truth and can come to the aid of what he has written when he is challenged and has the power to demonstrate from his own mouth the poverty of his writings, he ought not to be designated by a name drawn from them, but by one that indicates his serious pursuits' (278).

According to Socrates, the appropriate title for someone like this is not rhetor or rhetorician but "lover of wisdom" (74, 278). There is no question, then, about where Plato locates the ethos: it is in the person rather than in the moment of discourse. If the rhetor's purpose is truth, then he can do nothing but *be* the ethos he portrays.

Though this discussion of Plato may seem to have meandered from our original question about ethos, it speaks directly to it. In the theories of ethos constructed by key figures in the histories of rhetoric, we uncover a significant problem in working with ethos: the distinction between being of good character or seeming to be of good character. While Cicero and Quintilian wrestled with this problem, they were unable to bring it explicitly to solid ground one way or the other. In Plato, however, we find a rich view of ethos by examining his evolving discourses about rhetoric. Although it has the power to deceive, to please, to create opinion and belief, rhetoric can be valued when it works toward the good, toward knowledge and justice, toward improving the soul. Mediating between Plato and our other ancient thinkers, Isocrates' view that rhetorical education itself and the desire to persuade move the student toward wisdom and good character demonstrates a faith in teachers and education that may appear overarching; still, it seems a reasonable solution to a deeply contested philosophical-rhetorical question.

This view of ethos instruction, though it helps resolve the dilemma our other ancient rhetoricians presented, complicates it. Constructing ethos for the moment of discourse and teaching ethos as a temporary construction would be far easier than dealing with lived character. Because my interests are pedagogical, any theory of ethos has value for this project only if it can be applied in the classroom, but the Platonic view of ethos and the Isocratean faith in education raise the challenges and stakes of teaching ethos. How can we balance the practicalities of twenty-first-century higher education and improvement of the soul? Put more specifically, what does writing instruction have

to do with developing virtue and wisdom in students? How can we possibly have the kind of faith in our and our students' motives that Isocrates had in his? Perhaps looking at how the ancients viewed rhetorical education is a place to begin.

One thing that unites our key figures—Isocrates, Aristotle, Quintilian, Cicero, and Plato—is that they were all interested in educating the next generation. Aristotle, Isocrates, Plato, and Quintilian had their own schools; Cicero, though not a teacher per se, instructed through his orations, letters, and longer works such as *De Inventione* and *De Oratore*. All these important rhetoricians wrote with the purpose of instructing, and they all viewed education as a significant step towards creating or improving the state. All saw training in philosophy or rhetoric or both as essential in the training of an effective citizenry, and what one might call "character development" figures into this training.

Although Isocrates had a school, a very successful and long-lived school, he taught through his speeches and writing as well. His ethos is demonstrated most clearly, perhaps, through his pedagogical beliefs and practices. He was, as Richard Leo Enos claims, "without question the most illustrious teacher of his day" (113).[8] We can see his tendency toward teaching behaviors even as he presents his case in *Antidosis*, guiding his audience toward the reception of his speech:

> But I urge all who intend to acquaint themselves with my speech, first, to make allowance, as they listen to it, for the fact that it is a mixed discourse, composed with an eye to all these subjects; next, to fix their

[8] Many other scholars, including Cheryl Glenn, Werner Jaeger, and H. I. Marrou also assert the primacy of teaching in Isocrates' life.

> attention even more on what is about to be said than on what has been said before; and lastly, not to seek to run through the whole of it at the first sitting, but only so much of it as will not fatigue the audience. For if you comply with this advice, you will be better able to determine whether I speak in a manner worthy of my reputation. (12)

In asking his audience to delay judgment (17) and to hear him "with good will" (28), he both instructs them in critical thinking and promotes his cause for exoneration.

Isocrates' impulse toward educating others may be seen also when he relates to the audience his deliberations over what to include in his defense: one consideration for him was to incorporate "matter which it would be well for young men to hear before they set out to gain knowledge and an education" (10). Ever aware that people are learning from his speech, he sets out to present valuable information; he also takes every opportunity to explain his points, digressing to elaborate on his thoughts. Jaeger maintains that these digressions provide us with insight into his teaching of both content and form: "Fortunately for us, he often expressed his views of his art and of his educational ideals; he often seized an opportunity to break off the thread of his argument, and to explain what he was saying, how he was saying it, and why" (55). Through the digressions and the supplementary texts as well as through the main text of *Antidosis*, Isocrates keeps the audience mindful of both his character and his methods and the relationship between the two.

It is in defending the accusations against his teaching that Isocrates presents his educational theory and the strongest arguments for his ethics. To the accusation that he

has corrupted young men, he responds that no one has ever been harmed by him, and, referring to Panegyricus, argues that instead he inpires young men "to a life of valour and of dangers endured for their countey" (*Antidosis* 60). This conflation of patriotism and education takes us to the heart of Isocrates' pedagogy, for it is through his teaching that he believes he can best assist Athens. He believes that the health of the state is related directly to the quality of education (174); his goal is to make "better men" (185) so Athens will have able leaders and citizens. Jaeger contends that "he wished to educate statesmen who could give new direction to the efforts of the misguided masses and to the politics of the Greek states [. . .]" (51-52). For Isocrates, the key to such influence was the emphasis on values in his pedagogy. He was convinced that cultivating the power of persuasion helps students to know the good and the bad, the just and the unjust; he says that "the power to speak well is taken as the surest index of a sound understanding, and discourse which is true and lawful and just is the outward image of a good and faithful soul" (255). Through his rhetorical education, then, he envisioned training young men toward the truth and justice necessary for their work as valuable and worthy citizens.

Antidosis allows us to examine Isocrates' construction of his ethos, but if we adopt his view that "a man's life is of more weight than that which is furnished by words," we need to look outside his texts to evaluate his ethos, and we can do so by examining what scholars have determined about his contributions. Repeatedly, in texts that reflect the scholarship on Isocrates, we can find references to the influence he had on rhetorical education (Glenn; Kennedy; Jaeger; Marrou; Welch). The greatest

distinction bestowed on Isocrates by scholars, though, is that he established educational theories and practices maintained through the ensuing centuries, many of them still respected today. Although Marrou says that naming him "Father of Humanism" overstates the case, he does assert that it was Isocrates, not Plato, who was responsible for the education of Greece in the fourth century, that he was indeed responsible for the emphasis on poetics in Western education (79-80), and that in addition to inspiring our pedagogical tradition of imitating literary models (84), Isocrates changed the face of oratory (81). Other scholars agree that Isocrates had enormous influence on humanistic education,[9] in part because of his emphasis on values. Welch explains that the reputation of his school is better than the schools of other Sophists because of this emphasis on values (123), and Cheryl Glenn summarizes the connection among rhetoric, values, and patriotism in Isocrates' influential theory of education:

> [H]is confidence in the power of words was the wellspring of what would become humanist scholarship. He undertook to saturate his art with a content of real values, for his eloquence had a distinct civic and patriotic purpose, and his students were to be citizen-orators. As such, his sophistry, his educational system with its sound moral influence and its rhetorical base, was a system of general culture. (35)

In examining Isocrates' ethos as presented through his own discourse and through his lingering reputation, we see a man with the kind of character he required of persuasive

[9] Richard Leo Enos refers to Isocrates as the "founder of humanism" (84), Werner Jaeger contends that "it is perfectly correct to describe him . . . as the father of 'humanistic culture'" (46), and Kathleen Welch says the he is commonly known as "one of the founders of the liberal arts" (118).

rhetors.[10] But the question remains: must a rhetor be or simply seem to be virtuous, trustworthy, credible? The ancients repeatedly conflate the two despite their assertions that "the arguments made by a man's life" (*Antidosis* 278), "the morals, principles, conduct, and lives of those who plead causes" (*De Oratore* II.43), and "excellences of character" (*Institutio Oratoria* I.9-10) are of prime importance in creating ethos. Underlying this emphasis on lived life is the assumption that audiences *can* know rhetors' lives. While it is possible that Isocrates, Cicero, and Quintilian might have known the speakers they heard, at least by reputation, such familiarity with rhetors' lives is certainly less possible today. But that does not make ancient conceptions of ethos unreasonable for us to include in composition instruction; determining the quality of a rhetor's life was, for these ancient rhetoricians, far more complex than simply

[10] Examining Isocrates' character from a twenty-first century perspective, however, complicates our reception of his ethos. Several of his ideas signal warnings that his character may not be so widely accepted today as worthy of respect. For one, it is difficult for some educators to accept his notion that "natural ability is paramount and comes before all else" (*Antidosis* 189). Today, we have a more egalitarian attitude about what students must bring to the educational enterprise; Isocrates would have most assuredly refused education to students we regularly accept into academia. This notion of the primacy of natural ability rests in the belief that certain rights are established by physis, that natural law determines and regulates, among other things, who can be educated. We can observe in several of Isocrates' attitudes his uninterrogated acceptance of the demarcations drawn by physis. The absence of women in his texts, for example, is characteristic of this notion. When we read in Isocrates about students, forefathers, and citizens, we know he means only men, and we know that he was writing for an audience of men. The absence of women in his far-reaching texts indicates that within his idea of the polis, women were beneath regard, as was the cultural norm of his time. Knowledge about women in Athens indicates that there were clear distinctions between the roles of men and women and that these distinctions were based on the assumed inferiority of women. Both Sue Blundell and Sarah Pomeroy maintain that the primary value of women in ancient Greece was the production of citizens, that their chief role was to keep the state strong by providing legitimate heirs (Blundell 119; Pomeroy 60). This relegation of women to the role of citizen procreation resulted in concern over their sexuality: to ensure that only citizens were produced, women had to be isolated from other possible sexual liaisons, hence their restriction to the home and the harsh penalties for adultery. This certainly appears to be a political reason for the isolation of women, but like much political ideology, it is related to what is believed to be "true" and "natural." Today, this androcentrism and its accompanying misogyny seem not only out of date but wrongheaded, certainly not worthy of an ethos that is to be believed on other matters.

knowing him. Indeed, their estimation of virtue was entwined with rhetorical education.

To better understand this idea—that education improves character—we have to understand Greek education, its purpose and its place in Greek society, beginning with the Sophists, for, according to Werner Jaeger and H. I. Marrou, these teachers had enormous influence on the development of Greek education and on the idea that knowledge increased virtue. Both Jaeger and Marrou relate the development of education to the shift from aristocracy to democracy and the city-state's desire to have able leaders drawn from the citizenry. Marrou explains that education and political life were interdependent, that the Sophists' purpose was to train statesmen (50). Likewise, Jaeger reports that the shift from aristocratic leadership to a new politics necessitated educating young men to become able citizen leaders with areté, or excellence. Under the aristocracy, areté was believed to be transmitted through bloodlines; with the new city-state, however, a new way of training or discovering excellence was needed, and the Sophists provided the means—by educating Athens' new leaders (Jaeger 286-90). So the Sophists served the state in their work to train new leaders and established the belief that areté could be developed through education rather than through bloodlines. Isocrates, Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian, and even Plato are heirs to that concept. Throughout Isocrates' texts, we find evidence of his belief that education improves the man. In *Antidosis*, he explains the value of training the body and the mind, of providing structures for students to practice, and he finds the study of language to be most valuable:

> [Y]ou will find that among our public men who are living today or who have but lately passed away those who give most study to the art of words are the best of the statesmen who come before you on the rostrum, and, furthermore, that among the ancients it was the greatest and the most illustrious orators who brought to the city most of her blessings. (313)

Here Isocrates is not referring to the ability to dazzle through public speech. Instead, he sees the process of learning to speak well as the means by which people gain strong, good character. For Isocrates, rhetorical education prepares worthy leaders because understanding and gaining control over discourse trains the mind toward excellence. In the lengthy passage which follows, we can see Isocrates' strong opinion that speech and wisdom are bound together:

> For in the other powers which we possess, as I have already said on a former occasion, we are in no respect superior to other living creatures; nay, we are inferior to many in swiftness and in strength and in other resources; but, because there has been implanted in us the power to persuade each other and to make clear to each other whatever we desire, not only have we escaped the life of wild beasts, but we have come together and founded cities and made laws and invented arts; and, generally speaking, there is no institution devised by man which the power of speech has not helped us to establish [. . .] . It is by this also that we confute the bad and extol the good. Through this we educate the ignorant and appraise the wise; for the power to speak well is taken as

> the surest index of a sound understanding, and discourse which is true and lawful and just is the outward image of a good and faithful soul. With this faculty we both contend against others on matters which are open to dispute and seek light for ourselves on things which are unknown; for the same arguments which we use in persuading others when we speak in public, we employ also when we deliberate in our own thoughts; and, while we call eloquent those who are able to speak before a crowd, we regard as sage those who most skillfully debate their problems in their own minds. And, if there is need to speak in brief summary of this power, we shall find that none of the things which are done with intelligence take place without the help of speech, but that in all our actions as well as in all our thoughts speech is our guide, and is most employed by those who have the most wisdom. (327-9)

Marrou contends that, with Isocrates, rhetorical education became instruction in ethics and development of morality: "[According to Isocrates, an orator] will naturally be led to choose [. . .] subjects which are most in conformity with virtue. Further still, he will necessarily be led to transmit the virtue of his words into his behaviour, his life; for the orator's entire personality is embodied in his speeches [. . .]" (88-89). So when we read Isocrates' passage in *Antidosis* asserting that the "argument which is made by a man's life is of more weight than that which is furnished by words [. . .] (278), we must understand that if the man demonstrates virtue in his life, it is most likely because he

has had training in oratory, that his understanding of and control over language derives from a process that has also improved his character.

Although it is common to posit philosophy and rhetoric against one another, especially in discussions of Plato, I argue that the rhetoricians we have considered here, even Plato, are united at base: the excellence of character required for persuasive rhetoric is developed through rhetorical education, through gaining knowledge—either through practicing dialectic or rehearsing excellent examples provided by the past. As Kate Ronald aptly asserts in "A Reexamination of Personal and Public Discourse in Classical Rhetoric," both rhetorical instruction and the classical conception of ethos

> worked in the spaces *between* personal and public life, go[ing] beyond simply persuading large crowds about matters of law and politics. It is possible, I think, to argue that classical pedagogy was fundamentally concerned with the student's mind at work, and the student's ability to see rhetoric as a way of learning, thinking, and acting in the world. In other words, classical rhetoric taught individual, intellectual responsibility, not simply through the imitation of received wisdom, nor with the sole aim of improving the polity. (37-38)

And I have to assume that contemporary teachers of composition and rhetoric hold to this same view, that our work can assist our students in gaining knowledge and skills that result in their becoming more responsible, more critical in their thinking. This strengthening of knowledge and intellectual responsibility most definitely supports

understanding the value of ethos and its development and can even, I dare to say, improve the lived lives of our students.

Ethos in Contemporary Composition and Rhetoric Instruction

The character of the rhetor was indeed an issue in classical rhetoric, and teaching it was at the center of education towards participation in the politics and government of Athens. With the renewed interest in classical rhetoric during the late twentieth century and with the scholarship that contributed to composition theory, we might expect that these recent appropriations of classical rhetoric in composition pedagogy would include a concern for the character of the rhetor. But we would be mistaken. While there has been renewed interest in many elements of classical rhetoric, especially in Aristotle's system, attention to ethos has resurfaced only minimally[11]. As pointed out earlier in this chapter, we find mention of ethos in some composition and rhetoric textbooks, but aside from those discussed in that passage, more than a brief mention of ethos in current books for undergraduate students is difficult to find.

A primary impetus driving my current project is my contention that ethos is not being adequately presented to composition students but should be. Supporting that claim, however, is difficult, for demonstrating absence of anything, specifically in this case an absence of instruction, is a challenge, especially when referring to how a particular piece of rhetoric is *not* included in composition classes throughout the United States. At the onset of this project, I had a strong sense, based on my experience

[11] Although composition pedagogy has not taken up or revived ethos, there has been some theoretical activity in recent years, most notably James S. and Tita French Baumlin's collection *Ethos: New Essays in Rhetorical and Critical Theory* (Dallas: SMU Press, 1994)

teaching, reading the literature of the field, attending conferences, participating in online discussions, being fully in the discipline, that ethos was for the most part ignored in composition and rhetoric classrooms. To determine if my perceptions were reasonable, I examined three sites likely to provide a more solid sense of whether ethos is part of composition instruction in the U. S. today. First, I gathered information about textbook use.[12] In addition, I examined the April 2000 Writing Program Administrators Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition. Finally, I investigated fourteen years of archives of the WPA-L (listserv for the Council of Writing Program Administrators) to find references to ethos. Although any one of these pieces of my research would alone be suspect, the triangulation of the three provides a strong indicator of materials available to composition administrators and instructors and, more important, the concerns they seem to have in their deliberations of the composition and rhetoric curriculum.

Data from MIR provided by Bedford/St. Martin's included the top-selling textbooks for 2005 in each of four categories: rhetoric textbooks, rhetorical readers,

[12] There are two problems with this part of my research: first, connecting textbook adoption to course outcomes and classroom practices is unreasonable. Textbooks do not, should not, drive course objectives, nor is there any reliable way to determine, without a large survey of the population of composition instructors, how or if adopted textbooks are used. Determining how ethos is addressed in composition courses by looking at widely adopted textbooks would not provide the information I needed. It could be only one piece of the project. The second problem is that getting information about textbook adoptions can be expensive—either in dollars or in time. Data are not readily available through the standard lines of research. Checking publisher and retail websites for information about top sellers, wading through many college, university, and individual professor websites to find references to composition textbooks used in their classes, and searching for data from previous studies armed me with mounds of data that added up to nothing solid. Finally, I was able to obtain the 2005 *College Textbook National Market Report* by Monument Information Resource (MIR) from Bedford/St. Martin's. I greatly appreciate their generosity in providing this information; MIR charges $1600 for their reports.

complete handbooks, and brief handbooks. Table 1 includes the top three textbooks adopted for each category. As you can see, these data do not include textbooks focusing on argument and persuasion, so I visited Faculty Online, a site reporting some MIR data about "top sellers" for faculty to use in selecting textbooks. This site provides a list, from a sample of 1200 schools, of higher education faculty using specific texts. There are problems with these data, however: although the sample number is given (1200 schools), there is no indication how the sample was attained, nor is there information about which or what type of schools were polled; some titles are listed more than once with no indication of why or what the difference might be between the two (different edition, complete or short version, etc.); there is no information about how data were collected and no information about date or duration of data collection. Still, the information on the site does give an indication of the argument textbooks most widely sold, which indicates the ones with the highest adoption numbers.

Clearly my investigations of textbooks used in composition and rhetoric courses are not scientific; they are, indeed, limited. They do, however, provide a probability of what is available to composition students and what their instructors are adopting for use in their courses. I examined the following textbooks for their treatment of ethos:

- Axelrod and Cooper's *The St. Martin's Guide to Writing*, 7th –the top selling "rhetoric"
- Kriszner's *Patterns for College Writing: A Rhetorical Reader*, 9th—the top-selling "rhetorical reader"

- Fowler and Aaron's *The Little, Brown Handbook*, 9th—the top-selling complete handbook
- Hacker's *A Writer's Reference*, 5th—the top-selling brief handbook
- Hacker's *The Bedford Handbook*, 6th
- Lunsford, Ruszkiewicz, and Walters' *Everything's an Argument*, 4th—the top-selling argument textbook
- Ramage and Bean's *Writing Arguments*, 6th
- Barnet and Bedau's *Current Issues and Enduring Questions*, 7th

In searching these textbooks for concepts that approximate ethos, I did not limit target keywords to "ethos" but included other terms that sometimes stand in for it. As Nan Johnson points out in "Ethos and the Aims of Rhetoric," current texts refer to "'tone, 'writer's voice,' 'personal appeal,' 'attitude,' 'persona,' and 'credibility'" rather than the Greek term (112). Following her lead, then, I included those six terms in my search, plus I added another, "authority." After examining the table of contents for each book to discern specific chapters that would be likely to include instruction, information, or activities related to presentation of the writer's character, I checked the index for references to each of the terms listed above. The results of this search were interesting but, for the most part, not surprising. I expected to find few references to anything approximating ethos in the handbooks, and this proved to be the case, with one exception.

Fowler and Aaron's *The Little, Brown Handbook* provides students with a surprising number—far more than the other handbooks—of opportunities to at least

read about giving attention to how they portray their characters in their writing. The term "ethos" is never used, but Fowler and Aaron do include several passages on ethical appeals. Early in the text, in a section on audience, they provide "three key elements" that contribute to "pitching your writing to your audience." The list includes the following advice: "*The role you choose to play in relation to your readers*. Depending on your purpose and your attitude toward your topic, you will want readers to perceive you in a certain way. The possible roles are many and varied—for instance, scholar, storyteller, lecturer, guide, reported, advocate, inspirer" (11). This presentation is not problematized and is presented simply and briefly without further discussion. While this is certainly not a full discussion of the role of ethos in writing, it does introduce the idea that the writer's presentation of self, even if it is conceptualized as a "role," can be a significant contribution to writer-reader interaction.

Like many other writers of handbooks and textbooks, Fowler and Aaron include discussions of "tone," but their presentation addresses more than others: they go beyond saying simply that tone should be appropriate, pointing out that "[t]one is the expression of the writer's attitudes toward himself or herself, toward the subject, and toward the reader [. . .] . Tone can tell you quite a bit about the writer's intentions, biases, and trustworthiness" (152). This is followed by an example with commentary

Table 1

Top Three Composition/Rhetoric Textbooks and Handbooks in Each Category for 2005

Category	Textbook	Number sold[13]
Rhetoric	Axelrod, *The St. Martin's Guide to Writing* (Short), 7th ed. (Hardcover)	16, 141
	Axelrod, *The St. Martin's Guide to Writing* (Short), 7th ed. (Paperback)	15, 877
	Wyrick, *Steps to Writing Well with Additional Readings*, 6th	13,102
Reader, Rhetorical	Kriszner, *Patterns for College Writing: A Rhetorical Reader*, 9th	21,020
	Nadell, *The Longman Reader*, 7th	13, 716
	Kennedy, *The Bedford Reader*, 8th	7,820
Handbooks, Complete	Fowler, *Little, Brown Handbook*, 9th	14,081
	Hacker, *Bedford Handbook*, 6th	21,279
	Hodges, *Hodges' Harbrace Handbook*, 15th	12,397
Handbooks, Brief	Hacker, *A Writer's Reference*, 5th	65,061
	Hacker, *Rules for Writers*, 5th	39,656
	Raimes, *Keys for Writers*, 4th	17,547

Source: 2005 *College Textbook National Market Report* by Monument Information Resource (MIR).

[13] These data are unclear. The MIR report is laid out in such a way that these totals sold appear to be for used books; however, there are no numbers in the column headed "New Books." The prices listed per unit, however, seem closer to new book price than used.

Table 2

Top Selling Argument and Persuasion Textbooks

Textbook	Version or Edition	Number of Faculty Members in the Sample Who Have Adopted	Total of All Versions and Editions for Each Textbook
Lunsford, Ruszkiewicz, and Walters, *Everything's an Argument*	3rd	174	
	with Readings	308	482
Ramage and Bean, *Writing Arguments*	6th	153	
	3rd	43	
	Brief 6th	84	280
Barnet and Bedau, *Current Issues and Enduring Questions*	(edition not listed)	206	
	6th	13	219
Rottenberg, *Elements of Argument*	7th	137	
	8th	7	202

Source: http://www.mirdata.com/

about how the specific writer's tone is conveyed through word choice, a brief but excellent example of creating and deciphering tone.

Later in the book, in their chapter on writing argument, Fowler and Aaron present rational, emotional, and ethical appeals, explaining that an ethical appeal is "the sense you give of being a competent, fair, trustworthy person" (173). They instruct their readers that this sense can be created by presenting a sound argument,

acknowledging the opposition, demonstrating shared beliefs, and by avoiding language that is insulting or biased. Interestingly enough, they also point out that correctness in grammar, spelling, and sentence structure demonstrates competence.

Fowler and Aaron's instructions on reading critically include a passage about authority and how it is achieved differently in different cultures. They say that in the United States "authority tends to derive from study, learning, and experience: the more knowledge a person can demonstrate about a subject, the more authority he or she has" (148). Further instruction related to the concept of ethos is presented in several other passages in the book: using electronic mail, writing a business memo, questions for literary analysis, evaluating sources, and inappropriate appeals. Although I would not say Fowler and Aaron have given a full treatment to ethos, their inclusion of concepts important and related to understanding and constructing ethos exceeds other handbooks in number, frequency, and in depth of conceptualization.

Diana Hacker's two top-selling handbooks, *A Writer's Reference* and *The Bedford Handbook*, approach ethos in different ways and to different degrees. *A Writer's Reference* includes only one passage that refers to anything approaching ethos. In "Constructing Reasonable Arguments," the text focuses on (1) subject matter and context, (2) audience, and (3) writing an introduction that establishes credibility. Hacker writes, "In your introduction, establish credibility and state your thesis" (39). Here she explains that writers should establish credibility "[i]n the sentences leading up to the thesis [. . .]" (39) and includes a student-written paragraph to demonstrate how the writer "presents himself as someone worth listening to" by showing his knowledge,

his fair-mindedness, and the values he likely shares with his audience. Nowhere else in this handbook is there a reference to persona, voice, tone, or appeals.

The Bedford Handbook, however, provides teachers and students with more opportunities to think about such matters. In this text, Hacker includes passages on tone, credibility, and appeals to emotion. She refers to tone in three chapters: one on the writing process, one on document design, and one on MLA style, pointing out the importance of an appropriate tone in writing tasks from electronic communication to research papers. A basic but valuable opportunity for teachers and students to work with ethos can be found in Hacker's chapter on the writing process, where she includes a section on audience, explaining that "[t]he tone of a piece of writing expresses the writer's feelings toward the audience, so it is important to get it right. If the tone seems too self-centered—or too flippant, stuffy, bossy, patronizing, opinionated, or hostile—obviously it should be modified" (53, 56). She goes on to provide an example of student writing in which tone is improved through revising.

The passage in *The Bedford Handbook* on credibility is the same text as Hacker includes in *A Writer's Reference*, where she explains that credibility should be established in the sentences leading up to a thesis statement (494-495). In her chapter on critical thinking, though, Hacker addresses credibility through a discussion of evaluating emotional appeals in arguments. Clearly, the topic here is pathos, which she names, but the text opens the door to ethos because of Hacker's focus on the writer, on how fair he or she seems.

Not surprisingly, handbooks provide minimal opportunity to teach and learn ethos. Unfortunately, the textbooks commonly known as "rhetorics" fare little better. Perhaps the most disappointing presentation of anything that could be called ethos or one of its stand-ins was in Axelrod and Cooper's *The St. Martin's Guide to Writing*, 7th. Concepts related to ethos are presented in this textbook as either "credibility" or "authority." This text disappoints in its vague and sometimes circular explanations of the terms. For example, some of the statements are beyond useless, almost laughable: "Authorities are people to whom the writer attributes expertise on a given subject," "the believability of authorities depends on their credibility, on whether the reader accepts them as experts on the topic at hand" (605), and "authorities [. . .] must be authoritative—that is, trustworthy and reputable" (684). Although some of these "explanations" of the concepts are followed by interesting exercises or reminders, such as to pay attention to the writer's ideology and purposes (504-505), few are preceded by adequate instruction. One, for example, asks students to analyze how authorities are used in specific passages, all of which are isolated paragraphs in various essays. The amazing part of this assignment, though, is that it does not recommend a careful reading; instead, a parenthetical comment ends the assignment—"If you have not read the essays, take time to read or skim them" (685). One must wonder how much serious analysis can take place with such limited engagement with the texts. The result is the sense that even Axelrod and Cooper do not take these exercises—or the learning that should come from them—seriously.

As we might expect, textbooks that focus on argument provide more opportunities for learning about ethos. All three of the argument texts that I examined—Ramage and Bean's *Writing Arguments*; Lunsford, Ruszkiewicz, and Walters' *Everything's an Argument*; and Barnet and Bedau's *Current Issues and Enduring Questions*—treat ethos as a significant element of argument. Each text presents ethos as more than tone, more substantial than credibility, and more complex than a technique to use in appealing to an audience. Lunsford, Ruszkiewicz, and Walters, for example, include a chapter about ethos, "Arguments Based on Character," which opens with the example of John Kerry saluting as he accepted the nomination at the Democratic National Convention in 2004. They explain that by saluting, Kerry "was making an argument based on character, or ethos—the presentation of self that a writer or speaker brings to an argument" (61). A thorough discussion follows, asserting that individuals, groups, and organizations have ethos and that "[a]udiences clearly pay attention to ethos" (61). Throughout this discussion, the writers of this textbook include references to "self" and "identity," affirming that ethos is more than a mask or a tone of voice that writers put on for the moment of discourse. Although this text addresses how ethos is created for discourse, it is not a brief description of where credibility can be inserted into a text or an exhortation to befriend the audience. Instead, Lunsford, Ruszkiewicz, and Walters invite students to explore ethos carefully through the explanations presented in the text as well as through exercises and assignments. One exercise asks students to create a visual display that demonstrates an ethical argument. Another suggests that they "analyze the ethos of the authors and

editors of *Everything's an Argument* as they reveal themselves in this particular chapter" (75) by looking at language, examples, images, political and cultural attitudes, and it presses students to go beyond that analysis, asking them think about what they have discovered: "Does the chapter suggest a coherent ethos, or do you find inconsistencies that surprise or confuse you? Write a page describing the ethos and the appeal it does or doesn't have for you, being sure to offer specific evidence for your claims" (75). Finally, the chapter ends with a series of suggested exercises, all of them leading students to have a solid understanding of ethos and how it might be evidenced. In one exercise, students are asked to look carefully at public figures and how they might be persuasive in specific arguments; in another they are asked to rewrite some passages, giving attention to use of first-person pronouns, the way authority is claimed, credibility established, and competence demonstrated; in others they are encouraged to create images or ads with ethos in mind (76-77).

In addition to the chapter on ethos, the concept appears in the chapter "Thinking Rhetorically," which includes a sample paragraph with annotation about ethos, a chapter on fallacies, one on appealing to audiences, and one on visual arguments. An interesting inclusion in this textbook, the section "Visual Arguments Based on Character" explores what appearances say: "the point is that the visual rhetoric of any piece you create ought to be a deliberate choice, not an accident. Also keep control of your own visual image. In most cases, when you present an argument, you want to appear authoritative and credible" (424). The advice does not end there, however; students can also begin to think about subtle ways ethos can be created: "Consider how

design reflects your character" with attention to fonts, size of type, color, images, medium (425-426). Such attention to subtlety could be valuable in pressing students to think of ethos on multiple levels and in a variety of contexts. Lunsford, Ruszkiewicz, and Walters' presentation of ethos challenges students to understand it as it is used by other writers and speakers, to work with it as they do their own writing, and to be aware of it in their visual experience.

A more traditional approach to argument appears in Barnet and Bedau's *Current Issues and Enduring Questions*, and their presentation of ethos is explicitly Aristotelian. Although the approach to ethos in this textbook is not simplistic, it lacks attention to the subtleties included in *Everything's an Argument*. Because this text is more traditional, the focus is on written arguments rather than the wide range of persuasion that Lunsford, Ruszkiewicz, and Walters address. They never use language such as "identity" or even "character" in their explanations but approach ethos as a "suggestion" of intelligence, benevolence and honesty that writers convey through their discourse (238). With a nod to the distinction between—or conflation of—*being* and *seeming*, Barnet and Bedau insert that "[a]s the Roman proverb puts it, 'No one gives what he does not have.' Still possession of these qualities is not a guarantee that you will convey them in your writing" (238). In a further explanation of what they call the "writer's persona," they define it as "the way in which the writer presents his or her attitudes toward *the self*, [. . .] *the audience*, and [. . .] *the subject*" (239). Perhaps the most interesting and surprising twist in conceptualizing character appears in the section "Thinking about the Effects of Literature," where the authors emphasize the

significance literature can have on individual lives. While their discussions of rhetorical character suggest it is only a surface feature and leave readers with a pallid and flat notion of character, in the section on literature, "character" takes on flesh and blood. Barnet and Bedau weave literature and character together, acknowledging the depth to which readers' selves are implicated in the literary transaction:

> [A]lthough we may try to engage in [. . .] analysis as dispassionately as possible, we all know that inevitably we are not only examining something out there, but are also examining our own responses. Why? Because literature has an effect on us [. . .]. What about the *consequences of the effects* of literature? Does literature shape our character and therefore influence our behavior? It is generally believed that it does have an effect. (489-490)

Clearly, character is a concern of the authors of this text; still, aside from pointing out that it is important, Barnet and Bedau do little to assist students in their practice of creating persuasive character.

My investigation of first-year composition textbooks—handbooks, rhetorics, and argument texts—suggests that while ethos is addressed in some widely used books, scaffolding for instruction is flimsy. Instructors without an interest in helping their students understand the complexities and relevance of ethos in persuasive discourse would not be likely to address it, much less to assist their students in thinking about the power ethos wields over readers and writers or to help them understand how they are presenting themselves as they compose. Of course, textbook examination can reflect

what takes place in classrooms only minimally. To gain a more complete view of what guides composition courses, I examined the *WPA Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition*, developed and adopted by the Council of Writing Program Administrators, April 2000.

This document (provided in its entirety in Appendix A) is divided into five sections: "Introduction," "Rhetorical Knowledge," "Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing," "Processes," and "Knowledge of Conventions." The document is intended to "[describe] the common knowledge, skills, and attitudes sought by first-year composition programs in American postsecondary education [. . .] and to [articulate] what composition teachers nationwide have learned from practice, research, and theory." If we accept that this document does indeed articulate common knowledge, skills, and attitudes and reflects the practice, research, and theory of teachers, then we can surmise that ethos is not a pedagogical concern. In the section on rhetorical knowledge, where we would most likely find references to ethos, there are only two opportunities to include it in planning learning outcomes. The statement asserts that "[b]y the end of first year composition, students should [. . .] respond to the needs of different audiences [and] adopt appropriate voice, tone, and level of formality [. . .]." As we have seen before, rather than mention of the term ethos itself, the focus is on its stand-ins, voice and tone.

Most certainly, the outcomes statement does not in any way limit what instructors do in their course designs or classroom activities; it does, however, provide guidance for valuing specific pedagogical emphases. And outcomes related to

understanding or constructing ethos are absent. To further understand teachers' concerns and interests regarding ethos, I turned to the Writing Program Administrator Listserve (WPA-L) archives to find references to ethos and its stand-ins, voice, tone, and character. Aside from one lengthy string, "Onward Ethos," (and alternatively in some subject lines "Ethos, Logos, Pathos") from February 25 through March 3, 2001, the topic is not raised. In this particular string, however, seventeen participants address significant issues related to ethos. This lively exchange includes references to textbooks and scholarly essays where ethos is treated; discussions of rhetorical theory related to ethos that complicate and deepen the thread; personal comments and reflections on the contributors' own constructions and understandings of ethos; and references to instructional activities used in classrooms toward helping students understand and work with ethos. This online discussion indicates at least briefly a greater interest in teaching ethos than evidenced by current textbooks or the *WPA Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition*. Clearly, the people involved in this conversation consider instruction in ethos significant in teaching and learning composition. Still, uncovering only this one lengthy thread in the WPA-L archives suggests that such an interest is not widespread.

If instruction in ethos is a way teachers of composition and rhetoric can improve the effectiveness of their students' thinking and discourse and assist them in developing intellectual responsibility, it would seem an important focus in their course designs and classroom activities, yet my investigations have led me to conclude that such instruction is little valued or practiced. In the next chapter, I suggest reasons for this omission.

Chapter 2: Ethos in First-Year Composition

Efforts to shape composition pedagogy can confound at times: the field is so rich and varied that the means for reaching outcomes, even generally agreed upon outcomes, can take many paths. My claim that ethos should be included in teaching composition and rhetoric is only one suggestion among many. For me, it is a useful and focused way to approach key concepts and ways of thinking about writing, but the reasons other teacher-theorists have not lobbied for its inclusion are not difficult to discern. Theorizing ethos presents challenges, primarily in the context of the culture within which we and our students reside and its disciplining sensibilities, far different from the cultural sensibilities that disciplined ancient rhetoric.

As we have seen in examining how our five ancient rhetoricians conceived of ethos, a crucial concern centered on values, specifically how one might determine what is Good and True. In the intervening twenty-five hundred years, humans have continued to puzzle over whether we can trust in "ultimates," and, if so, what they are. One challenge of theorizing ethos relates directly to the complexity of shifting values and locations of values. As Nan Johnson points out, the study of rhetoric, because of its sensitivity to culture, must be a study of various conceptions of language, people, and culture. She suggests that learning how ethos is understood in a particular time necessitates investigating what constitutes the Good and the True in that time (99). The construction and effectiveness of a rhetor's ethos is of necessity related to the agreed upon values of the culture: a persuasive ethos requires both the rhetor and the audience to have a common understanding of what constitutes the moral and immoral, the just

and unjust. Following Johnson's lead, then, one move toward understanding how to situate ethos today is to determine the Good and the True in contemporary contexts.

Postmodern Sensibilities and The Good, the True, the Self

We can look to theories of postmodernism to help us understand contemporary sensibilities. Though theories of postmodernity, postmodernism, and the postmodern are complex, in the interest in time and space for this current rhetorical situation, I summarize and, of necessity, reduce: rather than elaborating on and complicating the wealth of commentary on postmodern theory, my current task is to extract qualities of postmodern experience and thought that are frequently recited as characteristic. To do so, I turn to four specific resources which provide excellent general discussions about the characteristics of postmodern thought and experience: Ihab Hassan's *The Postmodern Turn: Essays in Postmodern Theory and Culture*, David Harvey's *The Condition of Postmodernity*, Henry Giroux's *Border Crossings: Cultural Workers and the Politics of Education*, and Lester Faigley's *Fragments of Rationality: Postmodernity and the Subject of Composition*.

Referencing multiple writers (among them Kurt Godel, Thomas Kuhn, Paul Feyeraband, Mikhail Bakhtin, Roland Barthes, Wolfgang Iser, Paul de Man, Stanley Fish, Norman Holland, Jacques Derrida, David Bleich, Jean-Francois Lyotard), Hassan lists what he calls his "catena"—for our purposes here, a list of eleven keywords that outline the characteristics of postmodernism: indeterminacy, fragmentation, decanonization, selflessness (a vacating of the traditional self), unpresentability and

unrepresentability, irony, hybridization, carnivalization, performance and participation, constructionism, immanence (170-174). Both Hassan and Harvey make clear that modernism and postmodernism share traits, that the two cannot be distinguished solely by difference in characteristics but by difference in how those characteristics are received or communicated. While Harvey identifies fragmentation, ephemerality, chaotic change, transitoriness, and lack of historical continuity as characteristics of both modern and postmodern constructs of culture, he points out that the difference lies in the acceptance of such notions by postmodern thinkers in contrast to the modernist view that these are characteristics against which to struggle. He argues that postmodern sensibility can be characterized by "its total acceptance of the ephemerality, fragmentation, discontinuity, and the chaotic [. . .]. It does not try to transcend it, counteract it, or even to define the 'eternal and immutable' elements that might lie within it. Postmodernism swims, even wallows, in the fragmentary and the chaotic currents of change as if that is all there is" (44). The postmodern approach is to relax into the characteristics the modernist sensibility found frightening or abhorrent.

In his analysis of modernism and postmodernism, Giroux makes three points that can contribute significantly to our understanding of their complex relationship. He argues that definitions of modernism are subject to debate: "Not only is there a disagreement regarding the periodisation of the term, there is enormous controversy regarding to what it actually refers" (43). In elaborating on the conditions of modernism, he claims that certain elements of modernism have led to political change in both the West and other parts of the world. While struggles for equality and justice

have taken place on major fronts in other parts of the world, such as in Eastern Europe, they have moved to smaller fronts in the United States: "in the United States these are events that take place on the margins of civilization, related but not central to the political and cultural identity of the West except as mimesis" (41). Giroux sees these political moves as indication of "the exhaustion of those hierarchical and undemocratic features of modernism that produce state oppression, managerial domination, and social alienation [. . .]" (41). Despite the oppressive features of modernism, though, Giroux points to elements which have provided a legacy of possibility:

> In general terms, the political project of modernism is rooted in the capacity of individuals to be moved by human suffering so as to remove its causes, to give meaning to the principles of equality, liberty, and justice; and to increase those social forms that enable human beings to develop those capacities needed to overcome ideologies and material forms that legitimate and are embedded in relations of domination. (*Border Crossings* 46)

Giroux's insights challenge the impulse to reduce modernism or postmodernism to a list of characteristics. While he suggests, along with other theorists, that modernism does promote the European model of culture and thought and its attending elements "that represent the worst legacies of the Enlightenment tradition" (39), such as the emphasis on universality and the unified subject, he also defends elements of modernism that contribute to democratization and equality and explains postmodernism in relation to

the creations of modernism. Because his explanation of the rich interplay between modernist results and postmodern possibilities is valuable, I quote at length:

> As a discourse of plurality, difference, and multinarratives, postmodernism resists being inscribed in any single articulating principle in order to explain either the mechanics of domination or the dynamic of emancipation [. . .]. The value of postmodernism lies in its role as a shifting signifier that both reflects and contributes to the unstable cultural and structural relationships that increasingly characterize the advanced industrial countries of the West. The important point here is not whether postmodernism can be defined within the parameters of particular politics, but how its best insights might be appropriated within a progressive and emancipatory democratic politics.
>
> I want to argue that while postmodernism does not suggest particular ordering principle for defining a particular political project, it does have a rudimentary coherence [. . .]. Postmodernism raises questions and problems so as to redraw and re-present the boundaries of discourse and cultural criticism. The issues that postmodernism has brought into view can be seen, in part, through its various refusals of all 'natural laws' and transcendental claims that by definition attempt to 'escape' from any type of historical and normative grounding. In fact, if there is any underlying harmony to various discourses of postmodernism it is in their rejection of absolute essences. (51)

Giroux's reading of postmodernism focuses on the large scale and on the abstract. We must, however, also consider the effects of postmodernism on the quotidian, especially as it relates to our students and their lived experience.

For a glimpse of this postmodern world our students inhabit, I turn to Lester Faigley, who interrogates Jean Baudrillard to gain insights into the writing of college students. Despite criticism leveled against Baudrillard for his nihilism, Faigley finds him particularly enlightening because "students often sound very much like him" (212). So what does Baudrillard sound like? Like someone who understands the world to be fragmented and irrational, someone who, as Faigley says, "describes the United States as the center of what he calls 'hyperreality,' a condition where images, signs, and codes no longer represent reality but in effect constitute reality, becoming 'more real than real'" (164). Baudrillard sounds like someone who has watched the evening news, MTV, flipped through hundreds of cable channels, and met avatars on *Second Life*. He sounds like someone who has experienced New York, Los Angeles, and Las Vegas, like someone who has listened to talk radio, ten second commercials, rap and rock, read bumper stickers and tee shirt slogans. Our students have lived with this hyperreality most of their lives, watching "reality shows" on television, playing video games that increasingly appear "real," taking care of virtual pets, building virtual communities, even living virtual lives online.

Baudrillard finds that everything in our culture ridiculously mimics various elements of the past, that we paste disparate elements together into a ragged pastiche. Faigley characterizes Baudrillard's view of our place in the world: "Since we are at the

end of history, or as Baudrillard later qualified this statement, at the end of being able to talk about history, there is nothing left to do but 'play with the pieces' of the deconstructed universe" (210)—a disturbing image but one that touches the truth of what our students see enacted in the world, of how they themselves act in the world, a world whose chief characteristic is fragmentation rather than a sense of wholeness. Faigley's text was published in 1992, long before we saw the Balkanization of Eastern Europe and Western Asia, long before the wars that continue today, before the Internet became a staple in middle-class homes in the United States, before college students created and re-created themselves on facebook.com and myspace.com. His explication of the postmodern world à la Baudrillard, however, was prescient. The only difference today is perhaps in intensity: we have more images, more sites for images, more pieces to play with. And college students today are adept at playing with pieces. Their popular music includes sampling, putting pieces of existing recordings together to create new ones, and assembling mixes and playlists from existing recordings on their iPods. Personal web sites are pastiches of images and sounds their creators assemble, and both *MySpace* and *Facebook* facilitate uploading of photos, videos, and music to individuals' profiles, providing multiple opportunities for users to assemble disparate pieces of information about themselves—favorite music and movies, biographical information, status updates (what they're doing at the moment), links to favorite websites, and bulletins about events or a change in mood. The pieces available for play have increased exponentially and become more accessible to the general population than Baudrillard may have imagined.

Since 2001, Beloit College has annually published its Mindset List, a compilation of specific cultural and historical details that characterizes the world first-year college students have experienced. A selection of items from recent lists (2005 – 2008) includes items that underscore the ever present media and the resulting hyperreality in current college students' lives:

- They may have fallen asleep playing with their Gameboys in the crib.
- They have always been challenged to distinguish between news and entertainment on cable TV.
- Reality shows have always been on television.
- They have always been able to watch wars and revolutions live on television.
- They grew up with virtual pets to feed, water, and play games with, lest they die.
- Thanks to MySpace and Facebook, autobiography can happen in real time.
- They learned about JFK from Oliver Stone and Malcolm X from Spike Lee.
- High definition television has always been available.
- Virtual reality has always been available when the real thing failed.
- They get much more information from Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert than from the newspaper.
- Avatars have nothing to do with Hindu deities.
- The World Wide Web has been an online tool since they were born. (*Beloit College Mindset List* http://www.beloit.edu/mindset/2012.php)

Another text pointedly prescient of the world in 2008 is Henry Giroux's 1994 essay "Slacking Off: Border Youth and Postmodern Education," where he sketches the

world in which American youth live, a world with new population structures created by immigration, a world with a new economy based on shifting employment and massive unemployment, and he outlines the results:

> a general loss of faith in the modernist narratives of work and emancipation; the recognition that the indeterminacy of the future warrants confronting and living in the immediacy of experience; an acknowledgment that homelessness as a condition of randomness has replaced the security, if not misrepresentation, of home as a source of comfort and security; an experience of time and space as compressed and fragmented within a world of images that increasingly undermine the dialectic of authenticity and universalism [. . .]. ("Slacking Off" 8-9)

Baudrillard and Giroux provide for us a troubling but relevant view of life in our world, the world that our students interact with daily. If we agree with many theorists of both modern and postmodern culture that reality is a social construct, then we understand the impact of such a culture on thinking, and we can project that people living in such a world have a tendency to develop a sense that truth is relative and ephemeral, that nothing connects to anything else; they live without the sense of wholeness created by cultures that have truths to hold to and fewer choices. Young people today grow accustomed to operating and, thus, thinking within a fragmented world and to experiencing themselves as bits and pieces of identities they create as they participate in the multiple discourses of that world.

Following Nan Johnson's lead in locating the conception of ethos within a cultural context, we can project that, because the postmodern sensibility does not include central values or a universalized notion of the Good and True, rhetoric cannot be a means by which people can be trained to "think right" as Isocrates planned. In the absence of universally or even a narrower culturally acknowledged virtue, rhetoric cannot render its practitioners excellent in character, certainly not in the classical sense. The ethos of the postmodern rhetor, then, must be understood in terms of the fragmentation and chaos of contemporary life and thought.

In a world conceived of as ephemeral, fragmented, discontinuous, and chaotic, attempting to pin down a stable and lasting notion of what is Good or Real or True could be little more than masochistic exercise. With nothing whole or lasting, the possibility of establishing any immutable Good or Truth is impossible. Indeed, the attempt is antithetical to postmodernism. Harvey asserts that "[t]here is, in postmodernism, little overt attempt to sustain continuity of values, beliefs, or even disbeliefs" (56). So if rhetoric is sensitive to culture, and the culture in which we live functions within postmodern sensibilities, then rhetoric today operates within a system absent notions of universal or eternal Truth. Of course, remnants of the struggle to maintain a modernist faith in a universalized Truth remain, both in our culture at large and in composition pedagogy. This could explain, at least in part, how images of virtue have such power in our culture, how people can be willingly taken in by the appearance of morality without interrogating it, how the public seems to value even unsupported representations of character in both politics and popular culture. It does not require a

great leap of imagination to understand why, when our students' experience of the world tends to "feel" postmodern—with its pluralisms, skepticisms, fragmentations, its multiplicity of images and texts—they might cling to belief in a stability that cannot be supported. In our resistance to the psychic difficulties of postmodern life, we and our students may create classrooms feebly disciplined by modernist ideas and texts that none of us can believe in. Though we may at times yearn for the stability of universal and eternal Truth and unitary selves, we know better, and as we work with students as rhetors, we can see and feel and know the futility of specifying what makes a character—an ethos—good or true. Discerning effective ways to address ethos, ways we can believe in, can confound.

Further complicating the situation of ethos in contemporary culture are related conceptions of the self and subjectivity. Clearly, valuing instruction in ethos implies that there is a character, a self,[14] to be had, yet the postmodern view of the world posits a conception of self far different from the one which has dominated Western thought since the Enlightenment. Rather than being characterized as unitary, autonomous, the postmodern self is seen as fragmented, multiple, and fluid. In *Narrative Identities*, George Yancey ruminates in a very personal way on the disciplinary function of modernist conceptions of self and the difficulties they present in the face of postmodern sensibilities:

[14] I leave to others—primarily philosophers and psychologists—the detailing of differences among "self," "identity," and "subjectivity." They are complicated. Even theorists who have built their professional lives around the study of identity or the self or subjectivity disagree about distinctions among them. This will be addressed further in the discussion of Erikson later in this chapter. For our purposes now, though, I would like to stipulate that these terms, though not necessarily interchangeable, are closely related.

> While I teach the importance of considering the sociocultural, socio-political and socio-historical influences in shaping human distress, I continue to be surprised how I keep slipping into individualistic, negative and totalizing descriptions to depict students, peers, clients, and others [. . .]. It is a struggle to avoid the embrace of a Eurocentric position and the autonomous voice that stands in stark contrast to the collective voices of communality. (77 – 78)

Like Yancey, we and our students tend to cling to conceptions of self in opposition to the indeterminacy of postmodernism.

Student Subjectivity in First-Year Composition

We need to consider how students entering our first-year writing courses are challenged by these orientations to thought and self. Faigley provides us with a means by which we can better understand such challenges. He examines the student subjectivities assumed by current practices in composition classes and questions whether these are appropriate for students living in a postmodern world. He points out that, though there is much evidence of the effects of postmodern living on students, composition instructors continue to privilege a modern subject, one that is whole and knowing, one that "possess[es] an identifiable 'true' self [which] can be expressed in discourse" (122). In reviewing composition textbooks and practices, he finds that, by and large, composition classes are trying to create selves that are "reasonable, authoritative, and objective" (162), a self the same as Lanham's central self, the

introspective "knower" described by Ong. The subject privileged, in fact trained toward, in composition classes is the self of modernist print technology, not the self of postmodern digital culture.

The study of subject creation in composition classes is important because, as Faigley points out, our evaluation of student writing is influenced by how we see those selves constructed. That is, a student's writing is perceived as good only if the self portrayed by it conforms to the instructor's notions of self (23). It is crucial, then, for us to consider new ways to address issues of subjectivity in our writing classes. I argue that working with our students to develop new constructions of ethos might be a way into these dilemmas. If, however, we are to include instruction in ethos as part of a writing curriculum, it is crucial for us to consider not only how students' understanding of ethos might be undermined by the creation of fragmented subjectivities in a postmodern, digital world, but also how our understanding of ethos has been disciplined by the culture we have experienced. If we understand the complications of teaching ethos presented by the subjectivities of the students we teach, we also have to understand the selves we expect them to be as they write, the types of ethos available to them and to which we will respond when we read their work. If, for example, we have been disciplined by current-traditional notions of the subjectivity of the writer, we must interrogate how those notions play out as we work with students developing an understanding of ethos and attempting to develop that understanding into discursive practice. This kind of introspection could be an enormous challenge to teachers in developing curricula. Given the possibility that we might succumb to hopelessness and

helplessness in the face of postmodern conditions, we may fear what we learn about ourselves and our world. It would be easy to respond pessimistically, to perceive the gap between our students' orientation toward the world disciplined by postmodernism and digital experience and our own expectations of them in our classrooms, to wallow in Baudrillard and give in to the notion that higher education and the students within it are only, like everything else in the world, fragments of a deconstructed universe with our only option to "play" with them because no pedagogy can address the ills Baudrillard ascribes to culture. Arriving at such a point leaves us with little to do but to shut the doors of the academy, an event not likely to happen. Our project, then, is to create curricula in response to who our students are and how the world disciplines them, and that means looking at students and their world through a new lens, one that accepts and understands the fragmentations and lack of wholeness.

Faigley points outs that this view of the self as fragmented has proven a problematic and a site for resistance to postmodernism in composition pedagogy:

> Where composition studies has proven least receptive to postmodern theory is in surrendering its belief in the writer as an autonomous self [. . .]. Since the beginning of composition teaching in the late nineteenth century, college writing teachers have been heavily invested in the stability of the self and the attendant beliefs that writing can be a means of self-discovery and intellectual self-realization. (15)

And that brings us back to that paradox of belief in modernist notions as we experience postmodern life. If the postmodern self is not unitary or autonomous, relying on

locating or portraying a stable ethos to effect persuasion is futile. The ancients' concern about whether a persuasive ethos resides in the life of the rhetor or in the moment of discourse becomes a moot point. If there is no enduring character of the rhetor, ethos can exist only in the moment of discourse. Buying into this notion, however, seems to complicate further. Teachers may find themselves confronted by an ethical dilemma: either teach ethos as ever-changing, always constructed for the moment of discourse (a component in the type of rhetoric that Plato railed against) or leave it out of composition pedagogy entirely. Perhaps this choice is the limitation that drives teachers and theorists away from the idea of raising the issue of ethos in composition courses. How can we justify performing the anti-Platonic when we want our students to operate from a base of values with a sense of ethics? I believe that this is a false dilemma, a topic addressed in the next chapter. The real question is how to theorize ethos within a postmodern sensibility, an ethos that grows out of and reflects this world.

Where First-Year College Students Are: Considering Erikson's Fifth Stage

Even if we can come to terms with a new conception of ethos that agrees with postmodern views of subjectivity, we must face the challenge of raising issues of self and subjectivity with classrooms full of late adolescents. Before constructing effective composition pedagogies, we must know who our students are; we need to understand where they are developmentally, and we need to understand the world they experience.

To learn more about the psychosocial development of first-year college students,[15] we can look to Erik Erikson, who was especially interested in the challenges of moving from late adolescence into adulthood.[16] His studies centered on the development of identity. Based on the understanding that psychological development cannot reasonably be considered independent of the society into which a person is born, Erikson's theories underscore the importance of context, the interrelationship between individual and community in human identity formation. Erikson maintains that identity develops in eight stages that span the life cycle and is fueled by crises or conflicts which cause disequilibrium and result in movement from one stage to the next. Traditional students in their first years of college are typically in the late adolescent, or fifth, stage, dealing with crises that contribute to identity formation in their adult stage. If we accept Erikson's theories, we understand that our students are wrestling with what he calls "identity diffusion," known sometimes as role or identity confusion or identity crisis.

The primary task for adolescents and older adolescents in this fifth stage of development is to establish an ego identity, and this process is fraught with difficulties. Erikson points out "that the adolescent, during the final stage of his identity formation, is apt to suffer more deeply than he ever did before (or ever will again) from a diffusion

[15] Though this discussion focuses on late adolescent/early adult students, these do not comprise our total student body. Demographics fluctuate, especially with national and international economic changes, so there are times when our population of nontraditional (typically adults returning to college) is higher than others. Still, the majority of most first-year students in the United States is of traditional age, seventeen to nineteen years old.

[16] Despite the period of time which has elapsed since the 1950 publication of Erikson's initial work, *Childhood and Society,* his theories of psychosocial development are still highly regarded and are often used as the foundation for further research and speculation on identity development. More recent scholars such as James Marcia have built their work around Erikson's, further elaborating on his initial theories. Others have found fault with Erikson's sex differences, especially his treatment of women's identity development. For basic understanding of stages of identity development, though, Erikson's work holds.

of roles [. . .]" ("Problem" 117). This is a time of experimentation for the late adolescent, a time when the issue of self-image acquires greater importance. Key to understanding who our students are in Erikson's schema is his contention that "[a] state of acute identity diffusion usually becomes manifest at a time when the young individual finds himself exposed to a combination of experiences which demand his simultaneous commitment to *physical intimacy* (not by any means always overtly sexual), to decisive *occupational choice*, to energetic *competition*, and to *psychosocial self-definition*" ("Problem" 123). Could any situation be more rife with these variables than first-year college students' lives? Most of them live in a new type of intimacy, with strangers who now share their most personal spaces; they are driven—by parents if not by their choices of majors—to make decisions about "what they're going to be" after college; they find themselves competing academically, socially, and physically in new and strange situations; and, for many students, they are struggling to define themselves as apart from their families of origin and even their geographic locations.

The picture Erikson paints of the students most likely to be in our composition classes should give us pause as we consider the enterprise of having them think about their subjectivities, about who they are or who they seem to be to their prospective audiences. There are psychological dangers here, to be sure, but that is not what concerns me most. Those dangers exist whether we raise them in our classes or not. Erikson discusses at length the "symptoms" of adolescence, pointing out that "in spite of the similarity of adolescent 'symptoms' and episodes to neurotic and psychotic symptoms and episodes, adolescence is not an affliction but a normative crisis, i.e., a

normal phase of increased conflict characterized by a seeming fluctuation in ego strength, and yet also by a high growth potential" ("Problem" 116). If we raise questions about the appearance and reality of who they are as rhetors, our job is complicated by the difficulties our students are experiencing. We most certainly do not want to increase this painful time for them—and I am not minimizing the ethical dimensions of this—but my concern in this specific context is the pedagogical possibility of addressing the concept of ethos with people in the midst of identity diffusion, in the process of wrestling with who they are and who they will be.

Erikson contends that adolescents often experience the same types of conflicts they did in childhood but now in different ways. For example, despite the fact that they may have already learned to trust themselves and others, they are now confronted with seemingly larger issues of trust and faith: in what can they believe and in what ways can they become trustworthy (*Identity* 128-129)? Compounding the intensity of the crisis of identity for adolescents is the enlarged society in which they must operate. At early stages of their development, their societies were their families, later their schools; now they are learning who they are within a larger world.

Identity, according to Erikson, can be a problematic term. It is, he says, an individual's connection to his or her community, both family and society, as well as something "in the individual's core," and it can be understood, he goes on to say, within several contexts: "at one time, then, it will appear to refer to a conscious *sense of individual identity*; at another to an unconscious striving for a *continuity of personal character*; at a third, as a criterion for the silent doings of *ego synthesis*, and finally, as a

maintenance of an inner *solidarity* with a group's ideals and identity" ("Problem" 102). Erikson acknowledges not only the slipperiness of the term "identity" but also implicates himself in his slippery use of it, asserting that "I have tried out the term identity almost deliberately—I like to think—in many different connotations [. . .]. And on more than one occasion the word slipped in more like a habit that seems to make things appear familiar than as a clarification" (*Identity* 208). Whether the term has consistent meaning in discourse or not, we can understand it to approximate, at least generally, how people see themselves. Erikson's own unstable use of the term should hearten those of us who find its multiple meanings frustrating and should not prevent us from proceeding in the effort to understand our students' developmental stages.

Our Students in the World of Digital Communications

Clearly, managing psychosocial growth through identity diffusion with its attendant conflicts and crises is difficult, even in a world where communities are homogenous and where beliefs and values are agreed upon, but complicating the process today are the realities of the twenty-first century and its pluralisms, the paradox of fundamentalism and nationalism in the face of fragmentation, the barrage of images that seem more real than experience itself. These conditions most definitely present challenges to those of us who teach composition and rhetoric, especially if we are considering the inclusion of ethos in our pedagogies.

One condition of the contemporary world, the prevalence of digital communications technologies, allows, indeed encourages, students to enact

postmodernism in their daily lives and affects how they think as well as who they are. Anyone paying the least attention knows that digital technology thrives and that today's college students are not only accustomed to but habituated by computers, iPods, and mobile telephones. Parents and teachers born before 1970 are often confounded by the constant links younger people have to their social networks. Aside from such anecdotal reports, there are data supporting the prevalent use of digital communications by students. John H. Pryor, Sylvia Hurtado, Jessica Sharkness, and William S. Korn reported that 86.3% of fall 2007 freshmen surveyed through the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) said they go to social networking sites (*Facebook* and *MySpace*) every week, and nearly one-fifth of them said they spend six or more hours on the sites per week (3). Likewise, the American Association of Colleges & Universities (AAC&U), referencing a survey detailed in *The State of Our Nation's Youth: 2008-2009*, reports that the use of the internet for social networking sites takes up an average of over six hours a week for the students surveyed (AAC&U). An older study, conducted in 2002 by Harris Interactive and 360 Youth, found that eighty-eight percent of college students owned a computer, using it to communicate socially (42%) and to check email at least once a day (72%). The study further found that sixty-seven percent of college students owned cell phones and thirty-six percent used their mobile devices to access the Internet (Greenspan 1)—and this was before the ever-present iPhone appeared on the scene. It is certainly reasonable to conclude that those figures would be considerably higher today.

The point is this: our students are communicating frequently using these technologies. They are, for many students, their primary method of maintaining contact with other people, and this type and frequency of communication has an effect on how students think and write. Not only can being "plugged in" affect their sense of what goes on in the world; it also influences how they use language. Consider how students today use computers: in addition to the word processing we teachers require of them, they spend hours online, blogging, checking on and communicating with their Facebook or MySpace "friends," emailing, sending and receiving instant messages, participating in chat rooms, surfing the net, and playing games. Consider also the characteristics of many acts of electronic communication. Discourse—especially in instant messages, text messages, and chat rooms or other networked environments—is characterized by brevity, informality, hastiness—in short, by its fragmentary nature. Topics change rapidly, with responses to old topics appearing several screens later. Scrolling through the record of a chat room text reads at times like absurd conversation, with no one obviously responding to anyone else but everyone making a "contribution." Communicating within such environments works best for people who require little continuity, who have no qualms about jumping into a conversation in the middle and with little knowledge, people who are comfortable with fragmentary discourse rather than expecting the sense of wholeness we expect in most printed communication. These are dominant ways in which our students communicate regularly and comfortably; the speed and brevity of such transmissions are enactments of the postmodern and reinforce fragmentation.

Even when our students conduct research, they are typically working in online environments, usually where hypertext dominates. Whether or not they are frequent users of text messaging or social networks, students' thinking can be influenced by the workings of hypertext. It, too, reinforces random, fragmented thinking. Characterized by its lack of linearity, its lack of sequence and predictability, hypertext opposes a sense of wholeness. With a printed text, we can see its boundaries—its beginning and its end; in hypertext, though we may be able to discern a starting point, we negotiate our own ending by opening link after link until we reach some point at which we simply draw our reading to a close. Jay David Bolter points out that "in any true hypertext the ending must remain tentative. An electronic text never needs to end" (87).

Bolter also raises the issue of heterogeneity of digital texts, asserting that "[a]n electronic book is a structure that reaches out to other structures, not only metaphorically, as does a printed book, but operationally" (87). As we work through hypertext presentations, we find links that are visual—images and videos rather than words. Such links become part of the "whole" electronic text, but it is a very different kind of wholeness than we find in print. It is true that print texts include photographs and drawings; in hypertext, though, the visual links are weightier than are illustrations in printed texts. They carry the same emphasis, the same weight, as every other link, leaving the reader with the perception that visuals are just as important as the verbal. This creates a different orientation, a different experience to text than does print: we expect words to be of primary importance in print and regard illustrations as just that, illustrations, secondary to the words in the text. In hypertext, though, images share

primary importance with words on our monitor, and the experience of homogeneity in reading print texts becomes disrupted by the heterogeneity of hypertext—all further enactment of the postmodern that can have an effect on thinking and writing.

One of the more striking differences between printed text and hypertext is that, while we expect printed texts to be logical in their organization and development, hypertext is associative rather than logical and cumulative rather than selective in its development. John M. Slatin writes that "the hyperdocument 'grows' by process of accretion, whereas the conventional document tends to have been winnowed out of a larger mass of material [. . .]. [Hypertext is] a collection of possible documents any one of which may be actualized by readers pursuing or creating links between elements of the system" (876). Thus, readers of hypertext expect a collection of links arranged by associations the writer makes that readers can manipulate by following their own associations. Readers can, in effect, create their own texts from the variables presented by the writer.

Frequent readers of electronic communications—hypertext, instant messages, discourse in chat rooms—adapt to a lack of logical sequencing, to the randomness of the volatile medium. Such communication is characterized by fragmentation rather than wholeness, so students accustomed to working in this milieu develop habits of thinking, especially the thinking that accompanies writing, antithetical to wholeness. And this manner of thinking affects subjective structures. Marshall McLuhan, Walter Ong, and Richard Lanham have all considered how communication technologies affect the self. McLuhan and Ong look primarily at how the move from orality to literacy affects

people, how experiencing the printed word creates differences in people than when their communications are oral. Though this move from orality to literacy is not our concern at the moment, it does enlighten and can contribute to our understanding of how various technologies have different effects on people's ways of thinking, even being.

In *Gutenberg Galaxy*, McLuhan points out that oral cultures are social cultures; they are tribal, "community [in] non-personal collectivity" (121). Such tribalism changes, however, when communication technology changes. According to McLuhan, reading print isolates people, creating greater individualism than they have in oral culture. Even religion, he points out, is more individual in a literate society; after print, the focus moves from an "objective to a subjective piety" (139). People interacting with printed scripture experience the words and ideas more personally than they might when participating orally in a communal ritual.

McLuhan goes on to make the paradoxical claim that print creates both greater individualism and greater nationalism. Characterized by homogeneity, specialization, and interdependence, print allows many people to read exactly the same words—they may encounter them alone, but they join with others and know they join with them because of the repeatability of the text. Reading printed language is, for McLuhan, "the uniform processing of minds" (209). Not only does print with its possibilities for homogenization create a greater wholeness within individuals; it also creates a greater wholeness within societies. One culture in particular that grows more uniform is the culture of education. The textbook, from the time of Ramus on, was used as a means to homogenize students, to present them with the "tangible, repeatable, visible proof"

(McLuhan 184) that literate cultures seek (and believe is possible). To imply there is a proof is to imply there is a truth, and truths come to us whole. To work with printed texts is to work with and be accustomed to wholeness.

Walter Ong, in *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*, casts clarifying light on the effects of print on individual psyches. He explicates the relationship between human beings and language use, providing a list of the "psychodynamics of orality." He shows how thinking in an oral culture is related directly to communication rather than isolated in its significance to the mind of the reader. Reading is an internal process that may have little to do with communication. Like McLuhan, Ong sees interaction with printed text as reflective and, thus, a force in creating a sense of isolation in literate people. Printed writing is self-contained rather than obviously contextual as oral communication is. Ong says, "Print encourages a sense of closure, a sense that what is found in a text has been finalized, has reached a state of completion" (132). Books are read in silence and in private, they can be duplicated many times over, and they appear unchangeable. Interaction with printed texts masquerades as interaction directly with the mind of the writer, but a writer who cannot be challenged. Ong points out that even "after absolutely total and devastating refutation, [the text] says exactly the same thing as before" (79) and takes on the appearance of irrefutable truth. So we see books as closed, unchangeable, and authoritative, as representations of wholeness and truth.

In examining *Gutenberg Galaxy* and *Orality and Literacy*, we find that both McLuhan and Ong do concern themselves with the effects of print technology on the

self. The move toward introspection that print engenders is recognized by both. McLuhan makes much of the fact that print brings with it a narrowing in point of view. Until print technology is established, point of view is hardly an issue—oral communications are adapted to the situation and can be an amalgam of many points of view—but with print, a private point of view, a private stance, is not only possible but probable. The fragmentation of point of view in orality becomes the wholeness in literacy when print technology becomes dominant.

Ong also addresses the development of introspection as a result of print technology:

> By separating the knower from the known [. . .] , writing makes possible increasingly articulate introspectivity, opining the psyche as never before not only to the external objective world quite distinct from itself but also the interior self against whom the objective world is set. Writing makes possible the great introspective religious traditions such as Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. (105)

To consider an introspective subject with a private point of view is to consider a subject characterized by wholeness, a self that understands itself as separate and unified.

We can, perhaps, better understand the definition of self in relation to communication technology by considering the social self of oral culture in opposition to the central self of print culture. According to Ong, oral cultures are made up of people "more communal and externalized and less introspective than those common among literates" (69). Such a communal, externalized being could represent for us the social

self Richard Lanham refers to in *The Electronic Word*, "the actor's self, performative, social rather than central, [. . .] a self good at reading the social surface and providing what was decorous for that time and place" as opposed to his central self, "meaning *really us*" (144). These oral people, these social selves, operate within their societies, understanding themselves and functioning as themselves in the context of their environment to a degree not possible after the dominance of literacy. Ong tells us that "[i]n primary oral cultures, even business is not business: it is fundamentally rhetoric [. . .] , a series of verbal (and somatic) maneuvers, a polite duel, a contest of wits, and operation in oral agonistic" (68). The words of people in oral culture are situational, embedded in their lively context, not context free and rendered permanent by print. In a private, introspective reading of a printed text, however, the existential situation of the reader reduces the "duel," the "contest," to a quiet struggle between the reader, a distinct entity, a whole self, and the text with its idea shining through the "crystal goblet" of print (Lanham 74). The central self, then, functioning as a separate, whole self, is representative of print culture, characterized by its insistence on a fixed truth that exists regardless of context, written about in texts trusted to be authoritative, unchangeable, and finalized.

As people become less tribal, they see themselves differently; as they develop their individuality, they have a different conception of self than when they saw themselves as part of a collective. And this change in self is not minor: it effects the changes to culture brought by communication technology. Interestingly, though McLuhan, Ong, and Lanham write about broad changes in culture, their ideas are based

on the primary assumption that communication technology affects the actual functioning of the individual and in the ways the self perceives itself in relation to society. Neither Ong nor McLuhan speaks directly to the issues raised by our students' lives in a postmodern, digital world; the value of their work to this study is in their demonstrating the change in thought and self as a result of the changes in communication technology. Both make the case for the influence of technologies on people's consciousness.

McLuhan recognized more than forty years ago that the electronic age would change sense dominance again, that "our electric technology has consequences for our most ordinary perceptions and habits of action which are quickly recreating in us the mental processes of the most primitive men" (30). He warns that electronic technology will decrease specialization and move us back into a more tribal societal structure, this time in his "global village." Ong proposes that we are moving into a secondary orality, one similar to primary orality in its sense of community and its emphasis on interaction with context, but different from primary orality because of its self-consciousness: we are aware of where we have been—inside ourselves, with our central selves—and now we can be conscious of both the central and the social self. Although Ong conceptualized secondary orality before the advent of digital communications, this theory, though responding to truly oral media such as radio and television, does help us to understand the change in consciousness elicited by digital communications. Indeed, in a 1996 interview in Composition FORUM with Michael Klein and Frederic Gale, Ong says that, though he first used the term "secondary orality" in explaining the effects

of radio and television, he now includes "electronic verbalization[s] which are not really oral at all" because "computerized communication can thus suggest the immediate experience of direct sound [. . .]. Here textualized verbal exchange registers psychologically as having the temporal immediacy of oral exchange" (qtd. in *Notes from the Walter Ong Collection*). Ong posits that secondary orality combines characteristics of literacy and orality: secondary orality, based in text—in fact, requiring writing—along with newer technologies, causes consciousness to transform into one akin to the consciousness of orality, creating a greater emphasis on community, participation and aggregate knowledge rather than individuality and "owned" knowledge, characteristics of literate consciousness.

The Challenge

Including ethos in rhetorical instruction, then, requires that we take up several significant challenges, the largest of which is probably determining how to manage postmodern views of identity and subjectivity with students who will likely resist learning that they are not autonomous, unitary, stable subjects at a time when they are already struggling with identity diffusion. By examining alternate and varying subjectivities, though, we can help students understand the subject positions they occupy and how those subjectivities are created. Students can remain fragmented selves who think in fragmented ways, who understand ethos in ways far different from those laid out by the ancients, but looking seriously at subject positions could increase self-consciousness, making students more aware of who they are as well as who they

appear to be. Rather than remaining simply subject to the fragmentation of postmodern culture and digital life, they could, perhaps, negotiate selves rhetorically through understanding the role and construction of ethos in their discourses. Set with this task, then, the next step is to theorize ethos for the twenty-first century: how can we reconcile the concept of ethos with the situation we are in—a heterogeneous student body of students struggling to create their adult identities, a lack of stable definition of the Good and the True, the effects of postmodern, digital life on our views of self, and the ethical dilemma of creating appearances for persuasive purposes? In the next chapter, I propose a theory of ethos, take up the challenges to teaching ethos, and provide a rationale for including ethos instruction in first-year composition courses.

Chapter 3: Locating Ethos in the Borderlands

Unlike the ethos conceptualized by ancient rhetorics, contemporary constructions of ethos cannot presume a stable self or a stable location. Instead, any new conception of ethos must take fluidity of self and location into account. Because of postmodern sensibilities, as well as contemporary discursive practices, a new conception of ethos must include multiple contexts, multiple sites for ethos performance, and multiple ways of being in those locations. For the following reasons, I find theories of the borderlands useful in thinking about a contemporary ethos:

1. we all negotiate multiple borders in our daily lives,
2. though borders and boundaries can be fixed, many are malleable/unstable and can be penetrated,
3. effective cross-border communication requires an ethos constructed with an awareness of difference in culture, in values, in language, and in subjectivity.

Though border studies and border theories initially grew out of physical, geographical locations, we can consider the border a trope representing an appropriate site for conceptualizing a new ethos because of the ever-present margins in our world—margins between men and women, among ethnic and racial groups, between poverty and wealth, between political groups. Gloria Anzaldua speaks to the multiplicity of borders when she opens *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*:

> The actual physical borderland that I'm dealing with in this book is the Texas-U. S. Southwest/Mexican border. The psychological borderlands, the sexual borderlands and the spiritual borderlands are not particular to

> the Southwest. In fact, the Borderlands are physically present wherever two or more cultures edge each other, where people of different races occupy the same territory, where under, lower, middle and upper classes touch, where the space between two individuals shrinks with intimacy [. . .]. (Pref.)

The emphasis here is upon the collision of differences. In the binary thinking that has long characterized Western sensibilities, difference (e.g., race, gender, sexual orientation, class) often results in divisive critique that values One over the Other. The result is the creation of a hierarchy of acceptability: to put it simply, the One is "good," the Other "bad;" the One is "right," the Other "wrong." The conflicts that occur in borderlands rise out of a rich mix of difference and power, and the kind of binary thinking that divides the One from the Other and assigns specific hierarchical valences to them also tempts us to see the use of power in an overly simplistic way. If we look at power as Michel Foucault does, however, we will have a better comprehension of how it works in border conflicts. Foucault's insights about power are especially useful in understanding how people negotiate borders because he dismantles widely-held conceptions of who has power and how they use it. In *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, Foucault begins his explanation of power by specifying what it is not:

> By power, I do not mean "Power" as a group of institutions and mechanisms that ensure the subservience of the citizens of a given state. By power, I do not mean, either, a mode of subjugation which, in contrast to violence, has the form of the rule. Finally, I do not have in

> mind a general system of domination exerted by one group over another, a system whose effects, through successive derivations, pervade the entire social body. (92)

Instead of conceptualizing power as something held only by large institutions or government, Foucault argues that power is ever present, that everyone has it. The simplistic view of power in borderlands is that the dominant culture or race or religion always holds all the power and that oppression, domination, and subjugation define that power. Though oppression, domination, and subjugation may be a result of multiple power relationships, they are not the only manifestations of power. Foucault particularizes, locating the development of power from the "grass roots," specifying that "[p]ower comes from below" (Foucault, *History* 94), that it functions in individual relationships—in families and workplaces and schools—which

> are the basis for wide-ranging effects of cleavage that run through the social body as a whole. These then form a general line of force that traverses the local oppositions and links them together; to be sure, they also bring about redistributions, realignments, homogenizations, serial arrangements, and convergences of the force relations. Major dominations are the hegemonic effects that are sustained by all these confrontations. (Foucault, *History* 94)

An example of this process as it has been enacted in a borderland is the subordination of American Indians in the United States. Using the model of Foucault's theory of power, we understand that no one sent the explorers and colonizers to this land to exert power

over the Indians. There was no systematic plan that led to the hegemony of Whites. Instead, it began with individual desires and purposes, with men who came to claim land and the strategies they used to gain it. Their individual acts of power over the natives grew by accretion, connecting to others' acts of power until their dominance was an entire system of thoughts, behaviors, and language. The long quotation which follows from *The History of Sexuality* outlines Foucault's conception of such a process:

> [T]here is no power that is exercised without a series of aims and objectives. But this does not mean that it results from the choice or decision of an individual subject; let us not look for the headquarters that presides over its rationality; neither the caste which governs, nor the groups which control the state apparatus, nor those who make the most important economic decisions direct the entire network of power that functions in a society (and makes *it* function); the rationality of power is characterized by tactics that are often quite explicit at the restricted level where they are inscribed (the local cynicism of power), tactics which, becoming connected to one another, attracting and propagating one another, but finding their base of support and their condition elsewhere, end by forming comprehensive systems: the logic is perfectly clear, the aims decipherable, and yet it is often the case that no one is there to have invented them, and few who can be said to have formulated them: an implicit characteristic of the great anonymous, almost unspoken

> strategies which coordinate the loquacious tactics whose "inventors" or decisionmakers are often without hypocrisy. (95)

I appropriate none of this to minimize the atrocities performed by Whites as they exerted power over Indians, nor to lessen the significance of the hegemony that grew out of the individual acts. Understanding power in Foucault's terms helps us to locate its beginning squarely in individual human desires and actions that occur in specific contexts. The local nature of power's inception is especially important to understanding the consciousness that develops on borders. The manner in which power is used in individual contacts between people on both sides of the border, either metaphorical or geophysical, sets the stage for larger systems, which can become reified.

Resistance to power grows in much the same way. Foucault contends that resistance always exists alongside power, that there is no power relationship without both. He claims that resistance takes multiple shapes; some are "possible, necessary, improbable; others [. . .] are spontaneous, savage, solitary, concerted, rampant, or violent; still others [. . .] are quick to compromise, interested, or sacrificial [. . .]" (96). Likewise, resistance occurs at a multiplicity of sites and is enacted by both individuals and groups. Sometimes multiple resistances accrue, adding up to revolution, but more often, Foucault says,

> one is dealing with mobile and transitory points of resistance, producing cleavages in a society that shift about, fracturing unities and effecting regroupings, furrowing across individuals themselves, cutting them up and remolding them, marking off irreducible regions in them, in their

> bodies and minds. Just as the network of power relations ends by forming a dense web that passes through apparatuses and institutions, without being exactly localized in them, so too the swarm of points of resistance traverses social stratifications and individual unities. And it is doubtless the strategic codification of these points of resistance that makes a revolution possible, somewhat similar to the way in which the state relies on the institutional integration of power relationships. (96)

Especially in this final parallel, Foucault helps us to understand power and resistance as human activities that depend upon connections, upon human relationships and their resulting actions. This is an important point in conceptualizing/imagining the border. It prevents us from looking at power as static or stable and wielded from on high. And it grants a hopeful view in considering a border ethos. Considering power as ever present in all people strengthens the idea that ethos matters; constructing an appropriate ethos for persuasive purposes can have results.

This discussion of Foucault's notions of power has taken us into abstractions which need to be grounded. Grand-scale borders (such as borders between countries) and uses of power (such as those employed on the part of nations) are important, to be sure, but so too are the borders and uses of power people experience in their daily lives. While it is common to think of the "marginalized" as large groups of people who have been subordinated and discriminated against because of race, sex, or religion, for example, we must also consider the smaller, quotidian marginalizations everyone experiences. Students may develop a greater understanding of marginalization in

considering exclusions they have witnessed or experienced in their schools, exclusions and categorizations typically predicated on stereotypes and false binaries but real in student experience. Anyone who has been in high school in the United States or who has observed popular culture through television and in movies is familiar with the presumed characteristics that can lead to exclusion, oppression, domination, even subjugation of groups of people considered geeks or the "in group" or athletes or intellectuals. Such categorization extends into college and the professions, leading to ridicule and a type of caste-making of people based on their interests and areas of excellence: we have all heard jokes about lawyers and teachers. This is not to say that slights, especially fairly innocuous jokes that people experience from time to time are as important as those that have broader social codification and more serious ramifications. Examining these smaller-scale marginalizations is simply a starting point for understanding the experience of dwelling on a border.

Borders are the results of power activities; they have been drawn to isolate people into distinct groups, to isolate them rather than to grant them access to some place that is valued. But, though some borders seem impenetrable, most are not. Before we can conceptualize a border ethos, we must first recognize that margins and borders are negotiable boundaries rather than impenetrable lines of division. The image of a penetrable border has its basis in geopolitical fact: people who live on the physical border between Mexico and the United States move back and forth through the boundary regularly: they speak both Spanish and English and learn to negotiate cultural difference. If we imagine rhetors as border dwellers, we can begin to understand ethos

in a way which answers the concerns of the postmodern self participating in multiple discourses.

Before discussing more specifically how border ethos can be incorporated into composition pedagogy, it is important to consider how such a pedagogical move fits into composition course objectives. Clearly, there is no single purpose for composition as an elective or required course in higher education. Still, I would like to stipulate that the following are some significant goals for composition courses and programs: students will develop rhetorical understanding, begin to claim their own discursive space through thoughtful practice, and think critically about discursive contexts. Though stated in contemporary terms, these goals approximate the goals the ancients had for rhetorical education—to prepare citizens, to help students learn to think critically so they can participate thoughtfully in civic discourse, to help them move toward wisdom and, yes, even good character.[17] We want our students to do what Isocrates asked his audience to do as he delivered his *Antidosis*: to understand the demands of different types of discourse, to pay close attention to what is being said, to take the time to think things through, and to delay judgment until after thoughtful consideration and with good will (12 – 28).

Debates about the purpose of composition as a course of study—whether the value of composition is pragmatism or critical consciousness or effective citizenship—have led some teachers down blind paths. Theorizing, studying, and teaching ethos, however, can redirect the efforts of composition professionals and, perhaps, allow the

[17] Inserting this reference to good character is not intended as a negation of the problems raised earlier regarding classical notions of ethos. It is, instead, a bridge to later discussion about what might constitute good character in a new conception of ethos.

debates to reach a draw. Creation of ethos as a subject and a practice both complicates and makes accessible some of the issues important to rhetors today, and reconceiving of ethos as located in borderlands opens up possibilities for refocusing and reinvigorating rhetorical instruction in several ways: constructions of ethos are related to constructions of self, and both are relevant to students' lives in general but also in their roles as rhetors; instruction in ethos can introduce both classical and contemporary rhetorical concepts useful to writers today; focus on ethos emphasizes the social function and the performativity of rhetoric; and a course centered on ethos allows investigations of power relations, both in the classroom and in the world at large. These possibilities work together to support the goals of composition courses and programs, providing students with rhetorical understanding, giving them processes and concepts for thinking critically about discursive contexts, and ultimately giving them the opportunity to claim their own discursive space, performing as mindful rhetors. The following section begins to chart more specifically the pedagogical value of an undergraduate composition program founded upon ethos studies.

First, composition pedagogy which includes instruction in border ethos would enable work with conceptions of self. Students should be given the opportunity to interrogate the fictive but disciplining unitary, stable self that continues to reside in our culture's imagination, and they should be able to explore alternatives. As discussed in the previous chapter, this is generally delicate work; first-year students may resist any challenges to their individuality and uniqueness. They are, after all, older adolescents who are just beginning to see themselves as separate, autonomous individuals.

However, providing them with the concept of a borderlands ethos and helping them imagine and practice ethos creation for multiple rhetorical moments can perhaps alleviate some of the distress of indeterminacy. They can learn to take an active part in analyzing their worlds and their places in them, considering the roles of others in constructions of self from situation to situation, moment to moment, culture to culture, and to respond kairotically and ethically as informed rhetors.

Understanding the exigencies of discourse situations and how ethos functions within them deepens rhetorical understanding and helps students lay claim to their own discursive space. Responsible instruction in *ethos*, like responsible instruction in rhetoric in general, demands attention to subjectivities, audiences, purposes, social constructions of language and selves, and a persistent interrogation of hierarchies, "common sense," and "neutral language." A problem with traditional, uninterrogated instruction in ethos, approached simply as one of many terms or concepts a student of rhetoric "should know," left unexamined and unsupported by rhetorical theory, becomes yet another "device," just one more element in a formula for producing text. A course centered on ethos, however, gets at the heart of rhetoric. Real attention to conceptions of ethos and the theories that support and challenge it, added to conscious practice in enacting it, allows students to learn actively and self-consciously the function of rhetoric in their complicated lives as rhetors. Reading and talking about how subjectivities are formed may be interesting to both teachers and students, but constructing an ethos contextualized for a specific rhetorical act from a considered subject position <u>is</u> rhetoric.

Second, instruction in *ethos* serves as entrée into instruction in both classical and contemporary rhetorical concepts, allowing, for example, introductions to concepts with immediate usefulness such as rhetor-audience relationships; the relationship among *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*; the function and constitution of enthymeme; and the canons of rhetoric. All of these can promote deeper understanding of rhetoric in general and in the students' own discourses. In addition, introducing concepts key to rhetorical theory in first-year composition/rhetoric classes guides students to begin theorizing for themselves, an important move for their developing consciousness of discourse.

Finally, to think critically about discursive contexts, students should learn something about dynamic power relations and authority. Instruction in ethos, especially viewed as a borderland construction, promotes such learning. The teacher in an ethos-centered classroom could guide students to raise and answer important questions: Who gets to speak and when? What constitutes an authoritative ethos? Does authority derive from personality, location, expertise, discourse, or something else entirely? What is the ethos of the classroom, how is it constructed, and how does it evolve over time? What ideologies drive the power relations in this class culture and in other social situations? Such questions could lead students to think not only about ethos as it is constructed in the context of classroom culture but also about influences on the development of their characters in their daily lives. Such questioning could benefit students in what Kay Halasek, evoking Bakhtin, refers to as "ideological becoming." This is, I contend, an important goal of higher education in general as well as an ideal of rhetorical instruction. Because of the deep, generative effects of discourse on becoming, bringing

such conceptions into the students' consciousness is crucial. As Halasek points out, "[C]ompositionists are in a unique position within the academy to provide students the tools and strategies from which to pursue their own ideological becoming and work against the preformulations of their experiences" (110). Working with *ethos*, especially from a border-dweller's point of view, is such a tool.

Even if we agree that including ethos instruction supports our instructional objectives in composition classes, we must deal with the challenges to teaching ethos raised in chapter 2:

- postmodern sensibilities and the absence of universal and stable values;
- the world we live in, characterized by fragmentation, a surplus of images, and hyperreality;
- the possibilities presented by technology for assembling information and creating new selves;
- the developmental stage of our students and the crises of identity formation;
- resistance to postmodern constructions of subjectivity on the part of both writing instructors and students.

Careful theorizing of borderlands ethos, however, followed by a pedagogy responsive to the theory can, I believe, ease the difficulties.

Ethos of the Borderlands and the Absence of Universal Values

In answer to the first challenge to teaching ethos—the absence of universal and eternal values—I argue that the conception of ethos on borderlands precludes a stable,

universal set of values. Border dwellers know that values do not hold from one culture, or even one group within a culture, to another. People who negotiate the boundaries between their own and another culture understand that their values are not universally held. Typically, border studies have investigated the intersection of a non-dominant culture with a non-dominant one, usually to point out the tyrannies of the dominant culture and its values and to resist them. Often these intersections have been characterized as violent, either psychologically or physically, resulting in colonization or massacre. Anzaldua refers to the border between the United States and Mexico as

> *una herida abierta* where the Third World grates against the first and bleeds [. . .]. Gringos in the U. S. Southwest consider the inhabitants of the borderlands transgressors, aliens—whether they possess documents or not, whether they're Chicanos, Indians or Blacks. Do not enter, trespassers will be raped, maimed, strangled, gassed, shot. The only 'legitimate' inhabitants are those in power, the whites and those who align themselves with whites. Tension grips the inhabitants of the borderlands like a virus. Ambivalence and unrest reside there and death is no stranger. (3 - 4)

Too often borders are sites of violence. Whether the violence continues to be overt or not, though, the memory of it has a disciplining effect on all parties—those who inflicted harm and those harmed by it. The tension about which Anzaldua writes is a remnant of the violence leveled against the Mexicans and *tejanos* (Texans of Mexican descent) during the creation of what is now the border between Mexico and Texas.

Anglos migrated into the area and drove the natives from their land. The resulting war, culminating in the Battle of the Alamo and the subsequent capture of Santa Anna, gave the United States the area we now call the Southwest—Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, and California, all formerly part of Mexico. The violence of these events set the terms for continuing border conflict. Anzaldua asserts that the Battle of the Alamo "became, for the whites, the symbol for the cowardly and villainous character of the Mexicans. It became (and still is) a symbol that legitimized the white imperialist takeover" (6). These clashes rose out of differences in desires and values: invading Anglos wanted land and believed they should have it; Mexicans and *tejanos* considered the area their home and resisted giving it up. The divisions that resulted in a new shape for Mexico and the United States, however, were not based strictly on race or ethnic difference but on economics as well. Wealthy Mexicans were complicit in the U. S. takeover of Mexican land, working with Anglos to claim Mexican and Indian land for production. Values, in this case, the actual value of land as well as the psychological/sociological/moral value place on ownership of the land, were at the heart of the conflict, and these values were definitely not universally held. The values of Manifest Destiny collided with the values of natives who lived on and worked the land, and these values fueled the initial acts of power and the resistance and set the stage for subsequent border clashes.

Such dramatic intersections of values are obvious, but not all border conflicts derive from overt, concrete displays of value difference. The borders our students might find most relevant to their lives are social borders, boundaries established by

differences in the ways people value things such as sexual orientation or age or education. Renato Rosaldo, in *Culture and Truth*, a foundational text for border studies, emphasizes that "[m]ore often than we usually care to think, our everyday lives are crisscrossed by border zones, pockets and eruptions of all kinds. Social borders frequently become salient around such lines as sexual orientation, gender, class, race, ethnicity, nationality, age, politics, dress, food, or taste" (207-208). By investigating the disciplining values in specific borderlands, we and our students can arrive at a greater understanding of how the borders are established, how values conflict. Examining these value differences can result in important opportunities in composition classrooms: it can provide a way to consider ethos, particularly how values shape the way rhetors present themselves in performing rhetoric, and it can provide a deeper awareness of the absence of universal and eternal values.

Focusing on borderland ethos and how it is constructed by values and through conflicts with other values underscores postmodern sensibilities and reduces or eliminates the emphasis on universal and stable values. It allows students to see that culture itself is not a monolith and that there are not only differences but reasons for differences among people, thus eliminating the concern that determining ethos must rely on only one conception of what is Good and True.

Henry Giroux's reading of postmodernism suggests that, rather than posing problems for a composition pedagogy that includes border ethos, it provides a rich environment for just such instruction. Because of its dismantling of modernist claims to universal values, postmodernism has given us a changed view of knowledge and

knowledge production, it has questioned the cultural hierarchies and histories instantiated by modernism, "offer[ing] a powerful challenge to the hegemonic notion that Eurocentric culture is superior to other cultures and traditions by virtue of its canonical status as a universal measure of Western civilization" (55 - 56). Indeed, Giroux asserts that "postmodernism constitutes a general attempt to transgress the borders sealed by modernism, to proclaim the arbitrariness of all boundaries, and to call attention to the sphere of culture as a shifting social and historical construction" (55). A pedagogy centered on exploring borders is performance of just the type of transgression Giroux situates in the postmodern. This postmodern view of boundaries and borders makes such pedagogy possible; in a modernist construction of borders, creating this pedagogy would be fruitless because modernist borders are closed systems. Postmodernism gives us the opportunity to both interrogate and explore boundaries of all sorts.

Ethos of the Borderlands and Postmodern Fragmentation

In answer to the second challenge to teaching ethos, I contend that just as investigating borders can assist students in resisting the hegemony of the single Good and True, it can open a beneficent door on the fragmentation of postmodern life. Rather than ignoring or despairing over the diverse ways of being in and interacting with the world, we can guide our students to think critically about fragments they encounter, about how we are inscribed by our environments. Lugo contends that the instability of culture is at the heart of border theory: "Its temporality, its instability, its contingency,

and thus its fragmentation all give form and content to the theory of borderlands [. . .]" (53). For composition courses where ethos is studied, border theory reinforces postmodern indeterminacy and fragmentation, whether we name them as such or not, and allows students to see them not as aberrations but as characteristics of contemporary life. Likewise, the differences that fuel creation of borders may be seen as fragments that come into view only as we bring borders and their dwellers into focus. Though the modernist lens could view only monoliths, the postmodern lens focuses on fragments, the rich pieces that fill our world. Rather than being just pieces to play with, as Baudrillard suggests, they are pieces to view clearly, to interrogate, to combine in new ways, and to validate.

Ethos of the Borderland and Contemporary Technology

In answer to the third challenge to teaching ethos, I view students' comfortable interactions with digital technology, especially in communications within networks and their ability to manipulate multiple media, as concrete support to increasing their understanding of border ethos. As pointed out earlier in the Beloit College Mindset List, first-year students at this time are quite familiar with the avatars and virtual reality they see, create, and interact with on the Internet or in their video games. Whether they have owned a virtual pet or created a Second Life or not, they know about these. They have created new selves as they have communicated online through chat rooms or created their own websites or MySpace pages. Such self-creation may be practiced routinely by our students but probably without any interrogation of the causes or effects

of such practices. Their familiarity with these activities, though, can serve as a prelude to more careful investigations of what the technology allows them to do, how that ability affects their conceptions of self, how their creations affect their audiences. In many cases, when students create these new selves, they are practicing the construction of border ethos but without interrogation, tailoring their means of persuasion and their intended results toward a particular audience by selecting the most appropriate ethos for the rhetorical situation. This "challenge" proves to be no challenge at all but a means by which we can connect border ethos to our students' current practices and assist them in understanding the possible results.

That is not to say that technology does not present problems in our examinations of borders and border dwellers. The challenge of widespread electronic communications resides in the availability and openness of discourses that create knowledge and serve as sites of power relations. "Information" can be produced and distributed widely; such distribution can break down metanarratives or create new ones, depending on the power relations involved. As Giroux points out, power takes new shapes with electronic technology, allowing it to be displayed and enacted across borders. The results of this dispersion could be a calcifying of hegemonies, with power networks connecting across borders to reaffirm modernist values. Even without digital communications, Giroux details some of the ways how modernism reaches outside the West: "Modernity now parades its universal message of progress through the experts and intellectuals it sends to Third World universities, through the systems of representations that it produces to saturate billboards all over Latin America, and/or

through advertising images it sends out from satellites to the television sets of inhabitants in Africa, India, and Asia" (57). Add the volatile medium of digital networks throughout the world, and we find exponentially greater possibilities for either changing or reifying power structures. The results depend on whether hegemonic discourses prevail or become disempowered.

Obviously, the effects of digital networks depend in large part on access: who has it and who does not? The elitism of access has lessened somewhat with the development of less expensive computers and more widespread connections to the Internet, but there are still governments that limit access and still millions of people who do not have the hardware necessary participate in such discourses. Nevertheless, the possibilities of power dispersed and collected through digital networks have changed borders and the ways people can communicate across them. Giroux emphasizes this point in quoting Renato Rosaldo: "the Third World has imploded into the metropolis. Even the conservative national politics of containment, designed to shield 'us' from 'them,' betray the impossibility of maintaining hermetically sealed cultures" (qtd. in Giroux 58). Borders can either be dismantled or reconstituted by digital networks in ways we may not foresee. This only underscores the importance of a population of technologically astute people who also know how to interrogate information and its sources. Understanding ethos construction in an online environment is crucial to evaluating the information available through digital communications. This is a special kind of border—between print and digital communications—that must be examined in a composition course with ethos at its center. The play of creating new

selves online takes on more serious implications when we consider the ease of creating a persuasive electronic ethos that appears to be authoritative and credible. Anyone with access to the requisite hardware and software can be published, and with an eye for creating appealing images and texts, the publications can be very appealing. Theresa Enos and Shane Borrowman address this capability in "Authority and Credibility: Classical Rhetoric, the Internet, and the Teaching of Techno-Ethos":

> Concern over questions of authorship and authority on the Internet develops out of a key concept in the traditionally defined history of rhetoric: ethos. Because the Internet is a virtual agora in which any rhetor with a small amount of technological know-how and in possession of minimal hardware can make her or his voice heard, our preoccupation with this new technology turns, very naturally, to questions of credibility and authority—to classical notions of ethos. 93

I reiterate here, though, that classical conceptions of ethos are inadequate for the task. The differences between being and seeming are far more subtle in a digital environment than in the Roman senate. Still, by problematizing classical conceptions of ethos and addressing manifestations of border ethos in both print and digital texts, we can at least increase our students' awareness of issues of credibility and the effects of accepting authority without questioning.

In a pedagogy of border ethos, contemporary technology presents us and our students with ways to participate effectively in new discourses, with new ways to construct ethos through image and sound as well as text, and it presents us with

important questions about authority and credibility as they are used to enact power. Studying border ethos today requires the use and interrogation of discourses enabled and supported by computer use, especially in networks created by the Internet. This particular challenge to teaching ethos in a composition course becomes a formative challenge: even in composition classes where ethos is not central, it must be addressed because of current uses of technology. This "challenge" becomes serious rationale for including ethos in composition pedagogy.

Ethos of the Borderland and the Developmental Stage of College Students

In answer to the fourth challenge to teaching ethos, I argue that despite the uncertainties students have about their identities when they are working through Erikson's fifth stage, explorations of border ethos is not harmful to them. It is possible, in fact, that "playing" with shifting ethos, working through multiple possibilities of displaying character in their discourses, allows students to explore their identities. Actually, the identity exploration that characterizes this stage of development could make students more amenable to the idea of practicing ethos construction that is not stable than they might be at other stages of development.

Erikson's assertion that fifth-stage older adolescents are challenged by the enlarged society in which they must operate is key to understanding our students' developmental stage and the difficulties it presents. The crisis occurs regardless of location, whether the older adolescent is in college or on the job or still living at home, but being in college can compound the difficulties. For many students, the move to

campus is the first time they have lived apart from their families and away from familiar social structures, sources of some comfort, perhaps, as they work through these fifth-stage problems. Separation from familiar people and sites necessitated by a move to campus forces them to reshape their society. It is possible, though, that learning about border ethos and practicing it could prove helpful; analyzing ethos for discourses with multiple audiences in multiple rhetorical situations can help adolescent students know better how to navigate these broader waters, giving them opportunities to practice connecting and communicating in a variety of situations. As students struggle to define themselves apart from their families of origin and perhaps even the geographic locations of their homes, the activity of imagining themselves in new discursive locations could be rewarding, giving them tools necessary for making new societal connections. These effects, should they occur, are certainly not reasons to include ethos instruction in first-year composition, but they could serve the students well. The point is that this "challenge" may not be a challenge at all but may indicate a particular utility to the pedagogy.

Ethos of the Borderland and Resistance to Postmodern Constructions of Subjectivity

At one point in *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mextiza*, Gloria Anzaldua says that people who live on the United States-Mexican border develop "a dual identity—we don't identify with the Anglo-American cultural values and we don't totally identify with the Mexican cultural values. We are a synergy of two cultures with various degrees of Mexicanness or Angloness. I have so internalized the borderland

conflict that sometimes I feel like one cancels out the other and we are zero, nothing, no one" (63). Later in her text, though, she reports a different response to living on the border, one which emphasizes "developing a tolerance for contradictions, a tolerance for ambiguity [. . .]. [N]othing is thrust out, the good the bad and the ugly, nothing rejected, nothing abandoned [. . .]" (79). In effect, she describes the subjectivity created by border life as both nothing and everything, a confusing proposition for anyone disciplined by modernist notions of a unified subject. The dilemma of identifying with multiple cultures and languages and attempting to function in all of them creates an understanding of subjectivity and identity and self that is distinctly non-modern. Throughout *Borderlands/La Frontera*, Anzaldua reinforces the fluidity of border dwellers' identities, asserting that living in such multiplicity frustrates and exhilarates. As she articulates in her preface, "Living on borders and in margins, keeping intact one's shifting and multiple identity and integrity, is like trying to swim in a new element, an 'alien' element." For those of us who are not so conscious of the border elements that constitute our subjectivities, imagining such a swim can perhaps help us come to terms with postmodern conceptions of subjectivity.

As pointed out in the previous chapter, Lester Faigley locates some of the resistance to postmodern composition pedagogies in the persistence of modernist views of the self, in composition teachers, for example, holding onto the notion of the writer as an autonomous self. If we are interested in creating pedagogies that are anchored in postmodernism with its interrogation of hegemonic social and political structures, however, we must find a way to release the hold of a modernist notion of self and its

relation to damaging binary thinking that results in oppression. Failing to acknowledge and teach to the multiplicity of subject positions reinforces the modernist subject and its power to discipline.

Too often, the academy is complicit in such reinforcement; the "academic self" is rarely acknowledged as one self among many but as the only one with value. Students are disciplined by this conception when they are forced to take on the academic identity, and they respond by knowing, on some level, the falsehood of that position: they have a sense of the rupture between who they are in the academic setting and who they are everywhere else, and the result can be the students' alienation from their own education. Institutionalized modernism erases the richness of their lives and the voices with which they can speak and write. Ironically, in assuming students to be author/ities, modernist approaches to writing strip them of their power; the subject position that is supposed to have agency has none at all. Though the ideal is that teachers of composition have theorized their pedagogies and thoughtfully generated classroom objectives and activities, there are still remnants of the most modernist pedagogy of all, current-traditional rhetoric.[18] As Sharon Crowley points out in *The Methodical Memory: Invention in Current-Traditional Rhetoric*, "The pseudoscientific bias of the five-paragraph theme [. . .] substitutes the voice of the institution for those of writers [. . .]" (14) and "usurps students' authority over their discourse" (150). For too

[18] Despite the fact that "cur-trad" is known as "rhetoric," Sharon Crowley contends that it is not. Because current-traditional thinking minimizes or ignores audience and social context, "modern rhetorics are not especially rhetorical" (167). Although I would like to think that current-traditional composition classes have disappeared along with the invigoration of postmodern theory, current-traditional formulations of writing still appear in the academy, frequently in disciplines outside English or composition and rhetoric, and present a challenge that composition teachers must overcome.

many students, the response is to have little interest in their writing, in their own construction of knowledge; instead, they participate in what Jasper Neel calls anti-writing (qtd. in Crowley 148; and Welch, *Electric Rhetoric* 141), an exercise in "getting the job done" in order to pass the class. Thus, students are disciplined in two ways when they are subjected to the power of modernist notions of rhetoric: first, they are forced to limit their thinking and writing to specific formulas; second, they are reminded that they are powerless in the face of the institution. In both cases, power relations within the institution are confirmed, and students leave the university without a conception of the multiple subjectivities they enact or the multiple possibilities for writing situations. Limiting students in this way naturalizes and maintains the status quo and socializes students into the class structures implicit within the modernist institution. Crowley aptly says this is "smuggling middle-class social values into composition instruction by disguising them as inflexible rules for discursive behavior" (184). The complexity of social constructions, subjectivities, and power relations is ignored in favor of forming well-behaved students who will leave uninterrogated the problems created by persistent hegemonies. Welch puts this strongly in her critique of textbooks that

> continue to reproduce the scourge of the two-hundred-year-old current-traditional paradigm with its faculty associationist psychology, its gridlike boredom-inducing formulas, its commitment to obsessive error correction, and, worst of all, its project of making student writers develop great negativity toward their own writing—a result that leads to

> an uninformed citizenry bereft of rhetorical strategies, bereft of the understanding that the native tongue drives meaning (language speaks us; we do not speak language), and bereft of the ability to change the dominant culture. (150-151)

As graduates of modernist institutions move into their adult lives with, perhaps, some power and influence, they proceed with faith in the modernist view of knowledge and writing and continue to support its hegemony in the world outside the academy.

Composition programs are also affected by the modernist construction of subject. As long as composition teachers promote the modernist approach to writing, most fully realized in current-traditional rhetoric, there will be a disciplinary bias that devalues the teaching of composition. As long as composition courses and programs focus on a unitary subject transmitting ideas via a current-traditional model, they will be seen, as Theresa Enos says, "as technicians, not scholars" (Enos, *Gender Roles* 38). This bias is, in part, well-deserved by composition faculty who buy into the modernist project, who resist activating postmodern views of subjectivity in their courses. As long as modernist constructions of self and knowledge and language maintain their hold on the consciousness of the academy, composition will not be understood; professionals in composition will continue to be viewed as servants to the "greater good" of other disciplines. Breaking the hold of the modernist paradigm demands a reconceptualization of what must go on in composition classes, and that must include a postmodern view of student/writer subjectivity.

But the postmodern conception of subjectivity brings specific questions and difficulties related to agency. Feminist concern over how agency can be maintained by the unstable subject exemplifies this significant difficulty. Working toward attaining "full subject" status, some feminists view postmodern conceptions of subjectivity as disempowering, a removal of the possibility of agency. As Nancy Hartsock, with good reason, complained, "Why is it, exactly at the moment when so many of us who have been silenced begin to demand the right to name ourselves, to act as subjects rather than objects of history, that just then the concept of subjecthood becomes 'problematic'" (qtd. in Grewal and Kaplan 233). Henry Giroux considers this dilemma an example of how postmodernism lends itself to a reformulation of agency itself:

> Postmodern feminism provides a grounded politics that employs the most progressive aspects of modernism and postmodernism. In the most general sense it reaffirms the important of difference as part of a broader political struggle for the reconstruction of public life. It rejects all forms of essentialism but recognizes the importance of certain formative narratives. Similarly, it provides a language of power that engages the issue of inequality and struggle. In recognizing the importance of institutional structures and language in the construction of subjectivities and political life, it promotes social criticism that acknowledges the interrelationship between human agents and social structures, rather than succumbing to a social theory without agents or one in which agents are

> simply the product of broad structural and ideological forces. (*Border Crossings* 71)

Viewing postmodern agency in this way should ease some of the resistance on the part of both composition instructors and students, giving them a way to conceive of the writer as a functioning agent in specific situations and locations.

The Power of Border Ethos in Composition Pedagogy

I opened this chapter with reasons why borders provide us with an apt trope for the location of ethos and then elaborated on those fairly innocuous and understated reasons to raise some larger and more significant issues to consider in theorizing composition pedagogy: construction of and response to difference; foundations of power and resistance; conceptions of self, identity, subjectivity, and agency; hegemonies created by modernism; and the position of composition within largely modernist institutions. The presentation of these points uncovers the enthymeme that guides my interest in teaching with a focus on border ethos. In so doing, teachers can not only reach the stipulated goals of composition (to help students develop rhetorical understanding, begin to claim their own discursive space, and think critically about discursive contexts) but can also enact a critical pedagogy, increasing the possibility that students will be better able to perform as humane, thoughtful, and just members of our democracy. I take to heart Henry Giroux's earnest appeal that we link "education to the imperatives of a critical democracy" (*Border Crossings* 73), and I see reconceptualizing ethos as a means by which such a link can be forged in composition

courses and programs. Using Giroux's criteria for developing a transformative, critical education as a guide, I outline in the next chapter how a pedagogy focusing on border ethos could take shape in a composition course.

Chapter 4: Locating Border Ethos in Composition Pedagogy

In an earlier chapter I asserted that a goal of rhetorical education today is the same as rhetorical education in ancient times, that we still intend to prepare students for their roles as citizens. The importance or possibility of this goal is, of course, contested; still, I believe it is a significant goal, not only for rhetorical education but for all liberal education. I see myself as, in Giroux's terms, a "cultural worker" and believe that the most important job I do is to help engage students' critical skills as they think and act as citizens, both of the United States and of the world. In *Border Crossings*, Giroux explains the importance, especially in the United States, of critical pedagogy as a support for democracy:

> [A] number of polls indicate that while the youth of Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Germany are extending the frontiers of democracy, American youth are both unconcerned and largely ill-prepared to struggle for and keep democracy alive in the twenty-first century.
>
> Rather than being a model of democracy, the United States has become indifferent to the need to struggle for the conditions that make democracy a substantive rather than a lifeless activity. (72)

This concern about youth and democracy echoes the concern expressed by classical rhetoricians. Isocrates' interest, for example, in educating the boys of Athens, training them to "think right," was not without purpose; his goal was to support the strength of the state by preparing the next generation of leaders. As I pointed out in the first chapter, Plato, Aristotle, Quintilian, and Cicero, like Isocrates, were deeply invested in

education and its role in creating an effective citizenry. The seriousness of this function of education fueled their concern about the virtue of rhetors: they wanted to prepare citizens and leaders who had wisdom and who could make considered decisions—a goal no different from the one expressed by Giroux and held by many in higher education today. Despite twenty-five hundred years of changes in material conditions, ways of thinking, communicating, and experiencing the world, it seems we are not so different from rhetoric teachers of Athens and Rome. Of course, because of the changes in material conditions, ways of thinking, communicating, and experiencing the world, our methods have changed. As previous chapters have asserted, our understanding of how values are shaped have complicated the development of pedagogies. The philosophy of teaching and the resulting methods employed by the ancients were not complicated by the contingency and indeterminacy that concern twenty-first century teachers and theorists. We are faced with the task of responding to modern and postmodern sensibilities and contemporary material conditions by generating pedagogies that engage students and support their learning in complex contexts. Obviously, I believe that giving attention to ethos as conceptualized within current sensibilities and conditions, can provide an appropriate option for composition pedagogy. Though I have provided rationale through previous chapters for creating such a pedagogy, it is important to illustrate teaching practices that support the theory. I begin by stipulating characteristics of the border.

Although borders are conceptualized in many different ways, this border trope must have specific characteristics. It cannot, for example, be a closed, nor can it be

inhabited by only people who speak a single language. The border under consideration here can be imagined not as a line but as an area, one which may at times appear to be stable and impenetrable but which takes on different shapes and can be entered and exited. The inhabitants of this border area are varied, with many languages spoken and many different sets of cultural practices. Some of these inhabitants speak all of the languages of the area; others speak primarily if not solely one language. Regardless of language, though, the inhabitants are involved in multiple and varied discursive acts, but all discourses take place in person; communication is always in the present so that the rhetor has a greater investment in ethos. Although this area's inhabitants are willing to communicate, doing so can be difficult. Differences among the inhabitants are multiple; sometimes difference is obvious, other times hidden. Some inhabitants are in the area because they must be; others choose to remain there. Some are natives, others from distant places. For all, though, it is a difficult place to be because the differences are sometimes challenging to live with. Within this area, a variety of groups has formed, some of them based on language, some on shared cultural practices, some because they have power over others, some because they lack power. This is not a place free from oppression or injustice, but one where democracy is valued to varying degrees by the inhabitants.

Contrasting this discursive space and its inhabitants with the spaces occupied and written about by ancient rhetoricians supports the claim that a different ethos is needed for rhetorical participation here: while the ethos the ancients conceptualized could be based on shared values and language, a border ethos cannot. In border

discourses, effective rhetors discern difference with respect rather than as a means to exclude or to exoticize, and they resist universalizing, relying instead on the local to inform them. In constructing ethos for a rhetorical moment, effective border rhetors work to know the values of their audiences, and they distinguish where rhetor-audience values intersect, creating a space for clearer communication, greater understanding, and persuasion. The border rhetor understands that power is enacted within relationships, even between individuals, and respects the individual powers of the parties in discourse. Effective rhetors understand that there is no single source of authority and that constructing a persuasive ethos includes not only knowing but using, when available, modes of authority and credibility valued by the audience. Creating ethos in border discourses is not easy; it requires multiple types of thinking—analytic (to understand the locations, subjectivities, and values of the audience), synthetic (to find points of intersection between differences), evaluative (to think critically about what things are most important), and creative (to imagine the situations of people who are different and predict the effects of their discursive constructions).

Although I have no intention of presenting a series of lesson plans for instruction in border ethos, I would like to propose some types of activities designed to help students understand and practice border ethos. Clearly, a teacher cannot simply stipulate the above descriptions of borderlands and border ethos and expect students to learn from them. Some concepts in border ethos can be addressed fairly easily, such as making clear that within border areas language difference and cultural practices are issues, and can be handled in the classroom through examples and models. Textbooks,

even some of the ones I reviewed in the first chapter, provide activities that teachers can adapt. Such class activities are fairly common, often conducted to present the concepts of voice, but as I pointed out in an earlier chapter, this is a weak substitute for ethos. Focusing on voice tends to oversimplify, attending to level of language, for example, or determining if the writer has adopted a humorous or serious or cynical way of dealing with the subject matter. Focusing on voice does not get at the heart of ethos and its full integration into a text; instead, it suggests that the tone or arrangement or language is an add-on, a flourish that exists in a space outside the real text. Ethos is a significant part of the text and, though it is a construction, it is not an "extra." It includes a special richness that informs texts by revealing writers' attitudes about themselves and their audiences, their intentions and values. Ethos is revealed in ways far more complex than in the level of language that writers use; it is revealed through what they tell and what they omit, through what they tell first and last, through their means of addressing the audience. I would suggest that teachers interested in developing students' understanding of ethos expand on exercises typically presented for determining "voice" or "credibility," having students interrogate texts more deeply. Following the lead of Lunsford, Ruszkiewicz, and Walters in *Everything's an Argument*, teachers can ask students to consider political and cultural attitudes evidenced through ethos and to look for how the ethos remains consistent or where there appear to be inconsistencies, for example. They can ask students to examine the use of first-person pronouns and how they affect ethos, and they can have students rewrite texts or prepare images or revise

their own writing to shift the variables that add up to ethos, changing connotative words, reordering, truncating or adding text.

Other steps in preparing classroom activities for instruction in border ethos are far more difficult: helping students to imagine themselves with different subjectivities presents one of the largest challenges, not only because the modernist notion of subjectivity persists but also because this activity will be performed inside the academy, a place notoriously unresponsive to making spaces for different subjects, especially in its institutionalized discourse. Difficult or not, though, we must explore ways to help students to first understand that there are differences in subjectivities and second to imagine different identities, new ways to be.

We can draw on the work of feminist scholars in composition for assistance in this pedagogical problem. Recognition of multiple subjectivities is enacted when feminists work towards the inclusion of diverse discourses in rhetorical scholarship. Attention to rhetors, usually women, whose work has been discounted or ignored because they did not fit the traditional paradigm of rhetoric has provided us with greater diversity of contexts, ways of thinking, and means of expression. Serious consideration of platform speakers such as Sojourner Truth and pamphleteers such as Ida B. Wells has raised important possibilities of subject construction into the academic consciousness,[19] and reconceiving the histories of rhetoric by including women such as Sappho, Diotima, and Aspasia, as well as the often disregarded Sophists such as Gorgias and Isocrates, has made clear that the modernist view derived from Plato through Aristotle into the

[19] See Shirley Wilson Logan's *With Pen and Voice* and Jacqueline Jones Royster's *Southern Horrors and Other Writings: The Anti-Lynching Campaign of Ida B. Wells, 1892-1900* for their studies of Truth and Wells.

Enlightenment was constructed with disregard for multiple possibilities of subject.[20] In most cases, this work has opposed the modernist construction of subject. Indeed, the enthusiasm for rehistoricizing classical rhetoric grows out of a desire to change the modern rhetorical consciousness. Glenn, Jarratt, and Welch, in particular, in their interrogations of foundational assumptions about classical rhetoric, have provided ways to theorize a non-modern rhetoric. In *Electric Rhetoric*, Welch calls for an Isocratic Sophistic in theorizing what she calls Next Rhetoric, a means for understanding and deploying the language of our world, a world which includes the aural/orality of television and visuality of computer screens. A compelling reason for Welch's focus on Isocrates, and a reason that compels me to include such thinking in theorizing a pedagogy of border ethos, is that Isocrates is not modern. We can begin to understand for ourselves and to create opportunities for our students to understand a different subjectivity by bolstering our knowledge of subject construction with non-modern examples. Classical rhetoric, with valuable scholarship already underway, is an excellent place to begin imagining a non-modern subject. It may seem odd to suggest exploring different conceptions of subjectivities and selves in classical rather than postmodern texts. I do so for good reason. Though postmodernism rejects modernist thought and construction of the self, its *raison d'être* is modernism. The classical consciousness, however, is simply apart from modernism, not a rejection whose existence depends upon it.

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[20] See Cheryl Glenn's *Rhetoric Retold: Regendering the Tradition from Antiquity Through the Renaissance*, Susan C. Jarratt's *Rereading the Sophists: Classical Rhetoric Refigured*, and Kathleen Welch's *The Contemporary Reception of Classical Rhetoric: Appropriations of Ancient Discourse* for their inclusionary work with rhetors traditionally rejected in rhetorical studies.

Still, there are problems with using classical texts in first-year composition classes to help students understand different ways of viewing the self: the texts present the challenge of reading and understanding translated classical languages, and they often require a basic understanding of philosophy that may distract from the purpose at hand. I am not suggesting that Greek and Roman rhetoricians and philosophers have no place in the composition curriculum, only that they may not be the best texts to assist students in conceiving of differing constructions of the self. Narratives, however, from any number of non-Western[21] writers are more accessible and may be better resources for providing students with the experience of imagining other selves.

American Indian narratives, for example, provide a rich resource for considering non-modern constructions of the self. Because they are stories, they draw us into the world of the characters, not through an abstract representation of ideas but through location and action and discourse, and we can experience imaginatively how inhabiting a non-modern subject position feels. Before providing a specific pedagogical example of working with an American Indian text, I want to present some important caveats.

First, because working with non-modern texts requires finding sources typically written by non-Western people, the writers, as well as the cultures from which they write, are oftentimes marginalized in the dominant, Euro-centric culture of the West. Actually, that is part of their value: they have been marginalized because they do not meet the hegemonic modernist standards. But using texts by writers from marginalized groups must be done carefully, with awareness of the tendency to reduce, stereotype,

[21] What constitutes a non-Western writer is the subject of debate. For the purposes of this project, I consider a non-Western writer anyone who writes with a sensibility other than modernist. The distinction is not geographical, nor is it racial or ethnic.

essentialize, and exoticize them and their work, and such tendencies must be resisted persistently. The point of working with their texts is to create imaginary experience that can help students to consider subjectivities other than the modernist one that continues to discipline them, not to set up yet another binary of "us" and "them," either to glamorize or to demonize. Anzaldua writes about how ethnocentrism devalues native work and appropriates it in harmful ways:

> Ethnocentrism is the tyranny of Western aesthetics. An Indian mask in an American museum is transposed into an alien aesthetic system where what is missing is the presence of power invoked through performance ritual. It has become a dead "thing" separated from nature and, therefore, its power.
>
> Modern Western painters have "borrowed," copied, or otherwise extrapolated the art of tribal cultures and called it cubism, surrealism, symbolism.The music, the beat of the drum, the Blacks' jive talk. All taken over. Whites, along with a good number of our own people, have cut themselves off from their spiritual roots, and they take our spiritual art objects in an unconscious attempt to get them back. If they're going to do it, I'd like them to be aware of what they are doing and to go about doing it the right way. Let's stop importing Greek myths and the Western Cartesian split point of view and root ourselves in the mythological soil and soul of this continent. White America has only attended to the body of the earth in order to exploit it, never to succor it

> or to be nurtured in it. Instead of surreptitiously ripping off the vital energy of people of color and putting it to commercial use, whites could allow themselves to share and exchange and learn from us in a respectful way. (68)

We most definitely must not misappropriate, exoticize, or essentialize the texts which we introduce to our students, and we want to teach them to read the texts of people who are different than they are in respectful, non-totalizing ways.

Second, I am quite aware that so far I have said nothing about teachers and students who are from marginalized groups, that I have been writing as if all of us, teachers and students, are from the traditionally dominant group in the United States, but I fully recognize that some of us who teach and some of our students are very likely from groups marginalized because of their race, ethnicity, class, or religion. Although the constitution of our classes is of concern when we work with such texts, the point is to have students experience the texts for understanding non-modern subjectivities, and regardless of race, ethnicity, class, or religion, if students are in our college courses, they have very likely been thoroughly disciplined by modernist notions of subjectivity. And if we have, for example, Indian students in our classes when we are working with Indian texts, it is quite possible that they have not experienced the subjectivities under discussion—unless they have lived entirely immersed in their tribal culture. Even then, the exercise of reading and experiencing and discussing Indian texts can perhaps help them in understanding some of the unstated challenges in their work as college students. If we take Giroux's imperatives for critical pedagogy seriously, we are compelled to

focus on margins, allowing our students to know sites of struggle, especially the struggles against modernist binaries established to silence or oppress. Focusing on the margins of difference as they are expressed in narratives by and about people who have been outside dominant ways of being and thinking can open doors to understanding and respect.

To illustrate a pedagogical move that can help students understand different conceptions of self, I turn to LeAnne Howe's "Blood Sacrifice," a story that frames her novel *Shell Shaker*, though it was written and published prior to the novel. Rather than including the whole text of the story here, I present a critical reading of this story focusing on how self is constructed and how it differs from the modern construction of the unitary, autonomous subject. By looking closely at this story, situated in Choctaw thought and culture, we can begin to conceive of a world without binaries, most particularly a world where self and community are fully integrated.

This narrative unites opposing qualities that would be viewed as binaries in a modernist view. For example, though the modernist view might understand peace and killing, warrior and peacemaker as opposites, "Blood Sacrifice" illuminates their unity. In this narrative, Tuscalusa and Grandmother of Birds exemplify the integration of warrior and peacemaker. Though Tuscalusa, Black Warrior, goes into battle with De Soto, Grandmother is fully involved in his actions. The stone he gives her to swallow holds his spirit, and she gives him a *kasmo*, "a feathered shawl with locks of her hair woven through it" (204), which holds her spirit. Warrior and peacemaker are fully integrated in both characters. Even after their deaths, for generations, they appear

together, always as birds—eagles, hawks, and swans. The archetypal warrior and peacemaker are complements to one another in both life and death.

In this story, the unity of self and community is crucial, for without the integration of individual and community, a blood sacrifice will not work. The only way the supposed offense Shakbatina's daughter, Anoleta, has committed can be ameliorated is for the community itself to suffer a loss, and that can be done through the death of Shakbatina. Such a substitution works only because the individual is not of prime importance. Shakbatina's execution is a just retribution to restore balance to the community.

This view that an individual is integrated into the community does not imply that individual actions are insignificant. The individual does not disappear into community but is deeply integrated into it, and an individual's actions can have lasting effects on the people of the community. Just as one person can infect a blanket with small pox and cause the deaths of many people, so, too, can one person's daily decisions affect a community. Shakbatina understands the effect of her apparently insignificant decision to send her daughter on an errand:

> In a way I am responsible for the disaster at the Red Fox village. I had sent Anoleta to them as an emissary of our town. I was still recovering from the *Inkilish* disease that had killed so many people. She was to exchange vegetable seeds and bowls filled with special healing plants for flints. (206)

Shakbatina's decision places her daughter in a serious situation which could result in war. To prevent war, Shakbatina stands in for Anoleta. Her sacrifice is an individual act which restores peace and balance to the community.

The view of self in "Blood Sacrifice" includes fluidity that allows transformations from and to human forms. Tuscalusa leaves his spirit with Grandmother of Birds and becomes a shell; the Seven Grandmothers transform into birds in their effort to save themselves and reestablish their home; and the warrior observed by the young Shakbatina "slips[s] out of his body and into *na tohbi*" (208). The older Shakbatina, soon to be executed, says she "know[s] when it is time to return to the earth (205) and declares, "When I am released I will grow up through the earth and sprout like green corn. From the summit of the mound I will guard our people. Do not cry for me, I am a fast grower" (210). Finally, after Shakbatina's execution, she tells of her transformation:

> I feel myself growing younger in this place. When I look back at my body, blood is seeping out of my head and flecks of bone are strewn through my hair [. . .]. An unknown language floats around me. Each word is in Old Code I must decipher. Suddenly there are streaks of white, and the delicious scent of tobacco fills the air as the spirit of an animal appears. Big Mother Porcupine walks into view and takes me by the hand. (218)

These transformations are not linear, permanent changes. In Western thought, transformation typically is regarded as something that occurs when one autonomous

being or thing changes into another. In "Blood Sacrifice," transformation does not occur in that way. The Seven Grandmothers change into birds for a time but become women again when they are out of danger, and when Shakbatina dies, she is not simply removed to another realm but remains in this world, living on in her daughters and guarding her people. To understand this type of transformation, we must conceive of the quality of wholeness among beings, understanding that, as Shakbatina's husband tells her, "one thing can hold the essence of another" (213). Transformations can take place because the possibilities of other incarnations are already there. The Grandmothers can become birds because they already hold the essence of birds, and Shakbatina can live on in her daughters because they already hold her essence.

Adopting the view that people can, indeed, hold essences of other beings is an enormous challenge to modernist, Western thinking, and it explodes binaries, even that most persistent division between self and others. If we can adopt this view, acknowledging that we are full of the essences of others, we cannot continue to maintain that the self is unitary and autonomous. We can understand self only in terms of community—the community of our ancestors, our current families, friends, and acquaintances, and other beings.

This story also demonstrates the destructive power of binary thinking, especially the destructive power of thinking about the self as autonomous. The modernist conception of self and its separation from others has wreaked havoc on all people not conforming to the masculine, white, elitist, Western hegemony. When binaries of self and community, mine and yours persist, damage ensues. We can see this very clearly in

"Blood Sacrifice" with the incursions of whites into the Choctaws' lands. At every step, from De Soto to the influence of white culture on the Red Fox people, the events of this narrative are affected by the growing presence of whites. And all of the damage is generated from a conception of the world that separates individual from community and allows for, even valorizes, individual possession of land and wealth. De Soto and the other whites who follow him, all disciplined by post-Enlightenment notions of self and conquest, see their actions as somehow their right.

Reading, analyzing, and discussing stories such as this with students presents opportunities for them to at least begin to understand alternate possibilities of self, if not to integrate the experiences of different selves into their imagination. The function of this particular type of exercise, though, is solely to focus on the self as revealed through characterization in a narrative to effect imagining different possibilities of subjectivity, not an investigation of ethos. Such an exercise can move students toward disempowering the modernist view of the self before they begin exploring the selves they manifest through their writing.

A series of exercises with narratives essays could introduce students to ethos. The series should begin with the teacher modeling ethos analysis in a sample essay, guiding students to find clues to the ethos displayed based on the choices—in specific language, in sentence construction and patterns, in depth of detail, in arrangement—the writer has made. Students then can begin to perform their own ethos analyses, beginning perhaps in pairs or small groups to share insights about what ethos is displayed and how it is constructed, later working alone on the same tasks.

Focusing on this kind of work in the composition class takes time. It would be possible to spend an entire semester working with print texts, but that would be a mistake. Students must be given the opportunity to interrogate ethos as it can be produced in multiple discursive situations, especially with images and text design. Because of the pervasiveness of the visual in contemporary United States culture, we would be doing a huge injustice to ignore it as a site for study. Theresa Enos and Shane Borrowman explain a series of activities they have found useful in helping students' awareness of "techno-ethos," the creation of online credibility and authority, by using holocaust denial websites, which students analyze to evaluate how key people are presented through their credentials, the texts they author, images of them, even the use of font size, type, and color of the various texts. Such analysis, say Enos and Borrowman, leads students to see the ease with which websites can be made to appear credible and to understand the importance of ethos in persuasion (93-109).

I would suggest that, though such exercises are of great value, we lead students beyond them to give them experience in interrogating their own instances of techno-ethos. As I mentioned earlier, most students today participate in online social networks such as Facebook and MySpace, where they have the opportunity to construct ethos that can be seen, maybe heard, by hundreds of thousands of people. These sites have easily accessible tools for creating pages with whatever appeals their participants choose. Students today have the tools to create multi-media ethos whether they are on the social networking sites or not; that is not the issue. Our task is to help them consider not only what they do when they construct these pages but why they make the choices they do

and what the results of these choices might be. Using social networking sites in the composition classroom is a simple way for students to begin to take techno-ethos seriously as a border location requiring interrogation: Who has power on these sites and how is it made manifest? What constitutes credibility and authority? In what ways is difference accepted or rejected? What are the results of specific power relations? In what ways do these social sites oppress or suppress people? What language must be spoken for persuasive communication? In what ways do these sites work toward human empowerment, and in what ways do they do harm? When students participate in the discourses available in these social networks what ethos do they intend and why? Do they experiment with different selves, or do they try to project a stable self, "who they really are?" Questions such as these can lead to a relevant understanding of ethos in a volatile context and support a critical pedagogy that calls to question students' "citizenship" in a specific social site.

The exercises and activities I have referenced to this point are examples of pedagogical moves that can be made to effect the goals of composition through a focus on border ethos. All of them support the development of rhetorical understanding; all of them demand consideration of rhetorical contexts, and all of them encourage students to claim their own discursive space

Constructing composition courses and programs that center on border ethos can support a critical pedagogy. Work with ethos necessitates giving attention to subjectivities and how they are constructed; locating ethos in borderlands necessitates giving attention to difference and the conflicts that can arise from it. Work with ethos

implies a consideration of ethics that is deeply integrated into social processes and relations and allows critique of social constructions and power. Work with ethos requires interaction with the local rather than the universal, with contingencies rather than stability. These characteristics allow creation of a critical pedagogy as Henry Giroux outlines.

I rely heavily on Giroux for my understanding of critical pedagogy for several reasons: (1) though his theories share similarities with other thinkers such as Paolo Friere, his ideas are framed by experiences, politics, and cultures of the contemporary United States; (2) he views the role of critical educators as working for transformation toward liberation and justice and for shaping democratic subjects; (3) his work integrates theory and practice; (4) it centers on the lived lives of people, especially students; (5) he gives attention to the disciplining functions of language and knowledge in human experience; (6) regarding oppression, he focuses on multiple categories—e.g., race, class, gender—rather than only one; (7) he recognizes higher education as a site of struggle and possibility; and (8) as a public intellectual, he has written and continues to write frequently and prolifically.

Giroux presents us with models for thinking about and producing pedagogies that aim for ideals significant to the goals of higher education within a democracy. For my purposes in this project, I begin with Giroux's model of critical pedagogy and its nine criteria as articulated in *Border Crossings*:

1. Towards the goal of empowering people in their lives, critical pedagogy must investigate identities, power, agency, and struggle as they exist in social and political spheres (73-74).
2. An ethics of social responsibility must be a basis for developing pedagogies (74).
3. Identities and categories of difference must be understood as constructions and interrogated (75).
4. Knowledge must be viewed as dynamic, and the contingent and the quotidian valued as worthy of study (75-76).
5. There must be an emphasis on how knowledge is created and who gets to create it (76).
6. The understanding of reasoning needs to be expanded to include more than the "universal" logic of the Enlightenment (77).
7. Both critique and possibility need to inform us (77-78).
8. Teachers must function as cultural workers, able to both acknowledge and interrogate the social and the personal as constituted by and operating within specific contexts (78-79).
9. The intended result should be engagement on a personal and political level to move society away from oppression (80).

These criteria can be understood and employed in multiple institutional sites of higher education—in general education programs, history courses, interdisciplinary studies, at the graduate or undergraduate level—and considering how they might take shape in

each of these contexts is interesting but not the purpose of this current project. Instead, the task is to situate them in relation to composition pedagogy, most specifically a composition pedagogy with border ethos as a significant element.

Interestingly enough, when critical pedagogy with ethos at its center is enacted in a composition course or program, it contributes to developing good character on the part of our students. Taking ethos seriously, examining intersections of difference, and interrogating social and political structures as they relate to individuals' lives allows character to grow by accretion: it is a process of understanding and taking responsibility for social relations and personal actions that affect them. The question which confounds some of us when we study ethos as a classical rhetorical construction—whether it is created for the moment of discourse or it resides in the rhetor—can be answered: ethos is displayed in discursive moments, and it resides in the rhetor who develops the habits fostered by critical pedagogy, emancipatory habits that serve to eliminate tyranny and oppression.

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