

CHAPTER 3

WRITING MOVES—THEORIZING/ PICTURING SITUATED PROCESSES

How do we picture composing processes? As Linda Brodkey argued in 1987, how we imagine process is shaped in part by what she calls the “picture postcard of writing” (399). The postcard is the image that “many of us find ourselves reading when we think about writing, or, worse, when we are in the very act of writing” (396). This stubborn construction sees the writer as a “solitary scribbler” (398), one who is “merely a clerk” engaged in writing as “transcription” (398), or as Marilyn Cooper describes a similar figure, a “solitary author” (365) “producing propositional and pragmatic structures, Athena-like, full grown and complete, out of his brow” (366). Material conditions on the scene—the “closed shutters of the garret, the drawn drapes of the study, or the walls of books lining the library”—invades this picture as well but operates somewhat counter-intuitively as a means of taking the writer *out* of her contexts or “effectively remov[ing] the writer from time as well as place” (Brodkey 404). In short, Brodkey’s postcard embodies Western constructions of authorship as disembodied and transcendent. And this picture is not just pervasive, it is invasive as it compels “those who teach as well as those who take composition courses” to “recreate a garret and all that it portends whether we are writing in a study, a library, a classroom, or at a kitchen table” (397). The postcard encourages us to imagine writing processes as somehow sealed off from contexts immediate and distant; it prevents us from recognizing the social and cultural situatedness as well as the lived experience of writing that Brodkey argued we must reckon with in writing research and teaching.

This image is still afoot—even in spite of how our field has come to account for writing in terms of its sociality and situated cognition (and its politics, its varied communities and locations, its systems or networked relations). I think most can still relate to Patricia Bizzell’s description of process in our classrooms as at once revelatory and resisted. She writes,

Simply to acknowledge that composing processes exist is something of a gain for modern composition studies. My undergraduate students would like to deny this premise: they prefer the fantasy that when they finally become “good writers,” they will be able to sit down at the desk and produce

an “A” paper in no more time than it takes to transcribe it. Nor are my students alone in this fantasy of instant text production. It is part of a more general notion in our culture, a sort of debased Romantic version of creativity wherein verbal artifacts are supposed to be produced as easily and inevitably as a hen lays eggs. (175)

Processes, in Bizzell’s students’ minds, are no doubt shaped by the picture postcard—easy, linear, special, continuous, contained in the mind, floating somehow out of time and space.

The picture postcard reflects back to us how routinely we assume that “text composing can somehow be isolated from physical and material conditions of production and use” (Syverson 25). But if we look for processes in the world, we find them inseparable from constraints and pressures of all kinds, within and in excess of the writer’s control and awareness—time, others, materials, electricity, tools, deadlines, genre conventions, cultural and financial capital, and so on. Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s famous account of the composing process of his poem, “Kubla Khan,” illustrates the enduring and routine ways we separate composing from material life. As he narrates it, this poem simply came to him, fully formed and with no effort, as he slept. He awoke to transcribe it on paper only to be interrupted by a visitor, a knock on his proverbial garret door. With that interruption, the transcendent garret of the poet’s mind is disrupted, invaded, and destroyed. Thus, Coleridge concludes, his process was incomplete and the product, the poem, only a fragment.

For this poet, the world is not a part, just an unfortunate meddler. But if we shift our vantage and see Coleridge’s processes as instead in and of the world, we see his processes differently. We see how environmental factors—that specific farmhouse setting, the drugs Coleridge took, the work he was reading, his long nap, the loud knock on the door, the hour-long conversation with the “person from Porlock,” the cultural ideologies swirling at the time about authorship and creativity—more than a transcendent mind alone shape the famous 54 lines into the version we know still today. And yet it is Coleridge’s framing—seeing the environment as a distraction, as the antithesis to his process—that sticks. Our pictures of processes remain in the shadow of Coleridge’s story and the picture postcard: writing as rarified and separate. But our lived experiences of them—physical, wandering, located, *implicated*—upend such easy and detached pictures.

In this chapter, I continue to poke at the postcard’s control such that we might perceive a knock at the door as much a participant in composing processes as any other present condition or action or individual. To do so, I first locate some residue of the postcard in three recent pedagogical documents that feature

process prominently and aim to steer the fundamentals of writing instruction today. Then toward forming a situated and descriptive rather than a picture postcard and prescriptive view, I theorize processes in three intersecting parts: as activity, as physical, and as materially emplaced. By calling this work theorizing, I indicate my interest in exposing and adjusting assumptions around process. As Thomas Kent has it, theories are what operate underneath—“coherent systems of presuppositions” that can “explain and that bring coherence to the practices that derive from our beliefs” (“Principled” 429). I think assumptions can be exposed and questioned especially through contemplating imagery. So I partner “picturing” with theorizing as the main work of this chapter for a set of reasons: for one, to disrupt associations of theorizing with abstractions or rarefied intellectualism; two, to follow Brodkey’s lead in her postcard image and its network of assumptions; and three, to continue to build a method of situating processes by looking, locating, describing, or in short, seeing processes as they happen in time and place. Building upon my adjustments to process histories in the first two chapters, I hope this conceptual tour helps us, teachers and writing professionals, continue to work to see an old familiar and its potentials differently.

“SKILLS AND STRATEGIES”: PICTURES OF PROCESS IN RECENT PEDAGOGICAL DOCUMENTS

It is likely impossible to know how process is really imagined, talked about, and enacted in contemporary pedagogies, in different kinds of writing classes across the country, at ranging institutions, with differing populations of writers. And given the ways that process has worked itself into our bones (Anson, “Process”) or become the very fabric of composition (Foster) or the right answer to a now mundane question (Petraglia, “Is There”), we might find it especially hard now to locate such a defined or unified sense. However, if there were to be such a place, it may be in a set of recent documents interested in the foundations of writing pedagogies today: CWPA, NCTE, and NWP’s 2011 document, “Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing;” CWPA’s 2014 “WPA Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition 3.0;” and NCTE’s 2016 position statement, “Professional Knowledge for the Teaching of Writing.” Far from backgrounded, processes feature prominently in these documents, a distinct area of knowledge earning discussion alongside other teaching and learning fundamentals including critical thinking (“Framework”), rhetorical knowledge (“WPA”) or awareness of writing’s range of purposes (“Professional”). In my read, discussion of processes across these documents evidence tension. On one hand, processes are complexly described in relation to rhetorical situations or changing technolog-

ical scenes. On the other, though, processes are repeatedly defined as a writer's *own* set of strategies. In linking process to strategy, I suspect some influence of the picture postcard at work, where processes are controlled or engineered exclusively by the writer alone.

To be sure, across these documents, the pictures of processes are nuanced and complex, reflecting histories of process critique concerned about overgeneralization and acontextuality, as well as increasing pedagogical focus on rhetorical and genre studies. In NCTE's recently revised 2016 position statement, in which "Writing is a Process" remains as one of its ten epistemological precepts, the document authors underline that processes should not be seen as enduring, singular, or generalized; instead, they will always differ in relation to varying purposes and genres. As such, focusing on process in our teaching should not signal "a formulaic set of steps" that could be learned "once and for all" ("Professional") as the novelty of different writing situations requires different processes. That processes are multiple and responsive reflects elsewhere as well: processes are described as "flexible" in light of differing contexts of writing and "seldom linear" ("WPA"); and "[s]uccessful writers use different processes that vary over time and depend on the particular task" ("Framework" 8). In the "Framework" especially, flexibility is emphasized, echoed as one of the framing habits of mind that urges writers to respond nimbly to differences of purpose, audience, conventions, and disciplinary contexts (1). Writing processes in these documents are multiple; they change in light of rhetorical concerns especially; they are acquired and adjusted by writers across time. "Professional Knowledge" provides perhaps the most capacious articulation of these kinds of differences: processes are said to "develop and refine" across writers' lives and experiences with new genres, "personal and professional contexts," and "writing spaces and technologies;" and they "shift" not just in light of purposes, audiences, and genres, but also "circumstances, such as deadlines and considerations of length, style, and format."

In sum, processes here are plural, multiple, and based on many factors that precipitate adjustments in a writer's procedures. But, even allowing for these differences, I do not see processes as *situated* in the ways I'm after. For example, that processes differ based on "circumstances" is potentially provoking, particularly in the way the document authors exemplify them. Deadlines and format are familiar constraints of school writing; parameters traditionally set and enforced by the writing teacher. Writers enact processes, probably too as guided carefully by the teacher, in order to divide and control time—say, to stave off procrastination or kickstart invention. So, of course, much process activity is in planning and executing in time. But, at the same time, something like a deadline is a constraint that is also profoundly *out of* a writer's control, intentions, or plans. As I think Steven King is famous for saying, writing is never done, it's just due.

So too do other “circumstances” acknowledged in these documents, like technologies or sociality, provoke us to consider what is within and without a writers’ control or domain. All the documents in some way recognize profound change in communication technologies. In fact, “Professional Knowledge” cites as impetus for its 2016 revision the ways that “the everyday experience of writing in people’s lives has expanded dramatically” with the rise of handheld devices, composing across a range of modal and life domains, and increasing access to and variety of speech and composing technologies. “WPA Outcomes” too emphasizes writing tech across their discussions of rhetorical knowledge, critical thinking, processes, and conventions, suggesting that by the end of first-year writing courses, writers should be able to “Adapt composing processes for a variety of technologies and modalities.” This articulation is of course important—we can’t talk about writing’s production, especially today, without thinking about the tremendous range and learning curve of various composing tools. But, on the other hand, this articulation is also a bit strange when inspected up close. For one, what can “adapt” really mean in this context? It implies writers walk around with their multiple processes—somehow “isolated from physical and material conditions of production and use” (Syverson 25)—and deploy adjustments to them accordingly when employing a pencil versus a laptop versus the interface of Instagram versus an offline Kindle. Processes do certainly change in light of changing technologies (as Haas’ and Syverson’s studies expose). But those changes are simply not limited to sets of intentional “adaptations” made by the writer alone; they’re rather the result of changes in a nexus of relations among environment, tools, objects, memories, intentions, thoughts, time, and so on.

So too with sociality. The documents reflect the social turn; writers should, for instance, “Experience the collaborative and social aspects of writing processes” and “participate effectively in collaborative processes typical of their field” (“WPA”); they should “work with others in various stages of writing” and “use feedback to revise texts to make them appropriate for the academic discipline or context for which the writing is intended” (“Framework” 8). Writing’s complex social situatedness is acknowledged here, in peer review, feedback, and discourse conventions (Especially the last quotation above evokes the discourse community perspective initiated by Bizzell). But, again, social contexts are described in a way that suggests any given writer can control them—for instance, how feedback can be “used” to ensure a pleasing, home-run product that fulfills a discourse community’s every convention. But within shaping social and cultural contexts, discourse conventions aren’t just sitting out there for writers to master in advance or through the rational exercise of “use.” An errant zeal for “correctness” or simply the capriciousness of any given reader in those dynamic contexts (of which the writer too is a part) exert their control upon any writer’s process.

Any writer alone cannot guarantee something like “appropriateness.” In short, writing processes are not ours as much, or more than, they are ours alone.

What I’m eager to expose in these documents is how processes are ultimately controlled in their descriptions by control. Each forge tight links among process and intention; processes may be many and different, but they are writers’ *own*. Ownership is exemplified especially in how each document defines processes foremost as *strategies*—the “multiple strategies writers use to approach and undertake writing and research” (“Framework” 8); “multiple strategies, or *composing processes*, to conceptualize, develop, and finalize projects” (“WPA”); “a repertory of routines, skills, strategies, and practices for generating, revising, and editing different kinds of texts” (“Professional”). The image of writerly isolation and control is further delivered in recurring appeals to the process wheel: abstractions cast in familiar terms of “prewriting techniques, multiple strategies for developing and organizing a message, a variety of strategies for revising and editing, and methods for preparing products for public audiences and for deadlines” (“Professional”). Strategies indeed denote some context-awareness. And these documents do imagine processes as a capacious, multiple, flexible, adaptable set of strategies fitting to rhetorical situations and constraints. But still, as writer’s own alone. Strategies indicate we can plan, control, direct those contexts that are “out there.” Strategies imply that “our” processes are *separable* from where, with what, and with whom they are. But processes are never just a writer’s plans; they are an amalgamation of ranging, distributed, shaping and participatory forces which include the writer. Such “aloneness” is a fiction, as “writing is always already overwritten by other people, and, crucially, other *stuff*” (Lotier 366). *Situated* forces act in concert and dissonance; the writer is but a force among other forces. Situated forces like technologies, racial or economic privilege, comma conventions, writers, and more—to be now explicitly new materialist or flatly ontological about it—exceed any one actor’s or force’s control or awareness. Processes in the world are implicated, distributed, situated.

This is not at all to say that the writer has no agency in her processes. And it’s not at all to say that talking about and teaching process as strategies is unhelpful. Of course, writers benefit from developing plans and options and techniques for developing complex texts; of course, writers benefit from reflecting on how they and others produce and circulate texts of all kinds; of course, versatile control is emphasized in documents about outcomes and knowledge (chaos, magic, happy accidents, collaboration with a network of writing actors, or improvisation, after all, are not so easy to register in our reigning educational schemes). It’s not at all that process strategies are wrong. It’s that strategies *alone* is misleading. Processes are never *just* strategies. Writing processes in the world quickly exceed the bounds of strategy as in the world they are mostly unruly, on the fly, constrained,

pressed into and merging with the realities and forces of living. Processes are a tangle of intentions, attempts, responses, failures, accidents, others, missed opportunities, things, actions, and movements cobbled together and experienced on-the-spot, not in advance or separately. Processes as strategies, in short, is just incomplete.

Can our notions of process in the classroom account for situated realities, those that exceed the steady, controlled vision of writing epitomized in the process wheel or strategies? Can we still teach with process if processes are more than strategy alone, if processes are *not* ours just as much as they are ours? Seeing processes as situated attunes writers to the susceptibilities, constraints, forces, and differences in writing acts across shifting contexts. Instead of strategies alone, instead of process as writer's pre-fab plans *before* a particular impetus for writing emerges, instead of imagining writers and their processes as somehow *separate from* their swirling surrounds, we can proceed with pictures of processes as implicated in time and place, as situated, distributed, and susceptible *activity* that is *physical* and *emplaced*.

PROCESSES AS ACTIVITY

It doesn't feel radical to begin with the claim that situated processes be seen as *activity*. This isn't exactly breaking news. The whole story of the process revolution, as it is known so well, is thought of as a pivotal shift from seeing writing as formalist surface correctness towards observing writing as complex human processes of thinking and acting. Process not product. And yet, in recent years, seeing writing first as human activity has not necessarily been the default. Social constructionist, cultural studies, postmodern, and postprocess are among the influences that have tipped field assumptions more toward writing as heteroglossic textualities or signifying webs and discourses. In such views, the "writing subject" is deemphasized, problematized, or moved entirely out of the frame in favor of what Sidney Dobrin, in his deconstructionist vision, simply calls "a more explicit focus on writing itself" (*Postcomposition* 3).

No longer the default, compositionists recently studying writing as composing activities have found need to make explicit their case for doing so. Jody Shipka, in her study of composing processes as mediated and multimodal, for example, contrasts her intervention to what she sees in the field as a "tendency to 'freeze' writing, to treat it as a noun rather than a verb, and to privilege the analyses of static texts" (104). Similarly, Pamela Takayoshi notes a "deep commitment to and abiding interest in writing—the print linguistic graphic system of marks (letters, words, and other symbols) on a surface or screen" ("Short" 4) among computers and writing scholars, in light of the long social turn. As a result, she

laments, we have accounted too little for how writing technologies and digital tools are used, how they shape and alter scenes of contemporary (mobile/digital) composing. That is, for Takayoshi, seeing process as activity is crucial now given how “[w]riting spaces are dramatically different than they were 25 years ago” (4). For Shipka, if we fail to see writing as verb, we leave invisible the multimodal nature of all communicative acts. For me, seeing writing processes as activity stands to help reshape classroom processes from controlled textualities into living and breathing, susceptible and situated ones.

In using the word activity, I don’t mean to suggest necessarily specialized or particular connotations (like activity theory, for example), but more simply something like everyday and particularized bodily action. I align with Lee-Ann M. Kastman Breuch’s claim that process be understood as “an activity rather than a body of knowledge” (120). For Breuch this postprocess idea understands writing as situational and “indeterminate” (133), and thus beyond the scope of systematicity, closed skill sets, or mastery (127). As open systems, writing processes are specific, contextualized, and distinct across times and places. Seeing processes as activity located in experienced time and place, rather than as writers’ *own* pre-fab if adjustable strategies, leads me to three related claims: first, processes leak into life—writing processes are practices of being, inseparable from and encountered across life domains and activities (not just in school); second, processes unfold in the present-tense, not just as abstracted routines that leap out of time to predetermine future action; and third, process activity exceeds the control of textual products.

If we see process as physical activity, then writing stretches out across innumerable scenes, spilling over, into, and through everyday living. Writing processes are living processes, susceptible to many forces and coextensive with other activities. Paul Prior has often emphasized this point with his sociohistoric view of literate activity. I admire this view for how it richly thickens any given composing participant or action with connections to influences and convergences near and far, or “how many voices and moments of activity buoy and flow through the apparently fixed, one-dimensional words of a page” (*Writing* xi). But, Prior notes in contrast to his rich framework, we talk routinely about writing as a condensed, one-dimensional, straightforward, and isolated task. He writes, “Usual representations of writing collapse time, isolate persons, and filter activity (e.g., “I wrote the paper over the weekend”)” (*Writing* xi). But when seen as a “situated” (*Writing* xi) and “actual embodied activity” (“Tracing” 171), clean and orderly reportage about writing processes becomes much more complicated. Far from wholly planful or contained, processes from this view “emerge[] as a confluence of many streams of activity: reading, talking, observing, acting, making, thinking, and feeling . . . transcribing words on paper” (*Writing* xi), as well

as “drinking coffee, eating snacks, smoking, listening to music, tapping . . . fingers, pacing around rooms” (“Tracing” 171), and countless other actions. This uncontained view certainly departs from a process as strategies paradigm. More conventional conceptions of process might emphasize procedure with contained identifiable timelines characterized by the “progress” of a text’s development. Process as activity, by contrast, exposes the detours, interruptions, failures, abandonments and “fits and starts, with pauses and flurries, discontinuities and conflicts” (Prior, “Tracing” 171) characteristic of writing *experience*, in a phenomenological sense. An activity perspective disrupts the presumption that processes always already yield development or that processes only happen when an identifiable “skill,” like reverse outlining or cubing, is deployed. When we look for process as activity, we see writers and writing acts as profoundly vulnerable to material forces and confluences of activity that are situated and unique, not neutral but *implicated* in broader systemic mechanisms of, for example, cultural and economic capital (e.g., Aronson; Brodkey; Canagarajah). Indeed, observing the leakiness of processes into and across life and activity domains attunes writers and their teachers to perceive the rich if elusive contexts that give shape to writing behavior and attitudes.

Processes as expansive activity also invokes ontology: processes as being and living. Prior and Jody Shipka, with their cultural-historical activity theory perspective, illustrate this idea, claiming:

that literate activity consists not simply of some specialized cultural forms of cognition—however distributed, not simply of some at-hand toolkit—however heterogeneous. Rather, literate activity is about nothing less than ways of being in the world, forms of life. . . . It is especially about the ways we not only come to inhabit made-worlds, but constantly make our worlds—the ways we select from, (re)structure, fiddle with, and transform the material and social worlds we inhabit. (181-2)

Following this description, processes are imbricated actions, ongoing forms of life and (re)making, not deployable tools. Robert Yagelski reflects this ontological perspective onto writing and its instruction. His phenomenological notion of writing experience is helpful toward seeing processes as activity. He writes, “what if we shift our theoretical gaze . . . from the writer’s writing to the *writer writing*? Not writing as thinking, or socially transacting, or ‘constructing itself’ in a postmodern way, but writing as ‘the self *being*?’” (107). This ontological view positions process as a continuous unfolding rather than a telos that might be predetermined in steps. It puts writing activity *in-situ*—in the moment, in the

world, as we differently experience it.

This in-the-momentness leads me to a second dimension emphasized in activity: seeing processes as situated in time (and space). As Haas emphasizes, writing (with computers) modifies the “realms of time and space” (226) and thus “how utterly bound to the physical world of bodies is writing” (Haas 46). The right-here-and-now of processes evokes for me too Takayoshi’s “composing moment” (“Writing” 570)—those infinite snapshots that momentarily anchor the swirling social factors and other constraints that impinge on writing. But conventional process teaching, as Prior puts it, by contrast collapses time and thus erases the specificities of located processes. Conventional process artifacts like portfolios, drafts, or prewriting condense and limit writing activity into repeated textual steps, “effectively remov[ing] the writer from time as well as place” (Brodkey 404).

Moreover, conventional process teaching would implicitly cast time as orderly and controlled. Process time is regimented, collapsed into steps, the linear deployment of strategies, normative stages, or said another way, “compulsory notions of able-bodied composing processes” (Wood 272). Even recursivity—the supposedly messy back-and-forth movement of composing through time—can often feel boxed into orderly fashion. For example, when recursivity is described as when “a writer may research a topic before drafting, then after receiving feedback conduct additional research as part of revising” (“Framework”), I note how it still marches steadily toward a developed textual outcome. In short, conventional process time is regimented and normative.

“Crip time,” a concept from disability studies, helps disrupt normative (process) time and locate processes in experienced time and place. In part an affectionate acknowledgment that disabled persons may need more time or may often be late, crip time embraces the ranging times things take (Samuels; Wood). Any attempt to systematize or regulate time—attempts built overtly and covertly upon certain bodily normativity—will (and should be) exploded by bodily differences, including “a slower gait, a dependency on attendants (who might themselves be running late), malfunctioning equipment (from wheelchairs to hearing aids), a bus driver who refuses to stop for a disabled passenger, or an ableist encounter with a stranger that throws one off schedule” (Kafer 26). Crip time doesn’t seek, though, exception or allowance *within* normative time. It seeks instead (characteristic of the disability ethos) to dismantle normative time altogether. As queer, feminist disability scholar, Alison Kafer asserts, “Crip time is flex time not just expanded but exploded” (27); a paradigm not of regiment but “flexibility” (Price 62) keenly aware of and connected to the interplay among space, bodies, moments, and others. Thus, time, from compositionist and disability scholar Margaret Price’s vantage, is utterly located and thus *susceptible*—

to barriers, avenues, others, architectures, objects, systems, and more. Time cannot be bootstrapped by individuals or codified as “how long things take.” As Price emphasizes, time is an experienced construct always in interrelation with embodied, material, populated, and fluctuating spaces.

Thus, process time cannot be secured or assured in advance. Errant attempts to secure processes for future writing scenes (an attempt a part, it would seem, of defining process as strategies) has been a problem at the core of postprocess critique. The oft-repeated claim that “no codifiable or generalizable writing process exists or could exist” (Kent, *Post-Process* 1) is essentially an argument about carrying processes into the future. Discerning the shape or ad-hocery of processes might be possible after the fact, says Kent (*Post-Process* 3). But when we enter into a new communicative situation, “we can never be sure that the process or system we used initially will prevail a second time around” (Kent, “Paralogic” 148). We can’t assure that any set of strategies can be deployed again. You can’t step in the same process river twice, a postprocess perspective would hold. This doesn’t mean there isn’t anything to learn about processes, it means what matters more is not the strategies alone we carry with us, but our ability to discern on-the-spot where and with whom is our writing. The focus on process in-advance—floating somehow out of, or above, particular moments in which a writer finds themselves—is the issue from a postprocess (and my) view. In very different ways and for different reasons, both Price and Kent emphasize how (process) time cannot and should not be systematized or codified in advance.

The regimented in-advance-ness of conventional images of process, I think, reflects in our students’ thinking. In my experience, student writers see processes operating independently of specific times and places. Often my students don’t believe they really “had” a writing process at all when I ask them to draw themselves engaging in a recent scene of writing. They limit their experiences of process to just where and when they’ve deployed certain familiar school strategies like prewriting or outlining or drafting procedures. When I ask them to draw their processes (as I’ll discuss further in Chapter 4), most often they show me writing for school—not writing on their phones, on social media, on fan fiction sites, or for their jobs. And they rarely, if ever, show me *where* they are and who they’re with. If we put processes in time though, we’d put it in space too; we’d see writing happening wherever and whenever without any preconceptions about what constitutes a “writing process.”

Yagelski amplifies this point, as he shows just how much of our instruction equates processes with engineering texts that attain some level of surface acceptability. In our enduring focus on textual features, he observes, we focus basically not at all on the myriad and manifest *experience* of the writing process. He illustrates this in part by describing a scene at an NWP conference—one thousand

writers in a big room all quietly and collectively experiencing the act of writing together and then, simply, putting that writing aside. This moment of being and composing, for Yagelski, is itself a profound act, one of inquiry and provocation rarely lingered upon or even acknowledged in our instruction. Through a case discussion of his work with writing student Chelsea, Yagelski exposes how routinely in our instruction, we hyperfocus on writing as making socially acceptable *forms*, a focus which, again, prevents the potential for writing acts themselves to be transformative experiences. He writes,

Whatever happens to a text after it is written does not affect what is happening to (or in) the writer as she or he is writing that text. Whatever happens to this text that I am composing right now after I have written it will not change what is happening right now as I write it. It is this experience that current theory fails to explain. (105)

Refocusing on the right-now-ness of writing adjusts writing theory and practice: Yagelski's phenomenological, non-Cartesian view exposes how even process instruction, which purportedly focuses on practice over product, thoroughly fails to get at writing as it unfolds in an ongoing present. But focusing on process as activity *in time* might urge us toward radical process descriptivism in our methods. More than future-oriented strategies, processes as activity in time reveal composing as situated and emergent activity—influenced strongly or indirectly (or not at all) by the past (experiences, tools, practices learned and exercised, cultural norms, conventions, etc.) *and* equally why what is *in situ* (new, unthinkingly performed, responsive, never repeated or habitually enacted—in short, improvised).

Teachers of writing may rarely think of processes as living emergent action. Instead, we reconstruct a student's process through collected textual artifacts: drafts arranged in a portfolio, a required prewriting web, freewrites, marginal comments, editing marks, portfolio reflections, tracked revision changes, and so on. Process knowledge is demonstrated in how texts change, not in how a writer has acted. In Yagelski's words: "For all the attention this has received, the process movement seems to have effected little change when it comes to where we cast our collective gaze in our efforts to understand and teach writing: Our eyes remain fixed on the text, like so many test-takers admonished to keep their eyes on their own papers" (144). It should be no surprise that I am taken by Yagelski's image—our process eyes fixate on papers, on drafts, on texts. Meanwhile, the vibrant physicalities of processes (*v.*) covers its tracks, recedes from view. We maintain a steady, even relentless, focus on texts even if or as we continue to utter our mantra, "process not product." This brings me to my third and final

assumption disrupted in casting processes as activity: how we default to searching for process as it presents *in texts*.

The link between process and product is as complicated as it is deeply ingrained. The field turned to processes (along with a set of other foci: developmental psychology, the fight for students' rights to their own languages, open access initiatives, civil and students' rights movements, and so on) in part because some writing teachers were faced with written products they increasingly did not understand. And as Prior has put it, when we consider why studying writing processes is important: "The first and central reason is that writing processes are where texts come from" ("Tracing" 167). Thus, it may be difficult to imagine processes as anything but directly related to products. The familiar process wheel, for example, is trained thoroughly on the path and changes of any particular text from prewriting to publication. It is true too that process theorizing, as evidenced in the last chapter, has increasingly accounted for wide swaths of factors and contexts that influence writing activity as well as the circulation and work of texts. This recognition is evident in Prior's claim that "To understand how a text comes into being requires looking broadly at contexts as well as closely at specific situated activity" ("Tracing" 172). While this perspective highlights the complex situatedness of writing activity at both micro- and macro-scales, Prior here nevertheless prioritizes writing as the movement of the text into the world. Tightly connecting products to processes predetermines and limits what counts as relevant process activity.

Perhaps the most restrictive perspectives on product/process relationships are those that have assumed direct correlations between features of texts and specific (acontextual, discrete) writing behaviors. This may feel like an "old" idea about processes. But the NCTE statement I reference above still implies this view. For example, the first point in a list of what writing teachers need to understand about processes is "[t]he relationship between features of finished writing and the actions writers perform to create that writing." This suggests that a teacher can "see" process activity in hindsight, as determined through features of "finished" texts. It presumes that distinct behaviors can be isolated and directly associated with specific textual features. It predetermines what might constitute meaningful writing activity. But how can an observer know after-the-fact what specific actions cause changes that move a text toward its final realization? As John Warnock has it, though we cannot really know writing in any other way than through products, texts ultimately confound as a means of "seeing into writing" (7). And plus, even if those behaviors could be isolated and defined, even if writing (n.) and writing (v.) both laid bare its tracks and its relationships, of what use could those behaviors really be in new contexts, for new texts, in novel material and rhetorical situations?

The hope that process and products will offer up clear one-to-one correlations has been perhaps the most errant of process hope. It likely led to well-meaning but ultimately damaging instructional strategies that presumed student writers' processes were systematic texts to be interpreted and debugged by insightful teacher-observers. Perl's study of "unskilled writers" in some ways exemplifies this hope. On the one hand, Perl's methods revealed the complexities, patterns and logics of participant Tony's processes. As Perl writes, "The conclusion here is not that Tony can't write, or that Tony doesn't know how to write, or that Tony needs to learn more rules: Tony is a writer with a highly consistent and deeply embedded recursive process" (328). Perl's assertion is extremely important as it countered anxieties at the time that manifest (much like they can still today) in veiled arguments for academic rigor, "appropriateness," or "back-to-basics" methods and in backlash to calls for language diversity and preservation. Perl demonstrated that Tony, a writer simply presumed to be "unskilled," performs writing processes logically and with sophistication. This was a powerful claim at a time when access to higher education was opening but against a backdrop of insidious social control waged against the fight for increasing civil rights and the recognition of language diversity.

On the other hand, though, Perl suggested that writing processes like Tony's could be modified for the better through instructional intervention. What Tony needed, Perl and others thought at the time, "are teachers who can interpret that process for him, who can see through the tangles in his process just as he sees meaning beneath the tangles in his prose, and who can intervene in such a way that untangling his composing process leads him to create better prose" (328). Embedded in this view is the assumption that processes are amenable to some measure of mechanization and that processes could be stable across contexts. If the processes involved in writing are performed "right," this view implies, "good writing" will result. This interventionist belief also entails the problematic assumption of learner deficiencies: writing problems as problems in thinking rather than—as social process theorists quickly pointed out—relative inexperience with certain social discourses especially those valued and most performed in middle-class, academic contexts. In short, that writing teachers should "intervene in and . . . modify their students' writing habits" (Selzer 276) is predicated on the idea that there are direct correlations to discover between processes and products. But, as Jack Selzer asserts in 1984, the dizzying number of contextual factors potentially at play in processes will always dash these interventionist hopes. Selzer warns, for example, that teachers must understand that student writers who "truncate their writing processes for school writing" or revise "only superficially" may be doing so not out of "ignorance or intransigence" but because they see school writing as unimportant or routine (281). And, of course,

this list of intervening forces which affect the products we receive can expand infinitely—the writer was in a noisy room and under a time limit (Emig); their electricity was turned off; they were caring for an insistent child; they were working a double shift, or in a silent library late at night; their phone or laundry timer or roommate rhythmically interrupted; and so on. Acknowledging processes' always changing environments and situated actions further undermines any sense that process behavior can be tuned or jostled or controlled to reliably generate specific textual features.

For as much as we no longer believe we can untangle or engineer students' processes, products' control of our process imagination remains quite entrenched. In his recent book on process pedagogy, Kyle Jensen takes on this trope of development and control so deeply anchored in process teaching. In Jensen's view, the dominant "how-centered" philosophy of more than forty years of process instruction equates student development with empowerment, a state attained through a carefully orchestrated façade of control. Students produce textual materials that expose their processes for surveillance by instructors. Instructors in exchange "transfer control [back to the student] by providing strategies that facilitate greater levels of proficiency" (2). From Jensen's perspective, this under-interrogated philosophy and the ways it presupposes incremental literate development prevents writing professionals and students alike from fully grasping writing as "a complicated sociohistorical phenomenon" (81). Said another way, because of our preoccupation with the careful engineering of texts, or as Yagelski would put it, because of our driving interest in making texts increasingly acceptable in their surface features, "neither students nor scholars can develop a full intimacy with the complexity of writing processes" (Jensen 13).

Jensen argues that we should shift instead to a "what-centered" conception of process that sees writing in excess of control (6). To make this shift, Jensen positions students as researchers in online writing archives—in "digital interfaces that display every mark of revision" (7)—where they can observe the tiny, seemingly patternless changes in texts as they are marked through time. This view opens up what Jensen sees as an "uncanny space where writing unfolds in surprising ways" (83). Observing myriad textual choices that could be otherwise, Jensen argues, "helps students recognize that material development is not a linear process toward control" (87). Instead, Jensen shows how archival study of process helps writers conceptualize writing as a "multidirectional activity characterized by distributed processes" (87) and unveils the complex, decentered, and "more mysterious dimensions" (117) of writing. This kind of archival looking at a text's tiny and major changes unveils the chaos of emergence.

In his characterization of process teaching as well as his descriptive process methods, Jensen's project aligns very much with my own. He embraces process

descriptivism; he disrupts process as orderly, *a priori* development; he values having writers see the tiny detail of processes as they unfold in time. He shifts where we look for process. But where we diverge is in that he makes these adjustments by training student writers' eyes upon process as *text*. Student writers perhaps infer writing as complex human actions as they train their eyes closely on small and major textual changes. While Jensen upsets process commonplaces to good end, he at the same time, from my perspective, doubles down on the stubborn association of processes as products as he casts the "meaning and movement" (Jensen 10) of writing in terms changes marked in the archive. Ultimately, I share Jensen's vision of the pedagogical value of embracing "insecurity" (10) and cultivating curiosity rather than trying to mechanically practice literate control. But I see his "what-centered" view from the perspective instead of bodily activity in space-time—moving physical bodies, affects, spaces, objects, and situated and shaping sociomaterial forces. If writers are to see their writing acts as implicated and susceptible, I think they might do so more readily by observing process as actions with discernable influences than by observing marks in an archive.

Perhaps it is true that we can only distinguish writing activity from the rest of life by virtue of eventual products. But there is value in stretching that process/product connection to its limits. And of course, our instruction will still entail products; we cannot in our teaching, nor should we, erase outlines, portfolios, reflections, drafts, pages, or other text-oriented process artifacts. I'm suggesting rather that there is value in dimensionalizing processes as bodily activities that live and breathe in everyday participatory contexts. This expanded or dimensional view makes writing meaningfully embodied and material, a conception not just suppressed by a process tradition associated most with texts or abstract cognition or controlled literate development. A wider and invasive Western intellectual tradition that prefers mind over matter also interferes.

PROCESSES AS *PHYSICAL* ACTIVITY

Writing is embodied. This is a now familiar assertion in composition and rhetoric. But complicating its familiarity is the range of ways embodiment has come to mean, matter, and do. A. Abby Knoblauch, for example, worries about an "obfuscation of terminology" (51). Such imprecision about what we mean when we say that writing is embodied, Knoblauch suggests, risks further disregard for work invoking embodiment and the marginalized bodies, voices, and lived realities it aims in different ways to account for. I agree with Knoblauch's assessment that what embodiment may signify does vary: to name just a few ways, embodiment is a critical term in feminist composition, methodology, and epistemology (e.g., Flynn; Haraway; Kirsch and Ritchie); in writing pedagogy as signifying

bodily performance or performativity (e.g., Butler; Cedillo; Fishman et al.; Koppelson; Lindquist; Stenberg); in theories of language and identity that emphasize racialized, gendered, normative, and class dimensions of composing as well as its systems of difference, privilege, and social and economic capital (e.g., Alexander; Banks; Bloom; Dolmage, *Disability*; Royster; Villanueva, *Boostraps*; Wilson and Lewiecki-Wilson). But even this set of citations, as any, reduces the ways embodiment may work as a living concept. Indeed, I think it's impossible, and likely undesirable, to reach the conceptual stability Knoblauch seems to seek. Instead, we might reach for, as I hope to here in this section, the clearest articulation possible of what is meant by any given invocation of writing's embodiment. In emphasizing its physicalities, I see processes as located, susceptible, affective, conditioned and improvisatory, differentiated, and particular bodily movement with material things.

The first point to emphasize, again, is that I most often speak in terms of the physical or physicality rather than embodiment. I lean away from embodiment in some measure because I think the term can more often connote textuality or signification. For instance, in her tripartite taxonomy of embodiment in writing scholarship, Knoblauch emphasizes “embodied language” or “terms, metaphors, and analogies” (52) that reference the body (or do not), as well as “embodied rhetoric” which she defines as the “purposeful effort by an author to represent aspects of embodiment within the text he or she is shaping” (58). I have no issue with the importance of terms in Knoblauch's scheme; I just mean to focus not on textualized embodiment but rather on bodiedness which lives, breathes, stops, rests, responds, takes up, moves, does. I choose physicality to direct our (i.e., writers') attention to observable and particular bodily action—the choreographed and improvisatory experience of physical movement and affect that drives any scene of composing. Processes are only accomplished through physical activities, by means of the differing movement of body parts like hands, eyes, mouths and voices, fingers, legs, arms, brains, and muscles engaged with material objects. In part, my work in previous chapters leads me to this assertion: Christina Haas' observation that, “Writers use their bodies and the materials available to their bodies via the material world, to both create and to interact with textual artifacts” (225); Reynolds' call for attention to “those physical movements that we call writing” (168); Emig's emphasis on the “literal act of writing” (“Hand” 112) as physical creation somewhat akin to the acts of sculpting or carving. Located bodies enact writing processes as an ineluctable bodily doing with materials—digital or analog, enduring or ephemeral. Minds alone do not make writing.

At the same time, this physicality is almost too obvious. It risks seeming inconsequential or oversimplifying writing as “mere” inscription. But it is the cen-

ter of my thinking first because processes in our classrooms are ritually couched in terms of acontextual thinking or textuality, an association which takes writing acts out of time and place as acontextual, floating free, controlled—or in short, picture postcard. In one sense then, seeing processes as physical activity focuses on the bodily action that is available to observation. Aligning with phenomenological traditions, Anne Wysocki similarly suggests that embodiment encourages us to “attend to what we just simply do, day to day, moving about, communicating with others, using objects that we simply use in order to make things happen” (3). Indeed, focusing on physical activity does, to some extent, aim to see “simply” the smallest details of what a writer does, where they do it, and with what. But I am not sure that that bodily doing is best understood “simply.” Wysocki adds this kind of attention with a more constructionist perspective. On one hand, embodiment is constructed and socially-situated; it is “knowledge that we are also experienced from outside, observed and shaped as part of a culture and its institutions” (3) and, on the other, it is our “felt experiences of an interior” (11). Wysocki appears to construct this tension familiarly as an inside/outside or self/other dichotomy: embodiment is shaped “through culturally developed identities being placed on us by others while at the same time we come to experience ourselves as sensing interiors” (12-13).

I appreciate the simultaneity that Wysocki reaches for here—embodiment is both individual-interior and socially constructed. But I resist the dividing line, one I think is commonplace in constructions of embodiment: that sensations and “felt sense” or authentic voice are *in* our bodies and social narratives and cultural signification ride outside on bodily surfaces. Embodiment rides instead, it seems to me, always in between and in motion. For one, we know bodies aren’t more authentic or originary than culture at the same time that they are always already interpolated (as Judith Butler’s well-known work on gender performativity suggests). A body is never outside the interpolation of culture or language broadly construed. At the same time, bodily experience perpetually exceeds or undermines those determinations (see, for example, N. Katherine Hayles’ treatment of embodiment versus “the body” as exceeding determination in her reading of Foucault’s panopticon). This kind of complex interrelation amongst bodies and signs has been nuanced in this way especially in disability studies. As Tobin Siebers emphasizes, particularized bodies are not blank slates that can be so easily overwritten by language, category, or constructionism. “The body is alive,” Siebers emphasizes, “teeming with vital and often unruly forces” (68) that exceed and are “capable of influencing and transforming social languages” (68). I see the physicalities of processes riding in between in this way too—experienced and felt, never outside the imposition of culture, habit, others, and social signification *and* always at the same time “teeming” with transformative potential.

An important implication of this view, one which interconnects sensation and sociality, is that focusing on writing as a physical process isn't at all to narrow its scope or ignore its larger contexts. Quite the converse. Taking cue again from Haas, embodied practice is at once local, sensory, social and historical, learned and idiosyncratic. Writing tools, like a #2 pencil or a MacBook desktop computer in a university library, "have a history built into them" (Haas 229), histories that are shaped by the wider cultural processes preceding (and exceeding) any writing act. Simultaneously, literate tools are the "products both of the uses to which they have been put and of the beliefs that guide those uses" (229). Those histories and uses and beliefs too, I would stress, are not contained just *in* the tool itself either (as Haas emphasizes), but also in relation to bigger *scenes* of use (e.g., the desktop in the university library versus one in a home positioned in a shared family space). Haas nevertheless helps us see the dynamic interconnections of a single writer's moves with writing tools or objects shot through with cultural assumptions, social histories, beliefs (collective and individual), and material affordances. And these relations, it should be underlined, are not of automatic accord or parity. Rather than a baseline of "fit" amongst tool design, beliefs, and specific bodies, the default is better seen as "misfitting" (Garland-Thompson; Miller)—collisions of bodily differences with baked-in assumptions about "the body" (as a universal) as manifest in material tools or writing spaces. As Elisabeth L. Miller exemplifies, for example, "people with aphasia experience a conflict between their bodies, minds, and the normative materials and expectations of literacy—or literate misfitting" (28). Misfitting exposes reciprocal relations amongst tools' actual—that is, fitting, hacked, modified, reinvented, ranging—embodied uses and constraints at a range of scale: material, cognitive, cultural, social, historical. As such, attending to physicality is not to focus processes on interiors or bodies in isolation. Bodies instead are implicated—shaped by and shapers of macro-scaled contexts of community, culture, history. As feminist philosopher Gail Weiss states, building upon Maurice Merleau-Ponty's notion of intercorporeality: "being embodied is never a private affair, but is always already mediated by our continual interactions with other human and nonhuman bodies" (5).

As bodies are never alone nor solely interior, writing's physical activity can be understood as movement *with*. As Laura R. Micciche puts it, "Writing is contaminated, made possible by a mingling of forces and energies in diverse, often distributed environments. Writing is defined, ultimately, by its radical *withness*" ("Writing" 502). Processes are also always thoroughly *with* where they are located. Similar to invocations in feminist, cultural, and affect studies (Haraway; Kirsch and Ritchie; Lu; Massumi; Mauk; Reynolds, "Ethos as Location"), Vandenberg, Hum, and Clary-Lemon offer *location* or *position*—locating bodies in specific contexts (discoursal, physical, cultural, dialect, community, and so on)

that are fluid, overlapping, and conflicting—as a means to disrupt universalisms and erasures. Observing the “living human body” (12), Vandenberg and his co-authors assert, “encourages one to recognize gender, skin color, age, and the mild or debilitating physical effects of one’s labor. Such observations can become an inroad to the recognition of privilege and difference, or the value-laden ‘station’ one occupies while engaging others in language” (12). Starting with emplaced bodily experience creates “inroads,” as Vandenberg et al. construct it, a place from which to perceive both “a register of life in action, a locus of personal experience as a source of knowledge” and “a reflection of discursive interaction” (12). A living *writing* body similarly spotlights such locatedness: the writer’s relations to her interlocutors, her uptake or violations of particular community discourses, her shifting positions of disempowerment or privilege, the changing reception and judgment of her language performance across domains, and so on. The physical movements of processes are then never in a vacuum but implicated in—and a *way in* toward perceiving—the vast contingencies and shaping factors of writing (I say more about this below in my discussion of emplacement).

Next, to see writing processes as physical is also to see affect. Affect in composition studies, somewhat similarly to embodiment, has directed our attention widely, framing considerations related to emotion, psychology, feeling or sensations, “nonrational” action, movement, and relationality. Affect is largely understood as the domain of physical bodies, forces, and sensations, or a “gradient of bodily capacity” (Gregg and Seigworth 2). Affect too unfolds on connective axes of selves/others, evincing how individuals and groups form morphing relations with others, communities, institutions, ideologies, and physical objects and environments. Affect recasts emotions, thought conventionally to be individual and interior, as instead thoroughly social, externalized, and relational forces that hold explanatory power for political and social organizations, allegiances, stances, and fractures, as emotions generate surfaces on bodies and communities that compel and repel (Ahmed).

Compositionists invoke affect and emotion to reconceptualize publics and public rhetoric (e.g., Edbauer-Rice) or reconsider pathos (Jacobs and Micciche); to expose psychological phenomena in composing like anxiety, beliefs and motivation (McLeod) or extra-cognitive (Brand and Graves) or social-performative dimensions of emotions in the teaching and learning of writing (Chandler; Lindquist; Micciche, *Doing*). Alice Brand and Susan McLeod have worked specifically to expand our conceptions of writing processes with concentrated efforts to account for affect, to meaningfully include the shaping roles of emotion in processes and push their constructions beyond control, linearity, acontextual cognition, or detached problem-solving. In spite of these efforts, there remains little focus in contemporary teaching with process on the affective *life*

of writing—its physical sensations, rhythms, interruptions, compulsions, and avoidances. Observing the physical and environmental aspects of composing processes will reveal a range of affective relationships writers forge and feel with their writing spaces, the “unconscious, automatic, ineffable, inexplicable” (Brand and Graves 5) ways of knowing and doing. Thus, affect is an important extension and complement to Haas, Perl, and Syverson’s focus on embodiment and knowing. Tacit cognitive frameworks can imply sustained goal-directedness and intentionality that affect would perpetually undermine through excess. Observing affect disrupts the sure command, intentions, or predetermined steps conventionally thought to chiefly steer composing. Processes are driven by situated thinking, social conditioning, and affective intensities, among other forces, all of which are likely indistinct or inseparable.

Physical affective dimensions are especially important toward disrupting containment in our pictures of process. Kevin Leander and Gail Boldt’s “non-representational approach” (26) to literate activity focuses on any given moving literate body. Through a “strategic sketch” (26) of Lee—a ten-year old boy whom they observe for a day as he reads, plays, socializes and lives through Japanese manga texts—Leander and Boldt portray literacy “as living its life in the ongoing present, forming relations and connections across signs, objects, and bodies in often unexpected ways. Such activity is saturated with affect and emotion; it creates and is fed by an ongoing series of affective intensities that are different from the rational control of meanings and forms” (26). Whereas conventional understandings might delimit “Lee’s reading” processes as only those moments when he’s moving eyes over a text, Leander and Boldt capture an enormous range of things, movements, and activities that constitute his practice: a comfy armchair, toy headband and dagger, jumping, searching the internet, playing cards, a friend, a porch swing, a play-sword fight (where gender constructs and socialization scripts no doubt give shape to Lee’s bodily behavior), just to name a few of Lee’s emergent interactions over many hours. This adjusted perspective—Lee-as-body rather than Lee-as-text (29)—undermines highly structured and engineered school literacy tasks, which couldn’t register or solicit the indeterminate, unruly, and “unbounded” nature (41) of reading-living-playing practices like Lee’s.

Departing from the reigning social semiotic framework of the New London group, which sees “youth literacy practices as purposeful, rational design” (Leander and Boldt 24) within (disembodied or detached) sign systems, Leander and Boldt see processes as movement and mobility, as motivated *and* aimless bodily action rather than as steps or as sedentary and ephemeral mind or sign work. They forefront potential and emergence rather than control; they highlight interactions and composing *with* material objects and tools; they capture movement, desire, feeling, need, and doubt as part of literate action. Their work too echoes

my concern about conventional process instruction. Process constituted in terms of texts, drafts, or outlines has focused us too much on “prescriptive shaping” (Leander and Boldt 24)—or engineered literate development (Jensen)—missing how processes are an “emergence of activity, including the relations among texts and bodies in activity and the affective intensities of these relations” (Leander and Boldt 34). Inviting in affective physicality meaningfully into our process pictures focuses us on particularities and differences, specific bodies and things coming together in writing. The particular, physical-material, and affective movements of writing constructively “troubles the writing process” (113) to borrow Dolmage’s phrase. Alterity or “broken-ness” (125), understood positively not pejoratively, should be central to our understandings of processes as physical and material. Physicality emphasizes potentiality and disrupts by refusal the conventional “forward march toward a perfectable text/body” (Dolmage 126).

Physicality is thus indeterminate, experienced, culturally shaped, and social. It is also always particular. Focus on embodiment body can by omission become focus on “the body”—a universal standard (which far from applying to everyone, smuggles in dominant normative assumptions), a view from nowhere, the body in general. Writing pedagogies risk the same, promoting under the banner of a supposed “‘objective’ or disinterested standard” (Vandenberg et al. 16), a generalized subject position that becomes code for able, white, middle-class, hetero, and/or male. Jay Dolmage amplifies this point in relation to processes specifically, noting that the “regime of bodily normalcy is also present, and perhaps even more insistent, in the writing process itself” (112). And though we may acknowledge the ways writing is necessarily governed by the body, Dolmage continues, “few pedagogical approaches allow that the bodies engaged in this process should be viewed as diverse; to ignore the fact that our bodies all write differently is to superimpose a single bodily norm onto the writing process” (112). Following these and other compositionists, I emphasize particularized difference in physical processes: never *the* writing body nor movement in general, never an enduring construct of an “ideal” or “universal” bodily writing experience; and always physicality as particularized, as located, as a view from somewhere, a stand- or sit-point as epistemological social positioning (Dolmage, *Disability* 129). As Elizabeth Grosz writes succinctly, “Alterity is the very possibility and process of embodiment” (qtd. in Wilson and Lewiecki-Wilson 13). Processes as physical activity means to expose and make available rather than elide difference, seeking particularity across the contexts, subjects, and actions that are connected by and constitute writing acts.

My bottom line here, and really in this book, is that I think it’s important in process teaching to forefront bodies (and places and things). In their recent anthology, Vandenberg et al. share this call for context-attuned instruc-

tion. Embracing process-oriented pedagogies that can break free from inherited constraints and omissions, the authors underline that “while process pedagogies seem amenable to explorations of difference, they routinely homogenize these inclusions under the universalized rubric of ‘good writing’” (6). This is to say that, in writing instruction, processes are framed as largely stable and repeatable; that a set of “good” process behaviors will be broadly applicable and result in “good writing” in undetermined future contexts. As such, conventional process approaches occlude the many ways that writing activity *differs* across situations in ways both in and out any given actors’ control. The hefty challenge for instruction then—and as the field has recognized for some time and evidenced, for example, in the deconstruction of “general skills instruction” (e.g., Petraglia, *Re-conceiving*)—is to help student writers not only build a body of knowledge about writing and practice, but balance that knowledge with what they will need to *learn on-the-spot*. Most instruction, though, ends up stabilizing what is thought to endure about writing in the form of skills or rules—for a simple example, a set of comma *rules* perhaps specific to a given instructor, rather than an exploration of comma conventions or tendencies or what some in power have agreed upon is the case (for now). Contemporary process instruction would more beneficially help writers to *learn how to learn* to write in any situation. By seeing processes first as physical activities iterating differently in every new situation, writers can begin to take on this situated view of writing and focus upon what they need to discover about *where* they are writing.

Syverson too demonstrates how the corporeal can become a dynamic inroad: the micro-scaled study of writing processes as physical and material gives access to the macro-scaled dimensions of writing “observed at every level of scale” (Syverson 23) and that far exceed the spatial and temporal borders of any given writing scene. Syverson puts this idea quite elegantly, as she describes her own train of thought about writing phenomena as it expanded almost wondrously through the course of her studies. She says that most of us, our students and in our field’s history, repetitiously knit writing together with thinking, and thinking as “a matter of logical processing neatly managed by a brain in splendid isolation” (xiv). But when viewed from the perspective of an ecology, writing reveals itself to be terrifically expansive: “a complex ensemble of activities and interactions among brains, hands, eyes, ears, other people, and an astonishing variety of structures in the environment, from airplane cockpits to cereal boxes to institutions” (xiv). This view of the breadth of writing, the entailment of writing in place and time and things and life, is made available through a focus on writing bodies moving through spaces and times. I’m taken with Syverson’s wonderment at the complexities—the near magic of—seeing writing’s processes as *at once* expansive *and* physically located.

PROCESSES AS *EMPLACED* PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

In concluding with *emplacement*, I risk redundancy. I have already emphasized processes as relations among writers' bodies, movement, context, and objects. Process as bodily movement is always movement *with*. Writing is corporeal and material action (Haas). Writing entangles embodiment and enaction: the physical-material-spatial grounding of complex writing systems (Syverson). The affective body is "always in relation to an ever-changing environment" (Leander and Boldt 29), always the "body-*and*" (Leander and Boldt 29), a lively nexus of time, place, material objects, worlds, sensations. Emplacement, in other words, is inextricable from physicality. Writing bodies are never self-contained, not *in* a place but *emplaced*. As N. Katherine Hayles constructs this implicit relation: "embodiment is contextual, enwebbed within the specifics of place, time, physiology and culture" (154-5). Through emplacement, I emphasize susceptibility—writers and processes are an emergent result always of, never isolated from, where they are (on a range of scales). Processes are writer's own as much as they are not.

Kristie S. Fleckenstein helps capture what I'm after in picturing processes' strong emplacement, through her notion of somatic mind. She writes,

somatic mind is tangible location *plus* being. It is *being-in-a-material-place*. Both organism and place can only be identified by their immanence within each other; an organism in *this* place (body, clothing, cultural scene, geographical point) is not the same organism in *that* place. Who and where (thus, what) are coextensive. ("Writing" 286)

As always already a "view from somewhere" (Fleckenstein 281), emplacement is more than passive background or staging. Rather writing and writers are always already implicated, a part of the place where they are. Change where, with what, or for whom and writing processes change.

In recent years in composition and rhetoric, theorizing emplacement has become a prominent frame, a boon in rhetorical theory sometimes referred to as a "material turn" (e.g., Barnett, "Toward"). Actor-network theory (e.g., Lynch and Rivers), object-oriented ontologies (Barnett and Boyle), activity theories (Prior and Shipka; Russell) and new materialisms (Gries; Rickert) among others, each fit under this material umbrella and share a general impulse: deconstruct the human-as-absolute-agent and proceed instead from the notion that humans and other entities are "thoroughly immersed within materiality's productive contingencies" (Coole and Frost 7). In other words, writers/rhetors, things, and environments are distributed and ontologically flat (not hierarchically arranged) in

their relations. With emplacement, I align my thinking about situated processes with this materially-oriented thinking. Material things of and around writing are actively a part of processes not inert tools transparently deployed by a writer-agent. Writing environments are participatory and shaping, not mere staging. Writers are important but never isolated agents alone acting upon their contexts. Writers are actors in the midst, alongside, or overpowered by materialities immediate and distant—objects, bodies, light, noise, tools, chairs, electricity, pets, and so on—that are too “active, self-creative, productive, unpredictable” (Coole and Frost 9).

To flesh out emplacement a bit more, I turn to the recent new materialist work of Jane Bennett and Thomas Rickert. In Bennett’s terms, material things exhibit vitality as “the capacity of things—edibles, commodities, storms, metals—not only to impede or block the will and designs of humans but also to act as quasi agents or forces with trajectories, propensities, or tendencies of their own” (vii). New materialisms like Bennett’s understands agency as spread out in a complex, interactive network of actants, rather than contained solely within a human actor. Actants, a term Bennett forwards from Bruno Latour, is a “source of action that can be either human or nonhuman; it is that which has efficacy, can do things, has sufficient coherence to make a difference, produce effects, alter the course of events” (Bennett viii). Disrupting the entrenched human/material, agent/object opposition doesn’t slip into a material determinism, nor does it disavow the capacity of human action as a kind of agency. Rather, agency or action is always emerging and reemerging, as actants coalesce and separate differently through time.

Our images of writing process have no means to account for what Bennett names “distributed agency” in a given scene of writing. That agency which we conventionally pour into human actors alone as unfettered textual engineers, under a new materialist frame, would be instead “distributed across an ontologically heterogeneous field, rather than being a capacity localized in a human body or in a collective produced (only) by human efforts” (23). Bennett herself reflects on how we might understand a scene of writing through this distributed framework:

The sentences of this book also emerged from the confederate agency of many striving macro- and microactants: from “my” memories, intentions, contentions, intestinal bacteria, eye-glasses, and blood sugar, as well as from the plastic computer keyboard, the bird song from the open window, or the air or particulates in the room, to name only a few of the participants. What is at work here on the page is an animal-vegetable-mineral-sonority cluster with a particular degree and duration of power. (23)

Bennett's perspective stretches process. As she underlines, processes unfold as loose and constantly reforming alliances. And those actants themselves entail entwined and divergent histories, prior engagements, and trajectories that simultaneously found and exceed them. This rich picture of implicatedness shifts how we are accustomed to thinking of processes. For one, it makes little sense to "adapt" processes to surrounds or to varying tools as processes are always already implicated.

Thomas Rickert's notion of rhetorical ambience too emphasizes emplacement. His intervention aims to deconstruct over-simplified notions of rhetorical context and instead conceptualize rhetoric as situated and ambient. "To be situated," Rickert writes, "means that one's emplacement is inseparable from the rhetorical interactions taking place, including material dimensions both within and beyond meaning" (34). Like Fleckenstein, Hayles, Leander and Boldt, and others, Rickert binds embodiment with place and things: rhetors/writers are constituted by and in relation to their (material-social-cultural-political-historical) environments. As Rickert describes it, "minds are at once *embodied*, and hence grounded in emotion and sensation, and *dispersed* into the environment itself, and hence no longer autonomous actants but composites of intellect, body, information, and scaffoldings of material artifacts" (43). In other words, Rickert's rhetorical ambience encourages seeing process as material and "embodied and embedded" (34). And, similar to Leander and Boldt's shift away from literacy as rational design, recognizing ambience shifts the focus from rhetorical intention to emergence. The "intent and self-consciousness" of the rhetor "no doubt matter enormously, but they no longer suffice" (36), Rickert writes, because, for one, this intention-driven model cannot account for the oftentimes unruly, accidental, failed, or detoured nature of such action and persuasion in the world. Conceptualizing processes as emplaced similarly emphasizes emergence, affordances, and responsivity to context, which are all important adjustments for contemporary writing pedagogy.

A writer's conscious control will always be infiltrated by situational participants, human and otherwise. The ontological orientation of new materialisms, moreover, exposes how selves continuously interpenetrate material environments and how processes are constituted by living, feeling, moving, emerging. These and other implications of new materialisms have "made inroads into composition studies . . . but the transfer to writing theory and practice remains very much in progress" (Micciche, "Writing" 489). Theories of distributed agency and ambience help generate different questions about the practice and construct of writing processes: What objects and environments are significant (in a given writing place and time) and how does their participatory force operate? How does writing emerge in relation to and as a result of materialities? Methodolog-

ically and pedagogically, how can we capture and understand the participatory roles of material objects and spaces in writing processes? How can we teach writers to attune to their locations and practice emergence, response, uncertainty rather than chasing the illusion of control?

CONCLUSION: WRITING MOVES

When I was in graduate school, back when I was just beginning to think about bodies and environments and processes, I recall lingering over a friend's story on social media about the writing blocks she was experiencing. In my memory, she described that in the course of a medical appointment, she suddenly confessed to her doctor her crippling and enduring aversion to sitting in the chair at the desk where she was trying to work on her dissertation. She described spending much time each day trying to get in that chair, moving around it, sitting at it briefly, resolving to order paperbacks, and then quickly fleeing it. A solution offered seemingly in passing, the doctor told her to just associate the chair with something more pleasant—just think about it as something like “her grandmother” or “going to the zoo.”

The doctor's casual recommendation sees composing, and this particular writing problem, as a *mental* block. Just *think* about this writing task differently and the problem will be solved. Indeed, the picture postcard of writing seems to shape this likely well-meaning health professional's advice. Writing is a thinking problem. Writing is independent from things and places and objects. But clearly, this writer's ceaseless avoidance of her writing chair very much and meaningfully *is* about the physical, material, and spatial environments in which writing is, or in this case, is not, accomplished. What seems to be going on here is a matter on a different register than thoughts or associations: this object—the chair—the strained dance around it, the attempts to sit down into it, the body's resistance and refusal. Over time the relation of the chair and the body has become laden with physical, not simply symbolic, force. Sensations of the body being strained and pressed, stilted, tensed, fidgety, flighty, pushed and pulled have accumulated on the chair's physical surface. In a sense, the chair shapes the moves that are possible within the writing environment and, in turn, every hesitating, jerky movement the writer enacts adds to the force of the chair. In this way, writing objects and physical habits become laden with a certain affective weight or force—the “writing chair” becomes an un-sittable place as it accrues the physical force of bodily memory. And these sensations exceed the bounds of this room and chair alone—genre, readers, prior histories, memories, conversations, domestic dynamics, and economic anxieties are among the larger forces perhaps felt too through the surface of the chair.

I wonder about what might happen if this writer, instead of *thinking* something different, might have found more relief in *moving* differently—taking up a different chair in a café or library instead of her home, an email window instead of a word-processing document, perhaps. There's no way to know for sure. But my point is this: far from ephemeral, transcendent, or trapped within the two dimensions of the page, writing processes are no doubt impelled by the three-dimensions of our lived experience. Our postcard image and process pedagogy changes when we first see processes as emplaced writers moving and making.

In this way, writing processes move. Writing *moves* in terms of physical, emplaced action. They just never hold still enough to be captured as abstracted strategies alone. Writing *moves* too across and within our many life domains and spaces—across our social, civic, personal, familial, work, and political lives. All writing entails processes, and wildly different ones at that. Difference and susceptibility, not sameness and strategy, is the nature of processes as experienced in the world. And, as I explore next, looking at processes in our classrooms as emplaced physical activity can help students perceive writing expansively, differently, and *in situ*, across ranging contexts and as ways of living.