PREFACE: YES, I KNOW THAT EXPRESSIVISM IS OUT OF VOGUE, BUT …

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Critical Expressivism: Theory and Practice in the Composition Classroom offers those of us with "Yes-But" syndrome a solution. I was reminded of this syndrome in a webinar in which Richard Johnson-Sheehan claims, "I think Chuck [Paine] and I are still process people despite some of the theoretical arguments for post-process. We still believe we are teaching students a writing process, and in a sense, genres guide us from the beginning of the process to the end." Johnson-Sheehan and Paine explain and justify their decision to teach writing as a process with a "yes-but" approach: Yes, I know that in our growth as a discipline we have moved from a focus on writing as a process to the social and cultural factors that impact language in our electronic worlds, but I still teach writing as a process and assist my students with developing their processes.

Johnson-Sheehan, a scholar in rhetoric and composition, admits in 2012 that he knows this approach to writing has been trashed by scholars who have controlled our meta-narrative, but admits that he sees a need for it. I have faced the same struggle to justify how I teach writing and what I study. Colleagues have asked, "Liz, how can you still focus on teaching expressivism and voice when there are new theories to study?" That's simple—I build new theories and practices into my meta-narrative of Composition Studies. This either/or epistemology doesn't work.

But, composition scholarship leads us to believe that we "are" one or the other. In our scholarship one cannot "be" both/and because the significant scholars in our field have said that a social epistemic view of writing precludes an Expressive and Cognitive view of writing. However, as I work with the myriad of writers in my classes from first-year writing to graduate thesis writing, I experience writers thinking and composing in various paradigms. Havier from East Chicago struggles with translating his mixture of black dialect and Spanglish into Standard American English. When Paul asks me if he should include a piece of research and a quote in his report, I ask him to see his writing situation from the cognitive paradigm: "Does your audience need this information to understand and be convinced of your position?" Charmaine struggles to write the findings

from her original research into the final drafts of her thesis. She asks, "Can I really tell philosophy professors how I think they should teach writing?" To assure her that this is what she is supposed to do, I draw on M. M. Bakhtin's idea of writing as a conversation that she can join, and how voice has both expressive as well as social dimensions.

As a teacher and writer, I use various theoretical paradigms to give me different views of the phenomena of writing. Each of these theories is a slice of the writing pie—one aspect of this intricate, analytical, emotional practice we use to bring thought to language. One of these theories does not explain it all, so we keep studying writers and writing, trying to figure it out in its entirety.

Can we create a new metanarrative, one based in building on the theories of others? Certainly. We can view this phenomenon of writing that we teach, study, and practice as composed of the many theories and practices that have been and are being developed in our scholarship. This is the mission of *Critical Expressivism: Theory and Practice in the Composition Classroom*. Its writers and editors are building on Sherrie Gradin's *Romancing Rhetorics: Social Expressivist Perspectives on the Teaching of Writing* from 1995 that theorizes a relationship between expressivism and social-constructivism (xviii). The problem with accomplishing this is that academia has been built on one-upmanship: if my theory is going to be given any credit, I have to trash the ones before me.

For example, James Berlin's words in "Rhetoric and Ideology in the Writing Class" set up his classical "trashing" of expressive rhetoric. In closing his essay Berlin writes, "it should now be apparent that a way of teaching is never innocent. Every pedagogy is imbricated in ideology, is a set of tacit assumptions about what is real, what is good, what is possible, and how power ought to be distributed." He then reiterates the ideology behind cognitive and expressive rhetoric, and ends with his support of social-epistemic rhetoric in which, "social-epistemic rhetoric attempts to place the question of ideology at the center of the teaching of writing. It offers both a detailed analysis of dehumanizing social experience and a self-critical and overtly historicized alternative based on democratic practices in the economic social, and political, and cultural spheres. It is obvious that I find this alternative the most worthy of emulation in the classroom, all the while admitting that it is the least formulaic and the most difficult to carry out" (492). In the last sentence Berlin reminds every writing teacher that "a rhetoric cannot escape the ideological question, and to ignore this is to fail our responsibilities as teachers and as citizens" (493).

Here is the subtle yet evident belief that if teachers choose to employ a cognitive or expressive teaching practice, they have failed. Not wanting to be complete failures, one might employ the "yes-but" strategy: "Yes. I know that Berlin says this strategy is not good, but it certainly works in this class right here, right now."

James J. Sosnoski labels these spaces for trashed theories as theory junkyards. We reach back into our theoretical junkyards to choose a theory and teaching practice that works for us in individual teaching situations, going to the "hard-to-reach basement shelves, boxes in attics, files, that our current word processors barely recognize" (Sosnoski 25). In my attic, I have blue milk crates of articles on student conferencing and archetypal criticism. My husband asks me each year if we can get rid of the crates because he's tired of moving them; my department chair, the narratologist, tells me that no one does that type of criticism anymore: "Liz, come on, do you really believe that archetypes are passed down in our unconsciousness?" And I respond, "You know, I'm not sure about that collective unconscious, but I do know that I can teach *The House on Mango Street* from the perspective of Esparanza's quest myth." Here's another yes-but justification for using tools that have been discounted and trashed.

Literary Criticism is also built on this pattern of trashing the current theory to propose the new. The New Critics burst onto the academic scene in the 1940s with their criticism of the biographical critics. Because the New Critics forbade the study of the author, they trashed the biographical critics. In "The Intentional Fallacy" W. K. Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley claim that it is a fallacy to determine the meaning of a poem by looking to the intentions of the author. Wimsatt and Beardsley argued that embedded in the poem are meanings that the well-trained critic can interpret. Through the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, the New Critics were in vogue until the Marxists, feminists, and new historians came along to tell us what was wrong with the New Critics and why they should be banished to the theory junkyard.

But if we stay with the theory junkyard, we trash many theories that explain how, why, when, and where writing happens. Each of the expressive, cognitive, and social-epistemic rhetorics, as well as Thomas Kent's theory of hermeneutic guessing that moved us into the post-process movement, explains just one aspect of producing texts. The theories build to give us more insight into what humans do as they compose and what teachers do to build writers. Our theories build; they are not trash. And each time a theory is added, our pie gets larger and larger with many more slices for everyone when they need it.

The irony is that in the midst of this supposed trashing there is building. Richard Fulkerson's study of composition at the turn of the twenty-first century reports on "the quiet expansion of Expressive approaches to teaching writing" (654). In 2005 Fulkerson offered his "metatheory" of composition scholarship in which he discerns that Expressivism is alive and well "despite numerous poundings by the cannons of postmodernism and resulting eulogies" (655).

Composition's metanarrative is in need of a revision that integrates all that we have discerned about writing and the teaching of writing: a metavision of

our field that encompasses the places we have been and the theories and rhetorics that we have practiced. And this is what the editors and authors of *Critical Expressivism: Theory and Practice in the Composition Classroom* offer us. Their classroom stories build a both/and metanarrative of composition as they theorize how the expressive practices are embedded in the social practices and how the social practices are imbedded in the expressive practices of writing and learning.

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