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## Out of the Body, Onto the Page: Awakening the Role of the Body in Writing and Practical Applications of Embodied Composition

Jasmine Jackson

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# Thesis of Jasmine Jackson

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

## Master of Arts Composition, Rhetoric, and Digital Media

Nova Southeastern University  
Halmos College of Arts and Sciences

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Out of the Body, Onto the Page: Awakening the Role of the Body in Writing and Practical  
Applications of Embodied Composition

A Thesis

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Composition, Rhetoric, and Digital Media

Jasmine C. Jackson

Halmos College of Arts and Sciences

Department of Communication, Media, and the Arts

Nova Southeastern University

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## Abstract

Academic writing courses privilege a style of learning that often excludes the awareness of the body. In this thesis, I propose an exploration of the role of the body as an active agent in the writing process. This thesis collates and queries research on embodiment to provide what a sample of embodiment theory and writing activities that facilitate embodiment in the classroom might look like by bringing in interdisciplinary studies to help fill the gap of research on embodied composition in the field.

In doing so this thesis argues in favor of an embodied approach to composition and is supported by the principles of yoga to create bodily awareness through physical movement and reflective writing prompts to encourage writers to consider writing an embodied act as a means of characterizing different identities. This thesis also provides insight into the growing role of embodiment in writing studies and acknowledges the intuitive intelligence of student bodies in the writing classroom.

*Keywords: embodied composition, embodied writing, embodiment, movement, writing classroom, yoga*

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## Introduction

Writing is fundamentally a physical act of inscription performed by the forelimbs (i.e., the arms: extending from the shoulders to the hands) on old-fashioned pen and paper on digital surfaces like tablets, laptops, phones, etc. It may seem obvious that the body is integral to the writing process. Without the structural mechanics of the forelimbs writing would not be possible. But basic functional anatomy is not the only means by which the human body influences writing. John Lee (1994) determines that unseen dynamics of the physical body also leave substantial impressions on a text. Yet and still, the role of the physical body is often isolated from writing scholarship. When analyzing finished writing products, the agency of the body is often forgotten while the influence of other agents like the environment and even nonhumans are considered (Shipka, 2017). For example, in Writing Studies materiality explains that a number of physical objects enable and position the writer to create a text. In this sense, material objects include anything within the writer's vicinity that has the potential to impact the writer's process, e.g. a chair for the writer to sit in, a sweatshirt to keep the writer warm while writing in a cold environment, a watch to keep track of time, etc.

To establish my positionality in this thesis I examine my experience as a writing student. Most of my writing had been done within the confines of academia and the writing classroom up until 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic hit. Following the standards of academic writing my process became predictable and rigid, but the more I wrote in isolation, the more apparent my yearning for movement became which led me to enroll in a 250-hour yoga teaching training program. That same year my quest for movement resulted in my attending an international Embodiment Conference. My curiosity about embodied composition emerged after my teacher training and the conference when I found myself writing in a different way. For example, when I



felt tension in my neck and shoulders after writing for an extended period of time, I opted to flow through a 5-minute yoga sequence of asanas or postures including mountain pose, forward folds, and downward facing dogs, and when I experienced writer's block, I practiced mindfulness by lying facing upward or in a supine position, with my arms and legs extended in savasana, otherwise known as the final resting pose in a yoga class. The relief I felt from these little adjustments to my writing process encouraged my descent into my body and curiosity about the role of the body in writing and how the principles of a yoga practice might help writers. Therefore, my learned understanding of the body derives from training as a yoga instructor and includes anatomical and metaphysical explanations for body movements and sensations.

My teacher training enlightened me that many yoga programs call on literature that recognizes that humans have more than one body—four bodies. Jill Willard (2016), author of “Intuitive Being: Connect with Spirit, Find Your Center, and Choose an Intentional Life” explains the benefit of tuning into the instinctive interconnectedness of a multidimensional body as encouragement toward more intentional life encounters. The multidimensional nature of the body as explained by Willard, can be understood through observance of an individual's four bodies which are: the physical body, the emotional body, the mental body, and the spiritual body. Moreover, some yoga instructors acknowledge that an intermingling of the four bodies enables the yogi to access higher and more authentic forms of self-expression. To further examine Willard's idea of four bodies, I will provide a concise explanation of what parts make up each body and the influence of yoga on each. To support my exploration of the role of embodiment in writing, I will draw parallels between how applying yoga principles might enable a writer to realistically experience the affordances of each of the four bodies. Starting with the physical body, asanas, or yoga poses, literally balance the yogi, bringing them to a state of grounding that

makes the yogi feel connected and secure enough to take up space on the earth. Put simply, yoga nudges the physical body to alignment in the skeletal, muscular, and internal systems. The succession of this thesis will examine how the components of the writer's physical body—including their skin, organs, muscles, skeleton, etc.—can find homeostasis through simple movement to facilitate a more enjoyable bodily experience while writing. Using the principles of yoga asanas, this thesis will provide gentle movements like stretching the neck to ease bodily discomfort that the writer may feel. Secondly, practicing yoga encourages the yogi to focus their attention on the mental body or thoughts. In the same sense, when the writer is poised in a comfortable physical state, their mind is free to sort through the chatter of their thoughts to determine what ideas are useful for their text despite the reality that the human mind is constantly racing with thoughts—positive and negative. Stillness of the physical body creates an opportunity for the writer to confront their teeming thoughts.

In this section, I will build upon the concept of the four bodies and their agreement with yoga and writing to speculate the potential effects of an embodied writing practice for this thesis. The first is that the role of embodied composition in this thesis will demonstrate how yoga principles more fully support the idea that intentional bodily movement and time for mindful reflection can inspire the writer toward more ease of communication in their writing as a result of bringing the mental body into a state of agreement and clarity. Next, it is of importance to note that the emotional and spiritual bodies might be assumed as one and the same, but this thesis will distinguish the two. Then, embodied writing will yield an opportunity for the writer to confront suppressed emotions like yoga does after the mind is quieted and is free to move through the asanas staying alert of any emotional resistance that may arise in the process. Furthermore, increased emotional awareness enables the writer to experience a motionless body and

nonjudgmental mind as a haven to discover and explore their emotional responses to a subject, text, etc. Also, my assembly of theories for embodied composition in this thesis will permit the writer to support their emotional body—consisting of their hormones, nerve pathways, etc.—by utilizing gentle stretching to accept unpleasant sentiments like irritability, restraint, anxiety, etc. Moreover, the writer can utilize an embodied writing practice informed by the principles of yoga to pinpoint and transmute unwelcome emotions into compassion, inclusivity, and understanding of their writing process, their subject, and their audience. Finally, I hypothesize that the writer's recognition of the fourth body, the spiritual one, will invite them to see their task as a small, but influential part of larger society where external encounters with people, places, and things provide wisdom and insight that become the innate intelligence of the writer's heart. This thesis acknowledges that writing is an isolating process that can cause the writer to feel disconnected from the rest of society and the world, but an embodied writing practice can prove to be useful, and contemplative for the writer.

To establish a foundation of what defines embodiment and what characterizes an embodied practice, this thesis will collate and query research on embodiment in composition studies and in other fields of study such as movement science, cognitive theory, and art therapy. In providing a sample of what embodiment theory might look like in college-level writing classrooms, this thesis argues in favor of three approaches to embodied writing. The first maintains that emotions and experiences are held in the body and naturally become embedded in texts. The second asserts that writing has always been an embodied act as a means of characterizing different identities. The third explores the structure of writing as a body moving in space. To establish the body as an uncompromised authority, I will uncover its existence in theories of composition while integrating contemporary theories of embodiment from wellness

studies. Ultimately, I hope this thesis will provide insight on the growing role of embodiment in writing composition in leisure writing and higher-level writing courses. As an added bonus, I hope to encourage writers belonging to different racial, cultural, and ethnic groups to utilize physical movement as a means of producing more organic, diverse narratives. Later in this thesis, I will create sample writing prompts that encourage self-awareness and self-reflection to further support the practical applications of embodiment whether inside or outside of the writing classroom.

Going back to my positionality, as a yoga instructor, I recognize that embodiment can function as a practical approach to finding alignment in the physical body and attaining a sense of personal identity and mental equanimity. Instinctively, my curiosity began about whether the principles of embodiment could be applied to writers looking for physical comfort—since writing for long periods of time can be tedious on certain parts of the body like the back, neck, and wrists—clarity of mind, and authorial identity. In this thesis, I denote the Hindu discipline of yoga and its principles as a system for examining embodiment in writing, as it embraces a holistic awareness of the body that includes the mental, physical, emotional, and soul bodies, and that it prioritizes awareness of separate parts of the body as intimately interconnected and justifiable by reference to the whole body. The writer's recognition of other dimensions of their body is necessary in this thesis because the writer has been conditioned to depend on their physical and mental bodies to generate texts more than anything while remaining blind to the implications of the involvement—even unacknowledged—of their other two bodies. An entry in the *Harvard Business Review* (1973) makes it clear why the writer needs to acknowledge the involvement of their other bodies in the writing process; the entry champions clarity of mind (the mental body) as the basis for plausible writing. Naturally, in writing studies and other academic

fields, ideas are frequently thought of as originating from the mental space only and are communicated to the public in writing, speech, movement, etc. using the physical body in one way or another. Pierson, a medical researcher investigating common obstacles that cloud the mind, underscores that a focused mind—achieved through mindfulness—is fundamental to effective writing. A third instance exemplifies the emphasis placed on the importance of taking care of selective parts of the body (i.e., the hands) in the University of California Los Angeles' (UCLA) directives for maintaining healthy hands by positioning the elbow at 90 degrees or more on its ergonomics site for employees. Collectively, these researchers demonstrate a multidisciplinary fascination with writing as an embodied practice, which may also include emotional and spiritual elements in the creation of a text.

In comparison, embodied emotional theory postulates that an individual's physical arousal is related to their emotional perception and processing (Wu Li, et al., 2020). This means that the writer's emotional body plays a considerable role in how a text is created because the existence of the text depends on the writer's willingness to write at all which is likely determined by their emotional state. Even if the writer has developed the discipline to write when they do not feel like it, the quality of any text they produce will be a direct result of their intentional and unintentional changes in attitude. To further support the concept of embodied emotional theory, writing is cited in therapy as a technique for moderating emotions. A study of the impacts of expressive writing on the psychological and physical well-being of 116 healthy adults found that after three months of writing, anxiety reduced significantly in adults with an expressive tendency. Contrarily, healthy adults who erred on the side of low expressiveness experienced considerable increases in anxiety (2014). Even more, the emotional body in tandem with the spiritual body can influence the quality of the writer's text even though neither body is visible.

As a note, the spiritual body in this thesis regards the soul essence that exists in the atheist and religious writer alike. To demonstrate this idea, I compare the writer's invisible emotional and spiritual bodies to the medical phenomenon of a phantom limb. The phenomenon asserts that medical researchers have found between 80% and 100% of amputees experience what is called a "phantom limb" (Cristol & DerSarkissian, 2021), which is the feeling that an amputated or absent limb is still attached. The sensation of a phantom limb might influence the amputee's unconscious perception of their physical body. That is to say, the invisible impression of a limb can influence the quality by which an amputee chooses to maneuver in space. Likewise, the states of the writer's invisible emotional and spiritual bodies can produce visible results exhibited in the quality of a text.

After acknowledging the existence of the writer's four bodies, it is equally as important to recognize the interconnectedness and interaction that happens between them. Of course, the writer's mental impressions, which can be explained as derivatives of their lived experiences in the temporal world, are bound to manifest in the imaginary, metaphysical, idealistic worlds that exist in the writer's text. Although, this thesis asserts that writing is not merely a transference of the writer's life experiences held in the body and etched on paper or a digital computer interface. This approach to embodied writing limits the writer's process to a one-dimensional process that starts at an experience in the world and ends when it is transferred into writing. Instead, this thesis acknowledges the recursiveness of writing and embodied writing as both a transference of internal and external encounters with the writer's self, other writers, and their readership. Writing is also a transformation that occurs in the visible and invisible realms as a result of a clashing or cohesion of ideas. At its foundation, writing is and always has been an embodiment of the writer's comings and goings in society, internalized notions about their positional relation to and

within society, musings of the possibilities of the afterlife, and all thinkable conversations that fall on the spectrum of existence few and far between. The physical action of scripting functions twofold as an expression of embodiment. The first—on the surface—writing gives visible form to abstract ideas, qualities, and feelings. The second purpose of scripting is to construct a literal interpretation of text as a living, breathing, moving body. Consider performative dance choreography as a parallel to writing composition. One asserts that writing and physical movement practices like dance agree on their primary function to momentarily communicate a message to a wider, peripheral audience. Furthermore, both writing composition and performative dance choreography convey messages through a narrative consisting of smaller elements. The conveyance of the story is utterly dependent upon the interweaving of tempo, flow, rhythm, and a larger structure. In short, physical movement practices and writing composition are embodiments that imagine and assemble as a form or body oriented and actively moving around in space. Earlier in this thesis, I noted that embodied exercises based on reflection and breathing, can remind the writer of their place in the larger scheme of society. Acknowledging that the sequencing of actions, ideas, or events even establish mood, tone, and voice inform my research question by reaffirming the affordance of embodiment to situate the author in their writing genre, the field of writing studies, and their professional credibility as a writer in society.

Moving on, this thesis asserts that a regular practice of embodiment will result in an elevated sense of awareness that will naturally move the writer towards their authorial identity. How so? Regular acknowledgment of practices that call for the unification of the mind and body consequentially solidify the writer's sense of identity because embodiment and awareness beckon the writer towards a state of familiarization with defining characteristics of their thought

processes, writing patterns, personal biases, blind spots, personal triggers, etc. independent from writing and as a writer. Even before she puts pen to paper, the writer embarks on a quest to provide valuable insight and answers to preceding scholarly conversations. To contribute to the field of writing composition—or to the sector of consumer or trade publishing—the writer might question their credibility, for better or worse. Consequently, it would not be uncommon for the writer to ask questions like: What authority do I have to speak on the subject matter at hand? How can I change or influence people? To what conversations can I lend my voice? In this context, embodiment theory affords the writer an understanding of the credibility of their lived experiences as part of their unique identity that can provide insight to answer questions like these. Moreover, such questions affirm how the practice of yoga might inform embodiment theory by encouraging reflective questions, more to be provided later, in order to clarify the author's intention for their text. Such questions appear in popular culture and many writing improvement articles offer additional implications of identity to consider. For example, questions surrounding the writer's fear of uncertainty like, "What if I try to write one story and it becomes something else?" Such a question reaffirms the dynamic nature of writing and storytelling. Moreover, the writer can ask themselves questions that require self-reflection as a useful technique for introducing embodiment to the writing process which is vital for later analysis of the affordability of authenticity as a result of engagement with embodied practices. Analyses of texts undoubtedly have the power to encourage the writer and the reader to consider their private identities in relation to one another, imaginary characters, and the subject matter at hand. The text sets a precedence for the writer to present ideas for the reader to accept or deny through active participation. The author's approach to conveying ideas—through clever word choice and connections—in the text exposes their attitude toward the subject and other matters like it. For



example, a text discussing the history of transportation in which the author favors the advancement of green cars in length, might reveal the author's values on climate change.

In order to rely on the body as a source of knowledge, this thesis will bring together literature that addresses the body's potential to generate narratives from within, the physical act of composing as embodiment, and the body as a tool for navigating existing stories to understand its role as an agent and primary writing technology. Understanding the role of the body in writing is integral for the writer to realize the full potential of their ideas—first through an understanding of themselves—and for the provision of more authentic and diverse texts in composition scholarship. Through the exploration of the body in writing, I plan to gather and synthesize available scholarship on embodiment to make the writing process more efficient by appealing to multiple literacies. As American society progresses to more holistic ways of living, evident in the changing health trends like incorporating gratitude and mindfulness in everyday life, multiple literacies, to be discussed more later, are important to include because the classroom landscape will likely change with society. In doing so, I will examine the many ways that embodiment discourse already exists in helping us theorize, create, teach, and understand writing to prove that embodiment can be significant in developing student literacy in undergraduate and graduate composition courses and the scholarly writing process. After considering the role of the body in writing, I plan to use my findings to develop sample writing prompts that encourage writers toward embodiment through introspection. By refuting that the physical body is separate from writing and by synthesizing current scholarship on embodied composition, I aim to achieve an understanding of what sorts of prompts would be effective in the journaling section of this thesis. My hope is that the resulting writing prompts might be used as a supplemental text for writing scholars, higher-level college compositionists, and

independent writers developing authorial identity and seeking nontraditional methods for improving their writing.

Embodiment theory will be the starting rationale for this thesis. As a nod to the interdisciplinary nature of embodied writing, I will define embodiment from two particular fields. The first, according to Catherine L. Reed, Professor of Psychology and Neuroscience and creator of the Reed Lab for cognitive neuroscience, perception, and action at Claremont McKenna College. Reed found that the body is not absent from emotional processing, even so, the neurological pathway in the body impacts an individual's perception and attention. Furthermore, Reed's research on embodiment explains that posture and inhibition of body movement impact expression. The second, as per Mark Walsh, Founder of the Embodied Facilitator Course, The Embodiment Podcast, and the Embodiment Conference. Walsh's approach to and the conference's premise for embodiment specifically through yoga and meditation is a personification of the collection of a person's responses to their life experiences. Embodied composition in this sense is an expression in a tangible form of the writer's thoughts. I aim to expand on these definitions while examining their implications on current conversations on embodied composition. Moreover, I will draw from the premise of 4E Cognition to account for the way emotions confined in the body are transferred into works of composition. For the purposes of this thesis, one will concentrate specifically on yoga as a comparative practice for the study of the role of embodiment in composition.

Ironically, as I write this thesis, I discover my own undertaking of embodiment and my journey informs the theories and concepts embedded in this thesis. From my experience I understand that the writer's personal experience with a subject influences their lasting identity because it affords an intimate learning process which can make for a more lasting impact.

Moreover, the unseen dynamics of the physical body such as emotions have the potential to leave substantial impressions on a text. Therefore, the principles of yoga for embodied writing in this thesis can provide a reflective individualist practice for bodies of different races, cultures, ages, etc. that characterize periods in a writer's life where they took on other identities. For example, a writer from the baby boomer generation might recall vivid lived experiences of the Vietnam War from their body that is conveyed in their text compared to a millennial war enthusiast who learned about the event from textbooks. Moreover, the baby boomer might write about the Vietnam War with more urgency when closer to the event compared to decades later. My attendance at the Embodiment Conference 2020 inspired me to include Walsh's expertise on embodiment. While conducting this study, a pivotal observation has been the acknowledgment of my body as a primary writing technology in forming this thesis.

The nuance of my experience as a graduate-level writing student, certified 200-hour Hatha Yoga Teacher, Internationally Certified 250-hour Aerial Yoga Instructor, competitive aerialist, general movement practitioner, and member of the Dance Studies Association will inform my approach to my body as participatory in generating this thesis. Furthermore, as a Black woman my body exemplifies a non-heteronormative cultural site for collecting, forming, and resharing conversations and opinions in writing this thesis. Of course, bodies that do not resemble that of the white, heteronormative, male writer are handled differently in the world. I argue that embodied composition enables writers of diverse backgrounds to introspect how their encounters resonate or fail to resonate with existing conversations in writing studies.

Consequently, the experiences of other bodies will be embodied disparately in compositions.

I found there was a gap in scholarship that acknowledges embodiment and writing as interdependent that I will address by examining how theories of embodiment might translate into

practical writing activities that facilitate an improved writing experience for higher-level students. I hope to provide context for the practical application of embodiment for writers by exploring journaling and its relation to embodiment. I will share sample writing prompts as activities that encourage the writer to use their body as a primary writing technology by borrowing concepts from other fields including movement therapy, psychotherapy, and cognitive science.

## Literature Review

Scholars have explored the cross-section of embodiment and composition through the observation of college student's approaches to writing assignments outside of the classroom (Fishman et al., 2005) and within the academy (Knoblauch, 2012). Academics found writing assignments involving elements of physical performance, like poetry, were productive to student retention. These findings are important to mention because introducing embodiment to writing composition might be perceived as distracting, but it can have quite the opposite effect. What's more, the research identifies that writing correlates to theories of performance studies drawing from social sciences, humanities, and the arts, as a pivotal component in the development of literacy. Other observations on the role of the instructor's body and the poetics of teaching are regarded (Pallant, 2018). The instructor's body is part of the context that shapes the learning environment. Bear in mind that the instructor's choice of clothing, hairstyle, hygiene, and gestures denote their credibility, attitude towards subject matter, and establishes whether learning will be fostered or not. Some students may be more receptive to an instructor who embodies a more conservative, traditional image, while others may respond to an unconventional instructor. For example, different students will take differently to a white, male instructor versus a black, female instructor. To add to that, the thin line between the human-computer interface (HCI) (Arola & Wysocki, 2012) in modern-day classrooms further complicates the interactions between all bodies in a learning environment. For example, the presence of laptops or desktop computers might interrupt the flow of communication between student bodies and the instructor. Thus, research on the human-computer interface is beneficial to this thesis because it provides insight into how computers can serve as barriers to learning, increasing the need for embodiment to pull student awareness and attention from the metaverse back into the present, their bodies,

and the classroom. While the field of composition addresses embodiment in some ways, research is limited. Little inquisitiveness about how the body shapes texts is apparent in earlier works (Goldberg, 1991; Johnson, 1993). I first came across Natalie Goldberg's "Writing Down the Bones," when I was a high school student. I did not understand, then, the full scope of Goldberg's beliefs about freeing the writer within. But, the little book, ignited my curiosity about the intertwining of the body and the writing process. Most notably, Goldberg says that writing is 90 percent listening; meaning the writer should pay attention to and hear the discourse that happens within themselves while writing. Goldberg offers Zen meditation as a viable technique for listening, in a similar way that I am suggesting that yoga postures and principles can support an embodied practice in composition. In discussing the need to listen, recent, popularized research on embodied composition ironically explains how sound is situated relative to both the internal and external experiences of the body (Herndon, 2022). Embodied composition, then, supersedes its existence as merely a supplemental writing practice, but rather explains writing as an embodied association by which the writer's emotive, motor, and corporeal systems are harmonized, an experience vital to the embedment of not only more authentic voices but also a diversity of such in texts. Embodiment affords the writer to come to terms with their individualistic experience which in turn provides a unique text.

On a larger time scale, scholarship spanning the past ten years emphasizes a growing interest in embodied composition. Although, contemporary writing scholarship and college-level instruction privilege a style of learning that does not adequately address embodiment through an awareness of the physical, emotional, and spiritual bodies. The reason for this exclusion might lend itself to the cultural values of Western education, which in my experience in primary school, secondary school, and higher education has followed a strict, active, regimented style of

learning. However, as I progressed higher in academics the intellectual demographics of my classmates became more varied; exposure to different viewpoints in the composition classroom piqued my curiosity about what other ways I might approach writing. It is understood in academia that writing standards are primarily set through the analysis of textual sources and it makes sense to study the product of a given area of interest to understand how it comes to be and to distinguish an effective text from an ineffective text. For example, if one wants to be an architect, she should study architecture. If one wishes to be an entrepreneur, she should study entrepreneurship. So, if one wants to be a writer, is it not safe to assume she should study writing? While it makes sense to study products of writing as guides for determining the mechanics and nuances of writing, what can be said about the process an author undergoes when she sits down to write? On the one hand, some theorists explain writing as a product of internalized social conversations, whether verbal or textual (Bruffee, 2011). For example, Donovan and Ben McClelland's *Eight Approaches to Teaching Composition*, includes Donald Murray's ideas about writing as a process (Fulkerson, 656) where he urges composition instructors to teach writing as a process of meaning-making. Still, the body serves as an intermediary for those conversations to be externalized and made available to the public once again in composition studies and all disciplines introduced later in this thesis. It is important to consider that the viewpoint from which such conversations are produced depends on the state or condition of the body of the writer.

Embodiment is the process by which an author externalizes these conversations—and the vantage point of a white, heteronormative, able-bodied, male author differs greatly from that of any other. If writing is derived from an internal knowing, otherwise a reservoir of lived ideas and experiences, surely the body has some authority to reject or block this knowledge from being

fully expressed at any given time. The other source of influence is the mind—which if in agreement or in total alignment with the body—can permit the writer to tell powerfully authentic stories. Embodiment is the provision of unity for the writer’s bodily systems that facilitate agreement in how a message is conveyed. For instance, in writing this thesis I experienced a mental eagerness to organize the innumerable thoughts circulating in my head after conducting expansive research, but at times my writing was jilted because my body protested that I needed time to rest from the exasperation of everyday life I experienced before even sitting down to write at the end of each day. Although one of the writer’s bodies might be poised to undertake a writing task, it does not guarantee the absence of resistance from any of their other bodies. An embodied approach to writing encourages the author to recognize the mind-body connection and to stop, pause, and reflect during the writing process by tapping into a “felt sense” (Perl, 2004) to check in with the alignment or misalignment of their systems. Perl asserts that the “felt sense” is the feeling of knowing something, but not being able to put your finger on it, and according to Perl it can be used to check in with the alignment or misalignment of the writer’s systems. I would add to this idea and assert that the systems are the four bodies acknowledged in yoga and the misalignment might come from one body being informed before the others, which also reinforces the importance of practices in the classroom that encourage the interconnectedness of the four bodies, thereby facilitating the writer’s “felt sense.”

The writer’s stories are understood as originating from the mind, but to define writing solely as cognitive is to reduce it to a linear process of conscious intellectual activity. Such an explanation does not encompass the entirety of what it means to use cognition. Oxford Languages describes cognition as “the mental action or process of acquiring knowledge and understanding through thought, experience, and the senses.” While cognitive theory attempts to



understand the individual's thought process in order to account for their behavior (Piaget, 1952). If such ideas are adopted, then it is crucial that composition pedagogy takes into account cognitive theory and the mental states of student writers. Of course, no student is the same, neither will the mental disposition of the same student remain consistent on a day-to-day basis. Cognitive theory in this way complicates composition theory because it is nearly impossible to account for the mentalities of all students in a composition course. Social cognitive theory explains the breadth of this concern in that it postulates that an individual acquires knowledge from observing other people in social exchanges, experiences, and external media influences (Bandura, 1991). Embodiment then, seconds this notion that the acquisition of knowledge does not only come from the mind, but also the body within the context of social interactions. For example, a writer regarding issues of social justice and activism carries past, present, and future conversations in their mind from repeated, external, political, and social commentators. Yet, that same writer may carry trauma from personal interactions with law enforcement in their body, which might show up as a feeling of apprehension when breaching related subjects even while writing—what one scholar calls a “background of relevant experiences” (Crick, 2003)—and refers to the emotional experiences remembered in the brain. Embodied composition can offer tools that free the writer through a mind-body approach. Furthermore, awareness of posture and positioning in relation to environment might impact the ebb and flow of the writer's ideas. Writing at the kitchen table might produce ideas at a vastly different rate than writing in a designated office space. As previously mentioned, other agents are often attributed as impacting the writer. In this case, materiality theory and the environment might explain how the writer's perception of the kitchen as a more relaxed, social environment might encourage the writers to take a more laid-back approach to the writing, resulting in increased productivity. Whereas,

another writer may need the reinforcement of a rigid office chair and a staunch office space to focus on their writing without distraction. More than likely, the writer has a designated, favorite space that they consider more conducive to their personal composition process. This too, accounts for embodied composition because the environment exerts a particular impact or force on the writer's body, and which affects the state and content of the writing.

### **The Dance Between Writing Studies and Other Disciplines**

Before presenting a review of relevant literature surrounding embodied writing in the sections to follow, it is important to query whether some scholars have avoided discussion about the body and writing due to the inevitability of borrowing from interdisciplinary premises to explain the relationship between the two. Nonetheless, Writing Studies has borrowed extensively from other disciplines to create kinds of theories such as: sociocultural theory of writing, cognitive process theory of writing, social cognitive theory of writing, to name a few. To integrate embodiment in writing theory, scholars would have to venture into academic fields that directly address physiology, anatomy, kinetics, etc. which would require writing experts to study the body academically—by attaining additional degrees—or to experiment extensively with experts already versed in theories outside of composition, either of which requires significant effort. Writing studies research has emerged as a space of interdisciplinarity among other fields of study and the interdisciplinarity of embodiment lends the importance of writing theory and the transferability of skills to other (e.g., STEM-based) fields. For example, art therapy and Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) and Accelerated Resolution Therapy (ART) recognizes the affordances of writing to recall and work through emotional complications for patients; writing can be used as a mechanism for relieving trauma (Anderson & MacCurdy), which will be more thoroughly discussed later.

I witnessed the benefit of compositional knowledge while enrolled in a writing science course during my final term completing a Master of Arts in Composition, Rhetoric, and Digital Media at Nova Southeastern University. Of the 12 students enrolled in the course, I was the only student from a writing discipline. Most of my peers had expertise in scientific studies like dentistry. Aside from reliable grammatical guidance, my familiarity with composition conventions enabled me to extract and restructure complex scientific texts into coherent summaries for the average reader—key concepts, facts, and figures from scientific articles and briefs—even without any prior understanding of scientific technical jargon. My knowledge regarding the structure of effective arguments, the standard form of a thesis statement and recommended order of supporting ideas facilitated my breaking down of scientific texts into more easily readable articles that curious patients and the everyday reader could understand. Even basic ideas about technical structure and rhetorical analysis can be beneficial for scholars of other disciplines. Some scholars have addressed the contradictory nature of writing studies relative to scientific disciplines. Within ecology, there is an expectation of quality research and writing technique, but there is a lack of writing instruction from science teachers that is necessary to the organization of research (Merkle, 2019). While science experts may be more versed in conveying technical jargon, writing theory can enhance the credibility of arguments by providing guidance for logically structuring data in a way that appeals to the ethos, pathos, and logos of a text, for example. Merkle's work is important because it pinpoints three potential reasons ecologists and scientists fail to integrate writing theory in pedagogy including lack of experience and guidance. Moreover, scientists may need assurance that writing is not being prioritized over their respective fields of study and vice versa. Recognizing the skepticism that exists between fields effectively highlights my overall claim for an embodied approach to

writing because the body and writing are omnipresent in that they both play vital roles in how information is collected, synthesized, and disseminated in any field.

Instructors extract information from textual sources to develop educational content while scholastic writers are tasked with analyzing information presented in texts for meaning and structure. While it makes complete sense to study examples of writing to understand the mechanics of writing, the compositionist benefits from acknowledging the role of their body as a primary technology and an active, authentic source of meaning making. Some may counter that the present approach to composition as a field is qualifying because it is what has always been done, but the field has also worked to identify how various agents—material, nonhuman, environmental, etc.—impact an author’s process. Why, then, is the state of the writer’s body as an agent of meaning-making perceived differently? The body too is significant because it is the ever-present vehicle by which a writer carries out their work and the unpredictable potential for it to change state unquestionably affects the writer’s ability to write. Body memory, to be expanded upon in the following chapter asserts that the body is undoubtedly capable of accumulating remembrances, and embodiment theory asserts that these remembrances influence how the writer approaches the writing process and become a part of the writer’s text.

### **Emotions and Experiences Trapped in the Body Naturally Become Embedded in Text**

Curiosity about the role of the body was apparent in the earlier days of writing studies. John Lee (1994) offers an early contemplative view on the author’s body as an intimate object of influence in the writing process. Lee determines that the writer’s treatment of their body (e.g., a body that feels strong from endorphins through a normal yoga practice versus a lethargic body lacking regular physical activity) can impact their emotional mood and perception of self, which in turn leaves impressions on the writing process and on writing as a product. Several writers

might attest to feeling an intuitive urge to jot down their thoughts for a premature work of composition at even the most random of moments. Reasoning for this may lie in corporeal signals via sight, smell, taste, touch, and hearing functioning as precursors that spur the writer into action. Lee depicts an example of how the writer's sensory reception plays a provocative part in story development. Lee depicts the scene of a female lover drying water dripping from her body with a cloth after a shower to demonstrate how the lover's counterpart might react. Obviously, the lover's writing will be reminiscent of the great romance authors like Jane Austen; musings filled with loads of attractive sensory elements, suggestions of affection, and depictions of burning desire. Moreover, the writer too, responds to changes in their internal environments. According to Lee, a writer's descent into their body enables them to discover and release trapped emotions lying dormant in untapped sites of the body. Once these emotions are freed, the writer's thinking becomes clear. Lee alludes to Natalie Goldberg's (1991) alternative take on freeing the mind—learning not to think to settle the clamor of the writer's mind that is constantly teeming with ideas. An overwhelming surplus of ideas can be just as constricting as a blank mind because there is no singular focus. Robert Johnson (1993) offers an embodied approach for the writer experiencing a mental block in his suggestion of throwing a scrunched wet towel directly at the floor. According to Johnson, sudden physical force is likely to instigate the release of pent-up emotions. Of course, using physical movement to free the writer's mind provides support for Lee's argument because it creates a fresh opportunity to interrupt the body's usual activity, and thus, the blockage the writer feels mentally. This physical technique brings about a sort of restart for the writer and enables the fresh flow of new ideas. Robert Johnson's idea is different from the previous concept of the body in that he suggests physically engaging the body to process emotions in ways like scrunching and throwing a wet towel at the floor to release anger, but this

kind of approach might conflict the writer who grew up with a parent who had trouble managing their temper and consistently threw things – embodiment provides that this childhood experience is embedded in the writer’s spiritual body or soul body which is referenced as interchangeable to acknowledge that not everyone ascribes to spirituality.

Incorporating bodily movement is an effective way to move past stagnancy in the writing process like writer’s block. For example, in writing this thesis I reflected on short breaks walking outside to catch a breath of fresh air and moving my body at points when I felt stuck. Discovery about the body’s impression on the writing process suggests that activities that foster a holistic, mind-body connection, like yoga, are beneficial for understanding how caring for the whole person, that is considering social, mental, and other factors, might better position the writer to create from a more enjoyable place.

Moving through the body affords the writer an authentic source of knowledge unique to themselves based on individualized experience and identity. John Lee also determined that unseen dynamics of the physical body leave substantial impressions on a text. Perl recognizes the mind-body connection and encourages writers to stop, pause, and reflect during the writing process by tapping into a “felt sense.” The “felt sense” can be described as feeling that you know something, but not quite having the words to explain it. Lee’s argument for this descent into the body is dubbed as “felt sense” by Sondra Perl (2004) who outlines a method for recognizing and utilizing intuitive nudges in the writing process. In some way Lee and Perl debunk the belief that the writer is not knowledgeable about subject matter until it is written because they assert that the information is already in the writer’s body before they put pen to paper and is accessible through their feeling sense. While one believes the writer can gain a deeper understanding about a topic as they write, Perl proposes an interesting idea that the writer is already aware of the subject

matter in some sense before beginning to compose. Perl suggests that the writer usually has an internal cognizance of what to write but is not always equipped to tap into that perception. Although Perl's guidelines vary in the manner it is experienced from writer to writer, they primarily ask the writer to stop, pause, and reflect while composing. Such guidelines, integrate an embodied process that touches upon three main objectives: to encourage the writer to write even if the destination is not clear, to encourage the writer to pause at intervals to ask what the work is all about anyway, and to encourage the writer to check in with their internal voice to ensure that what they have written aligns with what they truly want to say. Perl's "felt sense" reinforces the two arguments in favor of embodied composition in this thesis: emotions and experiences are trapped in the body and naturally become embedded in text, and writing has always been an embodied act as a means of characterizing different identities. It also gives us a framework for considering how the emotional body can serve and support the cognitive body during the writing process. As a note, Wagner (2015) and MacMillan, et al.'s (2020) ideas more fully address these many elements and will be discussed in greater depth later in this thesis.

The term embodiment is considered a physical sensation, the act of engaging with materiality, or the physical manifestation of a practice, according to Walsh's theory of embodiment introduced earlier in this thesis. Parker-Starbuck and Mock (2011) refer to bodies as both human and nonhuman, archived, historical, and absent. These different conditions and roles of the body cooperate with the different states of a text. For example, the body of the writer might be considered absent once a text is published and distributed to the reader or once an author mentally moves on to create another work. In alignment with Parker-Starbuck and Mock's ideas, the body is perceived as being both a subject and a material that is culturally inscribed. Parker-Starbuck and Mock provide insight to examine the body as a site of ethos in the writing

process. It is uncompromisable that the writer's primary role as a living being in a community of other living beings makes the writer characteristic of the community's beliefs and aspirations—on a small scale, academic affiliation, or large scale, national allegiance. Like Perl's literature, Parker-Starbuck and Mock's ideas fit into theories of cognition that identify the human body as an object that exerts a subjective influence on the mind. Specifically, 4E Cognitive Science (Newen, Bruin, & Gallagher, 2020), a relatively new area of study, assumes that mental activities are not exclusive to the anatomical location of the brain, but also occur in the body and are impacted by the body's standing in environments—both social and physical. The 4E's can be referenced to observe the writer's embodied, embedded, enactive, and extended interactions between their body, brain, and environments.

If such ideas are adopted, then it is crucial that the writer considers their cognitive and emotional states when preparing to write and during the scripting practice. Recall that embodied emotional theory mentioned earlier acknowledges the link between the emotional and the physical bodies. While, Rosemarie Anderson (2001) integrates the concept of sympathetic resonance to translate the experience of the physical body into written text. Anderson delves into embodied writing as a reflection of our sensory experiences and perception of routine life. The most common example of sympathetic resonance incorporates tuning-forks; it displays how the vibrations from one tuning-fork will irrefutably trigger the vibrations in the other tuning fork. The writer is regularly inundated with external stimuli from kinetic influences in the world. Changes occur in the writer's internal environment, provoked by the outside world. These internal shifts within the writer's body are like the vibrations of the tuning-fork, which in turn trigger the writer to compose. Anderson demonstrates that the writer is primarily influenced by environmental elements through a five-year study of writing faculty and students. Her methods



include the study of embodied writing as a means of data collection, motivation, and reporting. To strengthen her analysis, Anderson notes the transformation a researcher undergoes with the progression of study because of embodied composition's ability to encapsulate the body's total experience through the memories of lived experiences that are carried in the body and impact the way the writer approaches a subject or text.

### **Writing Has Always Been an Embodied Act as a Means of Characterizing Different Identities**

Building on Anderson's concept, this thesis asserts that the writer's total bodily experience involves both their internal and external responses to environmental agents. While the writer might respond one way to environmental agents to appear a certain way in the eyes of others, their internal response may be entirely different. Jody Shipka's (2017) work is in part like Anderson's in her survey of assemblage and reference of the role of external human and nonhuman agents on writing. Shipka's consideration of the compositionist as a collector also echoes the idea that the materiality of things contributes to the production of a text. Specifically, the synchronization between the arrangement of material objects and places impacts the writer in flux. This part of the process is invisible to the reader, but the writer is aware on some level of the materials necessary to embody the process of writing. Laura R. Micciche (2017) restates the other half of Anderson's argument that internal agents like feelings mediate the writing process. Micciche literally situates her and Shipka's agents into text by accentuating the acknowledgment section of texts as the home for praise of said external agents. Much like the existence of complex, interconnected networks in theories of ecology, Johannessen and van Leeuwen (2019) position writing as a small practice in a larger environment of gestures, practices, and media with the intent of trace-making. Identifying the influence of gestures in this system emphasizes the

effect of the body on writing. Each physiological part of the body becomes an active part of the whole system, that is the writer, and requires attention and care. For example, the writer's spine providing support must be strong and stable to ensure an uninterrupted writing process. An embodied approach to writing in this thesis supported by the principles of yoga encourages gentle movement to relieve the physical body, whereby embodiment enables the writer to relieve and revitalize their spine and any other body parts requiring attention and care.

Fulfilling this need to attend to the body relates to Jackie Hoermann-Elliott's (2021) reference to contemplative writing as a means of creating for those who compose best when their bodies are moving by pinpointing the cognitive origins of writing research to make a case for embodied cognition as a necessary element of contemporary embodied composition. This concept is vital to clarify the affordance of embodied writing because the modern-day classroom consists of students who learn through different modes and an embodied learning practice enables the student writer to personalize their learning experience in private according to their identity, while still meeting the assignment requirements set forth by the instructor and the institution. For example, if the instructor requires the student to write a paper examining the constituents of writing online, an embodied approach would enable the student to reflect on their personal beliefs, interactions, etc. with email, social media, etc. Continuing on, Hoermann-Elliott relates those writers who identify as runners in particular, experience moments of discovery when their bodies are in motion on a run. One asserts that Hoermann-Elliott's ideas are not only applicable to writers who run, but to all writers—the difference is evident in the type of movement that the writer chooses to engage in. For example, when the writer encounters a stuck place while composing, movement typically occurs in the form of head scratching, tapping toes, scooting a chair, furrowing brows, tapping a pen, etc. The writer may even choose to stand up

and stretch their limbs, walk to the restroom, grab a cup of coffee, etc. Hoermann-Elliott also depicts the body's literal movement into a composition through gestures like hunched shoulders, locked or focused eyes, etc. Movement while composing—whether large or small—brings the writer's awareness back to their whole writing body, which is not limited to their mind alone, but includes their body, environmental influences, other humans and nonhumans in their environment, etc. according to Hoermann-Elliott.

Mindful movement practices and meditation might reconnect a writer to their original intentions for a composition in the same way as taking a bathroom break because both are embodied approaches that enable the writer to abandon their tiny writing world for the larger real world, even if for a moment. Hoermann-Elliott's definition of embodied composition even brings awareness to how the health of the writer in terms of limitations to movement impact compositions. For example, the writer's composition may not reach its full potential if carpal tunnel syndrome comes into play because the act of writing might become unbearable as a result of physical pain, social or personal pressure to live up to someone else's or your own expectation of what it means to be a successful writer, etc. Since most writers do not identify with the obstacle that is carpal tunnel syndrome, I turn to performance theory to explain the dynamics of the able-bodied performer and the direction of learning.

Performance theory proposes that as humans—and in the case of this project, writers—we perform in nearly every facet of our existence. For writers this means that a performance occurs when we pen or type the thoughts and ideas that have been previously inscribed in the parts of our minds responsible for memory, namely the amygdala, the hippocampus, the cerebellum, and the prefrontal cortex. Elements of such performances may encompass the environments we choose to compose in, the materials we use, and other nonhuman agents that

contribute to our writing process and product. When a dancer learns choreography, they utilize Janet Emig's (2011) receptive functions—listening to verbal cues and reading a choreographer's visual anatomical disposition—to internalize a public occurrence. While Emig's approach emphasizes an outside-in learning style, where input comes from an external source (i.e., the choreographer), Jerome Brunner (2011) offers enacting, graphing, and symbolizing as three modes by which individuals deal with actuality that influence the process of learning from inside the self. Enacting reflects an individual's act of doing, while the iconic method encompasses an individual producing a graphic product, and symbolizing is restatement using words.

Movement practitioners like yoga instructors utilize graphic products and symbolization as immediate planning tools for class sequencing. Standard practices like using 52 roman numerals result in the enactment of a one hour-long class. Hereby, a group of yoga instructors in training may learn how to pace their classes through writing. Similarly, before the dancer processes choreography into writing, they go a step further to utilize Brunner's 'enacting' as a method of internalizing the occurrence. After, the dancer uses representation through words or symbolization to process or learn choreography through written composition. Brunner's method of internalization relative to the writer may be expanded through Kenneth A. Bruffee's (2011) explanation of the relationship between public discourse, internalized thought, and writing as part of a recurrent process of collaborative learning—which takes the place of graphing, symbolizing, and enacting. Bruffee asserts that thought is internalized public and social talk, and writing is internalized social talk made public and social once again (Bruffee, 395). The nature of writing from this stance suggests that writing is a product of external social events and public discourses in the community. A point of disparity between Bruffee's process of making knowledge public again and that of a dancer, is the enactment of a performance using the body as

the mode of contributing to the conversation by making the knowledge public again.

Nonetheless, the essence of collaboration is maintained in both Bruffee and the dancer's cyclical approach to meaning making using writing. If writing instructors couple Emig's ideas about writing from a process standpoint and Lee's discoveries about how the body leaves impressions on our writing process, they may choose to incorporate writing activities that are beneficial to the whole student. For example, an average performing student who works long hours before and after class to pay for tuition, may improve their performance in class if there were learning objectives in place that cater to the well-being and development of the student as an entire being with mental and emotional needs. Such activities may be achieved by drawing inspiration from performance theory or even through activities like meditation. The theory of social emotional learning can lend more insight as it postulates that the writer's competencies are encouraged or discouraged by the classroom climate, institution-specific learning culture, partnerships, and aligned learning opportunities. Finally, social emotional learning provides that practices like meditation can lend to the five social emotional learning skills i.e., self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision making, relationship skills, and social awareness (Collie et al., 2012). The agreement of these three theories would lend to the overall development of not only the writer's technical skills, but their mental discipline, and social and emotional convictions, which would more than likely lead them towards a more specialized path and expert in society.

In the introduction, I postulated that the Western learning culture might be one explanation for the exclusion of the body in writing in the classroom climate and that my exposure to a greater diversity of cultures seemed to progress as I achieved higher levels of academics—which I believe reflects the changing landscape of demographics within society as a whole. Drawing inspiration from Eastern culture, Mroz (2011) shows how the influence of

practices like martial arts, and qigong might be used as tools for achieving a balance in composing for theatre performances. Mroz's principles of preparation can be applied to the embodied writer to regulate their spaces, monitor their breathing, and clarify their intent. One would even suggest the potential of alternating periods of writing with periods of movement that call for reflection on what was written or forecasting what may be written next. This time of reflection, or looking within, is a large part of the practice of yoga, in that the individual regularly checks in with how they are feeling, what they are thinking, etc. with each progression into the practice.

Especially important to the integration of yoga in the writing classroom Christy Wagner (2015) calls attention to the mental, physical, and emotional well-being of students in writing classrooms in *Yoga Minds, Writing Bodies: Contemplative Writing Pedagogy* with a focus on the instructor, versus the writer (as in this thesis). Wagner asserts a need for instructors to attend to the gendered, racialized, and disabled bodies in writing classrooms. She proposes an Eastern-influenced structure for writing pedagogy that promotes meditation, yoga, and martial arts within university learning spaces. Wagner stresses the importance of the student's rhetorical development but contends that such development should be carried out in tandem with processes that improve the mental and emotional well-being of students. The proposal for contemplative educational processes as an extension of embodiment within first-year composition classes, engages the student's body. The unconventional premise of Wagner's suggestion is reminiscent of the nontraditional ideas about the self as a performer in Herbert Blau's (1982) work. Blau's autobiographical text *Take Up The Bodies*, conveys a discourse on the body as a performer from his experience with the theater group KRAKEN. Blau references theorists in the field of theatre to formulate an argument about the self and the theatricalization of life. Blau addresses inquiries

such as alternative narratives, masking, voice, body language, and the environment. Ideas about the disappearance of the self can be applied to the self as performer and to the self as writer in composition studies. The theatre's approach to the politics of culture and self are examined and principles can be compared with similar works of resistance in writing and digital media studies like Shepard Fairey's discussion on multimodality and remix as it relates to the Obama Hope poster.

Wagner's argument for the inclusion of Eastern practices like yoga in the writing classroom might ignite student awareness about their levels of engagement with their bodies while composing. Wagner offers that composition studies has addressed the rhetoric of othered bodies (i.e., racialized, gendered, disabled, etc.), but has done little to recognize the embodiment of the students occupying writing classrooms on an everyday basis. Wagner makes a case for yoga and meditation within the writing classroom as a tool for learning how to teach writers mindfulness about their composition and methods that promote their academic development. All the while, Wagner's ideas ensure the mental, physical, and emotional well-being of students as a byproduct of physically active yoga exercises in the writing classroom. Like Hoermann-Elliott's argument that movement creates a greater sense of awareness for the writer, Wagner offers contemplative writing as a tool for moving towards embodiment for the writer. Awareness of the writer's breath is of concern for Wagner as it proves to be a constructive habit that both yoga practitioners and writer's benefit from as it helps to situate feelings, emotions, and sensations.

The inclusion of the term 'embodiment' is still new to writing studies much like the adoption of yoga in western culture has provided a new approach to living from a body-centered awareness, but embodiment can awaken the writer to this descent into the body. One critique of this research that might be addressed is the implication of cultural appropriation. In response, this

thesis notes that the practice of yoga should in no way be copied and pasted into the writing classroom by taking some elements of the practice and leaving others, rather this thesis appreciates the governing principles behind the meaning of and reason for the practice that call for an awareness of the self, humankind, the universe, etc. through mindfulness serve as inspiration for developing practices that encourage mindfulness through movement that can enhance the writing classroom. Kristin L. Arola and Anne Frances Wysocki (2012) contend that bodies are composed and taught different qualities of existing in society when new media is produced. The concept of new media offers a different type of perspective that has the potential to complicate embodiment in the writing classroom if the two are perceived as competitors. Nonetheless, this competition between the two approaches is not necessary, rather both can be utilized when its affordances are more appropriate to the learning material. The writer's cultural, political, and economic stance is made known in the arguments they partake in their compositions. Arola and Wysocki assume that a writer's narrative is heavily influenced by the way their body is treated in society. The writer then approves or rejects whether their writing product accurately represents their experiences and might even alter it based on how they wish to be perceived. Reciprocally, writers unknowingly or knowingly convince readers to engage with or reject their conscious interpretations of the self. For example, the compositionist adding to controversial dialogues might explore the world through alternative personae like disabled, queer, and feminist bodies while inviting readers to assess the realities of how their own bodies are handled against these and other identities. Arola and Wysocki encourage the writer to establish "authorial identities" by embracing the body in writing as part of the process of learning themselves, the perceptions of others, the structures built by society, and those constructs that they create for themselves to inhabit. The circulation of the writer's embodied



text in turn influences their perception of self, due to other individuals forming associations with that text whether favorable or unfavorable. Evidently, the writer's self-perception is embedded in their speech and thought patterns and how each fits into the context of culture.

Language, culture, and cognition are bridged as a result of research on embodiment within cognitive linguistics. Maalej and Yu (2011) address the roles of individual body parts in the embodiment of human emotions, cultural values, character traits, and other characteristics as manifestations of diverse cultures. Maalej and Yu specifically highlight: English, German, Arabic, Greek, Spanish, Japanese, Turkish, Chinese, Estonian, Persian, Indonesian, and Danish languages. Metonymy and metaphors are examined in relation to the embodiment of mental states. For example, examination of the head and feet in Turkish language reveals that head implies positive value and feet implies negative value. This is according to the cultural perspective of the anatomical positioning of the head at the top, ascending upwards, and the feet at the bottom. Maalej and Yu's ideas reflect social stratification and the presence of the writer's body in composition based on the values of a particular culture or group. Rumble (2013) addresses metaphor theory and the typologies of body memory in *Body Memory, Metaphor and Movement*. Input from movement therapists, philosophers, and cognitive scientists provide approaches to embodiment for practical methods of teaching body memory (BM). Body memory asserts that the body is undoubtedly capable of accumulating remembrances and is mostly used to treat patients with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

The necessity of reestablishing the link between the mind and body for healing is evident in the two most effective treatments of PTSD, Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EDMR) and Accelerated Resolution Therapy (ART) both using varied or fixed eye movement and talk therapy. Clinical applications within the framework of traumatic memory strengthen

one's argument for the healing nature of movement, especially for trauma-informed writing. Marginalized writers who have experienced trauma related to their race, gender, sexuality, etc.—knowingly and unknowingly—benefit from practicing embodied composition because there is potential to not only become more knowledgeable of subject matter as they compose but also to heal from unspoken memories, trapped in their subconscious and conscious bodies.

Shapiro (2015) seconds the notion that embodied cognition, as a recent development in psychology, often supersedes general cognitive science in a functional sense. Shapiro examines embodiment as an alternative to standard cognitive science as a method of research that conveys the body and the body's interactions with the environment as inherent to cognition, requiring new perspectives for scrutiny. Mental representation as an extension of cognition is a focus that Shapiro uses—mental representation and extended cognition support connectionism and dynamical systems theory. Shapiro introduces topics concerning embodied concepts, emotion, and the development of preference to provide students with a psychological and philosophical premise for examining general cognitive science and its influence on embodiment.

Moreover, Tschacher and Bergomi (2011) progress cognitive science's influence on embodiment into the classroom through the coverage of embodied cognition and its implications within the writing classroom from a transdisciplinary approach. Tschacher and Bergomi define embodied cognition from a historical and scientific perspective utilizing phenomenological viewpoints that focus on neurological processes, synergetics (emphasis on behaviors of the total system which are not indicated by the behavior of any components of the system alone), and self-organization theory. The two examine the role of the body and interpersonal relationships within psychotherapy. According to Tschacher and Bergomi, nonverbal synchrony indicates that body movement plays an active role in shaping social interaction, while cultural and

environmental elements drive cognition for student composers. For instance, when students sit at a desk while engaging in a writing assignment in class, their bodily movements are limited which isolates students from the social interaction that Tschacher and Bergomi refer to. Instead, the student might find elements that exist within the classroom environment, e.g., books, posters, etc. as sources of information. Additionally, the students might reflect on the expectations of classroom culture (i.e., the student is expected to quietly complete their work). Tschacher and Bergomi conceptualize the mind as an embodiment of the writer according to principles of social psychology.

One key element to note is Tschacher and Bergomi's assertion that embodiment denotes different things for different scholars. For example, some scholars consider embodiment as a theory, like the thorough and informed work of Reed, while others consider it an ordinary perspective to consider as a unique, alternative approach to a longstanding question in their respective fields, as Walsh. Nonetheless Tschacher and Bergomi acknowledge that embodiment has been a paradigm that scholars considered in understanding the mind-body connection even as early as the Greeks. Tschacher and Bergomi's theories might impact my work on embodied composition in that it highlights social embodiment because bodily gestures are obvious variables that impact student levels of social interaction and communication at all ages and stages of human development. Social embodiment within the writing classroom is important to consider because it can reveal how student interactions with one another are shaped by cultural differences, shared language and meaning, thereby impacting their composition process in either a negative or positive manner. Berthoff and Stephens (1988) invite students to work towards order by providing "assisted invitations." Invitations encourage students to discover how to do something by looking at what they are doing in the process and to regularly look again. Writing

from student responses to invitations uncovers the way in which students work towards order or achieve a balance between heuristics and chaos. Berthoff and Stephens offer practical applications of theory for finding relationships in paragraph sequences and forming concepts in writing. The writer can benefit from Berthoff and Stephen's recommendations for developing concepts and gathering and sorting ideas. A standout idea was Berthoff and Stephen's question to the writer, "Do you know your knowledge?" For Perl, the answer is an absolute, *yes*. Perl's assertion that the embodied writer already contains the knowledge necessary to compose within their body might inform Berthoff and Stephen's challenge to the writer. In the words of Virginia Woolf, "Every secret of a writer's soul, every experience of his life, every quality of his mind, is written large in his works." Likewise, Guttorm, et al. (2015) invites collaborative inquiry between four academics from diverse disciplines on the concept of 'becoming' in writing. The writer is inspired to reflect on what they know and how they know what they know. The academics consider their individual approaches to writing and to the other participants, along with their encounters with material and immaterial agents throughout the process. The embodied writer reflects on such questions of themselves—what they know and how they know what they know—in order to purposefully integrate confirmed knowledge, personal experience, and serendipitous occurrences into their compositions. The aforementioned elements qualify as separate phenomena that collectively influence and characterize the writer's identity as a credible source of knowledge.

Embodiment too, can be utilized to reaffirm that external sources of information in the form of research are credible. For example, Anderson (2020) affirms embodiment as essential in human research. Methods of embodiment in research processes move the researcher into a deeper understanding of research design by situating them into quantitative and qualitative

systems of analysis. Anderson applies principles from somatic and dance psychotherapy and mindfulness to create embodied tools for research. For example, Anderson explores Gestalt therapy to emphasize an individual's experience of the present moment—isolating their experience. This form of psychotherapy enhances an individual's sense of awareness.

Anderson's research on embodiment is significant for embodied writing in this thesis because it provides tested evidence that the writer is influenced by their present environment and can obtain a stronger sense of self-direction as a result. This self-direction in turn, can enable the embodied writer to achieve a greater sense of self-awareness to consider what they are identifying with in relation to their text.

Increased awareness creates space for multi-modal methods of meaning-making which demonstrate the relationships between gestures and gaze, visual-spatial sources, and verbal resources for the writer practicing embodied composition. Bergmann (2012) records a scientific approach to linguistics and literature based on activities at the School of Language and Literature of the Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies (FRIAS). The two branches of study offer comparable, yet complimentary understandings of language research. Bergmann identifies the focus of linguistics on quantitative and qualitative research dependent upon collections of text gathered and analyzed for study. While Bergmann relates literary studies to the comparative and often transdisciplinary study of phenomena occurring within specific cultural contexts.

According to Bergmann the curriculum of human science research is augmented and transformed through contact zones existent between the two fields (literary and linguistics), humanities, and the natural and social sciences. The discussion of patterns of stress and intonation in language or prosody in relation to embodiment is of note. Bergmann's inclusion of a range of contributions including English, German, Swedish, French, and Danish provide a wide understanding of non-

verbal elements of discourse like eye movement, head placement, etc. In terms of the practical elements of embodied writing, these principles provide a theoretical basis for the study of embodiment as it relates to the writer's gestures and what they might suggest about their cultural background and what things might be potential triggers for the writer while composing. One argues that Bergmann's ideas reveal three occurrences of discourse for the embodied writer in the pre-writing and writing stages—in all of which the writer's identity morphs from an active participant with their environment, themselves, and the text respectively, based on their relativity to their text. The first is an enactment of discourse between the writer and their writing materials (i.e., paper, digital screen, pen/pencil, keyboard) and other human or material objects in the environment. The second encompasses the writer's discourse with themselves as they flesh out ideas contained in the composition. The third, and final, occurrence encapsulates the writer's discourse with the unwritten text before it takes physical form on the paper or screen.

The tertiary level of discourse is the most emphasized of the three within the classroom and often takes the longest because the writer can quickly become acclimated or choose to remain disconnected from writing materials and the environment but grappling with the unwritten text requires a commitment to the ebbs and flows of the writing process, an attachment to personal claims, and unyielding concentration. Bryant (2013) aims to build writing pedagogy for students with respect to the influence of social media. Bryant starts from the idea that millennial students do not easily form meaningful, personal relationships with fellow pupils and instructors due to looming attachments to social networks. Networks are characterized as 'distracting' for students in classrooms and other learning communities. Bryant stresses that students are more attached to the happenings on social networks than to their pupils and instructors even though they are physically present in writing classrooms. All in all, students suffer academically if they are

detached or preoccupied with other thoughts because there is no free mental space for new ideas or connections to form. Embodied composition can help bring the attention of mentally ‘absent’ students back into writing classrooms and learning communities. Certainly, Anderson’s observations on Gestalt therapy would prove to be useful for bringing students into the present moment for improved involvement in their learning communities.

Bryant draws from Emig’s arguments for an embodied classroom to ensure student development and community structure. Bryant seeks to bridge components of online social networking with hands on embodied techniques that can be performed face-to-face in the writing classroom. Emig foresaw technological developments as a challenge for 21<sup>st</sup> century composition instructors. According to Emig, the 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom is one of the few remaining social spaces for in-person collaboration and conversation despite rapid technological advances. Bryant deems the embodied classroom as a necessary space to explore complex and ambiguous questions about self and society for composition students. Although embodiment is not commonplace in writing curriculum, Emig’s embodied learning represents a traditional classroom where students engage in discourse amongst one another in the flesh. Similarly, Fulkerson (2005) affirms a turn towards expressive approaches to writing pedagogy based on the analysis of essays purported for new writing instructors. Embodied composition provides a more critical and cultural approach to the study of writing which Fulkerson deems as one of the three splits of rhetorical approaches.

This digitization of the classroom causes concern for the implications on younger students learning how to write according to Mangen and Balsvik (2016). The two acknowledge a major change in the writing classroom that students are taught basic writing skills using a keyboard. While one recounts learning to engage with the keyboard and computer interface around third

grade through programs like Mavis Beacon, such lessons proceeded actual handwriting assignments in earlier grades with pencil and extraordinarily large, lined paper. Nowadays, most children access cell phones, laptops, and tablets even before enrolling in school for the very first time. My learning experience as a child compared to more tech-savvy children today leads me to believe that Mangen and Balsvik's concern about the short-term and long-term cognitive implications of the digitized classroom on the educational and socio-cultural development of young writers is valid. Surely, the motor component of writing allows for a type of embodied cognition that the material affordances and sensorimotor exigencies of utilizing a keyboard do not in the acquisition of basic writing skills, that may not be as alarming for higher-level writing students.

On the contrary, Mandalaki and Daou (2020) argue in favor of digital technologies and writing studies in their recognition of virtual exchanges to connect bodies that are not physically in contact. The circumstances surrounding COVID-19 amplify Mandalaki and Daou's case especially as it relates to enabling feminist compositions as a cyborg practice. The hybrid nature of virtual exchanges allows for alternative studies in cyborg writing and connecting bodies from diverse academic compositions. Therefore, the social networks discussed by Bryant allow for the embodiment of bodies, and other bodies outside of the heteronormative persona of the academic writer. Feminist forms of writing might find a place in social networks, whereas they may be excluded from the institution. Mandalaki and Daou summon a feminine nature that involves more artistic elements of literature, prose, and poetry and counteracts the masculine standards of scholastic composing. Their observations on cyborg writing during COVID-19 supports the claim that writing has always been an embodied act as a means of trying on different identities. The digital space and cyborg texts permit the embodiment of divergent identities of others whose



voices are silenced within the conventions of masculine academia. Sağlamel and Kayaoğlu (2015) challenge the placement of writing as a “back seat” skill by demonstrating the immediacy of writing skills in general higher-level learning environments through essays, research, dissertations, theses, reports, and examinations. Sağlamel and Kayaoğlu examine questionnaires using content analysis to declare that students fail to achieve a common level of proficiency in writing due to differences in perceptions based on cultural variations and diverse meanings assigned to language used in writing activities. For this reason, embodied writing should be a higher priority in secondary institutions because it creates opportunities for students to tap into their most authentic perspectives, which in turn can be shared with fellow classmates to facilitate contact zones.

Butchart queries the validity of communication as solely an outward sharing of inner thoughts. Such ideas negate the assertion that humans are simply vehicles that produce mechanical signs of interaction. Butchart’s (2019) ideas relay a deeper understanding of the role of human participants in communication as the very embodiment of the community. Butchart challenges theoretical problems in communication and offers tools for future studies concerning the oppositions of speech/language, self/other, and community/immunity. Butchart offers a perspective of communication as embodied in comparison to a mere transmission of thoughts from human to human.

### **Utilizing Anatomical Practices to Nurture Embodied Identity**

Cooper (2011) introduces a novel perspective on embodied writing as a vivid activity instigating sensory responses from both the writer and reader. Cooper’s scholarship relies heavily on dance studies as a guide for defining the elements of embodied writing. For dancers, Cooper recognizes that embodied writing has the potential to clarify perception and inform

comprehension of dance methodologies. An emphasis on the first-person narrative of the kinesthetic practice invites a greater sense of authenticity for Cooper. Consequently, Cooper's understanding of embodied writing practices requires descriptive elements that trigger visceral responses.

Kinesthetic, sensory responses to written compositions move the artist towards growth and the writer towards new understandings of ideas. Cox (2018) provides an examination of theoretical constructions that recognize the importance of the body in relation to ideas, more specifically, information studies (IS). Cox situates scholarship that appreciates the body in a historical context that builds a basis for the body in Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of perception. Merleau-Ponty asserts that the consciousness of humans enables meaning in the world around them. Phenomenology corresponding to Merleau-Ponty focuses on the essence of things—including consciousness and perception. Maiese (2014) contends that human consciousness is embodied, and the writer's view of the world is conceptualized by their bodily subtleties and the surrounding environment. For Maiese, the writer's emotions are a vital manifestation of their embodiment and influences their self-consciousness, morality, and social cognition. The role of the body in practice theory, embodied cognition, and sensory studies is explored in a cultural context. For example, Cox discusses the development of identity and the body in the 1960's, when consumerism—evident in diet fads and more—was rampant.

Another cultural standpoint of the body is explored in the present day, one would argue that the transformation of gender norms might influence the writer's opinion of the body even more so than the digitization of things. These elements work off of one another to frame the importance of embodiment to facilitate a private experience (versus shared publicly in class discussion or with the instructor) for the writer exploring their identities and gender norms. But,

like Bryant's premise that 21<sup>st</sup> century students are not present in writing classrooms, Cox agrees that digital influences reinforce disembodiment. Cox takes the idea of disembodiment one step further by arguing that the writer is also socialized to disregard their body. This concept works against embodied composition because ignoring the body creates a deficit by removing the sensorial feeling and thinking desires of the writer's body as an agent in composing. Within the scientific scope, Fountain (2014) performs an ethnographic study of how rhetorical discourses shape perspectives of the body. Fountain explores learning through multimodal displays and embodied practices in the anatomy lab for medical students. Fountain finds that social elements create opportunity for rhetorical discourse to occur in technical and scientific domains—a process termed “embodied rhetorical action”—which underscores the interweaving of the body, an object, and the environment. In this way, embodied rhetorical action affords the student an opportunity to observe how social elements influence how they embody their thoughts through biological, verbal tendencies.

### **Defining Embodiment As It Relates to the Writer's Internal State of Being**

In examining recent conversations on embodied composition, one has found a wide range of explanations for what constitutes embodiment, its realistic application, and its value in the field. Three major theories about the role of the author's body in composition continue today that work as specific embodied composition by calling attention to the emotional constituents of embodied work. Catherine L. Reed (2020) defines embodiment as our bodily encounters and processes that aid in the understanding of our emotional experiences and the experiences of others. Reed's definition stems from psychology and her studies on implementing body-processing mechanisms in models of embodied emotion to simulate processes that might prevent social-emotional deficits in those with autism spectrum disorders (2019). Mark Walsh ascribes

an emotional and intuitive intelligence to the body in his description of embodiment (2020). Walsh's emphasis on embodied leadership is also rooted in psychology and movement, specifically yoga. Both scholars distinguish a practitioner's internal state and its impact on understanding the internal states of their audiences—creating a correspondence between bodies. Similarly, Julie Herndon identifies the organization of sound in relation to the internal and external experiences of the body as embodied composition for the musical composer (Henderson, 2021).

Yoo (2020) compliments Walsh's assertion of the body's intelligence by providing recent scholarship affirming the understanding that resides within the writer's body. Although, the concept of deep knowledge being within the writer's body is sometimes viewed as lofty and metaphysical. It is significant for the writer to understand that the practicality of their body's internal understanding exists as memorable sensory experiences, collected as they progress through life, that resurface in response to something else. To examine what this bodily understanding might look like for the trauma-informed writer, empathy and relatability are driving factors for the writer conveying the pain, suffering, and triumphs of others. While composing on traumatic experiences like police brutality, a Black woman writer might feel shock or a sinking feeling in the pit of her stomach because she has a direct connection to the pain and experiences addressed in her composition. Likewise, the writer who has not experienced the same trauma, might feel different sensations, like disbelief or curiosity in the mind about the experiences of others around them who identify with the profile of victims. The curiosity dwelling in the writer's mental space might trigger scratching of the head or chin. Yoo asserts that phenomena like social unrest remind the writer of their responsibility to cultivate embodied ways of knowing through reflexive writing rich with sensory details.

Furthermore, Van der Kolk (2014) pushes the idea of the body's intelligence to withhold trauma from past experiences and Pennebaker et al. builds upon the idea, exclaiming that aspects of the writer's natural language can serve as markers of these past experiences indicating social identity, emotional state, and way of thinking (2003). Likewise, Van der Kolk asserts that traumatic experiences with guardians remain in a child's body as they mature into adults. Trauma might show up in the way the child physically maneuvers through the world—through rigid, tight, stiff gestures—or resilience to social interactions or activities. For example, if a child endured raging temperaments from their parents, the child might learn to suppress their anger while maintaining stillness in their body. This frozen disposition might show up in stiff, rigid gestures while sitting, walking, etc. as a result of associating overt expressions of emotion with negativity. The case is made for the trauma experienced by war veterans because PTSD is easily understood as being held in the body. In summation, a writer's history with language, composition, and reading informs the physical nature of their body while writing. Imagine the writer that grew up with parents that criticized their writing as invaluable. This writer might develop a habit of hunching over their writing materials to protect their craft or block out distractions. Van der Kolk's findings inform the embodied writer in two ways: the writer can control their physiology through their breath, movement, and touch and language gives the writer the power to change. This sense of control benefits the writer by reaffirming their ability to maintain focus when triggered. Van der Kolk finds that tapping into the body helps patients feel fully alive and present. This embodiment can nudge the writer towards a deeper sense of engagement with their authentic feelings about the text in a sort of imagined, anticipated conversation with their audience. To create conditions through which the instructor can address differing student dispositions, one posits that it may require sensitivity training to identify

abnormal or alarming behavior—likened to training an elementary teacher to spot potential signs of ADHD—through faculty workshops or formal training. Sensitivity training would be appropriate to include here especially since most companies had already begun to take part in similar types of training since the uptick in diversity, equity, and inclusion programs in response to the social unrest that followed COVID-19. Sensitivity training for the writing classroom would support the instructor by making them aware of how their prejudices and goals become apparent in group interactions and how they can be more sensitive to students as the authoritative figure in the classroom.

### **Practical Applications of Embodiment**

Most will agree that readers voluntarily occupy the bodies, lives, and time of characters in a text when they engage with it. Readers willingly become invested in the trials and triumphs of characters each time they decide to turn the page and continue reading. Moreover, readers can carry the characters into their daily lives when they ruminate over stories, when they pause from reading in between chapters, and even after completing a text. On the surface, embodiment grants the writer and the reader access to additional compartments of their minds and imaginations by way of the intelligence of the body—resulting in a more visceral encounter with the text. Instead of relying on the intelligence of the mind alone, the writer and reader might find themselves relating to the feelings of characters by crying, laughing, etc. from dropping into their bodies to recognize how a text makes them feel. At present, f embodiment in writing composition reveals there are several claims regarding the affordances of embodied composition: writing process as reflexive flow; writing as a more profound, intimate experience for the writer, the text, and other agents; awareness of mind/body connection through mindfulness; and acknowledgement of the intelligences of the body. One should note the body's capacity to hold and process information as a container by way of memory or emotional impressions. This note is reminiscent of Sondra Perl's felt sense and calls on the body as the biographical expert on subject matter both read and experienced at earlier times in the writer's life. While some fair well addressing the practical applications of embodied writing, others offer a lofty, nearly metaphysical justification for incorporating the body into composition. This is to be expected, especially in the comparative study of practices like yoga and writing considering the highly spiritual, traditional roots of the Hindu practice. Such texts are still valuable to the discourse surrounding embodiment within composition and rightfully honor the origins of yoga—but can

be difficult for most scholarly writers to follow, especially if they do not personally maintain a yogic or even spiritual practice. This philosophical type of approach, simply put, will not resonate with the larger population of writers.

For those writers interested in exploring the intelligences of all four bodies, this section provides a practical approach to integrating embodiment in the writing process through reflective journaling prompts and gentle exercises. It is important to note that incorporating physical exercises is not an appropriation of a spiritual discipline, rather yoga is the lens through which the writer can come to understand the interconnectedness of their four bodies, while honoring the principles of its origins. More specifically, this thesis shares yoga poses for the writer to understand the origins and reason behind the inclusion of them per the principles of yoga. Then, this thesis expands on those principles by sharing simple movements that are inspired by those postures. For example, in yoga child's pose might call attention to the third eye for the purpose of opening perception beyond ordinary seeing by resting the forehead on the floor. A practical application of the principle of the third eye in this thesis might acknowledge that humans can tune into their perception to understand information. Building on, a practical exercise incorporating movement might call for the writer to sit still and close their eyes or gently lie their head onto their desk with their forehead down or on their arms to tune into their perceptive senses. All of these pieces work together to credit the principles of yoga as the inspiring force behind certain embodiment practices for the writer. The practices that follow are demonstrations of how writers can engage in the intelligence of the physical body in service of the mental, emotional, and spiritual bodies.



### Sequencing Bodies, Sequencing Texts

Longer texts may require more than a single exercise to usher the writer into embodiment because they are usually sitting for longer periods of time. To remedy this need, the writer might undertake a flow of movement and reflection. To understand this, I explain that in yoga a flow corresponds to a repeating sequence of postures initiated by the instructor at a more rapid rate, usually for the purpose of heating the body. A short version of a written, continuing flow might look something like this:

1. Inhale. Mountain Pose. Reach your arms up. Ground the four corners of your feet.
2. Exhale. Forward Fold.
3. Inhale. Halfway Lift. Lengthen your tailbone and your crown in opposition.
4. Exhale. High Plank to Low Plank. Bend your elbows slowly.
5. Inhale. Upward Facing Dog. Breath here.
6. Exhale. Downward Facing Dog.

As demonstrated in the written flow above, the yoga instructor's cueing of breath and posture (the defining elements of a flow) can be read in the written version. However, what is not seen—is the yoga student's external physical response to manipulate their body into the poses and the student's internal emotional and mental responses—which, depending on the level of difficulty of the pose, might not always be agreeable. One argues that scholarly composition embodies a process much like this. The writer's musings are visible not only to themselves, but also to the reader. Yet, the reader's responses to the writer's musings can be obscured because the author is not usually present once the text has been distributed. Such responses might reveal physical modifications associated with changing emotional or mental states. For example, the reader might move from an upright seated position at a desk to slouch on the couch as the initial

urgency to begin reading a new text wears off. Other examples might expose scratching of the chin to indicate deep thought, curiosity, or disagreement; removing a pair of glasses to squeeze their face in their hands from mental fatigue, etc. Moreover, embodied composition from this perspective offers a sort of reflexive flow, previously asserted by Berthoff and Stephen, that takes place between the writer and their audience: discourse, analysis, and feedback. The writer's text serves as the discourse in which they authoritatively address a subject, and analysis occurs when the audience reads the text because it provides an opportunity for synthesis of information. The text creates the opportunity for feedback or a responsiveness to the information which gives insight into how the communication has developed between the writer and the reader. Based on the collective scholarship on embodied composition addressed in the preceding literature review, one argues that embodiment affords both the writer and the reader a more profound, cyclical, intimate experience with the text, each other, and other agents. The reader engages in conversation with the writer that is initiated by the very act of reading the text—at the least a validation of the author's thoughts as thought-provoking. The text then moderates and acts as a third party between the writer and their audience to instigate responses and enquiries. From an embodied viewpoint (Pennebaker), the nature of the reader's retorts stem from memories held in their psyche or impressions of past experiences stored in their body. Incorporating embodiment in the writing process can normalize students' experiences while writing and help them understand why such a process would invite engagement by the emotional, mental, and spiritual bodies.

The word 'yoga' is derived from 'Yuj.' In Sanskrit 'Yuj' implies to yoke, unite, or join. Attuned awareness of the body enables the writer to see meaning as embodied practice and their embodied social identities (recall Reed and Walsh). Although their definitions of embodiment

have substantial holding power separately, the unification of the two definitions are most useful and offer a complete perspective of the significance of embodiment in composition scholarship because a conjoined definition provides that: embodiment acknowledges the emotional and intuitive intelligence of the body and encompasses our bodily encounters and processes that aid in the understanding of emotional experiences. An ethnographic study on embodiment, discourse, and medical students reveals that embodied practices morph the writer's perspective on the fleshly body (Fountain, 2014). In this way, embodiment brings awareness to the ecosystems and exchanges necessary to exist in between body, object, and environment. The writer's newfound awareness of the impact of the text on other bodies influences defining factors of a text such as the manner of delivery or level of appropriateness embedded in a text. Embodied composition makes for a more sympathetic and empathetic author who considers the impact of the text on the bodies of others orbiting in a shared environment.

### **Embodied Writing as a Form of Identity**

Practicing embodied composition makes space for the writer to come into this awareness of shifting identities. Increased mental clarity, centered attention, and sharpened concentration are among the many benefits of a regular yoga practice. Likewise, an embodied approach to writing provides the author with clarity of their stance in relation to the subject matter in the text. Improved mental focus will certainly sustain the writer to hold their position from the beginning of a text to the end. Finally, such focus enables the writer to set and maintain clear intentions for their discourse with their audience and other texts.

Going a little deeper, a didactic comic on discourse demonstrates one standout theory that supports embodiment as a means of defining authorial identity. The comic establishes that the identity of the writer is fluid; it is ever changing (Losh et al., 2021). Diverse audiences require

messages to be delivered in a range of ways, previously noted by Arola and Wysocki. Audiences prioritize different factors to determine the writer's credibility and respond to the writer's cues favorably or unfavorably depending upon whether their preconceived expectations about the text are met. The authors illustrate a writer's changing identities as changing clothes according to the social context of texts. Changing clothes is a metaphor for the mental changes or mindset shifts required to write for different audiences. In the same way that people in various professions dress appropriately for the demands of their work (e.g., scrubs for a physician, a suit for business settings, coveralls for a welder), writers personify a new character with personalized views about the world each time they engage in discourse within a text.

- Describe one aspect of your identity that is essential to who you are as a writer.
- Describe one aspect of your identity that is essential to who you are in relation to your subject matter.

### **Somatics**

If writing has always been about embodying different identities, the writer might effectively tune into their body to convey their identity in the text by utilizing somatics. Consider the early mention of Cheryl Pallant's text "Writing and the Body in Motion: Awakening Voice Through Somatic Practice." From Pallant's text, one has come to understand somatic writing as composition originating from the body, its experienced emotions, and sensory encounters. While embodied composition accounts for the unbothered presence of the body as it reacts naturally as an agent in the writing process, somatic writing enhances and supports the agency of the body through intentional movement-based exercises. Physical practices like performing a gentle sequence of relative yoga poses demonstrate the power of somatics in writing. For example, in yoga Extended Child's Pose with hands in prayer is one of my favorite methods for stretching

my spine and opening my back and shoulders after sitting stationary for an extended period. To experience this pose, the writer should:

1. Come to their knees and separate them hip-width distance.
2. Sit on the heels of their feet.
3. Extend their arms above their head long on the floor.
4. Bend their elbows.
5. Press the palms of their hands together (so their hands rest or hover behind their shoulder blades and their elbow tips rest firmly on the floor).

Some might argue that somatics distinguish the body as separate from the mind, which goes against everything that has been argued about embodied composition thus far in this thesis, but this is not so. One recalls Robert Johnson's (1993) approach to writer's block by throwing a scrunched wet towel at the floor. Johnson explained the physical throwing force as a solution for releasing mental and emotional blockages. Johnson's suggestion, however, is reactive rather than responsive and lacks intention and mindfulness behind the movement. The physical body supports the cognitive and mental body because through it the writer can find homeostasis using movement to facilitate a sense of feeling grounded or self-assured to share their thoughts with confidence in their credibility. In the same sense, somatics here provides a physical release from discomfort for the writer's body—which can especially be distracting while composing—to free up mental space. The “Father of Occupational Medicine,” Italian physician Bernardino Ramazzini, ascribed incessant writing to chronic muscle and tendon fatigue in the hands and arms—thereby deeming the writing profession as high-risk (1940). Extended child's pose with hands in prayer relieves tension in the writer's triceps, shoulders, back, and wrists.

Additionally, the position of the forehead (also referred to as the third eye, or the seat of intuition in yoga) on the floor and tucked into the body of the writer might also encourage internal reflection on the specifics of the identity the writer wishes to embody in a text. Yoga invites going inward by forcing the writer's attention towards a singular focus, themselves, which naturally causes everything else to blur out of focus. The prone (as opposed to supine) position of the writer in an extended child's pose with hands in prayer offers a moment of stillness for the writer to reflect on the authenticity of their inner thoughts and voice. The sheltering of the head in this posture is also reminiscent of the gesture children make, i.e., grabbing the head with a pillow or in-between forearms to block out excessive noise. In the methods section of this thesis, I borrow from other movement practices such as the Laban Technique to further support embodied composition as an essential practice for the writer. Somatics provides that writing is a dualistic practice that yokes the mind and body together in an embodied act.

### **Embodiment Embedded in This Thesis**

When I sat down to write this thesis, I had a clear intention to demonstrate the benefit of embodiment as providing more creative, visceral narratives for the reader. Nonetheless bouts of fatigue—that felt like my mind revolting after already writing numerous research papers to complete the required courses for my master’s program, combined with working full-time as an editor—led me on a journey of discovering and establishing my own embodied writing practice. I found that principles of yoga combined with mindfulness and movement provides a foundation for understanding the multidimensional nature of the writer’s body as a container for their felt senses. The felt senses reflecting a writer’s internal knowing from their lived experiences reflect the writer’s true identity, and the act of writing enables the writer an opportunity to try on other identities. The writer’s four bodies serve as an intermediary for conversations to intermingle between identities, eliciting impressions before being externalized and made available to the public, resulting in the writer’s most authentic expression of self.

Typing exhaustion from cramped wrists and tired fingers was a prominent inspiration for incorporating embodied sound methods. The combination of speech and cellular technology via a voice recording application enabled me to transfer ideas into text on my iPhone—consequently, providing a counter argument for Mangen and Balsvik’s concern about the short-term and long-term cognitive implications of the digitized classroom on students. Copying, pasting, and editing text from the recordings offered relief for my fatigued hands. Only my thumb and middle finger were used to paste text by hitting “Ctrl + V.” My experience of embodiment enabled me to minimize distractions from physical, mental, and emotional fatigue. It created space for me to shift my focus inward to my thoughts. I believe embodied composition can do the same for the writer.

## Embodiment in Practice

The simplest explanation for embodied writing is cluing in on the sensations of the body on a regular basis – writing informed through the sensory experience of the body. While most of us are taught to think our way through life relying on brainpower, dropping into the body enables us to choose the vantage point from which we experience life and writing. Being attuned to the sense-experience of the body has the potential to offer new information that might not be perceived through brainpower alone. Disembodiment, previously noted by Cox, occurs when our mind is present, and our body is somewhere else. For example, you might drive somewhere and realize you do not remember anything about the drive there. Relying primarily on the mind might be functional, but what writer simply wants to go through the motions of life? Embodiment provides a solution for those who are present, but not aware. To begin, I offer a series of preliminary questions that can be used in the classroom to introduce the writer to the role of embodiment in their writing:

- Where does your awareness go when you are writing? What does that feel like?
- Are you in your head the entire time? Does your mind feel busy? Does it feel packed? Does it feel heavy?

Embodied writing is about moving your awareness to other places in your body and being receptive to new insights or inspirations that come from that.

- Can you shift your awareness to your heart?
- What happens if you shift your awareness to your shoulders? Do you feel more relaxed? Do you feel more freedom to dig deeper into your ideas? Do you feel you need to hunch your shoulders to immerse yourself in your ideas?



Johns Hopkins University's Center for a Livable Future cites gut health as a new trend in the health and wellness sector, but gut health is not only about proper digestion, as it is also linked to mood regulation, mental health conditions, weight management, skin health, and more, which contributes to the way you feel about yourself in any given moment (Heath et al., 2022). That is, the condition of your gut as a part of your body functioning as a system affects your quality of writing and as such, also needs attention.

- Can you instead shift your awareness to your gut?

### **Brainstorming as an Introduction to Embodied Composition**

Brainstorming before writing produces prospective concepts and direction for a text. There are several approaches to brainstorming like: associative brainstorming, free storming, and role storming. In associative brainstorming the writer starts with a single word that encompasses the premise of their central idea. Then, the writer adds other words associated with the main word and any additional words from there. As the word describes, associative brainstorming encourages the writer to create a network of ideas that sets off other thinking points. The embodied writer should notice how the spring boarding of ideas through the connectivity of synapses in the brain, alert neurons in the rest of the body and fire off in their muscles. Brooke Adams Law discusses the benefit of being in your body before writing through free writing in her podcast episode, "The Art of Embodied Writing with Brooke Adams Law," (Adams Law, 2020). Law encourages the writer to be in their body by first connecting to the present moment. Law expresses how bonding with the present moment as part of her own writing rituals, time and again, led her to firmly believe that creativity exists in the moment at hand.

Embodied writing prompts that might situate the writer into their body and present environment:

- Describe or draw your writing environment.

- What or who do you see around you? What do you hear? What do you smell?
- Is this a new environment? How do you feel in this environment? Why?

Free storming is the most common method of brainstorming and is often referred to as free writing. This type of brainstorming has the potential to reach for the innermost character of the writer by engaging the mental, emotional, and spiritual bodies. In free storming the writer is permitted to write whatever words and phrases come to mind. While associative brainstorming restricts the writer to words related to the central point, free storming is a space for the writer to include ideas that are relative, random, and raw. In free storming the embodied writer might reflect on their unwritten text in relation to their physical body and representational body, as a talking head in the academic or commercial fields through prompts like:

- If your hands could talk, what would they say about you?
- What problem do you want to solve with your text? Why?

Role storming is the most physically involved method of brainstorming provided in this thesis, though it can also speak to the writer's emotional body depending on the subject matter or story and elements of role-play (Osborn, 1993). This method of brainstorming asks the writer to "try on" another character—realist or fictional—through actual role play. In role storming, the writer will swap their way of reasoning with another's. Role storming enables the writer to free themselves of reservations and inhibitions already tied to their idea of self culturally, politically, economically, etc.

- Stand in front of a mirror. Deliver an address on your subject matter as the President of the United States of America.
- Take your shoes off. Imagine you are a professional dancer. Relay the message you want to convey in your text through movement, without speaking.

## **Journaling To Understand Embodiment**

Buddhists called this incessant way of thinking the monkey mind – or jumping from one thought to another without stopping much like monkeys when they jump from tree to tree (Dalai Lama & Cutler, 2009). The monkey mind is our primal reaction to life events, and it is fueled by desire, fear, or both. The monkey mind is characterized as illogical, tangential, and emotional (Seligman, 2011). Moreover, many of the greats (i.e. great thinkers, leaders, innovators) attribute their success in large part to writing, more specifically journaling. Oprah Winfrey shared that she has been journaling since she was 15. The renowned American talk show host, television producer, actress, author, and philanthropist, credits professional, personal, and financial opportunities to writing. She quotes on her website, “You have to write them [your thoughts] down. It’s very different from just saying ‘I’m grateful for today.’ You have to physically write them down because there’s power in the words...Opportunities, relationships, even money flowed my way when I learned to be grateful no matter what happened in my life.” For theoretical physicist, Albert Einstein, journaling is evident in his accumulation of over 80,000 pages of thought. For example, his infamous Zurich Notebook (Janssen, et al., 2007) holds complex writing about the theory of relativity, gravitation, and even mathematical musings and sketches. Like many texts, Einstein’s Zurich notebook embodies his responses to many of the problems in physics at the time. Ernest Hemingway was known for always having a black notebook in hand. Lastly, Nelson Mandela, the South African anti-apartheid revolutionary and political leader who served as the first president of South Africa, recognized writing as tool for conversing with himself during his long, 27-year prison sentence. Mandela said, “The mere fact of writing down my thoughts and expressing my feelings gives me a measure of pleasure and satisfaction.” Think about it. Have you ever felt so overcome with emotions that you felt the

need to write it out and then destroy it by burning it, tearing it apart, etc.? There is something to be said about writing as an embodiment of the self—that by obliterating it—can cause transformation in the real world. Other examples include writing down your goals through scripting, in which the writer reflects as if they have already achieved their goals. Also consider the various kinds of journals—food journal, dream journal, workout journal, bullet journal, etc.—that are all embodiments of some aspect of the writer’s life. The journal prompts below elaborate on embodied writing practices to engage in the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual bodies.

#### Sample 1: Journaling to Prompt the Physical Body

- Draw your subtopic and how you learned about it. Disregard the lines on the pages.
- Video yourself discussing your topic.
- Sing about your topic.
- Preach it. Speak it. Teach it.
- Post your ideas in your writing space. Step away from them.
- What do you most appreciate about your body? How does it serve you?
- I feel stress in my body, and it feels like...
- I will try to ease some of the stress in my body by doing...

Earlier in this thesis I noted that even within the field of composition, scholars have revered the power of the written word for healing trauma by bridging the gap between cognitive and affective learning in the classroom (Anderson & MacCurdy, 2000)—which I proposed could be achieved through embodiment. Writing as a mechanism of trauma relief in this thesis has not been an argument in favor of an instructor playing the role of therapist for the writer, as this would require additional professional training and certification, but for the student

to recognize and explore how their brains and bodies respond while engaging in autoethnography, academic research writing, lab reports, etc. I reference my earlier mention of Goldberg's assertion that trauma is withheld in the body to depict how trauma and writing might inform one another in the classroom. Anderson and MacCurdy expand on Goldberg's observation of trauma in the body by explaining the brain's production of iconic images because of trauma that stays within the limbic system, more specifically in the amygdala. The writer's trauma stored as vivid images can weigh on the body and mind even unconsciously because of the sensory experience attached to the memory. Because writing students live full lives beyond the four walls of the classroom away from the gaze of the instructor, the instructor cannot know the intimate experiences the writer carries with them in the classroom. For all the instructor knows, a writer might be quietly battling depression, contemplating suicide, feeling out of place, etc. manifested in the writer's brain and body as feeling blocked, staring off into space, or an inability to focus. Without an awareness of the relationship between writing and trauma, an instructor might misinterpret the writer's physiological signals as the writer being distracted, instead of a side effect of trauma surfacing as a reaction to the subject, the learning environment, etc. Therefore, a more detailed understanding of emotions factors into a deeper understanding of the function of writing because embodiment can be a powerful tool that the instructor introduces to help the writer develop emotional literacy to independently process traumas that might prohibit or interrupt the writing process.

### Sample 2: Journaling to Encourage the Emotional Body

The practical application of embodiment in composition can be facilitated through close examination of the writer's truest thoughts and feelings about themselves, the environment, the subject matter, the narrative, etc.

- What is one thing that inspired me recently?
- Make a list of people who support your path as a writer. Write thank you cards to each person and how they have helped you.
- Consider what might happen if your writing fails. Imagine the worst and play this scenario in your mind. Observe how you feel in your body. Are you anxious? Do your hairs stand? Do you feel motivated to write with renewed fervor? Write it down, then destroy it (e.g., crumble it, tear it, throw it away, etc.).

Journaling might be most easily understood as a precursor to embodiment because nearly all higher-level writing students, or authors have been asked to journal or to respond to a journal prompt at some point in their academic or personal writing careers—even in the primary stages of learning how to write. Journaling has always been presented as a sort of brain dump for the writer to spew their most authentic thoughts, or to work through qualms and curiosities. For the embodied writer, journaling not only affords the writer a space to organize and clarify thoughts, but also a refuge to grapple with their sense of belonging, whether in the academic realm or the literary world beyond the requirements of academia. Writing on the page or typing on the screen is a safe space for the writer to become free of the clamor of their thoughts. It is an act of not only embodiment, but mindfulness and self-care. The writer generally intends to embody the type of person and world they wish to encounter and live in, respectively. As such, the writer is tasked with using their words wisely and carefully to affirm the reader is emotionally and

physically safe, the reader has a choice, the reader is a collaborator with the writer and the text, the reader is empowered, and the writer is trustworthy.

### Sample 3: Journaling to Stimulate the Mental Body

- Who am I?
- Why do I write?
- How do I want to change or influence people?
- What am I trying to say?
- Who am I talking to?
- To what conversations do I want to lend my voice?

For the writer, a text is a formulation of identity, and it has always been an embodied act because it reflects the writer's innermost thoughts about the world and how they show up in it, but embodiment encourages authenticity and checking in internally holds the writer accountable to write realistically and responsibly. Thus, embodied composition has the potential to transform the way the writer perceives themselves in relation to and independent of others. Consider the following journaling prompts. They are not meant to be seen by or shared with others but aim to bring awareness to and unite the writer's four bodies (mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical) to encourage authenticity and authorial identity. Journaling prompts are useful at any stage of the writing process, i.e., before brainstorming, after a first draft, during writer's block, etc. and the writer should return to their text immediately after responding to their selected prompts.

Research on self-perception and gratification at work contributed to the development of the following journaling prompts. Self-perception theory according to psychologist Daryl Bem (1972) suggests that a person's behaviors lead to their perceptions and attitudes towards things. According to self-perception theory, the writer may determine their attitude toward, and

perception of a subject are influenced by their racial or political classification, university, and professional affiliations, and even the genre or authors of texts they consume the most. The following journaling prompts to attempt to rule out the writer's biases and reconnect them to their purpose and instinctive human needs as a writer.

#### Sample 4: Journaling to Reflect on the Spiritual (Soul) Body

Earlier in this thesis, I hypothesized that the writer's recognition of the fourth body, the spiritual one, would invite them to see their task as a small, but influential part of larger society where external encounters with people, places, and things provide wisdom and insight that become the innate intelligence of the writer's heart. The following exercises might prove to be useful for the writer to understand their place in society because they offer insight into their role as an authoritative voice over their ideas as the author of their text and the function of their text that qualifies them as a participant in larger conversations the field of writing studies and society.

- Gaze in the mirror for one minute. Then, write without thinking.
- Write for an audience of one (yourself). What do you want to say?
- Track your daily activities up until the time you start writing. How did the progression of your day affect you and your writing?
- I really wish my reader knew...about me.
- What secret would your narrative tell your reader about you?
- What is one way you showed compassion to someone recently? How can you do so for yourself?
- How do you make time for yourself?



- What things are certain in your life? How can you focus on these things while writing?

The implications of writing for culturally diverse authors reflect different realities due to the subjugation and liberation of said bodies, evidenced by Maalej and Yu (2011) and Pratt (2004).

- Writing in any language or dialect you choose. You are allowed to skip details.
- Describe your narrator. What race, socioeconomic class, ethnicity, etc. are they? How alike or different are you with your narrator?
- Describe the demographics of your audience? What does your reader look like?
- How do you think your readers would perceive you if they could see you? How would they perceive your text? Your credibility? How does this affect the way you write? Be explicit and honest.

### **Desk Yoga Activities**

In the introduction, I reflected on the interconnectedness of the four bodies, specifically on how bringing the body into stillness makes space for the mind to wander and eventually sort through which thoughts prove to be useful and which thoughts prove to be useless. This eventual clarity of mind was achieved through the practice of asanas or yoga poses. An overwhelming number of thoughts might make it difficult for the writer to feel clear-headed and attuned to their voice. Research in *Nature Communications* (2020, Tseng and Poppenk) suggests that on average we have at least 60,000 thoughts per day. Neuroscience research not only reveals the immensity of our thoughts, but also the complexity of how exactly consciousness flows from one thought to another causing sporadic specks of thought, continuous chains of thought, etc. – lending even more to the crowdedness of the mind. Like asanas, belly diaphragmatic breathing and other

yoga-inspired exercises emulated to ground the body can shift the writer into a relaxed, non-threatening state. This might work in tandem with the previous section where I offer specific writing strategies connected to the body because the grounding offers an opportunity for the writer to find homeostasis in their physical body to facilitate alignment or agreement in the four bodies for a more enjoyable writing experience.

- Bring your hands to your chest in a prayer position. Gently press your palms into one another. Close your eyes. Visualize one goal for your writing.
- Soften your gaze or close your eyes. Place your hands on your heart. Keep your mind still for one minute.
- Roll your shoulders back four times. Roll your shoulders forward four times.
- Inhale. Observe your belly rise. Exhale. Watch your belly fall.
- Count your breaths. Breathe in for four counts. Hold your breath for seven counts. Exhale for eight counts. Try other counts (e.g., 3-5-6, 2-3-4)

### **A Sample Embodied Writing Exercise for the Classroom**

Embodied writing is writing from Sondra Perl's felt sense in the body. Getting words on the page reveals the imperfection of the writer's thoughts – disruptions in thought, confusion, resolutions, and more might show irregularities on the page. The page is a space for the brain and the body to find release; the body feels what the mind processes.

- Sit still in your writing space (on your chair, couch, etc.). Do you find it difficult to sit in silence? Play white noise, or soft music if so.
- Notice how your body adjusts to the shape of your seat. How supported do you feel? Perform a full-body scan from the ground up.
- Start by sending your attention to your feet. Do they feel stable? Are they propped?

- Next, send your attention to your legs and knees. Are your knees bent at a 90-degree angle? Are your legs crossed?
- Then, send your attention to your seat. Are you comfortable enough to sit for at least 15 minutes? Do you need to adjust your position?
- Send your attention to your back and spine. Is your spine erect? Is your back resting on the back of a chair? Is your spine curved? Are you resting your weight relying on one side of the body primarily?
- Check in with your shoulders. Shrug your shoulders up. Hold for four seconds. Drop your shoulders.
- Send your attention to your head. How does your neck feel? Is your jaw tense? Is your forehead furrowed? Relax.
- Count your breaths. Breath in for three counts. Hold your breath for five counts. Exhale for six counts. Repeat as needed.
- Write whatever comes to mind without stopping.
- Check in with yourself after fifteen minutes. How does your mind feel? How does your body feel? Better? Worse? Neutral?

## Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis is to bring into focus the awareness of the body as a key agent in the writing process, the force it exerts on the writer, and how it becomes embedded in a text. An embodied approach to writing maximizes the holistic connection that exists between the writer's four bodies: the physical, the mental, the emotional, and the spiritual or soul. The unique contribution of the writing prompts and exercises provided in this thesis unite the principles of yoga, mindfulness, and movement as a foundation for understanding the multidimensional nature of the writer's body. Even so, the writer's body is identified as a container of information retrieved through their felt senses. The felt senses distinguish the writer's internal knowing from their lived experiences and together reflect their identity.

Moreover, the act of writing enables the writer an opportunity to try on other identities. The writer's four bodies serve as an intermediary for conversations to intermingle between identities, eliciting impressions before being externalized and made available to the public, resulting in the writer's most authentic expression of self. Tuning into the body as part of the writing process enables the unaware writer to unlock a reservoir of thoughts, feelings, sensations, etc. that together influence ideas.

The prompts and exercises provided in this thesis work to invite embodiment and the four bodies into the writing process by utilizing movement as a tool for creating narratives. This thesis acknowledges that writing prompts can facilitate the integration of the body in the writing classroom and in the environment of the creative writer outside of the classroom. Although, the framework of embodiment in this thesis especially explains that embedded activities may inspire body awareness in the classroom because of multimodal activities being included in the

curriculum. Participatory practices within writing pedagogy can create access for students to sustain embodied work practices or interests.

The next step for this research is to compose a journal or workbook for instructors consisting of printouts that provide guidelines for easily and practically incorporating embodiment in the writing classroom. The workbook will provide embodied writing practices like those outlined in this thesis; journaling and yoga-inspired desk activities to acknowledge their body's experiences on a moment-by-moment basis during the writing process. For classroom application, embodied composition caters to multiple literacies and is beneficial to the development of multiple authorial identities which fosters an environment that welcomes the writer to read the world in their unique way and make sense of information utilizing methods other than customary reading and writing. Moreover, embodied exercises in the workbook will encourage authorial identities among students from different backgrounds. For example, students from high context cultures may tend to shrink their bodies and restrain from sharing their thoughts during discussions. While students from marginalized cultures may behave similarly due to their familiarity with oppression and may also refrain from taking up space in any way in the composition classroom.

Finally, the embodied classroom will awaken students to the realization of the narratives that their bodies carry when they enter the classroom. An awareness of their bodies calls for the recognition of the interplay of such narratives amongst diverse groups of students. Even more, other scholars might use the research in this thesis to ignite the potential for academic and social reformation by building upon it or incorporating embodiment in their classrooms.

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## Appendix

### (Printout) Embodied Writing Prompts for the Classroom

Use the writing prompts below to encourage students to discover embodiment through the four bodies: physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual (soul).

#### Embodied Writing Prompts to Prompt the Physical Body

1. Video yourself discussing your topic.
2. Sing about your topic.
3. Post your ideas in your writing space. Step away from them.
4. What do you most appreciate about your body? How does it serve you?
5. I feel stress in my body, and it feels like...

#### Embodied Writing Prompts to Encourage the Emotional Body

1. What is one thing that inspired me recently?
2. Make a list of people who support your writing. Write thank you cards to each person about how they have helped you.
3. Consider what might happen if your writing fails. Notice how you feel in your body. Are you anxious? Do your hairs stand? Do you feel motivated to write with renewed fervor? Write it down, then destroy it (e.g., crumble it, tear it, throw it away, etc.).

#### Embodied Writing Prompts to Stimulate the Mental Body

1. Why do I write?
2. How do I want to change or influence people?
3. What am I trying to say?
4. Who am I talking to?
5. To what conversations do I want to lend my voice?

#### Embodied Writing Prompts to Reflect on the Spiritual (Soul) Body

1. Gaze in the mirror for one minute. Then, write without thinking.
2. Write for an audience of one (yourself). What do you want to say?
3. What secret would your narrator tell your reader about you?

#### Bonus: Embodied Writing Prompts for a Diverse Classroom

1. Write in any language or dialect you choose. You are allowed to skip details.
2. Describe your narrator. What race, socioeconomic class, ethnicity, etc. are they? How alike or different are you from your narrator?
3. Describe the demographics of your audience? What does your reader look like?
4. How do you think your readers would perceive you if they could see you? (e.g., How would they perceive your text? Your credibility? How does this affect the way you write?) Be explicit and honest.