Articles

Self-Authorship and Faculty Writers' Trajectories of Becoming

Sandra L. Tarabochia

Writing researchers know relatively little about the needs and experiences of faculty writers. As a result, institutional approaches to improving scholarly productivity fail to account for vital components of writerly development and in doing so limit access to the academic enterprise. Drawing on an interview-based longitudinal study of faculty writers and the construct of self-authorship from the field of human development, this article reveals epistemological, interpersonal and intrapersonal dimensions of faculty writer development. Invoking Paul Prior, I call for inclusive support strategies that acknowledge and sponsor faculty writers' complex trajectories of becoming.

In her 2017 article "Writing by the Book, Writing Beyond the Book," Kristine Johnson urges readers of *Composition Studies* to be "present and persuasive in current conversations about scholarly writing" especially as they relate to graduate student and faculty writers (57). Although writing researchers regularly draw on disciplinary knowledge to inform decisions about undergraduate writing curriculum, pedagogy and assessment, we have "paid virtually no attention to faculty writers" (65). As a result, Johnson argues, popular approaches to supporting faculty writers do not always align with our disciplinary expertise about writing and writer development.

By way of example, Johnson critiques writing advice manuals, such as Paul Silvia's *How to Write a Lot* and Wendy Belcher's *Writing Your Journal Article in Twelve Weeks*, for emphasizing behavior over process and separating the act of writing from rhetorical invention, deep thinking, discovery and knowledge making (61-2).[1] Behavioral strategies for improving writing productivity (e.g., write for 15 minutes a day, write 1000 words a day, do not write in your office), she laments, often treat writing as an "emotionally detached activity" that can be habitualized, even though we know writing involves a wide range of emotion (Johnson 58; Driscoll and Wells; Driscoll and Powell; Gross and Alexander; McLeod; Stenberg). Although behavior-based approaches can have practical, "utilitarian benefits," they "risk putting an exclusive focus on short-term tips and strategies, rather than on long-term processes" (Werder 280). In Johnson's words, they forward an "epistemologically current-traditional" vision of writing

and writers that contradicts the "declarative and procedural knowledge about writing" established in composition studies and are therefore limited in "how well and how far they can support scholarly writers" (57, 63).

In response, Johnson calls for empirical studies of graduate student and faculty writers that seek to better understand the "behavioral, emotional, and intellectual challenges in scholarly writing" (67). In this article, I take up her call by sharing preliminary findings from an ongoing longitudinal study of faculty writer development. Participants were recruited from three research intensive institutions, where most were initially tenure track and participating in writing groups. They agreed to be interviewed annually for up to six years to share their practices, needs, and experiences as writers. Rather than focus on these writers' daily habits—a focus I argue too easily excludes writers whose developmental trajectories do not fit the mold—I take a holistic approach that investigates how faculty experience and story (Clandinin) their writing lives and explore how that understanding might counter the "pervasive behaviorist narrative" of faculty writer development (Johnson 67).

More specifically, I draw on the concept of self-authorship from the field of human development to reveal epistemological, intrapersonal, and interpersonal dimensions of development, typically unaccounted for in faculty writer support efforts. While writing consultants offer conceptual knowledge—rhetorical considerations of audience or strategies for writing cohesive paragraphs—and popular scholarship abounds with behavioral recommendations based on the best practices of successful writers, these types of support are rarely considered in relation to broader aspects of human development. By using self-authorship as a framework for interpreting stories shared by faculty writers, I show how struggles with meaning making, shifting relationships and identity negotiation are, indeed, entangled in writing lives and must be addressed as part of a holistic approach to faculty writer support.

This line of research is relevant for composition studies because we all work with faculty writers. Some of us hold official positions as writing consultants or faculty developers, others work with writers as journal editors and reviewers, advisors, peer mentors, department chairs, and tenure and promotion committee members. Moreover, many of us are faculty writers ourselves, whether publishing in high pressure, research intensive institutions or forging time for writing in teaching focused positions. Mining stories like the ones I spotlight here—and highlighting the developmental dimensions they reveal—can reorient us to the work we do as and with faculty writers in a range of capacities.

Resisting the Path to Productivity: From "Tales of Learning" to "Trajectories of Becoming"

No matter the roles we play, I argue that we in composition studies should

be "answerable" to the writers we impact in two ways: first, by acknowledging the political and ethical implications of our work; and second, by examining how our approaches determine access to knowledge production by facilitating the developmental trajectories of some more than others (Patel). Recent scholarship makes initial strides toward these ends. Anne Geller and Michele Eodice's foundational collection *Working with Faculty Writers*, for example, describes efforts to disrupt the myopic pursuit of peak productivity by considering faculty needs more holistically. Contributors "delv[e] into who faculty writers are, and who they might be, and conside[r] the theoretical, philosophical, and pedagogical approaches to faculty writing support" (Geller 9–10). The collection marks a new frontier in writing across the curriculum, but "the research is mostly in the 'This is how we do it here' phase" highlighting the need for more intense scholarly inquiry in the area (Hedengren 165). In that vein, researchers from across disciplines have begun to "turn the microscope inward" and systematically study faculty writers, identifying successful writers' strategies and habits of mind (Hedengren 165; Ezer; Sword). Researchers in composition studies, too, have contributed to this vital body of work focusing on the best practices of writers in our field (Tulley; Wells and Soderland).

Although the goal may be to improve access to scholarly publication by demystifying success strategies, research focused on how productive writers write stands to reinforce what Paul Prior calls "tales of learning"—linear views of development that suggest acquiring the "right" strategies will add up to a successful writing life. Tales of learning delineate particular "space[s] of knowledge and discourse" through which individuals must move "step-by-step along a sequentially graded curricular path" often "defined by the contemporary sociocultural organization of schooling." In the case of faculty writers, dominant tales of learning include stories about how successful writers navigate "space[s] of knowledge and discourse" defined by boundaries of disciplines and institutions in order to progress "along a sequentially graded path" to tenure. Tales of learning become entrenched in academic discourses, systems, and structures that honor certain developmental pathways and exclude others.

Alternatively, Prior offers "trajectories of becoming"—a story of development that "sees learning as embodied, dispersed, mediated, laminated, and deeply dialogic" taking place across multiple domains and moments of life. Prior's approach acknowledges that "emerging identity and emerging affective orientations lead learning." This vision allows that writer development does not happen linearly or in isolation but in relation to broader life-course development (Bazerman et al.; Brandt) and self-evolution (Kegan, *The Evolving Self; In Over Our Heads*). Therefore, those of us who work with faculty writers (in a range of capacities) must honor and promote trajectories of becoming

tied to actual bodies, histories, emotional landscapes, emerging identities and lived realities.

Self-Authorship and Faculty Writers' Trajectories of Becoming

I propose the concept of self-authorship as one tool for revealing hidden dimensions of faculty writer development. First formulated by Robert Kegan (*The Evolving Self; In Over Our Heads*) as part of his constructive-developmental theory of self-evolution and extended by Marcia B. Baxter Magolda (*Making Their Own Way*; "Evolution"; "Three Elements"; Baxter Magolda et al.) self-authorship refers to a phase of human development "characterized by internally generating and coordinating one's beliefs, values and internal loyalties, rather than depending on external values, beliefs, and interpersonal loyalties" (Boes et al. 4). Self-authorship is both an evolutionary process and a dynamic explanatory construct that involves the integration of three developmental dimensions: epistemological (meaning making); interpersonal (relationships with others); intrapersonal (identity or sense of self) (Baxter Magolda "The Interweaving"; Werder). Education and human development researchers use the framework to understand forces (personal and contextual) shaping how young people come to "take internal and external responsibility for their thinking, feeling, and acting" (Boes et al. 4).

Although the construct may seem inappropriate for faculty who have presumably achieved self-authorship over their lives, Carmen Werder suggests the transitions faculty experience as writers and researchers "could very well entail a new professional and personal crossroad where faculty look to reconstruct their beliefs about knowledge, themselves, and their relationship to others" (283). Faculty developers, Werder urges, might do well to consider comments about "unbearable pressure" and the "'soul crunching' experience" of writing on the tenure track "not simply as passing moments of stress but as places of deep discontent, where faculty are working toward self-definition" (282-283). With Werder, I see the potential of using self-authorship as a "plausible tool" (Torres 70) for mining previously hidden dimensions of faculty writer development as well as for enacting answerable research that "articulate[s] explicitly" how it "speaks to, with, and against particular entities," including dominant narratives of scholarly success and development (Patel 73).[2]

In that vein, I use the integrated dimensions of self-authorship as a lens for uncovering aspects of faculty writers' trajectories of becoming as they emerge in interview data collected as part of my longitudinal study of faculty writer development. Interviews are semi-structured and modeled after the Subject-Object Interview (SOI) (Lahey et al.) based on Kegan's theory of self-evolution. The SOI is designed to: access individuals' ways of organizing their experience, identify shifts from one meaning-making structure to another,

and trace journeys toward self-authorship. In the purest sense, SOI requires a highly trained interviewer with expertise in sociocognitive development and the ability to rigorously "score" transcripts (Lahey et al.). However, I have adapted the method to learn how faculty experience and make sense of their writing lives and explore if (and how) dimensions of self-authorship manifest in their trajectories of becoming. SOI is ideal for my purposes because it respects the many domains of life as porous rather than siloed and foregrounds the place of emotion in writer/human development.

Rather than apply the dimensions of self-authorship as a coding scheme, I use them to mine interview transcripts generated by the SOI for ways epistemological, interpersonal, and intrapersonal conflicts or transformations shape faculty writers' trajectories of becoming. For the purposes of this article, I focus on three faculty members—Sadie, Willa, and Mandy—all women in their thirties, all originally pre-tenure, and all from the same institution bearing the "very high research" Carnegie designation (*About*).[3] Twenty-five faculty writers are currently active in the study. Of these, 20 are women and five men; 19 identified as white and 6 as non-white or chose not to identify. They come from a range of disciplines including modern languages, education, architecture, social work, history, anthropology, health and exercise science, geography and environmental sustainability, though most are from disciplines in arts and humanities or social sciences. I chose these three women in part because they had been in the study long enough to complete three interviews, offering a robust picture of their experiences over two years.[4] Their experiences illustrate how scholarly writing is enmeshed in larger trajectories of becoming and how a narrow focus on increasing productivity based on dominant tales of learning does a disservice to faculty struggling to forge meaningful writing lives.

Epistemological Dimension: "I lost the ability to theorize like a poor Black girl …"

The epistemological dimension of the journey to self-authorship deals with meaning making; thus, individuals consider: How do I come to know? How do I decide what to believe? How do beliefs about knowledge influence my thinking and reasoning? For Sadie, the epistemological dimension of becoming a faculty writer involved a profound sense of loss as the ways of knowing and making meaning in her life and in her field were slowly stripped away. Sadie is now a tenured professor in education, although at the time of our first interview she was still on the tenure track. She identifies as a Black woman and describes her research as bearing witness and enacting pedagogy for Black women scholars. The following excerpt from our first interview is an origin story of sorts. She describes how the public education system failed her and

how the strong Black women in her history affirmed her ability and worth through "celebrations of everyday brilliance":

> When I was in the second grade . . . I couldn't read and . . . I had a white female teacher and . . . she just refused to work with me . . . told my aunt "I can't teach her, she can't read." And my aunt . . . had me moved to Ms. J., [a] young new Black woman's classroom and within two weeks I was reading the Encyclopedia . . . [My aunt] was in the bathroom and she heard me reading aloud and she poked her head out—now she is butt-naked just remember that . . . so she walked out . . . and . . . she danced around the house and she was like 'Oh Hallelujah thank you Jesus!' She did all this. It was crazy. It was wonderful. But I was in the second grade, I was 7 years old and my aunt danced around the house stark naked for me because . . . I am about to cry . . . because I was reading . . . talk about celebration of everyday brilliance. [I]t left an indelible mark on me. It affirmed to me that I was a smart little Black girl . . . So I do sometimes internalize not-good-enoughness. I also have this really loud voice in my head that says "no the institution just wants to kill you" . . . The women in my history in my past have given that voice a megaphone.

Here Sadie alludes to a perpetual trauma she experiences as a faculty writer—she must counter her tendency to internalize "not-good-enoughness" with the reality that "the institution just wants to kill you." At the same time, she describes a deep source of strength she relies on to survive despite the suffering. Emotion is deeply rooted in Sadie's developmental trajectory; she tears up telling me about the voices of the women who celebrate her brilliance and bolster her resiliency.

This story from Sadie's past contextualizes her struggle for self-authorship as she fights to sustain internal epistemological frameworks. She explained it to me this way:

> I lost the ability to theorize like a poor Black girl from South Louisiana. I felt like when I first became a [doctoral] student . . . there were insights that I used to have that were strong and clear and analyses about the academic institution that was so profound and rich and they were primarily, they were before I was introduced to theoretical frames and all these other ways of analyses. My experience growing up in South Louisiana was the theoretical frame and the analytical tool that I used to think about the institution. And the longer I have been here the less able I am to draw on those frames . . . They should call . . . the theoretical frame an enslaver."

Here, Sadie eloquently describes her epistemological enslavement. Her experience as a "poor Black girl" shapes her approach to knowledge construction as means of challenging corrupt institutions that have chronically failed to serve her and acknowledge her worth. Yet, the longer she is part of the institution, the more she loses access to her way of theorizing. She recognizes the loss as a form of systemic oppression related to race, class, and gender, but is unable to reverse or slow it. Coming to terms with the loss and finding new validated frames from which to write is an integral part of Sadie's developmental trajectory, though not one acknowledged by traditional writing support initiatives that focus on "productive" writing habits.

In the same interview, Sadie explained how struggling to sustain her internally validated epistemological frameworks in the face of institutional forces that dismiss and devalue them impacted her writing life and ability to be productive.

> And then when I became a faculty member and I experienced the real academy I was like "oh, you think that I am an idiot, the rest of all you people—the rest of the world thinks I am a stupid idiot, oh!" And so that goes back to the anger part is that these constant onslaughts of undermining the value of who I am as a scholar creates a space where I get very anxious about my writing, I get very fearful about whether or not I will make it and then you know the tenure track is so elusive and whatever that it's just so . . . it's traumatizing in and of itself and I just . . . there is so much at stake . . . .

Sadie's struggle with standards of meaning making is connected to her sense of self as a writer and a human being. Because her scholarship is entwined with her sense of self, the violence of intellectual degradation becomes dehumanizing, a form of what Miranda Fricker calls epistemic injustice, "a wrong done to someone specifically in their capacity as a knower" (1). By treating Sadie as a "stupid idiot," refusing to validate her lived experience as a "poor Black girl from Louisiana," and insisting on established theoretical frameworks rooted in Western epistemologies, the "real academy" enslaves her, committing violence against Sadie as an intellectual and a human being.

Fricker describes the "harm one incurs in being wronged in this way" in developmental terms: "Where [the harm] goes deep, it can cramp self-development," she explains, "so that a person may be, quite literally, prevented from becoming who they are" (5). Sadie's story throws into relief how scholars of color and faculty from marginalized populations face disproportionate challenges as writers and humans fighting to survive systems that not only fail to recognize and support their unique trajectories of becoming, trajectories built

around epistemologies of lived experience, but inflict harm on those who contort their trajectories (and epistemologies) to fit traditional "tales of learning" and pathways to success. At the same time, Sadie's trajectory reveals sources of strength for resisting dehumanization and epistemic injustice that are rarely acknowledged or fostered through traditional support efforts.

Interpersonal Dimension: "It's like writing, but other things too."

The interpersonal dimension of self-authorship is about self-in-relation-to-others; therefore, individuals ask: What relationships do I want? What happens when my needs and expectations conflict with other others? During our interviews, Willa described how shifting relationships with others, those directly related to her career in academia and those seemingly less so, impacted her writing life. For her, making progress on her book was not only "about writing," but about "other things too." Willa is a tenure-track faculty member in modern languages, literature and linguistics who identifies as a white woman. Over the last several years she's been working on the book required for tenure in her department. During our first interview in spring 2016, Willa reflected on her struggle to make progress with the book.

> I was married to a guy from Mexico City, and it ended in a very bad, violent way . . . and I wrote the dissertation there. And so there is all of these emotions wrapped up there. I saw these plays [topic of her book] there. I saw lot of them with him . . . I had this huge epiphany a few weeks ago of if I finish this book, that version of me is done. I am not a student anymore. I am not—I don't live in Mexico anymore. [T]he marriage thing and hardly anyone even knows those things about me here, so it's all gone. And so it was weird because I think it was a positive thing though it was hard. I like thinking it through, "Oh my gosh. This is why I am not wanting to just send this off and be done with it." But then I have recently gotten excited about a new project and I think, okay even if you leave things behind, you are still you and you keep doing things. It is not just an end with no beginning or no continuity. So that has been huge, it's like writing but also other things too.

Willa's reflection illustrates how her writing challenges are wrapped up in a complex trajectory of becoming that includes interpersonal relationships outside of writing. She mentions relational changes (concerning place and marital status, for example) that continue to affect her sense of self and her relationship with writing even though they are in the past. Her emotions are complicated; she experienced trauma related to a violent marriage, but at the same time she didn't want to let go of the person she was in Mexico by fin-

ishing her book. It is not difficult to imagine how behavioral strategies (such as writing fifteen minutes a day) might help Willa produce writing without meaningfully supporting her in wrestling with complex relational challenges as she strives to self-author sustainable writing practices rooted in a coherent yet flexible identity.

Shifting relationships were a central part of Willa's trajectory of becoming. In one sense, her past relationships with people and places impacted her relationship with her writing. In another sense, as her relationship with her writing evolved so did her relationship with those positioned to validate her work. In the interview excerpt below, Willa describes shifting perceptions of herself and her work in relation to journal editors and reviewers. She used to take an instrumental approach to writing and publishing, eager to satisfy tenure expectations. However, after four years on the tenure track and receipt of a contract for the book required for tenure, Willa became more invested in her writing for its own sake rather than only as a vehicle for career advancement.

> [N]ow when I'm submitting things I expect . . . at least changes . . . in a way I'm more invested in what I'm writing because it's less pragmatic . . . It's less instrumental and more invested in it but at the same time maybe because I believe in it . . . I know this is good, what do they have to say and then I can decide if I agree or not, what I need to do. Or if I need to place it elsewhere. It's more like it's my essay and I'm not just like please "What do I need to do to make this happen?" . . . I wrote to the editor of [a major journal in field] . . . and it was so funny because I really felt like okay, I'm writing to a real person and I really want to know the answers to these questions, it wasn't . . . because the 12 week article book [Belcher, 2009] told me to write a query, I'm writing a query. This is actually important to me and so it was more . . . of a relationship and I'm more of an adult probably coming across as like a mature person. For [the notecard] "angry" I have "lingering over first review, first round reviews." But I think I'm getting better.

Willa explains how her increased investment in her scholarship changed the experience of submitting work for review. Whereas she used to feel at the mercy of reviewers, she now feels empowered to make decisions about if, where, and how her writing is published. Her work was beginning to mean something more to her. Willa's connection to material from her first project was complicated because of the circumstances defining that time in her life. It was her "job keeping book" whereas she considers the new project her "real book." Understanding this trajectory and how life impacts writers' relation-

ships to their projects and their sense of empowerment in the writing and publishing process can inform more holistic theories of faculty writer development and more comprehensive support efforts.

Intrapersonal Dimension: "You're a fucking professor . . . and yet you're a fucking mess."

Whereas the epistemological dimension of self-authorship deals with meaning making structures and the interpersonal dimension concerns self-in-relation-to-others, the intrapersonal dimension deals with internal sense of self; thus, individuals ponder: Who am I? How do/should others' perceptions shape my self-perception? Mandy's stories about her writing life illustrate the significance of intrapersonal challenges and transformations. Mandy is a tenure-track professor in social work who identifies as a white woman. She had only been at the university for a year at the time of our first interview and was working to establish a reasonable pace and process for writing and conducting qualitative research. In our most recent interview in spring 2018, Mandy explained how her mental health struggles, what she calls "crazy person days," intersect with her efforts to build a multidimensional professional identity as a researcher, writer, social worker, and activist.

> So I judge myself less for having those [crazy person] days and I think about what my wife has said over the years, she's seen me go through this a lot and things that used to devastate me for weeks then moved to days and days moved to hours, so over a span of 12 years it's gotten better but it's also a struggle. I also get worse at it, because that's the nature of mental health struggles . . . So yesterday I just was having a complete breakdown sobbing and I decided to go to the doctor and I now have tools to help me like Xanax and I have a therapy appointment and a psychiatrist appointment and this is more related to mental health stigma and lots of other things but basically it feels like a defeat to have to go back to those things but it's not, it's just getting treatment for an illness but I also am hard on myself and say "oh well, you're a fucking professor, you teach therapists how to be fucking therapists and yet you're a fucking mess."

As Mandy's comments show, she is in the process of making sense of her struggles with mental health, still working out the story she wants to tell herself about her most recent breakdown and her decision to seek professional help. "Crazy person days" are part of the fabric of her life, and her wife is clearly an important voice shaping the story of this life experience. Still, the series of "buts" in this excerpt highlight Mandy's internal turmoil: it has got-

ten better *but* it is still a struggle; the decision to seek help and tools was the right one *but* it also feels like a defeat *but* it is not a defeat. Mandy juxtaposes what she knows about mental health as a social worker and a professor who trains therapists with the reality of what it feels like to live with mental health challenges. Mandy's experience with the intrapersonal dimension of self-authorship reveals limitations of behavioral approaches to writing support based on the best practices of successful writers. The common advice to simply write more and feel less might not only fail to meaningfully sponsor but actually impede Mandy's trajectory of becoming by forcing her to compare her rocky path with the seemingly smooth paths of her successful colleagues.

Implicit expectations about how to succeed in her department exacerbate Mandy's struggle to sustain confidence and self-motivation. Her experiences exemplify the difficulty of claiming self-authorship in the intrapersonal domain, as her efforts to establish a writer identity invoke larger questions about how to "play the game" of academia while staying true to her ideals:

> I think that's what makes me feel like a fraud. I think that's imposter syndrome you know in a nutshell is oh shit, look at all these other people succeeding. They're succeeding in the right ways and maybe even if I'm succeeding, if it's not in the right way then it doesn't matter. That's frustrating . . . So if I refuse to play the game, then that's a strike against me . . . [T]here's this tension in trying to figure out how to be true to my ideals but also be realistic about wanting to keep my job.

Mandy struggles to align who she is and who she wants to be as a scholar with definitions of success that do not always feel true to her. She knows there is a "game" she must learn to play and consequences for refusing or failing. At the same time, much like Sadie, she feels she must give up her commitments—her personal vision of success—in order to succeed. That disconnect makes her feel like a fraud as she sees others around her succeed in the "right way" even as she continues to struggle. A growing body of scholarship and personal testimony acknowledges the existence and effects of impostor syndrome on academics, especially women and faculty of color (Bahn; Hutchins; Kasper; Koch; Parkman). In fact, Mandy recognizes her feelings as impostor syndrome but is unable to temper her sense of incompetence. Traditional tales of learning might treat imposter syndrome as a problematic self-perception that should be countered or ignored when it interferes with writing. Alternatively, treating imposter syndrome as a common aspect of faculty writers' trajectories of becoming inspires questions about how structures of evaluation and support actually promote damaging self-perceptions. Instead of helping

Mandy learn to play the game, acknowledging the relationship between human development and writer development might lead us to ask how we can/should change the game altogether; it might help us imagine and support pathways to success that align with faculty writers' goals and values.

The inability to see such pathways is particularly damaging for faculty whose lives are intimately bound up in their scholarship. Mandy's personal passion for her research, which focuses on LGBTQ people and religion, intensifies her struggle to stay in "the game" and be true to herself. She explained how the emotional toll of conducting research impacted her writing practice.

> [I]t's also very meticulous and very time-sucking and energy-sucking and emotional-sucking, you know, especially the research that I'm doing. I feel like it's either dreary and dragging myself through a process I'm not ready for emotionally or hyping myself up enough to be like okay, yes I really care about this, this really matters enough to be meticulous so that I can describe it [to] my readers so that I can make an impact so that I can have the right message to the right people in the right way.

Mandy's research makes demands on her time, energy, and emotional wellbeing. Compounded with her struggle to stay in the game without compromising her personal values, those demands intersect with mental health challenges she faces daily, likely impeding writing productivity. Indeed, research confirms that effects of imposter syndrome include depression, psychological distress, low self-confidence, and emotional exhaustion—all of which interfere with job wellbeing, satisfaction, and performance (Hutchins 4). That is, the emotional effort required to forge a professional path that leads to traditional academic success and resonates with her goals and values is not something Mandy can just "get over," ignore, or bracket by resolving to "write more." This brief glimpse of Mandy's developmental trajectory lends credence to Werder's notion that the unique pressures and high stakes of writing for publication might shake faculty members' abilities to self-author their writing lives.

Mandy's emotional labor demonstrates the role of intrapersonal challenges in faculty writers' ongoing development as writers, scholars, and humans, just as Willa's narrative shows how interpersonal relationships shape writers' perceptions of their writing projects and identities and Sadie's struggle to defend theoretical frames rooted in lived experience illustrates the debilitating reality of epistemological injustice. By surfacing dimensions of human development, their stories drive home the reality that theories we have for understanding and supporting faculty writers are insufficient and potentially harmful. Challeng-

ing and revising these limited understandings is urgent because how we define productivity, success, and the work of writing informs institutional policies and practices that determine access to the academic enterprise; they have immediate, lasting impact on the material lives of writers and will significantly shape the future of academia. Because we dedicate our professional lives to researching and supporting writing/writers, composition studies scholars are well positioned and, I argue, obligated to develop research-based approaches to faculty writer development that counter accepted tales of learning and account for multidimensional trajectories of becoming.

Conclusion: Advocating for Diverse Trajectories of Becoming

No matter how we work with writers—as faculty developers, peer mentors and colleagues, tenure evaluators, and/or as journal editors and reviewers—we have opportunities to support and advocate for diverse trajectories of becoming. For example, as Werder suggests, faculty developers who facilitate writing groups might take a cue from Baxter Magolda's (*Making Their Own Way*) work with college students and foster the intrapersonal dimension by inviting self-reflection on writing-related goals, identities, and relationships. Werder asks the faculty writers she mentors to create a metaphor for their writing selves. Comparing their metaphors with those of fellow writers makes faculty more aware of their unique composing processes and more forgiving when their process or "output" doesn't look like their peers'. Werder goes so far as to suggest that writing mentors use the self-authorship framework and vocabulary to help faculty focus on "sustaining a secure internal sense of self" despite dominant tales of learning and homogenized expectations for scholarly publication that urge reliance on external forces (290).

Those of us who support writers more informally as mentors and colleagues can also embrace a holistic view of writer development. Holly M. Hutchins highlights how social interactions can become "an adaptive coping strategy in helping faculty address uncertainty in their identity development, especially in forming realistic attributions concerning doubts about their professional legitimacy" (5). Intentional exchanges attuned to intrapersonal dimensions of writer development could help "normalize imposter tendencies" (5) by reinforcing the natural place of emotion in academic writing lives, including feelings such as self-doubt that are not validated in dominant discourses of success. Understanding writer development in terms of self-authorship reiterates the need for "responsive" and "transformative" mentorship based on relationality and mutuality (Hinsdale; Glenn). Long advocated by feminist and race scholars, critical mentoring challenges structures and ideologies that leave unattended the needs of so many faculty writers, especially those from marginalized groups

(Berry and Mizelle; Cooper and Stevens; Gutiérrez y Muh et al.; Ribero and Arellano; Rockquemore and Laszloffy).

We can pursue this transformative mission in our roles as tenure evaluators, journal editors, and reviewers by acknowledging the impact of the academy's long history of exclusion and the "colonial nature of our knowledge systems" on writing lives (Hinsdale 21) and dismantling problematic practices that isolate intellectual work from the bodies, histories, and relationships of writers. As Michael Day et al. point out, senior scholars have a vital role in (re) defining what appear to be neutral standards of scholarly success. Viewing writer development through the lens of self-authorship confirms that, to borrow Irwin Weiser's words, "one size clearly does not fit all" when criteria for annual evaluation and tenure review equate fairness with sameness (qtd. in Day et al. 187). Witnessing the harm caused by narrowly defined standards positions us to stand up for trajectories of becoming that do not fit the mold of particular departmental or intuitional tales of learning.

Awareness of how writers grapple with dimensions of self-authorship along diverse trajectories of becoming positions us to embrace "inclusion activism" as journal editors and reviewers who are able to identify and "willing to challenge operations that exclude and diminish the experience and knowledge of some while propping up that of others" (Blewett et al. 274-75). As a construct, self-authorship becomes a mechanism for "jam[ming] the system" for revealing how dominant tales of development and success are constructed and harmful and therefore able to be disrupted and reconceived (274). When editors value diverse trajectories and offer multidimensional support for writers, journals are more likely to become "sites that enlarge and help to grow our scholarly communities rather than follow well-worn grooves" (275).

Review practices are an important part of inclusive publishing. Journals such as *Composition Studies* (winner of the 2017 Outstanding Composition and Rhetoric Journal Award in Recognition of Inclusive Editorial Practices), *Literacy in Composition Studies*, and the new journal *Writers: Craft & Context* have made this clear with their commitments to working with authors, including those new to academic publishing, to revise and develop promising work before and after formal review. As Lars Söderlund and Jaclyn Wells point out, "now is the time" to decide what peer review should be and do in our field (119). Attention to self-authorship can ensure that a holistic view of writer development shapes our efforts to make peer review a sustaining rather than traumatic aspect of faculty writers' developmental trajectories.

Finally, composition studies researchers should include faculty writers in our efforts to develop robust theories of lifelong writing development. My use of self-authorship as a tool for mining the stories of faculty writers has offered a glimpse of just how much we do not know about their needs and

experiences. The gaps in our understanding are urgent because decisions about support structures and assessment mechanisms, decisions that determine the nature of the academic enterprise and who has access to it, are too often made by those who do not have declarative and procedural knowledge of writing or research-based understanding of writer development. Our decisions about if, when, and how to focus on faculty writers are "profoundly ethical and political matters" (Prior). Furthermore, "when we ask what people need to know in order to advance inside a graded domain [in the case of faculty writers the track to tenure and promotion] instead of how people might become advanced in a life, we are likely to create obstacles rather than pathways to becoming" (Prior). On the contrary, treating development as "becoming" honors the humanity of faculty writers and calls for the transformation of dehumanizing systems, structures and policies.

Acknowledgments

Notes

1. Belcher's second edition of *Writing Your Journal Article in Twelve Weeks* does guide readers to process their feelings about writing and includes a new chapter dedicated to invention.

2. The self-authorship framework has been critiqued for constructing a generalizable theory of development based on a predominantly White sample (Torres). However, I see the potential in using self-authorship not as a theory to impose on data but as one lens among many for interpreting data about participants' holistic development. Used in this way, the construct encourages careful "consideration of multiple dimensions and the interactions among the dimensions allow[ing] a more complete picture to emerge" (Torres 70).

3. Pseudonyms are used to protect the privacy of participants in this IRB-approved study.

4. I had no more than two interviews each for the 5 male study participants, so I chose not to focus on them here. More research is needed to explore possible gender differences in how writers experience and demonstrate dimensions of self-authorship.

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