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# Reconceptualizing The Construct Of The Individual Writer In Composition Studies: A Felt Life Model Of Writing

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**RECONCEPTUALIZING THE CONSTRUCT OF THE INDIVIDUAL WRITER IN  
COMPOSITION STUDIES: A FELT LIFE MODEL OF WRITING**

by

**WENDY DUPREY**

**DISSERTATION**

Submitted to the Graduate School

of Wayne State University

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Advisor

Date

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## **CHAPTER 1: TOWARD AN INTEGRATED COGNITIVE-EMOTIONAL-MOTIVATIONAL MODEL OF THE INDIVIDUAL WRITER: CONTRIBUTIONS FROM EARLY PROCESS, COGNITIVE, AND SOCIO-COGNITIVE CONSTRUCTS**

From the 1960s to the 1980s in Composition Studies, the field's robust inquiry into the individual experience of writing produced several pedagogically-based theories of the writing process (Murray; Macrorie; Elbow) and helped to facilitate the uptake of "teach process, not product" in composition classrooms. These early process models and theories allowed composition researchers like Janet Emig, Sondra Perl, and Nancy Sommers to pursue more systematic observations of writers composing, subsequently offering richer models, theories, and moment-to-moment descriptions of the writing process to the field. Important to this early process research was an effort to understand the intellectual processes involved during the composing process, and some researchers in composition, most notably Linda Flower and John Hayes, turned to cognitive science as a promising theoretical and methodological framework for observing writers composing. But their close attention to the minds of individual writers was met with a series of critiques against what some in the field perceived as a reductive representation of the writer and the writing process, in particular as one that did not adequately consider the social context of writing. These critiques reflected an ongoing tension between composition scholars studying cognition at the individual and empirical level as composition scholars broadened the study of writing to include social, historical, and cultural contexts (Bizzell; Faigley; Berlin), which led to an assumption for some in the field that composition theory had rightly moved away from early process and cognitive investigations of the individual writer (Kent).

However, among the critiques that emerged during the 1980s and 1990s was the revisionary call by Alice Brand and Susan McLeod to include emotion into our field's theorizing about the writing process, and to investigate how emotion, cognition, and motivation are

interconnected. As Alice Brand states in "The Why of Cognition: Emotion and the Writing Process,"

Historically, the field of composition looked first at *the what* of writing, the product. Over the last two decades, it has added *the how* of writing, the process. It follows that the field look next at *the why* of writing, affective content and motivation. Understanding the collaboration of emotion and cognition in writing is both fundamental and far-reaching. It is in cognition that ideas make sense. But it is in emotion that this sense finds value. Without such priorities we could not think. The more comprehensive our understanding of the affective and cognitive content of discourse in any form, the more likely it will reflect their true interpenetration. (711)

Published in 1987, Brand's call to understand the interrelationship between cognition, emotion, and motivation received limited scholarly attention in composition studies after the social turn of the field in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Although Brand's *The Psychology of Writing* (1990), Brand and Graves' *Presence of Mind: Writing and the Domain Beyond the Cognitive* (1994), and McLeod's *Notes on the Heart: Affective Issues in the Writing Classroom* (1996) were some of the first books to significantly explore the role of emotion in human cognition during the writing process, disciplinary perspectives during that decade shifted the study away from cognitive-emotional interactions in the individual writer, and instead focused on emotion's affective, social, and political dimensions more broadly. Most notably, Lynn Worsham's definition of emotion, as "the tight braid of affect and judgment, socially and historically constructed and bodily lived, through which the symbolic takes hold of and binds the individual, in complex and contradictory ways, to the social order and its structure of meanings" (216), has been widely cited in the field since the 1998 publication of her article "Going Postal: Pedagogic Violence and the Schooling of Emotion." However, while Worsham's complex definition includes many dimensions of emotion, including the cognitive, I argue we have yet to substantially describe and theorize what *the tight braid of affect and judgment* looks like in terms of interconnecting cognitive-emotional-motivational processes during the writing process.



Importantly, current scholars in composition and rhetoric are extending the conversation about the role of emotion in human cognition, emphasizing how our worldview perspectives and intellectual positions are animated by our emotional investments, attachments, and commitments. In our rhetorical theories of argument, Laura Micciche contends that “emotion is part of what makes ideas adhere [by] generating investments and attachments that get recognized as positions and/or perspectives” (*Doing* 6). In this way, our emotional investments and attachments, as Jennifer Seibel Trainor notes, “animate particular texts and discourses” that reflect “the situatedness of interpretation and perception” for each individual (*Rethinking* 142). Particularly within the composition classroom, Julie Lindquist claims our “writing pedagogies must attend to the more rugged experiential textures of motive and affect,” whereby students have the possibility of learning “how their investments in their own views [are] linked to their lives and circumstances” (191, 203). Therefore, what motivates my project from within this existing literature is the goal of re-conceptualizing the construct of the individual writer in composition theory as a situated and invested individual, one that I am calling an *individual with a felt life*.

Based on recent theories of human cognition and the emotion process from neurobiology, psychology, and philosophy, I see an individual’s felt life as constituted by rich mixtures of cognition, emotion, and motivation that construct one’s sense of well-being (quality of life) and reflect one’s personal investments (goals, concerns, commitments) in the world. In Chapter Two and Chapter Three, I draw on a range of neurobiological (Antonio Damasio and Joseph LeDoux), psychological (Richard Lazarus and Nico Frijda), and philosophical (Robert Solomon, Ronald de Sousa, and Martha Nussbaum) perspectives to further develop this conceptualization of an individual with a felt life, which I then extend to updating the construct of the individual writer in Chapter Four. Since our field’s investigation of writing is never far from the complex living

presence of real people, whose textual performances, writing processes, and literacy practices are palpably charged with their subjective perspectives and narrative histories, I argue that individual writers do not leave this first-person perspective behind when they assume authorship or engage with texts. In this way, despite disciplinary efforts to theorize "the writing subject" in composition studies from the 1960s on, I suggest we have yet to broaden our construct of the individual writer to more comprehensively explore what it means to write within the context of a felt life by investigating how an individual's cognition, emotion, and motivation shapes, and is influenced by, his or her writing process.

In order to provide a background context toward further developing an integrated cognitive-emotional-motivational model of the individual writer with a felt life, the remainder of this chapter historically traces the construct of the individual writer through several turns in the field – early process, cognitive, and socio-cognitive – while asking the following question: “In composition theory, how has the individual writer and his/her writing process been presented or assumed in the scholarly and research literature of these turns?”

### **Early Process Turn: Construct of a Writing Self**

Donald Murray's popular essay, "Teach Writing as a Process Not Product," published in 1972, urged composition teachers to design a writing curriculum that supported students in "the process of using language to learn about our world, to evaluate what we learn about our world, [and] to communicate what we learn about our world" (15). His call to reform composition classrooms from places of shame-inducing, "repetitive autopsying" of students' writing to environments supportive of students' personal and collective experiences with the writing process also presented students with a *writing self*. Students' conceptions of themselves as having a writing self, however, appears contingent upon their level of investment in "examin[ing] their own

evolving writing and that of their classmates, so that they study writing while it is still a matter of choice, word by word" (Murray 16).

The construct of the writer that Murray proposes is at once personal and ethical: "The writer, as he writes, is making ethical decisions. He doesn't test his words by a rule book, but by life. He uses language to reveal the truth to himself so that he can tell it to others. It is an exciting, eventful, evolving process" (15). While Murray does not elaborate on the ethical dimensions of the writer and his writing process, he seems to suggest that the writer's motivation to "pass through [the writing] process, perhaps even pass through it again and again on the same piece of writing," is crucial for developing an invested concern in his or her textual and linguistic choices (15). To help students study their own writing processes, Murray published several process model descriptions of the writing process (e.g., *prewriting, writing, rewriting* (1972); *rehearsing, drafting, revising* (1980); *collecting, planning, developing* (1985)), which changed as he pedagogically tested how each successive model helped students internalize the different stages that "most writers most of the time pass through" (15). Although stage models were heavily critiqued in the field, Murray's stage model descriptions emphasized early on that writing "is not a rigid-lock step process," but a continual process of rewriting (15).

Important to Murray's personal and pedagogical essays on the writing process, therefore, was his philosophy that "we do not teach our students rules demonstrated by static models; we teach our students to write by allowing them to experience the process of writing" (31). Peter Elbow emphasizes this point in *Taking Stock: The Writing Process Movement in the '90s* (1994) when he writes:

What seems to me to characterize that moment in the history of composition -- was a burgeoning interest in the *experience* of writing. There was a mood of excitement about talking about what actually *happens* as we and our students write. Thus, there was a lot of first-person writing and informal discourse. And thus the overused term for the movement:

the "process approach." People wanted to talk about experience during the process of writing -- and not just about the resultant text or product. "Process" connotes experience. (qtd. in Tobin and Newkirk 195)

As Elbow suggests, investigating what actually *happens* when we write involved teaching the process of writing as something individually, emotionally, and experientially felt.

Compositionists like Elbow, Murray, and Ken Macrorie valued personal and experiential forms of knowledge in the writing classroom, and their construct of the individual writer, as a person writing from lived experience, complemented their visions of writing as "an organic, developmental process" (Elbow 43), "an individual search for meaning in life" (Murray 8), and "a connection between the things written about, the words used in the writing, and the author's experience in a world she knows well -- whether in fact or dream or imagination" (Macrorie 15). In other words, students were respected for having a *writing self*, and instead of forcing them to write what Macrorie called boring "English" essays, students were encouraged to acquire a feel for the process/experience of writing by freewriting, conferencing, workshopping and revising their texts like professional writers. As Murray noted, "Too often the very word *student* gets in our way, and we forget that the student is simply, first of all, a writer. If he is to write well he has to go through a process similar to the one which the professional writer has found works for him" (11).

As the first process study to systematically observe how students experience the writing process, Janet Emig notes early in *The Composing Process of Twelfth Graders* (1971) that such a methodology has as "its chief value [the] steady assumption that persons, not mechanisms, compose" (5). According to Emig, prior to the field's turn to process, rhetoric and composition handbooks depicted "a quite conscious, wholly rational – at times, even mechanical" mode of writing, thereby assuming all writers to be the same (15). She argues, however, "How the writer

feels about the subject matter and how his feelings may influence what he writes – the affective dimension – are not really considered in these texts. The notion that there might be a press of personality upon all components of the process is not present” (15). Thus, Emig broadens the construct of the individual writer to include a psychological perspective, one that affords the writer thoughts and emotions during the writing process.

While the student writers in Emig's study are seen as needing to write “from an expressive impulse,” the schema of writing she draws on to design her study separates the affective from the cognitive in her construct of the writer. This bifurcation arises from the distinction Emig makes between the two modes of student writing: as *reflexive* (“focuses on the writer's thoughts and feelings concerning his experiences; the chief audience is the writer himself; the domain explored is often the affective; the style is tentative, personal and exploratory”) or *extensive* (“focuses upon the writer's conveying a message or a communication to another; the domain explored is usually the cognitive; the style is assured, impersonal, and often reportorial”) (4). Emig's descriptions of *reflexive* and *extensive* correlate with the level of emotional engagement she judges the twelfth graders to exhibit in their writing. For example, when one of the twelfth graders, Lynn, chooses to write about Snoopy instead of her grandmother because “‘the Snoopy thing’ is ‘easier’ to write about,” Emig interprets Lynn’s move to extensive writing as “easy” because Snoopy is “a nonpersonal subject, one that does not demand interacting with her feelings, one that is *not* reflexive” (48-49). Here, there is the connotation that reflexive writing is the only mode of writing that interacts with the writer’s feelings in a meaningful way, in comparison to certain kinds of extensive writing, like the five-paragraph themed essay, which Emig regards as “programmable,” “algorithmic,” and “not requir[ing] the personal engagement of the writer” (50).

From an earlier essay entitled “The Uses of the Unconscious in Composing” (1964), Emig questions why students (like Lynn) don’t engage with their feelings when they write, consequently producing “surface scrapings” in school. Emig argues that “there is no wisp or scent anywhere that composing is anything but a conscious and antiseptically efficient act” (48). When writing their weekly themes, students operate “from one layer of the self – the ectoderm only, with student involvement in his own thought and language moving down an unhappy scale from sporadic engagement to abject diffidence” (46). The notion that “there is no unconscious self importantly engaged in the composing process” (46) largely reflects what Emig then observed in her case studies with twelfth graders, that “writing is a task to be done just like any other, and one simply gets on with it” (56), without significant personal engagement from the writer.

For this reason, Emig’s portrait of Lynn and the other students, as predominantly “ectoderm” writers composing in extensive modes, also assumes a bifurcated self: one that separates a cognitive, conscious self from an affective, unconscious self. Yet Emig, perhaps unconsciously, cannot maintain this split between the cognitive and the affective when she concludes her study with twelfth graders. Her final reflection of Lynn, as “a girl reserved about her feelings, though open, even volatile, about ideas” (73), points to an inter-animating, inseparable dynamic between cognition and emotion in the individual writer.

However, the process literature that follows Emig nearly a decade later, closer to the 1980s, mostly documents the intellectual thoughts and behaviors of writers composing. For example, Sondra Perl’s “The Composing Processes of Unskilled Writers” (1979) coded the “observable behaviors” of underprepared college students with the intent of detecting possible composing patterns among this group of writers. To reliably detect these composing patterns, Perl created composing style sheets as “a tool for describing the movements that occur during composing,”

which focused on the unfolding activity of writing itself (41). Whereas Emig's process study of twelfth graders primarily narrates and interprets students' experiences with the writing process, Perl's process study draws on intellectual categories to code students' process patterns, in ways that she calls "standardized," "categorical," "concise," "structural," and "diachronic."

For instance, her case study of Tony focuses on features like his composing behaviors and strategies, his level of fluency and language usage, and his editing patterns. Unlike Emig's quite detailed description of Lynn's extensive vs. reflexive topic selection (Snoopy vs. her grandmother), Perl's description of Tony's topic selection is abstract and stripped of specific commentary from Tony: "Given any topic, the first operation he performed was to focus in and narrow down the topic. He did this by rephrasing the topic until either a word or an idea in the topic linked up with something in his own experience (an attitude, an opinion, an event). In this way he established a connection between the field of discourse and himself and at this point he felt ready to write" (47). Here, Perl demonstrates how she is less interested in the experiential nature of Tony's connection and more interested in documenting his connecting behavior as a "composing rhythm."

This difference points to a significant change in the tone of process studies approaching the 1980s: Perl replaces Emig's psychological profiles of writers and their composing processes with the proposal that "teaching composing means paying attention not only to the forms of products but also to the explicative process through which they arise" (59). Like Perl, many process researchers began collecting audiotapes, videotapes, and think aloud protocols to help them observe thinking and writing processes more closely, on a moment-to-moment basis, which, as Perl recounts in *Landmark Essays on the Writing Process* (1994), reflected "the thinking of their time" and were "attempt[s] to isolate and examine features of composing in rigorous and systematic ways" (xiv).

In "Revision Strategies of Student Writers and Experienced Adult Writers" (1980), Nancy Sommers compared the revision practices of novice student writers with experienced adult writers, concluding "at the heart of revision is the process by which writers recognize and resolve the dissonance they sense in their writing" (82). She observed that the linear process model students tend to follow – seeing writing as "translating" or putting "the thought to the page" – differs from the "parts to whole" attunement that experienced writers have in knowing that "writing cannot develop 'like a line' because each addition or deletion is a reordering of the whole" (83). Based on her observations, Sommers re-defined revision for the field as "a sequence of changes in a composition – changes which are initiated by cues and occur continually throughout the writing of a work" (77). These cues or attunements that guide experienced writers to revise, what Sommers refers to as "dissonance," is a disposition she argues student writers need to acquire in their writing process:

It is a sense of writing as discovery – a repeated process of beginning over again, starting out new – that the students failed to have. I have used the notion of dissonance because such dissonance, the incongruities between intention and execution, governs both writing and meaning. Students do not see the incongruities. They need to rely on their own internalized sense of good writing and to see their writing with their 'own' eyes. (84)

While dissonance is a productive theoretical concept to explain revision, Sommers does not address how students should develop their capacity to identify good writing, especially through their own internalized sense of judgment.

Perl's explanation of "felt sense," on the other hand, suggests that experienced writers "rely on very careful attention to [their] inner reflections and [accompanying] bodily sensations" as internal cues for discovering the dissonance in their own writing (102). According to Perl in "Understanding the Composing Process" (1980), writers experience "alternating mental postures" when they write, which she describes more specifically as "the move from sense to words and



from words to sense, from inner experience to outer judgment and from judgment back to experience” (105). Perl argues this “shuttling back-and-forth” movement is “not solely the product of a mind but of a mind alive in a living, sensing body” (101). In other words, writers call upon their *felt sense* – “the images, words, ideas, and vague fuzzy feelings that are anchored in the writer’s body” – as “internal criteria” to evaluate their next move in the writing process (101). Thus, Perl's reflections on felt sense begin to theoretically explore how writers' evolving texts are constructed in connection with their "physically felt" experiences and judgments.

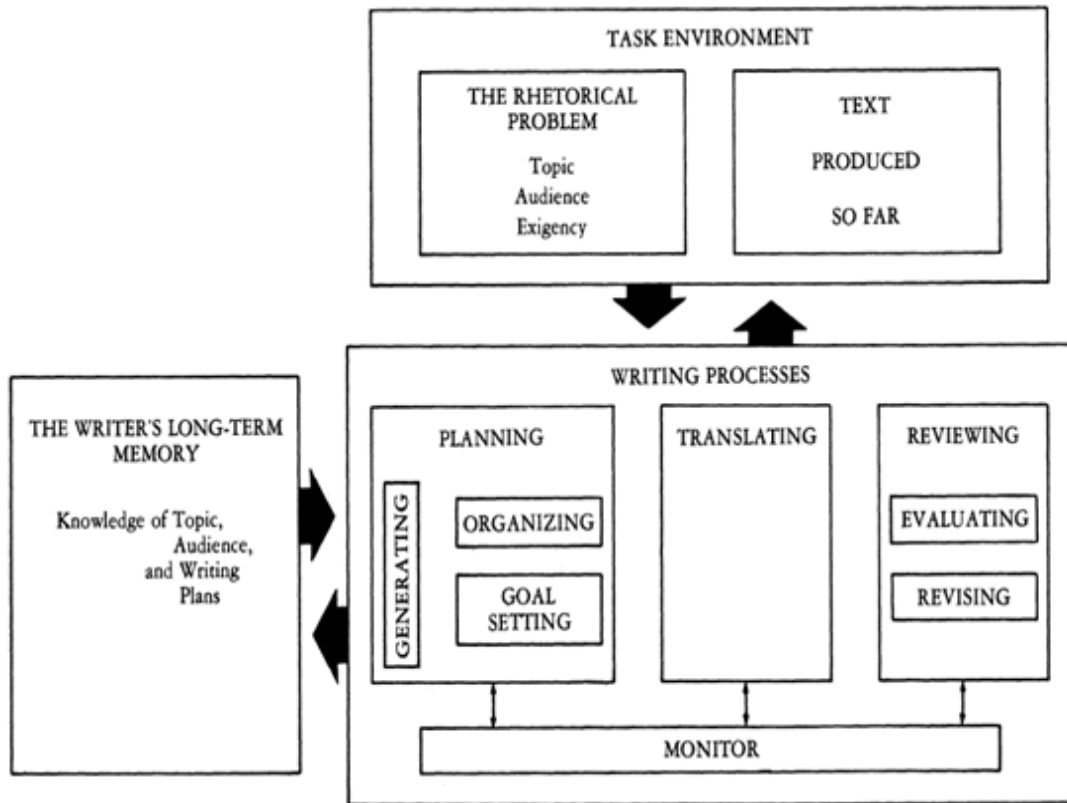
In attempting to capture how embodied processes accompany writers' thinking within a recursive writing process, Perl implicitly theorizes the importance of what early process teachers like Murray, Elbow, and Macrorie were doing in their classrooms: that is, they were creating a learning environment supportive of students' experiences with writing, while helping them draw on their senses and emotions to cultivate a "feel" for judgment in the writing process. In Perl's view, "Writers must have the experience of being readers. They cannot call up a felt sense of a reader unless they themselves have experienced what it means to be lost in a piece of writing or to be excited by it" (105). For early process pedagogues, the capacity to identify with a reader's felt sense meant sharing writing in the classroom, particularly by reading aloud. Murray believed that "the piece of writing speaks with its own voice of its own concerns, direction, meaning. The student writer hears that voice from the piece convey intensity, drive, energy, and more -- anger, pleasure, happiness, sadness, caring, frustration, understanding, explaining" (27-28). His emotionally-laden description of the student writer reading aloud mirrors what Macrorie observed in the listening audience: "As a paper is being read aloud, they're always responding unconsciously. They grunt approval, sigh in empathy, tense in their chairs during a suspenseful story, or emit sounds signifying disgust, fear, or agreement. At times they become dazed and tune

out, heads nodding toward sleep, and the author must face failure" (8). In short, this "writing/response" method allowed student writers to habitually acquire a feel for judgment in the writing process -- whether viewed in the context of dissonance, felt sense, or drawing on conscious and unconscious aspects of students as *writing selves* in process classrooms.

The 1980-1981 publications on the writing process in *College Composition and Communication* notably capture this turning point in the literature: namely, a maturing of process studies (Sommers; Perl) mixed with a burgeoning interest in how writers think within a recursive writing process (Flower and Hayes; Rose). In contrast to the stage models of writing that were experientially explored in pedagogical settings, these research-oriented studies produced process models aimed to more accurately describe the complex, recursive nature of writing, thus foreshadowing the field's cognitive turn, discussed next.

### **Cognitive Turn: Construct of a Problem-Solving Writer**

Linda Flower and John Hayes began publishing their version of a cognitive process model of writing in 1980-1981, represented below in Fig. 1.1.



**Fig. 1.1. Flower and Hayes, Cognitive Process Model of Writing (1981).**

Following research in composition studies, Flower and Hayes adopted a process model but changed the construct of the individual writer considerably by incorporating a problem-solving perspective from cognitive science. In their early CCC publication of "A Cognitive Process Theory of Writing" (1981), Flower and Hayes foreground "the inventive power of the writer, who is able to explore ideas, to develop, act on, test, and regenerate his or her own goals" (296). While the early process literature features a construct of the individual writer as a *writing self*, Flower and Hayes characterize the individual writer as a *problem solver*, a construct that also informs the research literature more broadly during the cognitive turn in composition.

Central to the cognitive research conducted by Flower and Hayes on the writing process, then, is a descriptive and theoretical conceptualization of the writer as a conscious, strategic

problem-solver. Their cognitive process model of writing (1980, 1981) graphically depicts how “writers are constantly, instant by instant, orchestrating a battery of cognitive processes as they integrate planning, remembering, writing, and rereading,” to which Flower and Hayes note, “the multiple arrows, which are conventions in diagramming this sort of model, are unfortunately only weak indications of the complex and active organization of thinking processes” (297). Whereas stage process models, for Flower and Hayes, “take the final product as their reference point, [thereby] offer[ing] an inadequate account of the more intimate, moment-by-moment intellectual process of composing... [such as] the inner processes of decision and choice” (275), their cognitive process model represents “a theoretical system that would reflect the process of a real writer” (276).

According to Flower, a problem-solving perspective on writing influences how writers experience themselves as thinkers: "To see yourself as a thinker is an important part of being one. To see yourself as a writer who steps back to reflect, as a problem solver who can see options...is not just an attitude. It is the potent knowledge that one's own flow of talk and thought -- that rapid, tumbling, sometimes surprising, sometimes confusing flow of thought -- is also the rapid and generative creation of plans, goals, strategies, and decisions" (*Making Thinking Visible* 23). Thus, one pedagogical aim of a problem-solving perspective on the writing process, as Flower suggests in her composition textbook *Problem-Solving Strategies for Writing* (1985), is "to make unconscious actions a little more conscious: to give writers a greater awareness of their own intellectual processes, and therefore the power and possibility of conscious choice" (vii).

In order to construct their cognitive process model, Flower and Hayes conducted think aloud protocols in their effort to “capture a detailed record of what is going on in the writer’s mind during the act of composing itself” (277). Protocol analysis, a research method typically used in

cognitive psychology, offered a rich, descriptive account of how individual writers attempted to solve rhetorical problems, such as the one Flower and Hayes mention in “A Cognitive Process Theory of Writing,” which asked writers to “Write an article on your job for the readers of *Seventeen* magazine” (277). After writers were prompted with a problem, they were asked to “compose out loud near an unobtrusive tape recorder,” “work on the task as they normally would – thinking, jotting notes, and writing,” and “verbalize everything that goes through their minds as they write, including stray notions, false starts, and incomplete or fragmentary thought,” while refraining from “any kind of introspection or self-analysis” (277). Through their analysis of nearly 60 protocols and written artifacts generated by their research subjects (1985 “Counterstatement”), Flower and Hayes described and theorized the activity of writing as a problem-solving, cognitive process, as represented in their model, noting that “insofar as writing is a rhetorical act, not a mere artifact, writers attempt to ‘solve’ or respond to this rhetorical problem by writing something” (279). As such, the inner processes of a *problem-solving writer* were gradually developed through a decade's worth of data-driven theories and research publications that further investigated specific components of their cognitive process model, particularly how individually-based a writer’s mental representations and processes are when it comes to defining rhetorical problems, building plans, and revising texts, each of which is discussed briefly below.

In research on rhetorical problems, Flower and Hayes relied on think aloud protocols in “The Cognition of Discovery: Defining a Rhetorical Problem” (1980) to study how writers defined writing tasks to themselves, contending that “people only solve the problem they give themselves to solve... [so] a rhetorical problem...is never merely a given: it is an elaborate construction which the writer creates in the act of composing” (468). Learning how individual writers “go about building this inner, private representation” largely accounts for why “people simply rewrite an

assignment or a situation to make it commensurate with their own skills, habits, or fears” (468-9). Their protocols importantly revealed that a writer’s self-defined construction of a rhetorical problem includes both the rhetorical situation of the writing task (audience and assignment) and “the set of goals the writer himself creates,” such as “affecting the reader, creating a persona or voice, building a meaning, and producing a formal text” (470).

In their analysis of the ways good writers and poor writers construct rhetorical problems, Flower and Hayes concluded that “good writers are simply solving a different problem than poor writers,” in that the good writers “build a unique representation not only of their audience and assignment, but also of their goals involving their audience, their own persona, and the text,” whereas poor writers “were concerned primarily with the features and conventions of a written text, such as number of pages or magazine format” (474-6). For instance, Flower and Hayes described how two students might construct two distinctly different rhetorical problems for a vague assignment description such as “analyze Hamlet.” The good writer might think, “Analyze this play; that means I should try to break it down into some kind of parts. Perhaps I could analyze the plot, or the issues in play, or its theatrical conventions,” and the poor writer might think, “Write another theme and talk about *Hamlet* this time, in time for Tuesday’s class. That probably means about two pages” (472). This comparison underlines the complex, problem-solving thinking process that separates a good writer's rhetorical construction from the poor writer in this scenario, who “narrowed a rhetorical act to a paper-writing problem” (476).

In research on planning, however, Flower and Hayes are careful to point out that “whether [a writer’s] goals are abstract or detailed, simple or sophisticated, they provide the ‘logic’ that moves the composing process forward” (“Cognitive Process” 288). Understanding the content of this logic, as Flower and Hayes explain in “The Pregnant Pause: An Inquiry into the Nature of

Planning” (1981), can particularly be observed with think aloud protocols during the moments when “writers are breaking concentration and changing focus, [which] are likely to be decision points in the writer’s ongoing planning process” (238). Here, writers are shifting between the processes of planning, translating, and reviewing, which are governed, according to Flower and Hayes, by the “kind and quality of goals writers give themselves and in their ability to use this planning to guide their own composing process” (243).

These goal-driven plans, as Flower and Hayes note in “Images, Plans, and Prose: The Representation of Meaning in Writing” (1984), are "by no means a neat catalog of words to be placed on paper" (124). Instead, "the writer's working memory speaks in many languages" (124), mixing a wide range of meaning-making representations that Flower and Hayes term multimodal, such as "notes, drafts, plans, criteria, and imagined reader responses, as well as all the imagistic, auditory, and schematic representations" (151). Since planning “is the purposeful act of representing current meaning to oneself,” involving "basic cognitive operations such as generating information (by activating knowledge in long-term memory or drawing new inferences), organizing or structuring information, and finally setting goals” (124), writers tend to construct multimodal plans that reveal a "record of thought within the much larger picture of cognition" (124).

Moreover, this multimodal framework of planning points to the difficulty writers have in moving from planning to translating in Flower and Hayes' process model: "The decision to switch from planning to 'writing' is a watershed of quite visible importance to writers. Our subjects are quite articulate about the shift, and it is reflected in the visible shift from notes and outlines to the conventions of text. This shift is often accompanied by hesitation, loss of fluency, and confusion. Writer's block...typically happens in front of the [computer] and not during planning in the shower"

(149). Ultimately, their protocols of working writers indicated that "thinkers often rely on a large set of specialized representations adapted to the current state of their knowledge. Writers are usually in the business of *changing* those representations into a new mode. And handling that mode is itself a major accomplishment" (152).

While research on the planning process received extensive attention from Flower and Hayes, research on the reviewing process, or learning how writers evaluate and revise their texts, including their plans, was more fully explored in the 1986 publication of "Detection, Diagnosis, and the Strategies of Revision." In this article, Flower, Hayes, and several of their graduate students at Carnegie-Mellon University described the revision practice of expert writers as "a highly conditional decision process" (20). The main factors influencing this decision process include the writer's knowledge (declarative and procedural) and intentions (task representation, informed by goals and criteria) (19-20). When evaluating their texts, "writers are comparing the text *as they read it* to that set of intentions and criteria *which they represent to themselves*" (29). Put another way, "revisers read not only the surface written text but also unwritten text in their heads" (28). Furthermore, what distinguishes expert revisers from novice revisers is not just their ability to detect a problem, but to diagnose what kind of problem it is while deciding which strategies will be most helpful in solving the problem, thereby "draw[ing] on the writer's meta-knowledge of his own writing to monitor the process" (46). As their research on revision suggests, more inquiry is needed to determine the value that cognitive research holds for helping novice writers acquire the kind of strategic knowledge expert writers perform, a call Flower and Hayes pose to the field at large when they write, "A cognitive process model by itself cannot tell us how different writers, with different levels of skills or experience, would carve out strategic paths through these processes...Students may learn to follow such plans where indicated [by teachers]



yet never learn to detect or diagnose the underlying problem themselves. Are we offering local remedies for text, when what students really need is the strategic knowledge that will let them generate such plans on their own?" (52)

Other scholars began exploring the issues and implications of cognitive research on writers and the writing process during the 1980s, including Carol Berkenkotter, Mike Rose, and Carl Bereiter and Marlene Scardamalia. Similar to Flower and Hayes, their characterization of the individual writer as a problem-solver, and their conceptualization of the writing process in terms of "setting goals, formulating problems, evaluating decisions, and planning in light of prior goals and decisions" (Bereiter and Scardamalia 362), contributed to an interdisciplinary body of research in composition studies that analytically and descriptively draws on cognitive psychology's problem-solving perspective to "think carefully and closely about the [individual writer's] process of getting words onto paper" (Rose 15). Collectively, the cognitive research of these scholars also introduced dimensions of introspection (Berkenkotter), emotion (Rose), and commitment (Bereiter and Scardamalia) to the construct of the *problem-solving writer*.

Published in 1983, Carol Berkenkotter's analysis of Donald Murray's composing process in "Decisions and Revisions: The Planning Strategies of a Publishing Writer" captured the substantial role that introspection plays in an expert writer's evaluation of his own texts during the writing process. Since previous cognitive studies on composing, such as Flower and Hayes' think aloud protocols, observed writers in a laboratory setting for one hour at a time, asking them to refrain from self-analyzing their own writing process, Berkenkotter incorporated naturalistic inquiry into her protocol research design to document Murray's planning, evaluating, revising, and editing activities in his everyday working environment. In doing so, Berkenkotter noted that "when [Murray] paused between or during composing episodes, instead of falling silent, he

analyzed his processes...show[ing] [him] engaged in composing and introspecting at the same time...[demonstrating that] writers do monitor and introspect about their writing simultaneously” (164-5). Furthermore, Berkenkotter's effort to not “separate the dancer from the dance, the subject from the process” (157) in her data collection methods also recorded what Murray, in his accompanying publication “Response of a Laboratory Rat – or, Being Protocoled,” referred to as the *simultaneous layers of concern* writers must negotiate when writing: "I find it very difficult to make my students aware of the layers of concern through which the writing writer must oscillate at such a high speed that it appears the concerns are dealt with instantaneously" (172). Together, Berkenkotter and Murray call attention to the pedagogical importance of studying how individual writers make evaluative decisions surrounding their constructed layers of concern within a recursive writing process, particularly during introspective moments of planning and revising.

Mike Rose's cognitive research on writer's block (1980, 1984) also highlights “the rich functional individual differences in composing,” as demonstrated by the range of writing rules, plans, and strategies that student writers draw on to negotiate writing problems. In "Rigid Rules, Inflexible Plans, and the Stifling of Language" (1980), Rose contends that "people don't proceed through problem situations, in or out of the laboratory, without some set of internalized instructions to the self, some program, some course of action that even roughly, takes goals and possible paths to that goal into consideration" (88). For the student writers in Rose's study, these internalized instructions helped or hindered the writing process depending on whether their self-defined rules and plans were followed as algorithms or heuristics. In Rose's words, "students who experienced blocking were all operating either with writing rules or with planning strategies that impeded rather than enhanced the composing process...[whereas] students who were not hampered by writer's

block also utilized rules, but they were less rigid ones, and thus more appropriate to a complex process like writing" (85).

For Rose, the question of how to teach writing as a complex, problem-solving process also means acknowledging the kind of research methods our field uses for gaining insight into the individual processes of writers. His concluding chapter to a collection of essays he edited, entitled *When a Writer Can't Write: Studies in Writer's Block and Other Composing-Process Problems* (1985), describes a broader framework for studying the complex nature of writing, from a perspective he calls a "cognitive/ affective/ social-contextual trinity" (62). As Rose states,

[This framework] doesn't reveal anything other than what we've already learned from day-to-day living: People act and react intellectually and emotionally and do so in situations that trigger, shape, and quell those behaviors. But I would suggest that it is precisely this 'obviousness,' this commonsense validity that gives the framework its value as a *research* paradigm. We are forced to at least acknowledge in our research projects the complexity that we live by. The framework reminds us to be alert to the possibility of interactions of the cognitive, the affective, and the situational. (66)

Even though Rose's previous research on writer's block suggests "that the cognitive often melds with, and can be overpowered by, the affective" ("Rigid" 97), his analysis of blockers and non-blockers focuses primarily on their cognitive processes, as described above. In this publication, however, his call for a more holistic research paradigm locates the study of cognition within the lived experience of individual writers, an account that more accurately encompasses *the complexity that we live by* through the inclusion of emotion and social context.

Furthermore, the pedagogical implications of this research paradigm might usefully apply to Rose's proposal in *Writer's Block* (1984), which encourages instructors "to help our students develop the capacity to judge their own work" (96). According to Rose, "we should help our students understand why they say what they do about their writing. One way we can contribute to their ability to evaluate their work is to encourage them to discuss the reasons behind their

compositional choices (or their reasons behind the judgment of others’ – peers’ or professionals’ – work)” (95). Similar to the difficulty Murray expressed in helping students understand the layers of concern behind their compositional choices, Rose’s research paradigm implies that learning about students’ evaluative decisions necessitates an examination of their emotions in addition to the intellectual context informing their writing process.

In *The Psychology of Written Composition* (1987), Carl Bereiter and Marlene Scardamalia investigated “how the composing process is structured in the mind of the learner” (245), leading them to develop two composing models, knowledge telling vs. knowledge transforming, that depict substantial differences between the mental processes of writers lacking conscious concern over their texts from writers displaying a more intentional commitment to their writing process. For Bereiter and Scardamalia, what distinguishes the intentional, problem-solving, and goal-setting aims of a knowledge transforming model is the writer’s continual effort to create a meaningful writing task by “constructing a goal representation that takes account of external requirements (such as those imposed by a school assignment) but also includes goals of personal significance to oneself” (360). A knowledge telling model, on the other hand, “generates content by topical and structural prompts, without strategic formulation of goals, subgoals, search criteria, and other components of problem solving” (348). Therefore, one hallmark of their knowledge transforming model is what Bereiter and Scardamalia call *intentional cognition*:

In its largest sense, intentional cognition means *having a mental life* that is carried on consciously and purposefully, just as one’s outer life is, but that is not simply a projection of that outer life. Rather, mental life has purposes and activities of its own, which are primarily concerned with the active construction of knowledge. Knowledge-transforming processes in writing are one important way in which the mental life can be pursued. Perhaps one of the most far-reaching consequences of developing a self-directed mental life is that meaningfulness ceases to be a property that is ‘found’ or not ‘found’ in external activities and contexts. It becomes a property that people invest activities with, by virtue of assigning them a role in their mental lives. (336)

Within this passage, hints of emotion appear to animate the make-up of mental life, especially when *meaningfulness* becomes *a property that people invest activities with*; yet, Bereiter and Scardamalia designate *the active construction of knowledge* as the salient intellectual feature of mental life. Thus, their definition of *intentional cognition* poses some challenges for the field when exploring what constitutes a writer's commitment to a knowledge transforming model of thinking and writing: "We must remind ourselves that mature writers are able to make writing tasks meaningful for themselves and *that this is part of their competence*. We must ask what this ability consists of, how it is acquired, and what effect different educational practices may have on its development...[since] largely absent, scarcely even contemplated, are school practices that encourage students to assume responsibility for what becomes of their own minds" (Bereiter and Scardamalia 360-61).

The notion that student writers must become comfortable with *having a mental life*, one that combines some degree of intentionality with an active interest in seeing themselves as *problem solvers* (pertaining to the writing task at hand), is characteristic of early process publications. Similar to Emig's preference for students composing reflexively rather than their actual behavior as composing extensively, Bereiter and Scardamalia suggest that writing with more engagement and commitment characterizes mature writers, unlike most student writers who lack a substantial display of *intentional cognition* during their writing process. But cognitive research studies by the end of the 1980s were consistently met with a mixed reception in the field, only to be overshadowed by the more prominent social theories of writing by the early 1990s. Nevertheless, against the backdrop of what has been called the social turn in composition studies (Bizzell;

Bartholomae; Faigley; Berlin), cognitive researchers Flower and Hayes took a socio-cognitive turn in their research on writers and the writing process.<sup>1</sup>

### **Socio-Cognitive Turn: Construct of a Situated Writing Strategist**

For the most part, the construct of a *problem solving writer* remains intact during the socio-cognitive turn. As Flower explains in “Cognition, Context, and Theory Building” (1989), “When we try to account for the influence of context in cognitive terms, we notice that the language of ‘problem-solving’ itself places the writer in a responsive stance. Cognitive action is often initiated in response to a cue from the environment – in response to an ‘ill-defined problem’ that the ‘solver’ may have to define from limited and ambiguous cues in the world around” (745). The construct of the problem-solving writer thus persists within the socio-cognitive research literature, but with greater emphasis on exploring how writers interpret and act on their immediate environmental cues. As a result, the construct of a *situated writing strategist* emerges, one with responsive and adaptive cognitive processes.<sup>2</sup>

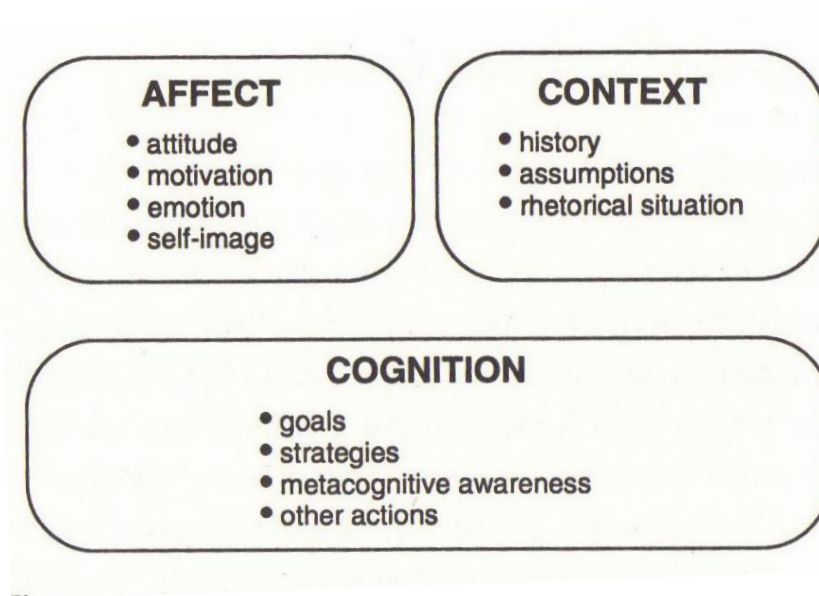
In *The Construction of Negotiated Meaning: A Social Cognitive Theory of Writing* (1994), Flower situates acts of meaning-making "in the minds of individual thinkers whose cognition is embedded and shaped by [their] social contexts and emotional realities" (89). In this sense, cognition "is not a purely mental procedure in the mind of a solitary thinker but interacts with an ongoing social (or physical) activity that provides structure and resources such as people, tools, techniques, and conventions. Nor is cognition always (or even often?) a rational, objective, process...but is an affective, inventive, and goal-directed effort to do something in the world"

<sup>1</sup> The socio-cognitive section extends the work of Flower and Hayes and does not include a review of the social turn literature in composition.

<sup>2</sup> The construct of a situated writing strategist is based on Flower’s and Hayes’ updates to their cognitive process model of writing from 1981. Although Margaret Syverson’s *The Wealth of Reality: An Ecology of Composition* (1999) theorizes writing as an embodied, distributed, and situated process, her work is not discussed here.

(115). Thus, Flower foregrounds the focus of a social cognitive theory of writing on "the play of mind of individual writers," emphasizing that this theory "uses text, talk, thinking, drawing, and even the silence of pauses to understand how the mind of a writer works in context to make sense of its world and to take action in it" (106).

One way Flower developed her social cognitive theory of writing was through a classroom study designed with Barbara Sitko, in which they observed how individual writers actually constructed a "multidimensional picture" of their writing process that "was far more interactive, far more strategic, than their readings (or current textbooks) did justice to" (242). To better account for this multidimensional image, Flower and Sitko mapped graduate students' representations of the writing process, shown below in Fig. 1.2, according to cognition, affect, and context, since "many of the comments writers made reflect the way that cognition is suffused with affect or defined as a response to a given context or situation" (242).



**Fig. 1.2. Flower and Sitko, Multidimensional Representation of the Writing Process (1994).**

Although affect, cognition, and context are depicted above as separate domains, "this theoretical separation is merely a tool that helps illuminate the distinctive contribution each way of

representing writing was making to students' images" (Flower 243). Compared to the Flower-Hayes cognitive process model from the early 1980s, which focused primarily on the individual writer's cognitive processes, long-term memory, and task environment, this descriptive illustration more broadly depicts how "these representations often offer articulate images of writing as an affective process embedded in social contexts past and present, played out as a cognitive act, and guided by the writer's expectations, strategies, decisions, and habits of response" (260).

Significantly, the affect section of the model includes aspects of the writer's attitudes, emotions, motivation, and self-image surrounding the writing process. Flower more specifically describes how "affect here also includes aspirations to be a writer, surprise at themselves, and the less conscious patterns of attribution – the ways students attribute their success or failure to luck, time, or ability versus effort, strategies, or experience" (244). For example, a student named Janet from Flower and Sitko's classroom study encountered a tremendous amount of resistance to writing about academic discourse as a main topic throughout the course. When reflecting on why she felt frustrated and unmotivated to meaningfully write about academic discourse, Janet realized that as a returning student to academia she no longer identified with the self-image of "being a college student" but instead experienced herself as "a professional writer" trying to complete an M.A. degree in professional writing (245). In Flower's classroom, Janet's affect-driven conflict turned into a productive discussion that her fellow students could also identify with as writers, one which raised the question, "How do you motivate yourself?" (246) From this discussion, Janet and her classmates responded to the dilemma of motivation by developing a couple of cognitive strategies for writers, such as re-examining self-imposed constraints on the writing task and adapting the assignment to meet some measure of personal purpose in the writing process (246).



Along the same lines as Flower, Hayes published an updated writing model in “A New Framework for Understanding Cognition and Affect in Writing” (1996), based on the premise that "writing depends on an appropriate combination of cognitive, affective, social, and physical conditions if it is to happen at all" (5). In his individual-environmental model illustrated in Fig. 1.3, the individual writer is robustly represented with cognitive processes and motivation/affect, both interacting and operating between faculties of working memory and long-term memory; the coinciding task environment includes the individual writer’s social environment, composed of an audience and collaborators, in addition to the physical environment of the unfolding text and composing medium.

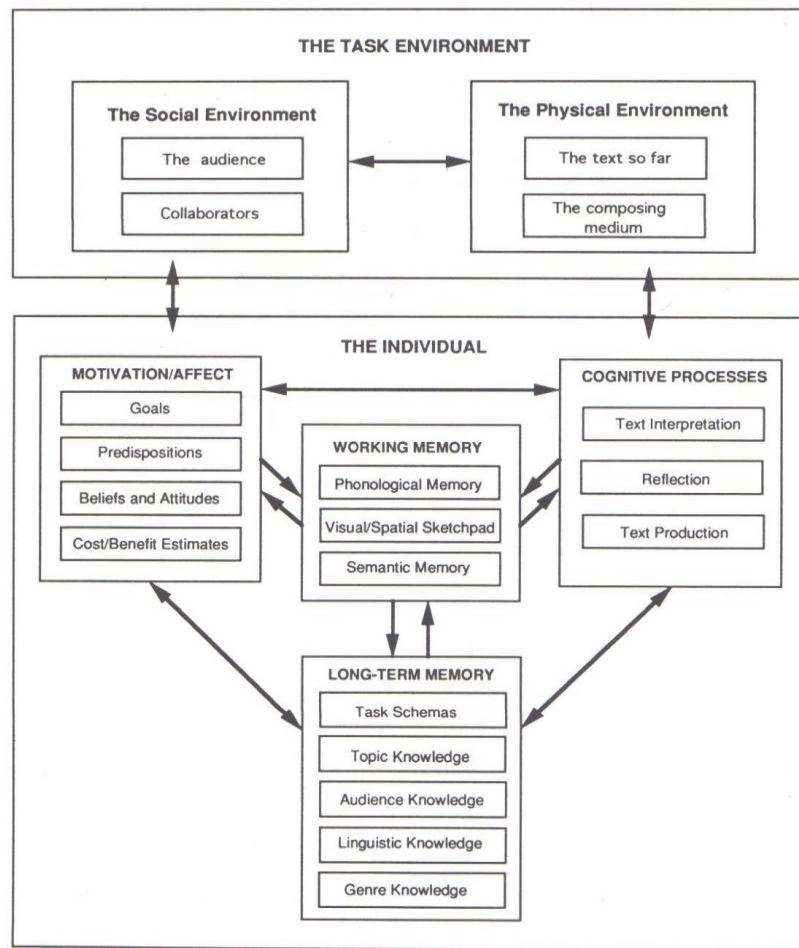


Fig. 1.3. Hayes, Individual-Environmental Model of Writing (1996).

Within this 1996 publication, Hayes highlights several revisions to the Flower-Hayes model from the 1980s, such as “greater attention to the role of working memory in writing, inclusion of the visual-spatial dimension, the integration of motivation and affect with the cognitive processes, and a reorganization of the cognitive processes which places greater emphasis on the function of text interpretation processes in writing” (26). Hayes’ integration of motivation and affect with cognitive processes is noteworthy because it not only complements Flower’s inclusion of affect in her 1994 model, but more explicitly incorporates what Flower and Hayes implicitly noted in several of their early publications on the writing process, that “many affective concerns shape the writer’s priorities and his or her definition of the [writing] task” (“The Dynamics” 42).

In this regard, the motivation and affect section of Hayes’ model encompasses the writer’s goals, predispositions, beliefs and attitudes, and cost/benefit estimates. Hayes proposes these four criteria as further research areas to explore in composition studies, especially when it comes to understanding how writing “is a generative activity requiring motivation” (5). For example, Hayes cites a 1992 study conducted by Palmquist and Young in which they concluded that “[college] students who believed strongly that writing is a gift had significantly higher levels of writing anxiety and significantly lower self-assessments of their ability as writers than other students” (9). In other words, students’ predispositions to writing, based on their beliefs and attitudes of themselves as writers, correspond to their construction of goals and cost/benefit estimates in the immediate task environment.

Flower’s student Janet, mentioned above, initially faced her writing assignments with an unmotivated and frustrated disposition, causing her to write, as she stated, ““with no real purpose at all in mind, you know, just to say something”” (245). The case of Janet can be understood

according to the construct of a *situated writing strategist*, in that, following her predicament as an unmotivated writer, Janet strategized some productive ways to work through her personal situation of returning to school, not identifying with the assignments on academic discourse, and consequently producing writing to simply get the assignment done. Hence, Janet's frustration with her immediate social context led her to affectively and cognitively re-evaluate what would motivate her writing process, a responsive strategy within her situation.

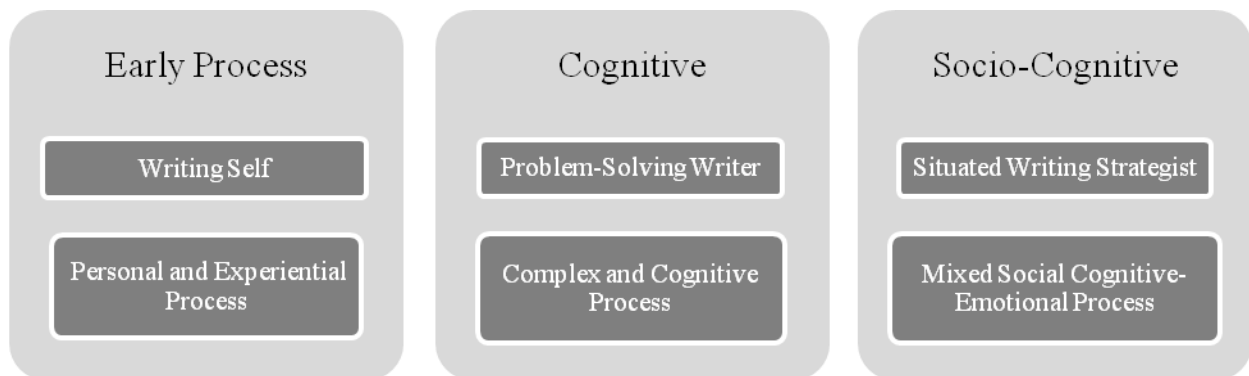
Overall, Flower and Hayes' socio-cognitive models of the writing process represent research in composition studies that attempts to more fully investigate "the minds of individual thinkers whose cognition is embedded and shaped by [their] social contexts and emotional realities" (Flower 89). Nevertheless, this inclusion of affect into their respective models was more a call for broadening how the field accounts for the writing process, rather than a developed theory regarding how emotion and cognition actually interact within the individual writer. Although both Flower and Hayes drew from the cognitive psychology literature of the 1990s, Flower's descriptive model (Fig. 1.2) was based primarily on one classroom study of writing, and Hayes' model (Fig. 1.3) was primarily a synthesis of the literature applied to previous models of writing. In this way, Flower and Hayes' theoretically-driven models highlight what composition research might look for when studying writing as a mixed social cognitive-emotional process.

The socio-cognitive turn that Flower and Hayes took with their research on writers and the writing process during the 1990s is reminiscent of the "cognitive/affective/social-contextual" research paradigm Rose proposed in 1985. By adding affective and social-contextual dimensions to their cognitive-based model of the individual writer from the early 1980s, Flower and Hayes ultimately present two additional frameworks for describing and theorizing *the complexity that we live by* when researching writers and the writing process in composition studies: a socio-cognitive

theory/ multi-dimensional model of writing (Flower) and an individual-environmental model of writing (Hayes). Taken together, these theoretical frameworks from Rose, Flower, and Hayes require investigation with more detailed research on both a theoretical and empirical level if our field wants to acknowledge *the why of writing* (emotion and motivation), as posed by Alice Brand in the chapter's introduction.

### Developing a Construct of the Individual Writer in Composition Theory

The constructs of the individual writer reviewed in this chapter – a *writing self* (early process), a *problem-solving writer* (cognitive), and a *situated writing strategist* (socio-cognitive) – and their corresponding descriptions of the writing process are diagrammed below in Fig. 1.4.



**Fig. 1.4. Constructs of the Individual Writer and Writing Process in Composition Theory.**

In the early process literature, individual writers created a *writing self* by engaging in a personal and experiential writing process; in the cognitive literature, individual writers were encouraged to become *problem-solving writers* by practicing a complex and conscious writing process; and in the socio-cognitive literature, individual writers developed into *situated writing strategists* by drawing on what Flower describes and Hayes depicts as a mixed social cognitive-emotional writing process.

One persistent theme that pervades the scholarly and research literature of these turns is a focus on how individual writers can cultivate an internalized capacity to produce and evaluate their

own writing (and judge others' writing), in ways that demonstrate some level of awareness and interest behind their compositional choices and decisions. Beginning with Murray's claim that students "examine their own evolving writing and that of their classmates, so that they study writing while it is still a matter of choice, word by word" (16), the early process literature that follows suggests strategies of recognizing dissonance (Sommers), attending to felt sense (Perl), and using a writing/response pedagogy in composition classrooms to personally and collectively acquire a feel for judgment during the writing process (Macrorie; Murray; Elbow). Emig points to the problem of ectoderm writers and their lack of personal engagement with the writing process, proposing instead that these writers compose in more reflexive modes. Flower and Hayes, on the other hand, take a more intellectual perspective with their cognitive process model of writing, hoping that writers will concentrate more consciously on their construction of rhetorical problems and their processes of planning, translating, and reviewing to achieve greater effectiveness when composing. The cognitive literature, as a whole, calls for pedagogical strategies of intentional cognition (Bereiter and Scardamalia), drawing attention to the simultaneous layers of concern that drive composing (Berkenkotter and Murray), and helping students understand the rules, plans, and strategies that inform their evaluative decisions about writing (Rose). Finally, the socio-cognitive literature from Flower and Hayes presents writers with an expanded sense of what shapes their writing process, especially through their emotional motivations within a social context.

However, one underlying assumption behind this lineage of composition literature is that individual writers are already motivated and committed to cultivating this internalized sense of judgment within their own writing practices. For instance, when Rose calls for composition instructors to "help our students understand why they say what they do about their writing," his proposed solution is to have students "discuss the reasons behind their compositional choices (or

their reasons behind the judgment of others’ – peers’ or professionals’ – work)” (*Writer’s Block* 21). In some sense, Rose positions students as *invested* stakeholders in exploring their evaluative and decision-making processes as writers, assuming a level of motivation and emotion connected to writing that may not exist, while attempting to facilitate this internalized capacity to judge their own work.

Thus, the composition research presented in this chapter does not fully account for how motivation and emotion make up the individual writer’s commitment, or personal investment, in developing this internalized capacity for juggling and judging his/her compositional choices. Yet in all of these turns, the composition theorists and pedagogues suggest hints of, or directly acknowledge to varying degrees that, motivation and emotion are necessary components when considering how writers generate and evaluate their own texts. For example, in “The Cognition of Discovery” (1980), Flower and Hayes contend that “an audience and exigency can *jolt* a writer into action, but *the force which drives composing* is the writer’s own set of goals, purposes, and intentions” (69 *emphasis added*). However, the motivational force that drives composing, as Flower and Hayes later acknowledge in their socio-cognitive models of writing, includes emotion and motivation interacting with cognitive processes. Therefore, what remains open for investigation, and where my project aims to continue in this line of composition research, is describing and theorizing how emotion and motivation operate in connection with cognition as interconnected psychological processes (discussed in Chapters Two and Three), and why it matters for the individual writer when cultivating an invested concern and capacity for evaluating compositional choices and making ethical decisions during the writing process (discussed in Chapter Four).

## CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUALIZING A FELT LIFE MODEL I: INCORPORATING NEUROBIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE EMOTION PROCESS

As discussed in Chapter One, many writing teachers and scholars throughout the early process, cognitive, and socio-cognitive turns in Composition Studies were concerned with how writers develop some measure of personal meaning, motivation, and interest toward their writing process, with the additional goal of cultivating an internalized capacity for evaluative judgment about their own and others' writing. In turn, I claimed that this literature assumed a level of cognitive-emotional investment connected to writing that may not exist for every individual writer, thereby hindering pedagogical attempts to facilitate a more conscious and reflective level of judgment during the writing process. This proved to be the case, for example, with the novice writers Flower and Hayes observed in their protocol analyses who tended to perceive and interpret the primary goal of their writing task as a "paper-writing problem," in contrast with the displays of intentional cognition that Bereiter and Scardamalia noted in writers who consciously invested their writing process with goals that were at once personally meaningful and rhetorically responsive. I argue that in order to understand how individual writers come to value and invest their writing process with both a motivated disposition and a cultivated practice of reflection and evaluation, we must first account for how investment and judgment *already* operate in the individual, as part of that individual's complex felt life.

Central to a felt life is the role of emotion and its complex relations among motivation, cognition, and action. Mixed within a nexus of beliefs and goals, dreams and desires, and attitudes and expectations, our emotions orient our cognition and motivation in terms of our perceptions, interpretations, evaluations, and overall perspectives, so that our way of being in the world is not simply neutral and evenly experienced, but infused with an intense involvement of the self. Emotions also shape our investments, passions, and participations in the world, as engagements

and interactions with the people, projects, and things we care deeply about, or are concerned with the most, as they relate to our sense of well-being. In this way, emotions heighten our experience of having a meaningful and purposeful life, and it is from this cognitively-rich, motivationally-complex, and socially-oriented stance that we construct and experience what I am calling a felt life.

To explain how our emotions motivate and sustain personal investments in the world and directly affect our capacity to judge what is important to our well-being, I first draw on neurobiological perspectives (Antonio Damasio and Joseph LeDoux) in Chapter Two, followed by psychological (Richard Lazarus and Nico Frijda) and philosophical perspectives (Martha Nussbaum, Ronald de Sousa, and Richard Solomon) in Chapter Three, to describe the key terms and interactions in my felt life model that I contend are valuable for describing and theorizing how we actually perceive, evaluate, and engage with the world as invested and situated individuals. Taking an interdisciplinary approach in their work on emotion, all of these scholars support the idea of biological universals in the emotion process, while also carefully grounding that commonality within the varying cognitive, motivational, developmental, and socio-cultural contexts of individual experience. Through synthesizing these interdisciplinary perspectives on the emotion process, I suggest some defining features of a felt life include the *narrative*, *experiential*, and *subjective* dimensions of an inner mind with a self process, as discussed by the biological perspectives, and the *evaluative*, *relational*, and *reflective* dimensions of an individual's ongoing judgments and engagements with objects in the mind and the world, as discussed by the psychological and philosophical perspectives.



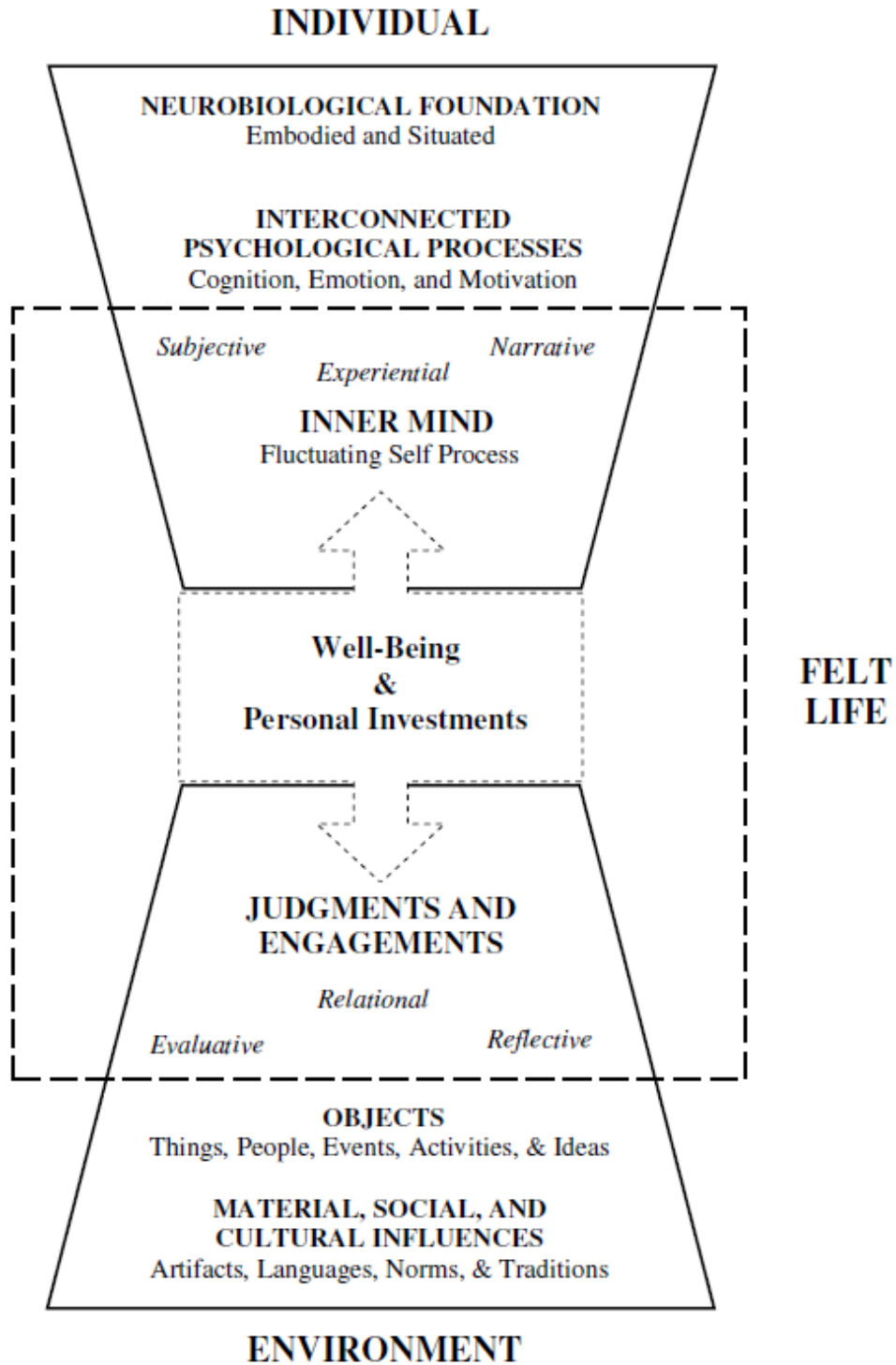


Fig. 2.1. Conceptual Model of a Felt Life.

As shown in my felt life model in Figure 2.1, the individual is constructed with a neurobiological foundation (embodied and situated) that co-influences the interconnected psychological processes of cognition, emotion, and motivation. This model conceptualizes the interconnected cognitive, emotional, and motivational processes of a felt life through the inner mind (experienced through subjective perspectives, constructed memories, and a rich narrative history) judging and engaging with objects (people, material things, abstract ideas, language, events and activities) in the external environment (or internal objects of imagination, memory, and reflection), which co-influence and shape each other based in large part on the individual's personal investments and sense of well-being in the world. An individual's personal investments embody the active goals (concerns, attachments, commitments) and corresponding objects (i.e., people, things, events, activities, ideas) that one cares about or judges important, which significantly influence how one thinks, feels, and acts (i.e., engages with the world). Similarly, the concept of well-being can be defined as an individual's sense of surviving and thriving in the world, as it is co-influenced by one's inner mind and ongoing judgments and engagements with the environment. Both personal investments and well-being guide cognition, emotion, motivation, and behavior in the individual, and collectively play significant roles in animating the dynamic features of a felt life: the narrative, experiential, and subjective dimensions of an inner mind with a self process and the evaluative, relational, and reflective dimensions of an individual's ongoing judgments and engagements with objects.

Conceptualizing an *individual with a complex felt life* begins in this chapter by first considering the essential role of emotion in human cognition, as framing, focusing, and motivating our capacities to think, feel, and act in the world as invested and situated individuals. From this standpoint, I incorporate Antonio Damasio's theory of biological value and consciousness to build

a neurobiological foundation of the self, which I see in terms of the experiential, subjective, and narrative dimensions of an inner mind with a self process. Then, I turn to Joseph LeDoux's classifications of the implicit and explicit aspects of the self to describe the underlying workings of cognition, emotion, and motivation as interconnected psychological processes, which will be further explored in Chapter Three in terms of judgments and engagements through the psychological and philosophical perspectives on the emotion process.

### **Establishing the Essential Role of Emotion in Human Cognition**

Within the literature, a common way of conceptualizing the essential role of emotion in human cognition is to imagine a person without the capacity to experience emotions, such as the profile offered here by the social psychologist Rudolf Dreikurs:

His thinking ability could provide him with much information. He could figure out what he should do, but never would be certain as to what is right and wrong in a complicated situation. He would not be able to take a definite stand, to act with force, with conviction, because complete objectivity is not conducive to forceful actions. This requires a strong personal bias, an elimination of certain factors which logically may contradict opposing factors. Such a person would be cold, almost inhuman. He could not experience any association which would make him biased and one-sided in his perspectives. He could not want anything very much and could not go after it. In short, he would be completely ineffectual as a human being. (qtd. in Lazarus, *Stress*, 100)

This thought experiment's cognitive implications, that a person without the influence of emotion is detached and constrained in his or her perspective-taking, decision-making, and judgment, has been illustrated more recently by neurobiologist Antonio Damasio through his research and clinical treatment of brain-damaged patients in *Descartes' Error* (1994). After being diagnosed and treated for a brain tumor "the size of a small orange" on his frontal lobes (36), Elliot, one of Damasio's most notable and frequently referenced cases within the emotion literature, struggled to negotiate the personal and social demands of daily living, such as making sound financial decisions, judging other people's character, and connecting emotionally with his family. Much to

Damasio's dismay, Elliot successfully passed an array of psychological tests that measured his intelligence, memory, problem-solving abilities, and even his personality; however, his poor judgments and decisions outside of a laboratory setting reflected the reality of a person who had become "unable to reason and decide in ways conducive to the maintenance and betterment of himself and his family, no longer capable of succeeding as an independent human being" (38).

It was not until Elliot participated in an experiment conducted by Damasio's colleague Daniel Tranel that he attributed Elliot's personal difficulties and disastrous decision-making choices to his emotions. In the experiment, Tranel showed Elliot a series of images such as "buildings collapsing in earthquakes, houses burning, [and] people injured in gory accidents or about to drown in floods," only to learn from Elliot's subjective report that he could no longer feel strong emotions towards scenes that most likely would have generated an emotional response prior to his brain damage (45). Linking Elliot's experiential account with observations from Elliot's family, including his own observations of Elliot's "mellow" and "neutral note" after hours of conversation, Damasio writes: "Elliot was able to recount the tragedy of his life with a detachment that was out of step with the magnitude of the events. He was always controlled, always describing scenes as a dispassionate, uninvolved spectator. Nowhere was there a sense of his own suffering, even though he was the protagonist" (44-45). Similar to Dreikurs' profile above, Damasio's account of Elliot is that of a person without any emotional involvement of the self, devoid of personal investments and motivated actions.

Further assessments of Elliot's responses to ethical dilemmas, moral values, and social consequences were conducted in light of this insight about his emotions, but these too were located in a laboratory setting and met with passing performances. Eventually, Damasio concluded that in these tests Elliot did not actually have to choose and make a decision after reasoning through a

problem or imagining potential consequences to an uncertain social situation. In this way, the tests were not measuring Elliot's in-process reasoning or decision-making, which in real life would more accurately resemble a complex set of circumstances and constraints, new options to choose from, and an interactive series of selected responses to an ongoing, context-driven engagement with the world (49). According to Damasio, "The defect [in Elliot's decision-making] appeared to set in at the late stages of reasoning, close to or at the point at which choice making and response selection must occur. In other words, whatever went wrong went wrong late in the [cognitive] process," resulting in real life situations where "Elliot was unable to choose effectively...not choose at all...or choose badly" (50). Due to his blunted emotions, Elliot ultimately struggled to "assign different values to different options," which in Damasio's words "made his decision-making landscape hopelessly flat" (51).

Through carefully studying Elliot's struggles of "knowing but not feeling," Damasio emphasizes that "real life faces us with a greater mix of pictorial and linguistic material. We are confronted with people and objects; with sights, sounds, smells, and so on; with scenes of varying intensities; and with whatever narratives, verbal or pictorial, we create to accompany them" (45, 50). Consequently, we rely on the interconnected relationship between cognition and emotion as inseparable from "how we perceive, evaluate, reason, remember, and make decisions" (Smith and Kirby 76), especially within personal and social contexts which require us to navigate and negotiate the complex demands of daily living. As philosopher Ronald de Sousa explains, this is the case because our "emotions are among the mechanisms that control the crucial factor of salience among what would otherwise be an unmanageable plethora of objects of attention, interpretations, and strategies of inference and conduct" (xv). In other words, human cognition without the capacity to process and experience emotion means "reason has no point or focus"

(Solomon 5) – a predicament that unfortunately cost Elliot a great deal within the broader context of his felt life.

Thus, contrary to an intellectual and cultural history that often pits emotion against cognition, a growing body of evidence now confirms that our emotions have a complex, interdependent, and vital role in human cognition, rather than a stereotypically inferior, separate, or entirely disruptive position. From the way we perceive the world to how we enact complex decision-making, Damasio and other neurobiologists have increasingly discovered, since the 1990s, that “emotion and cognition are neurally interdependent and have a strong influence on each other” (Forgas 14). Their close studies of neural systems involving perception, memory, emotion, and motivation, to name just a few, have underscored the significance of unconscious processes in shaping and influencing our thoughts, emotions, motivations and actions, as distinct from, and in addition to, the conscious mental content of our subjective experiences and feelings. As the next two sections demonstrate through Antonio Damasio’s and Joseph LeDoux’s constructs of the self, our neurobiological foundation coordinates and connects the physiological, psychological, and social aspects of the individual through the brain-body’s neural systems, constituting the underlying workings of an inner mind with a self-process.

### **Building a Neurobiological Foundation of the Self**

Damasio’s depiction of Elliot in the previous section was that of a person *knowing* but not *feeling* his moment-by-moment engagements with the socio-cultural environment. Detached and dispassionate in his overall affect, demeanor, and actions, Elliot had the ability to narrate and recount his life history but without a *felt connection* to those lived and recalled experiences. Without a felt connection to his unfolding engagements with the world, Damasio claimed Elliot was unable to assign different values to different objects, people, and events, thereby affecting his

cognitive abilities to make logical, conscientious decisions and to manage his complex felt life more broadly. In this way, the blunted nature and even absence of Elliot's subjective feelings not only points to the failed integration of his cognition and emotion as psychological processes, but also calls into question the neurobiology behind the felt connection Damasio claims is imperative for having a conscious and subjective state of mind.

In his recent publication *Self Comes to Mind* (2010), Damasio argues building a neurobiological foundation of the self – one that experiences a felt connection to the world – begins with the body, the brain, and what he claims is the driving principle behind the evolution of our conscious minds: *biological value*. Broadly defined, biological value encompasses what we need to survive, and, at its core, involves “the matter of a living individual struggling to maintain life and the imperative needs that arise in the struggle” (46). Also known as life regulation, or the homeostatic process of “managing life inside a body,” Damasio attributes biological value as the root of our ongoing, unconscious concern with survival and our more deliberate concern with well-being, or quality of life (60). Sketching the underlying processes behind the self requires understanding this hybrid interaction between unconscious life regulation and conscious life regulation, whereby biological value and consciousness mutually enhance our notion of what it means to experience an inner mind.

According to Damasio, “Consciousness came into being because of biological value, as a contributor to more effective life management. But consciousness did not invent biological value or the process of valuation. Eventually, in human minds, consciousness revealed biological value and allowed the development of new ways of managing it” (28). At the level of the body and without the aid of a conscious mind, homeostasis, as a process of valuation, relies on our organism's cellular abilities to detect and measure changes between our current physiological state

and its desired homeostatic range (“the balanced range of body chemistries compatible with healthy life” (46)), followed by its responsive release of chemical molecules as states of reward or punishment to incentivize the body to correct any physiological imbalances (49). Our body’s basic homeostatic design, while essential to life, is nevertheless limited in predicting or preventing aversive conditions that may affect our chances for survival and adaptation. Thus, Damasio claims, “evolution took care of this problem by introducing devices that allow organisms to anticipate imbalances and that motivate them to explore environments likely to offer solutions” (44).

Under this view, the limitations of basic homeostasis were eventually complemented by the development of brains and their enhanced life management systems, including drives, motivations, and emotions, leading in later evolutionary stages to a more conscious awareness of biological value through our thoughts, feelings, and subjective experiences. As discussed shortly, these more complex systems of drives, motivations, and emotions continue to fundamentally operate along the same lines, and in connection with, the valuation process of basic homeostasis (detection, measurement, and response), but with the advantages afforded by the brain’s ability to construct *neural maps* of “everything and of anything, inside our body and around it, concrete as well as abstract, actual or previously recorded in memory,” for the purposes of enhancing life management through its production of images in the mind (70).

With the help of billions and billions of neurons (nerve cells) located throughout the brain, the spinal cord, and the sensory and motor systems in the body, a continuous exchange of information about the body’s perceived or recalled interactions with the environment is sent to the brain, processed and interpreted, and responded to through networks of neural connection patterns transmitting electrical-chemical signals (neurotransmitters). These neural networks of



information, or neural maps, are “not static [but] mercurial, changing from moment to moment to reflect the changes that are happening in the neurons that feed them, which in turn reflect changes in the interior of the body and in the world around us” (67). As Damasio explains:

We are born with certain connection patterns, put into place under the instruction of our genes. These connections were already influenced by several environmental factors in the womb. After birth individual experiences in unique environments get to work on that first connection pattern, pruning it away, making certain connections strong and others weak, thickening or thinning the cables in the network, under the influence of our own activities. Learning and creating memory are simply the process of chiseling, modeling, shaping, doing, and redoing our individual brain wiring diagrams. The process that began at birth continues until death makes us part with life, or some time before, if Alzheimer’s disease disrupts the process. (300)

As the excerpt above indicates, this lifelong modification of neural connections is primarily shaped through our embodied and situated engagements with the world, whereby our brains map everything from the internal state and external actions of our bodies to the objects, events, and relationships surrounding us in the environment. In turn, these neural patterns become represented consciously and unconsciously in our minds as *images*. What we tend to perceive as the sensations and feelings we attribute to our bodies and inner experiences, such as “sights, sounds, touches, smells, tastes, pains, pleasures, and the like,” are the corresponding *felt* images of our conscious minds and their neural basis in brain maps (70). In other words, we become consciously aware of the images in our mind when “they *feel* like something to us” (158). However, most of the images created from neural maps are processed unconsciously; that is, they “never get the favors of consciousness and are not heard from, or seen directly” but are nevertheless “capable of influencing our thinking and our actions” (72). Conscious or unconscious, the crucial point about images is that “[they] are given more or less saliency in the mental stream according to their *value* for the individual,” which is shaped by “the original set of dispositions that orients our life regulation, as well as from the valuations that all images we have gradually acquired in our

experience have been accorded, based on the original set of value dispositions during our past history” (72). Therefore, the valuations we acquire, learn, and revise throughout our lives, and the images that explicitly reveal those valuations to us in the form of conscious *feelings*, continue to have “a direct or indirect connection with homeostasis” because at their core they pertain to our organism’s need for survival and desire for well-being (47).

In making the case that our brain circuitry is centrally concerned with biological value, Damasio shows how several systems of life regulation, such as our drives, motivations, and emotions, evolved to extend and complement our organism’s basic homeostatic design due to the development of neurons and their body-brain communication pathways. Similar to the body’s cellular recognition of homeostatic changes and urgent need for correction through the release of chemical molecules as states of reward and punishment, neurons, and their connection patterns of information about the body and everything that surrounds it, help the brain “know what the past state of the body has been [so it] can be told of modifications occurring in that state..., [which] is essential if the brain is to produce corrective responses to changes that threaten life” (94). For example, one corrective response designed by evolution and involving neural systems includes having the brain inform the body “how to construct an emotional state” (94). The following passage from Damasio usefully describes how an *emotional state*, operating as an integration of “complex, largely automated programs of action [“from facial expressions and postures to changes in viscera and internal milieu”] ... complemented by a cognitive program that includes certain ideas and modes of cognition,” unfolds within our organism (109):

Emotions work when images processed in the brain call into action a number of emotion-triggering regions (e.g., the amygdala or special regions of the frontal lobe cortex). Once any of these trigger regions is activated, certain consequences ensue – chemical molecules are secreted by endocrine glands and by subcortical nuclei and delivered to both the brain and the body (e.g., cortisol in the case of fear), certain actions are taken (e.g., fleeing or freezing; contraction of the gut, again in the case of fear), and certain expressions are

assumed (e.g., a face and posture of terror). Importantly, in humans at least, certain ideas and plans also come to mind (e.g., a negative emotion such as sadness leads to the recall of ideas about negative facts; a positive emotion does the opposite; the plans of action pictured in our minds are also in keeping with the overall signal of the emotion). Certain styles of mental processing are promptly instituted as an emotion develops. Sadness slows down thinking and may lead one to dwell on the situation that prompted it; joy may accelerate thinking and reduce attention to unrelated events. The aggregate of all these responses constitutes an ‘emotional state’ unfolding in time, fairly rapidly, and then subsiding until new stimuli capable of causing emotions are introduced into the mind and begin yet another chain reaction. (110-111)

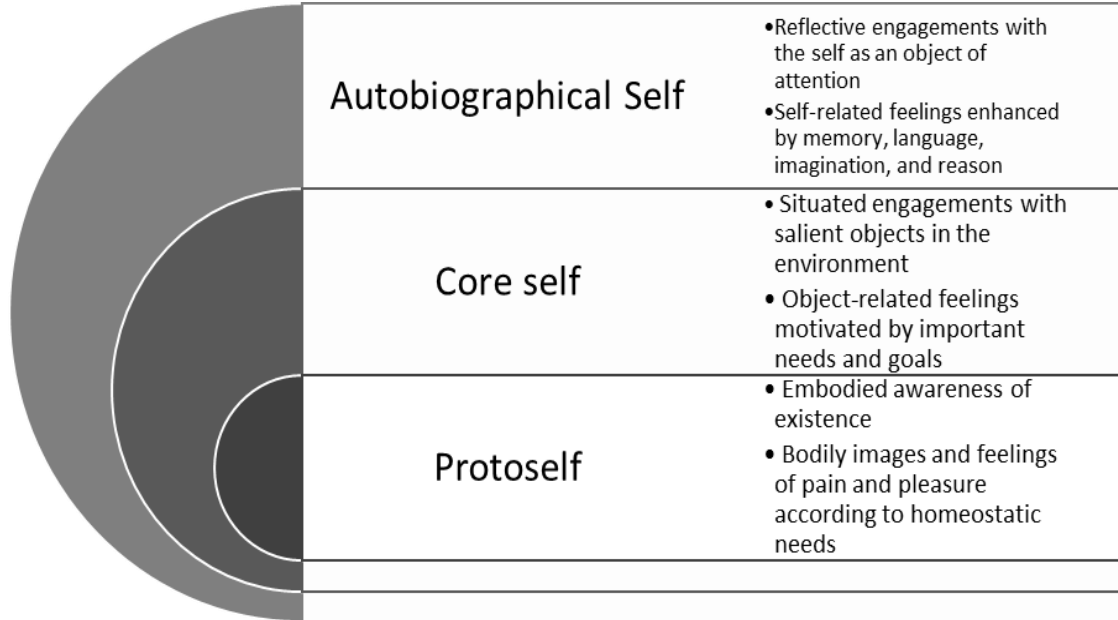
Triggered by images that are directly or indirectly related to biological value for us as a species or as individuals, the emotion process operates in conjunction with incentives like chemical molecules (hormones and neurotransmitters) and drives and motivations (appetites and desires) to guide physiological, cognitive, and action programs. In this way, our drives, motivations, and emotions continue to reflect the same basic homeostatic design mentioned earlier, such as “the sensing and detection of conditions, the measurement of degrees of internal need, the incentive process with its reward and punishment aspects, [and] the prediction devices,” but with the help of neural systems (111). The key evolutionary difference is that the brain’s propensity for map-making and image-making changed the way we engage with the world by providing us with “more details of the conditions inside and outside,” thereby “generat[ing] more differentiated and effective responses” (57). Furthermore, with the help of long-term memory, previously recorded images could be recalled and further modified through reasoning, reflecting, imagining, and decision-making, highlighting the adaptational advantages afforded by a conscious mind capable of “effective anticipation of situations, previewing of possible outcomes, navigation of the possible future, and invention of management solutions” (176). Based on Damasio’s account, the emotion process and its gradual intertwining with consciousness eventually led to what we now readily experience as subjective feelings.

As a neurologically separate but interconnected part of the emotion process, Damasio points out that feelings, the subjective “offspring” of emotions, provide us with “composite perceptions of what happens in our body and mind when we are emoting” (108, 110). He notes that “while emotions are actions accompanied by ideas and certain modes of thinking,” our feelings explicitly reveal “the actions, the ideas, [and] the style with which ideas flow – fast or slow, stuck on an image, or rapidly trading one for another,” usually as “late cognitive reactions to the emotion underway” (111, 119). With respect to the body, feelings are experienced as “images of actions rather than actions themselves,” making it possible for “external emotional expressions” to be “partially inhibited” by ongoing modes of conscious processing like reflection or reason (110, 124). Furthermore, feelings tend to be “connected to the object that caused them,” in terms of what we perceive as the triggering-image or reason behind why we are experiencing an emotional state (116). In lieu of their perceptive and experiential qualities, Damasio argues the most relevant aspect of feelings is their role in constructing a conscious self.

“Consciousness,” Damasio proposes, “is not merely about images in the mind,” but “the fact that the myriad contents displayed in my mind, regardless of how vivid or well ordered, [are] *connected* with me, the proprietor of my mind... and, no less important, the fact that the connection [is] *felt*” (10, 4). Simply put, “There [is] a *feelingness* to the experience of the connected me,” which characterizes the conscious self (4). Damasio hypothesizes that this felt connection developed in its level of complexity over time, across evolutionary and developmental contexts, in three well-defined but now interconnected levels of consciousness: the protoself, the core self, and the autobiographical self. As fluctuating states of consciousness, Damasio’s theoretical constructs capture the fluid nature behind the self as a process, “suspended [only] by dreamless sleep, anesthesia, or brain disease” (8). His notion of our brain’s *self process*, ranging from “barely

there to salient,” showcases the dynamic contribution of our emotions and feelings in constructing the experiential, subjective, and narrative aspects of our inner mind (9).

Due to our brain’s propensity for mapping images of its own body, Damasio suggests that the *protoself* consists of neural processes devoted to mapping images of pain and pleasure which pertain to the body’s perceived states in relation to its desired homeostatic ranges. Since neurons and their information networks connect the body and the brain as a “dynamic, bonded unit,” Damasio believes “this unit enacts a functional fusion of body states and perceptual states, such that the dividing line between the two can no longer be drawn” (257). In this way, the information delivered by neural processes “would not be merely *about* the state of the flesh but literally extensions of the flesh. [That is], neurons would imitate life so thoroughly that they would become one with it” (257). The bodily feelings of the protoself, then, “occur spontaneously and continuously whenever one is awake,” “provid[ing] a direct experience of one’s own living body, wordless, unadorned, and connected to nothing but sheer existence” (21). As the following image shows, the protoself is the source of both the core self and the autobiographical self, anchoring our subjective experiences as they pertain to having a body-mind that engages with the world and narrates and reflects upon our past, present, and future selves from within this embodied and situated perspective.



**Fig. 2.2. Damasio's Constructs of the Conscious Self.**

As an extension and modification of the protoself's embodied awareness of existence, the *core self* consists of neural processes mapping the body's situated engagements with objects in the environment (things, people, events, activities, ideas). These situated engagements are governed by “‘feeling[s] of knowing an object,’ as distinct from other objects in the moment” (203). Damasio describes this feeling of knowing as “a generation of ‘saliency’ for the engaging object, a process generally subsumed by the term *attention*, [or] a drawing in of processing resources toward one particular object more than others” (203). As previously discussed, the brain perceives an object's saliency for the self when it directly or indirectly relates to biological value and its corresponding spectrum of survival and well-being. In concert with the emotion process, the core self's object-related feelings are therefore motivated by “the needs and goals of the organism” (205). At this level, the core self provides the mind with a “wordless narrative” of its situated engagements with the environment, as a series of salient images that are observed but not quite “interpreted” (204).

Finally, the *autobiographical self* emerges “when the brain manages to introduce a knower in the mind” (11). Built on the bodily feelings of the protoself and the object-related feelings of the core self, the autobiographical self adds self-related feelings to the mix, making the contents of our mind knowable in the guise of an imagined “experiencer” and “protagonist” (11). This first-person, introspective view of the mind is usually organized and interpreted by “the sum total of our life experiences, including the experiences of the plans we have made for the future, specific or vague” (210). By extending the core self with enhanced image-making processes such as memory, imagination, reason, and language, the autobiographical self showcases our reflective engagements with “the self” as an object of attention, as opposed to the core self’s situated engagements with objects in the environment as sources of attention. Based on this distinction between the core self and the autobiographical self, Damasio writes, “When we need to attend to external stimuli, our conscious mind brings the object under scrutiny into the foreground and lets the self retreat into the background. When we are unsolicited by the outside world, our self moves closer to center stage and may even move further forward when the object under scrutiny is our own person, alone or in its social setting” (229). Such words not only emphasize the shifting on-screen, off-screen presence of the autobiographical self, but further reflect the fluctuating nature of consciousness as “being awake, having a mind, and having a self” (166).<sup>3</sup>

When viewed together, Damasio’s constructs of the protoself, core self, and autobiographical self “merge seamlessly on any given day,” constituting the *conscious* and therefore *felt* dimensions of our inner mind (166). But the inner mind, as alluded to earlier, is primarily shaped by unconscious processes that “percolate along outside of awareness” (LeDoux 259). According to Joseph LeDoux, these implicit processes account for “almost everything the

<sup>3</sup> In what Damasio describes as three states of consciousness, “being awake, having a mind, and having a self” (166), I refer to as the experiential, subjective, and narrative features of a felt life (see Fig. 2.1).

brain does, from standard body maintenance like regulating heart rate, breathing rhythm, stomach contractions, and posture, to controlling many aspects of seeing, smelling, behaving, feeling, speaking, thinking, evaluating, judging, believing, and imagining” (10). “Consciousness,” he claims, is usually “informed after the fact, [if at all]” (10-11).

To gain a better picture of how the underlying processes of our inner mind operate, I now turn to LeDoux’s classifications of implicit (unconscious) and explicit (conscious). The next section substantially narrows its scope of investigation to the interconnected psychological processes of cognition, emotion, and motivation, with attention given to the constructs of working memory and long-term memory.

### **Investigating the Implicit and Explicit Aspects of the Self**

Drawing on terminology from cognitive science and memory studies, LeDoux accounts for the self as having *explicit* aspects, which we are consciously aware of and represent knowable parts of the self, and *implicit* aspects, which are “not immediately available to consciousness, either because they are by their nature inaccessible, or because they are accessible but are not being accessed at the moment” (27-28). Under an explicit notion of the self, LeDoux suggests we usually fluctuate in our consciousness between a “minimum and narrative self,” with the *minimum self* embodying “an immediate consciousness of one’s self” and the *narrative self* reflecting “a coherent self-consciousness that extends with past and future stories that we tell about ourselves” (20).<sup>4</sup> These explicit states of self and consciousness are distinct from an implicit notion of the self, animated more “in the things we do, and the way we do them, rather than in the things we know” (116). Both implicit and explicit aspects of the self, LeDoux argues, are important for

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<sup>4</sup> Here I see LeDoux’s explicit notions of a *minimum self* and a *narrative self* corresponding with Damasio’s constructs of a *protoself* and an *autobiographical self*.



understanding how the human mind works in terms of interconnected cognitive, emotional, and motivational processes.

From a neurobiological foundation of “different genes” and “different experiences,” LeDoux’s construct of the self is by no means a “static” entity (3). Rather, he notes, “It is added to and subtracted from by genetic maturation, learning, forgetting, stress, aging, and disease” (29). LeDoux suggests that while the self’s flexible constitution and ongoing construction across a lifetime showcases our individuality, it also reflects the evolutionary design of specialized neural systems, allowing our species to share common mental, emotional, and behavioral repertoires. Some of these specialized neural systems include “sensory function, motor control, emotion, motivation, arousal, visceral regulation, and thinking, reasoning, and decision-making,” and they are all “capable of being modified by experience” (303).

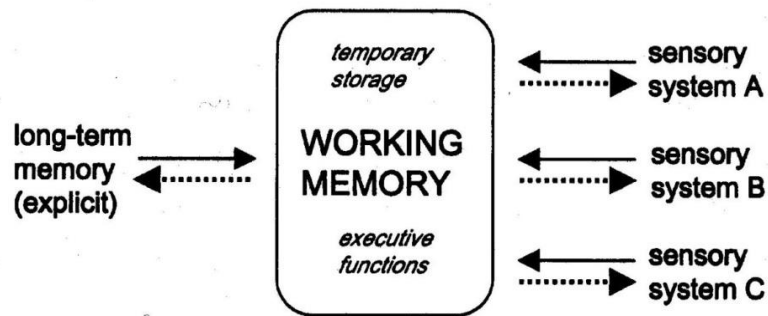
For example, in startling situations like being attacked by a dog in front of a neighbor’s house, our innate capacity to detect danger and respond quickly through our defensive and emotional systems provides an immediate opportunity to protect ourselves from harm. LeDoux claims just as our defensive systems are designed to process dangerous stimuli in the environment, our emotion systems operate when “the brain determines or computes the *value* of a stimulus” (206). Emotion systems related to fear, for instance, have been “programmed by evolution to respond to some stimuli, so-called innate or unconditioned stimuli, like predators or pain” for survival purposes (303). However, LeDoux indicates that “many of the things that elicit emotions in us or motivate us to act in certain ways are not preprogrammed into our brains as part of our species’ heritage but have to be learned by each of us,” corresponding to the objects (things, people, events, activities, ideas) we come to individually associate and evaluate as important to our subjective well-being (303). In the case of the dog attack, fear-learning circuits in the brain

may create long-term associations between stimuli in the environment (e.g., the dog and the neighbor's house) by modifying the kinds of objects that elicit fear in the individual. That is, a neutral object like the neighbor's house where the dog attack occurred might acquire fear-eliciting responses long after the incident, in which the neighbor's house, not to mention the dog, might be avoided altogether or treated with extreme caution as a result of these learned modifications to the defensive and emotional systems.

Moreover, beyond merely reacting to innate or learned emotional stimuli, LeDoux also draws attention to the cognitive processes that our emotional arousal calls on, in order to facilitate further courses of thought and action within a situation. Specifically, he notes that "attention, perception, memory, decision-making, and the conscious concomitants of each are all swayed in emotional states ... [because] emotional arousal organizes and coordinates brain activity" across different neural systems (225). When this occurs, the arousal and emotion systems urgently alert us that "something important is going on," and contribute to "all mental functions" in directing the self to pay attention to what is happening in the immediate environment or one's consciousness (*Emotional* 298, 289). Therefore, even though emotional arousal organizes and coordinates different brain systems implicitly, its allocation of cognitive processes also affords some explicit measure of controlled attention, deliberation, and planned action within a situation through our working memory.

Acting as an interconnected information processing network between implicit and explicit brain systems, *working memory* is the mechanism which allows us to gain conscious access to the "consequences" or "products" of our underlying mental processes (192), in the form of what we are "currently thinking about or paying attention to," especially in the case of our emotional feelings (174). As shown below in Fig. 2.3, working memory operates as both a temporary storage

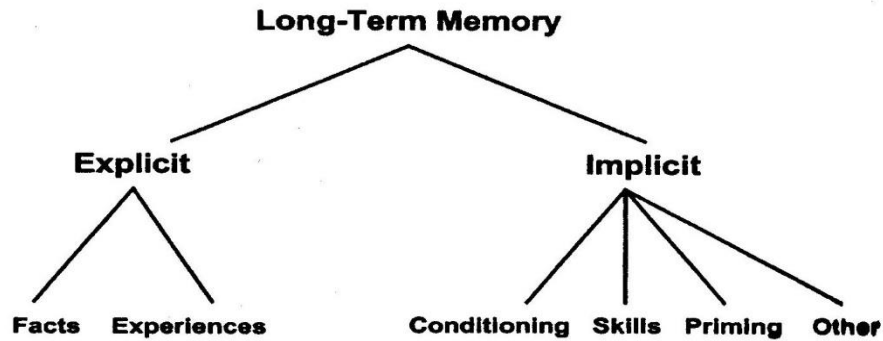
space and a highly active mental workspace for its “executive functions” to process and manage different sources of incoming information between long-term memory and other specialized systems (both *nonverbal*, such as sensory and arousal systems, and *verbal*, such as language comprehension). Cognitively, these specialized systems are “dedicated to specific mental tasks” and interact with the more general-purpose system of working memory, which is “utilized in *all* active thinking processes and problem-solving” (175-176). Altogether, the incoming sources of information from long-term memory and other specialized systems are integrated by the executive functions “work[ing] behind the scenes” of consciousness (176), which “juggle” and “manipulate” information in the workspace through such cognitive processes as “comparing, contrasting, judging, predicting,” along with “monitoring, resource allocation, task management, conflict resolution, [and] memory retrieval” (191-192). Working memory, therefore, is “not the function of one [brain] region but of a complex interconnected network in the prefrontal cortex” (198).



**Fig. 2.3. LeDoux, Working Memory (179).**

Furthermore, LeDoux notes working memory is “not a pure product of the here and now,” but is intimately connected to, and dependent on, long-term memory in determining “what we know and what kinds of experiences we’ve had in the past” (176). Long-term memory, as the following illustration demonstrates, branches out into explicit and implicit categories, reflecting

key differences between what we can consciously recall in terms of facts and life experiences and those habitual ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving that we enact, often without even realizing it.

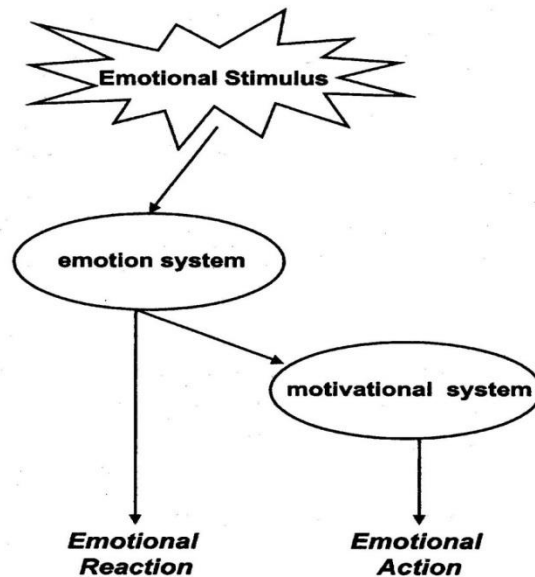


**Fig. 2.4. LeDoux, Long-Term Memory (102).**

In short, explicit memory is relational in its processing capacities, allowing one recalled image to trigger another recalled image in working memory, such as in the following cases: “Remembering a person or event or telling a story necessitates recall; recognizing objects and situations around us necessitates recall as well; so does thinking about objects with which we have interacted and about events we have perceived, and so does the entire imaginative process with which we plan for the future” (LeDoux 115; Damasio 136). Without explicit memory, it would be impossible to imagine, innovate, solve complex problems, or construct an autobiographical self (LeDoux 115). Implicit memory, on the other hand, is domain-specific and composed of innate or learned procedures, skills, and conditioned responses. According to LeDoux, “The systems that engage in implicit learning are not strictly speaking memory systems. They were designed to perform specific functions, like perceiving stimuli, controlling precise movements, maintaining balance, regulating circadian rhythm, detecting friend and foe, finding food, and so on” (117). Without implicit memory, our brains and bodies would not function as automatically or efficiently as they do, hindering the very processes that keep us alive and adaptive to life’s changing

circumstances. Both explicit and implicit memory processes are imperative for “learning and storing information...about things that are *significant* in people’s lives” (31).

For all of the advantages working memory affords in terms of everyday thinking, problem-solving, and accomplishing complex tasks like writing (Kellogg; Hayes), its major limitations are that it cannot be overloaded with too much information or information that represents conflicting goals (179). This means that the mental content we are thinking about and paying attention to at any given moment, such as “an idea, an image, a sensation, a feeling,” is selective and “can be occupied by mundane facts or highly charged emotions” (175; *Emotional* 19). In the process of perceiving an object like an apple, for example, LeDoux writes, “Our perception of an apple is not just based on the integration of the shape and form and other visual features of the object, but also on the integration of these [sensory] features with information stored in [long-term] memory about the object and our experiences with it, and its [emotional and motivational] significance for us at the moment, in the past, and in the future” (312). Thus, if an emotion system detects the apple as an object of value for the individual, then “emotion comes to monopolize consciousness” because “it can override the selection process and slip into working memory” (226, 228). In this way, LeDoux argues the brain is not only aroused by an emotion system, causing an individual to react to an emotional stimulus (the apple), but the brain also assumes a motive state, described by LeDoux as “coordinated information processing within and across regions,” “result[ing] in the invigoration and guidance of behavior toward positive goals and away from aversive ones” (247). Of particular significance here is the emotion system’s influence on the motivational system, where it facilitates not only an individual’s *emotional reaction* but also guides his or her *emotional action* (Fig. 2.5).



**Fig. 2.5. LeDoux, Emotional and Motivational Systems (237).**

Working together, the emotion system activates the motivational system in the brain as “neural activity that guides us toward goals” (236). LeDoux defines *goals* as “outcomes we desire and for which we will exert effort, or ones that we dread and will exert effort to prevent, escape from, or avoid,” and classifies them as both concrete objects (e.g., “a particular consumer product”) or abstract ideas and beliefs (e.g., “freedom is worth dying for”; “hard work will lead to success”) (236). *Incentives*, or the objects of our goals, range from “intrinsically motivating (as in the case of food, water, and painful stimulation)” to “others [that] acquire motivating properties through our experiences with them” (236). Incentives that we acquire through our lived experiences “can arise by association (when a stimulus with a low value occurs in connection with one of higher value), by observational learning (seeing the way a stimulus affects other people), by word of mouth (hearing about whether something is good or bad), or by sheer force of the imagination” (236). The significance of goals, then, is that they are responsible for motivating mental and behavioral action in relation to an emotional stimulus or incentive. Without goals, we would not

react emotionally to stimuli in our environments, nor would our brains assume a motive state to cognitively and behaviorally guide emotional action.

Therefore, this motivated brain state is a major goal of the emotion process, allowing the individual to make decisions and take necessary actions as a result of these interconnected cognitive, emotional, and motivational processes. Recall Damasio's brain-damaged patient, Elliot, who experienced the world devoid of emotional processing in his perspective-taking, decision-making, and judgment because of a lesion that affected his prefrontal cortex. In his analysis of Elliot's condition, LeDoux suggests that the brain damage resulted in "a dissociation between cognitive and emotional aspects of working memory," in which there was "a breakdown in [Elliot's] ability to use emotional information to guide thoughts and actions" (253, 306). Without the biased influence of his emotions, Elliot's cognition could not incorporate the emotional and motivational significance of the people closest to him (e.g., his wife and children), thereby inhibiting his ability to make decisions and take actions that considered his own and his family's well-being (e.g., mismanaging the family finances through poor judgments). Furthermore, Elliot's subjectivity reflected that of an "uninvolved spectator" rather than an engaged "protagonist" when speaking about his own life (Damasio 44) – a point worth re-emphasizing since even the explicit aspects of Elliot's self did not resonant with important goals, or what I am calling *personal investments*.<sup>5</sup>

When the brain is capable of implicitly integrating cognitive, emotional, and motivational processes, however, the self shows evidence of important goals through the mental content of our inner mind (thoughts, feelings, sensations, images) and the judgments and engagements (words, expressions, behaviors, actions) that shape our interactions in the world. Although not always

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<sup>5</sup> I will begin using my term for goals, *personal investments*, in Chapter Three, where I present a more comprehensive synthesis of the felt life model.

known to us inwardly or revealed to others outwardly, many of our goals are “acquired through the use of language” and enhance the explicit notions we have about ourselves and our world by helping the executive functions of working memory categorize and organize information (257). Since language “radically alters the brain’s ability to compare, contrast, discriminate, and associate on-line, in real time, and to use such information to guide thinking and problem-solving,” LeDoux claims our self-concept, conscious knowledge, and decision-making capacities expand when our goals are explicitly named and processed through specialized brain systems involved with language (197). It is “the structuring of cognition around language,” LeDoux argues, that is crucial to the development of our explicit selves (197); language, therefore, plays a significant role in shaping how the self explicitly negotiates “an on-the-fly construction about who we are that reflects who we’ve been (past selves), and who we want and don’t want to be (future selves)” within the “stable yet mutable” processing networks of working memory (255).

On the other hand, LeDoux’s treatment of working memory also reveals that although “we try to willfully dictate who we are, and how we will behave...we are only partially effective in doing so, since we have imperfect conscious access to emotional systems, which play such a crucial role in coordinating learning by other systems” (323). Similar to Damasio’s argument that the brain is motivated by biological value, LeDoux believes “our brain has not evolved to the point where the new [cognitive] systems that make complex thinking possible can easily control the old systems that give rise to our base needs and motives, and emotional reactions” (323). In this way, the explicit mental content and cognitive processes we have access to in working memory are limited in comparison to the implicit systems guiding our ongoing judgments and engagements with the world; however, this does not prevent us from intervening with an ongoing emotional reaction or cultivating new thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that may become stored implicitly in



long-term memory. Rather, the mind's flexible adaptation and temporal fluidity, both within particular contexts and across a lifetime, is shaped by "brain processes that are in constant flux due to their capacity to learn and remember" (325). This means that the underlying systems of cognition, emotion, and motivation must work together in order to construct a self that is capable of "experienc[ing] stimuli as meaningful objects rather than as raw sensations" (194).<sup>6</sup>

To further explore how the mind constructs personal meaning through interconnected cognitive, emotional, and motivational processes, the next chapter draws on cognitive, appraisal-based theories of emotion to describe the evaluative, relational, and reflective dimensions of an individual's judgments and engagements with the world. Whereas Damasio and LeDoux define the emotion process in terms of "how the brain *determines* or *computes* the value of a stimulus" (LeDoux 206), psychologists Richard Lazarus and Nico Frijda theorize this valuation process in terms of how the mind *appraises*, or subjectively evaluates and judges, the personal significance of objects and engagements with the environment. Furthermore, the philosophical perspectives of Robert Solomon, Martha Nussbaum, and Ronald de Sousa will be incorporated as a humanistic complement to the appraisal models, enriching the framework with a social, developmental, and ethical understanding of the individual's construction of a felt life.

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<sup>6</sup> LeDoux writes, "[Brain] functions depend on connections; break the connections, and you lose the functions" (304). According to LeDoux, this explains why brain lesions (as in the case of Elliot) and psychiatric disorders affect the mind: "Brain lesions always produce disconnections," whereas psychiatric disorders "might be best thought of [in terms of] malconnections" (306-7).

### **CHAPTER 3: CONCEPTUALIZING A FELT LIFE MODEL II: INCORPORATING PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE EMOTION PROCESS**

As shown through the neurobiological perspectives in Chapter Two, individuals engage with their world based on unconscious and conscious notions of value, or what is judged as important and even imperative to their survival and well-being. Central to this valuation process is how we interpret, and often reflect upon, the subjective meaning and significance of what we are perceiving and experiencing in our bodies, minds, and environments, in connection to our goals or personal investments. Thus, from our innate need to survive and adapt to a changing environment to our more intentional states of striving to flourish in the world as individuals with personal investments, we react emotionally to an object in the immediate environment or in our mind when we apprehend its value and judge its significance for our well-being.

In psychology, this apprehension and evaluation of personal meaning is called an *appraisal*, a term originally coined by Magna Arnold in 1960 and substantially developed by appraisal theorists like Richard Lazarus and Nico Frijda in the following decades. Building on Arnold's appraisal-based perspective of emotion as "the felt tendency toward anything intuitively appraised as good (beneficial), or away from anything intuitively appraised as bad (harmful)" (qtd. in Smith and Kirby 78), Lazarus claims "a given pattern of thought will always yield a particular emotion" (175). Furthermore, this given pattern of thought, or judgment, arises as a result of how we evaluate "the fate of [our] active goals in everyday encounters of living and in our lives overall" (92). For these reasons, Lazarus contends the appraisal process is "the most proximal to a person's emotional state because it reflects what the person understands and cares about" (138).

Characterized as a decision-making process or cognitive mechanism in the individual's mind with evaluative, relational, and reflective qualities, the appraisal process operates

continuously and unconsciously, although judgments can become conscious, for instance, when emotional feelings become objects of attention and reflection in working memory (Smith and Kirby 78; LeDoux). The perceived value behind appraisal theories of emotion, then, is that they strive to explain how different individuals can encounter the same object, yet experience a range of emotions or no emotions at all depending on how the object is appraised as beneficial or harmful in relationship to one's personal investments and well-being. For instance, appraisal theorists Craig Smith and Leslie Kirby pose the example of an exam, which "might be anxiety producing to a person who doubts his abilities [but] might be a welcome challenge to one who is confident of hers, and yet elicit indifference in one who is not invested in the outcome" (78). Here, the object of the exam elicits different emotions depending on how it is subjectively judged or appraised by the individual, which importantly includes the content and intensity of a person's goals, beliefs, needs, and values. Emotions, therefore, are not "stimulus-based" but "meaning-based" reactions to an individual's appraised relationship with the environment, which "keeps changing from moment to moment, situation to situation, and person to person, expressing the altered significance of what is happening" (Smith and Kirby 78; Lazarus and Lazarus 146).

To more comprehensively account for the ongoing, meaning-based construction and interconnection between our appraisals and emotions, this chapter weaves together Lazarus' and Frijda's appraisal-based theories and models of the emotion process with a holistic view of an individual developing and constructing a complex felt life, as enriched through the philosophical perspectives of Martha Nussbaum, Ronald de Sousa, and Robert Solomon, along with excerpts drawn from Deborah Brandt's life history interview of Johnny Ames in *Literacy in American Lives*. As an extension of the felt life model and synthesis I presented in Chapter Two, which focused on the *experiential*, *subjective*, and *narrative* dimensions of an individual's inner mind

with a self process, Chapter Three aims to analyze the *evaluative, relational, and reflective* dimensions of an individual's judgments and engagements with the environment, as represented in the lower half of the annotated model of a felt life (Figure 3.1).

Certain graphic features of the felt life model are representative of the dynamic self-world relationship that constitutes this chapter's core unit of analysis, such as 1) the double-headed arrow representing the dynamic movement between the individual's inner mind and ongoing judgments and engagements with the material, social, and cultural environment, as a centrally important cognitive, emotional, and motivational mediation of the individual's well-being and personal investments, and 2) the porous outlines of a "felt life" representing its fluid constitution (physically, mentally, and socially) and modifiable influences from both internal (neurobiological and psychological) and external (material, social, and cultural environment) sources. Moreover, whereas Chapter Two theorized the importance of an individual's well-being for developing and constructing a felt life, Chapter Three will consider the role of personal investments in structuring an individual's emotional judgments and engagements with the world. As previously noted, an individual's personal investments embody the active goals (concerns, attachments, commitments) and corresponding objects (i.e., people, things, events, activities, ideas) that one cares about or judges important, which significantly influence how one thinks, feels, and acts (i.e., judges and engages with the world).

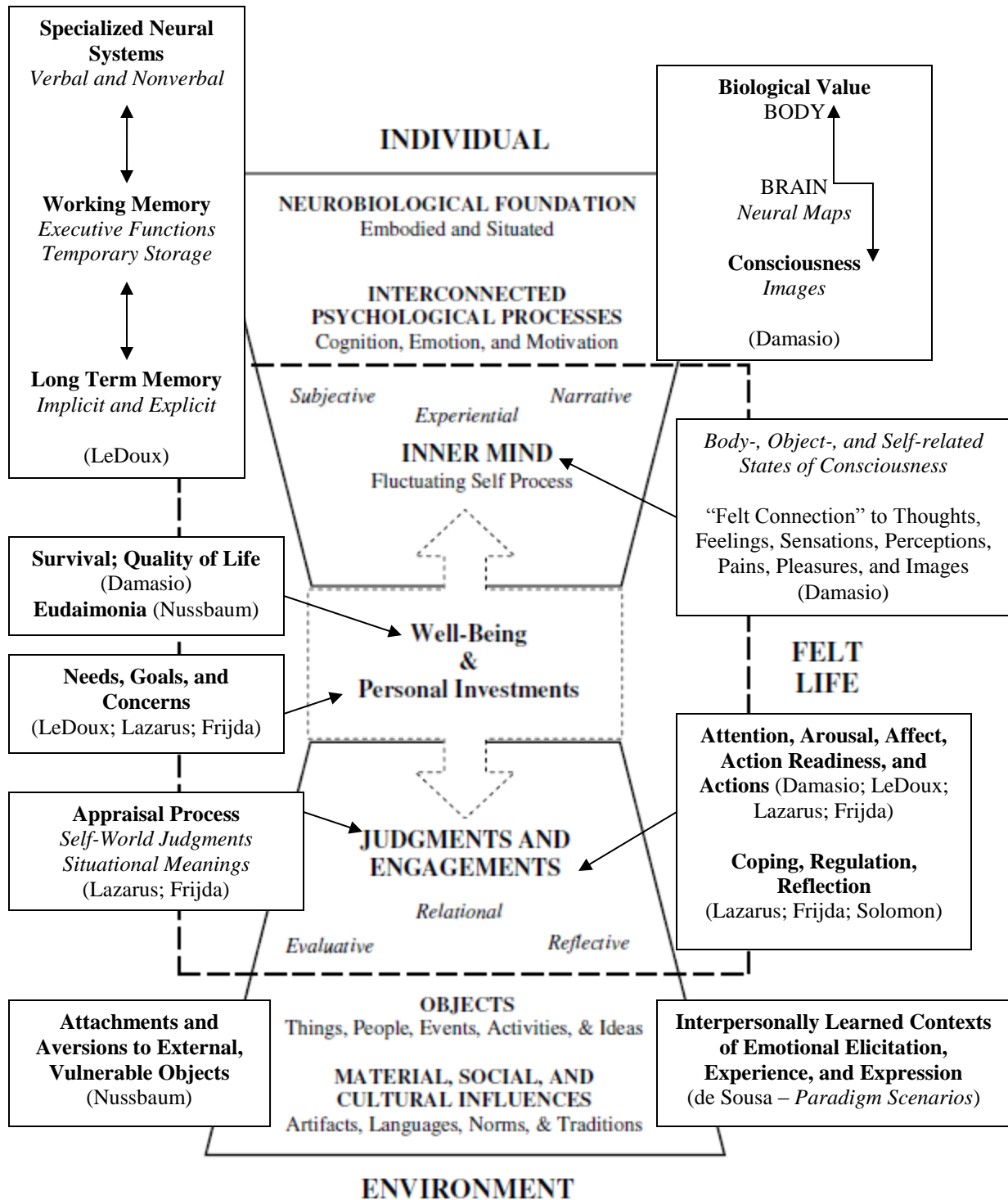


Fig. 3.1. Annotated Model of a Felt Life.

In this chapter, the concept of *personal investments* aims to capture how our entire being – the neurobiological, the psychological, and the social – is interconnected, involving a rich mixture of cognitive, emotional, and motivational processes that orient our judgments and activate our engagements with the world. Intuitively, the term *investment* evokes images of value, meaning, significance, and striving; it also embodies the amount of time, effort, energy, and commitment that one exerts toward maintaining, changing, establishing, or avoiding emotionally-relevant relationships<sup>7</sup> with objects in the environment or in the mind. In this way, personal investments are both dispositional (concerning belief, value, and goal systems) and transactional-relational (involving cognitive and behavioral efforts).<sup>8</sup> Developmentally, they are implicitly acquired as felt notions of “good/beneficial” and “bad/harmful,”<sup>9</sup> as well as explicitly learned, named, and expressed through language, social relationships, and cultural influences. As shown through the psychological and philosophical perspectives presented in this chapter, these explicitly recognized personal investments have the potential to heighten an individual’s understanding of the self and others, which may cultivate further analysis and reflection about one’s emotional judgments and engagements with the world.

### **Developing and Constructing a Complex Felt Life: A Holistic View of the Individual**

In *Literacy in American Lives*, Deborah Brandt’s interview study of Johnny Ames’ literacy history provides a valuable example of an individual developing and constructing a complex felt life. Through Ames’ memories and reflections as an adult, we see how his emotions evoke significant attachments and aversions within the narrative context of his lived experience. As a

<sup>7</sup> Based on Frijda’s account of states of action readiness.

<sup>8</sup> Lazarus’ description of the appraisal process involving dispositional and transactional-relational motivations.

<sup>9</sup> Here I draw on Magna Arnold’s appraisal-based definition of emotion, as “the felt tendency toward anything intuitively appraised as good (beneficial), or away from anything intuitively appraised as bad (harmful)” (qtd. in Smith and Kirby 78).

child, Ames' strong emotional attachment to his grandmother structured more than his daily activities on the cotton farm; his dependence on her as a primary caretaker also established early models of love, trust, and affection. Years later, the salient role that Ames' grandmother played in shaping his emotional development, particularly in teaching him what it means to love and care for the well-being of another, would continue to resonate in the attachments he formed to other individuals, such as the teacher-nun he meets in prison and the legal work he pursues to help other incarcerated people. Likewise, the early aversions Ames developed toward racist texts and white people, both within the classroom and the larger community he grew up in during the 1950s as an African American child living in Missouri, created an emotional backdrop that would continue to thread together other relevant life experiences, including how he appraises his initial interaction with the teacher-nun and the content of his trial's transcript.

It is useful to consider Ames' early attachments and aversions to objects in his environment within the context of Nussbaum's discussion of emotional development. Across social groups and cultures, Nussbaum contends we share the universal experience of living in a world where "need is a normal part of being human," and our interdependence with others is grounded in deep emotional attachments and social bonds (228). Nestled within this interdependence, however, lies an "imperfect control" over others and their abilities to meet our needs for human connection, security, and well-being (Nussbaum 43). Beginning in infancy, Nussbaum explains how the emotions develop "in tandem" with this felt tension of satisfying one's needs while lacking complete control over how those needs are met (207):

The child's emotions are recognitions of where important good and bad things are to be found – and also of the externality of those good and bad things, therefore also of the boundaries of its own secure control. Fear and joy and love and even anger demarcate the world, and at the same time map the self in the world, as the child's initial appraisals, prompted by its own inner needs for security and well-being, become more refined in connection with its own active attempts at control and manipulation, through which it

learns what good and bad things are part of its self, or under its control, and what are not. Among these external good and bad things it also learns that some are inert objects and some are endowed with their own agency. (206-7)

In this excerpt, Nussbaum draws on an important observation from the Stoics, that all emotions are cognitive judgments about “vulnerable things, things that can be affected by events in the world beyond the person’s own control, things that can arrive by surprise, that can be destroyed or removed even when one does not wish it” (42). She notes that vulnerable things also include our physical and mental health, as processes and conditions we cannot completely control. What often carries over from childhood into adulthood, then, is the value and importance an individual assigns to external objects<sup>10</sup> as “good things” or “bad things” in relation to one’s survival and well-being. In turn, the emotions begin to reflect a child’s initial appraisals of good and bad objects in the environment, thereby “provid[ing] the child with a map of the world” (Nussbaum 206).

In the case of Ames, for example, the strong emotional attachment he felt toward his grandmother evoked initial appraisals of “good things” and feelings of well-being through imitating her daily actions of cleaning and care-taking, listening to her oral stories of “the Bible and nature,” and only attending school out of her expressed fear that “she would be arrested if he didn’t go” (Brandt 50). On the other hand, his initial appraisal of the *Little Black Sambo* story as a “bad thing” created a long-standing aversion and movement away from written texts, until he acquired the motivation to read and write several decades later. In Ames’ words, “That story...did something to me...It just didn’t make sense. And I guess during that time when you’re a kid and you’re trying to make sense out of something that don’t make no sense, eventually you just resolve in a way that none of this makes sense” (Brandt 59). Moreover, the unsettling experience of listening to the *Little Black Sambo* story being read aloud by his teacher in school also became

<sup>10</sup> Ronald de Sousa defines *objects* in terms of “whatever an emotion is *of, at, with, because of, or that*” (109).



associated with his exposure to other racist texts that were displayed throughout the community, such as public signs that read “No Negroes Allowed.” According to Ames, “That story threw everything out of whack. In my mind I can see how that association took the drive out of me. It didn’t motivate me to write” (Brandt 59). Thus, in Ames’ childhood effort to “make sense out of something that don’t make no sense” (Brandt 59), his initial appraisals of written texts as “bad things” became connected with aversive emotional responses to these external objects, as negatively affecting his well-being.

In prison, however, Ames’ aversion to written texts gradually transformed when he developed the desire “to be able to read the transcript of his trial” (Brandt 60). His circumstances of receiving a life sentence in prison, along with a host of other legal, social, and historical factors that Brandt analyzes in her literacy research, contributed to co-shaping Ames’ personal investment in his own literacy learning. Among the significant contributors to Ames’ literacy development were the mentoring relationships<sup>11</sup> and emotional attachments he formed with certain individuals in prison. For instance, Ames’ daily interactions with the teacher-nun arose as a result of seeing her read books like Booker T. Washington’s *Up from Slavery*. After learning from a fellow inmate and friend what the word “slavery” meant, Ames directly confronted the teacher-nun with this newfound knowledge by saying, “Well, you must like what your people did to us” (Brandt 61). In resolving to show Ames that “all white people are not alike” (Brandt 61), she mentored and encouraged Ames to learn how to read, and introduced him to important texts that he soon acquired an interest in (e.g., Booker T. Washington, Frederick Douglass, self-help literature). She provided a dictionary for him to use to look up words, and if Ames did not know how to pronounce a word, then she was there to help him. Thus, in contrast to the prison environment Ames described as

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<sup>11</sup> Brandt’s term is *literacy sponsors*.

one of “total repression... [where] there was nothing about encouraging people to learn anything” (Brandt 61), the pedagogical relationship Ames had with the teacher-nun was reminiscent of the loving relationship he had with his grandmother: attentive and responsive to his learning needs while demonstrating an explicit concern for his well-being.

In this way, Ames’ initial encounter and evolving relationship with the teacher-nun reflected early emotion models of anger (in connection to racist texts) and love (attachment to his grandmother), evoking similar situations and feelings that Ronald de Sousa claims have their origins in infancy and childhood experiences. Noting that our emotions “act like models” and “give us frameworks in terms of which we perceive, desire, act, and explain” (24), de Sousa coined the term *paradigm scenarios* to express how “emotions operate by evoking whole scenarios not just beliefs” (199). According to de Sousa, paradigm scenarios capture how individual emotions “get their meaning from their relation to a situation type, a kind of original drama that defines the roles, feelings, and reactions characteristic of that emotion” (de Sousa xvi).<sup>12</sup> For children, particular meanings become constructed in connection to certain situations (dramas) within familial and social groups, whereby they learn how to appraise and eventually name their feelings within the social context, based on external cues, actions, language, and so on. From this perspective, an individual’s emotional repertoire develops within the situated meanings of social norms, which play a powerful role in designating the behavioral expectations, social roles, emotional expressions, and accepted normative boundaries of a group.

Even into adulthood, our emotional repertoires are further reinforced and sometimes modified through the interactive feedback we experience and internalize in social situations. Since

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<sup>12</sup> De Sousa’s paradigm scenarios are similar to Lazarus’ definition of core relational themes, in which “each emotion arises from a different plot or story about relationships between a person and the environment” (*Fifty* 357), but his construct is more fully attuned to the temporal structure of individual emotions.

our emotions reflect a complicated history of attachments and aversions to objects that “concern elements of our conception of well-being” (Nussbaum 233), modifying the narratives and paradigm scenarios we have been constructing since childhood involves changing “the way one evaluates objects” (Nussbaum 232). In the case of Ames, his entrenched beliefs and attitudes about white people and written texts – *they* wrote the racist signs (“No Negroes Allowed”) and stories (*Little Black Sambo*) and *they* painted the wrong picture with their words (at his trial) – gradually acquired new meanings through his interpersonal relationships, access to material resources, and participation in educational programs and self-help opportunities within the prison. Objects that once evoked an aversive set of dispositions and reactions slowly became mixed with positive appraisals and cultivated attachments.

For example, an important shift in Ames’ cognition, emotion, and motivation occurs after he apprehends how he had been misrepresented at his trial. In Ames’ words:

When I went to prison, I knew I was functionally illiterate. I could see things but I couldn’t understand what I saw. I told the truth [at my trial] and they talked over my head. I didn’t know what was happening... I heard the words; I went through the nods and the gestures. But in all actuality, I didn’t know what was going on. They were painting a picture of me that I didn’t understand. When I could read and understand what they said about me, [I could see that] they made me out to be something that I was not. And it hurt me real, real bad, in my heart, in my soul. And I said that I would never let anyone talk over my head again. I vowed to myself that I would never do that. (Brandt 61)

What emerges out of the reappraisal of his trial proceedings and hurt feelings is a commitment to himself to “never let anyone talk over [his] head” (61), which vitally shapes how he sees himself, his relationship to the world, and his own literacy learning. Although Ames’ individual literacy development in prison reflects a highly contextual history, one embedded in layers of institutional and social reforms, his personal investment in learning how to read and write is further framed by this significant emotional event. His explicit goal, of never letting anyone talk over his head again, not only motivated a different cognitive-emotional disposition, of believing and valuing that

reading and writing afford him with a “chance to evaluate what is valuable and what is not” (64), but also focused the way he chose to invest his time, energy, and effort while in prison.

In this way, Ames’ personal investment in reading and writing serves a dual motivational purpose in the appraisal process. On the one hand, his personal investment in literacy, believing it affords him with an opportunity to evaluate what is valuable and what is not, is a *dispositional motivation*, structuring part of his personality in conjunction with other beliefs, values, and goals. Dispositional motivations, Lazarus claims, form the basis of an individual’s overall goal hierarchy, or “what is considered most or least harmful or beneficial” (94). We use this goal hierarchy in combination with our values and beliefs to structure the significance of specific goals, or personal investments (e.g., discovering a future career, living close or far from loved ones, improving one’s health, avoiding uncomfortable social settings), according to “what a person typically wants or finds aversive” (94). In doing so, our dispositional goals, beliefs, and values collectively orient our emotional judgments, while activating the second motivational component of the appraisal process, *transactional-relational motivation*.

Transactional-relational motivations require “the actual mobilization of mental and behavioral effort in a particular encounter to achieve a goal or prevent its thwarting” (Lazarus 96-97). In terms of Ames’ literacy development in prison, this meant actively putting forward mental and behavioral effort into looking up words in a dictionary, deciphering new meanings from his trial transcripts, and discussing important passages from Booker T. Washington and Frederick Douglass with the teacher-nun. As a child, he also actively put forward mental and behavioral effort toward written texts, but his effort was concentrated on avoiding them, given his early literacy experiences and painful associations with racist texts. In this way, transactional-relational motivations showcase the intensity at which an individual physically, psychologically, and socially

engages with the ongoing demands of a situation. And as Lazarus notes, “the stronger or more important the goal, the more intense is the emotion,” for he argues “there would be no emotion if people did not arrive on the scene of an encounter with a desire, want, wish, need, or goal that could be advanced or thwarted” (94). As such, an individual’s emotional stake in negotiating and managing what happens to the fate of one goal often intersects with other personal investments, as “a complex motivation encompassing personal history, current conditions, and future ambition” (Brandt 69).

Most significantly for Ames, through educational opportunities like passing his GED, enrolling in community college courses, and completing an associate’s degree in legal assistance, he was able to write a legal appeal and successfully overturn his conviction (Brandt 63). Due to “bureaucratic delays,” however, “Ames would remain in the prison system on technicalities for another 11 years” (63). Throughout this extended time, he worked in a legal clinic and shared his legal knowledge with other inmates. When he was eventually released from prison, he continued this line of work and “became a full-time researcher in a legal clinic providing assistance to incarcerated people...research[ing] law and translating legal issues into lay terms, both in speaking and writing” (64). Echoing the events surrounding his own trial, Ames stresses that his clients “must have no reason to be misled as to whether we are going to represent them when in fact we’re not going to represent them or whether they have an issue when in fact they don’t have an issue” (64). Above all, he articulates, “The work I do is important because the men really need someone to explain to them their particular situation. I learned to write in order to convey that message to them so that they can understand what’s going on in their life” (64). When viewed from a narrative perspective, the choices Ames made over the course of his time in prison reflect an enlarged sense of purpose and commitment within his individual literacy development, to the point that, upon his

release from prison, his personal investment in writing becomes ethically connected to the fair treatment and well-being of his clients.

In viewing his legal work and clients as valuable and important, Ames was able to incorporate them into his ongoing sense of *well-being*, or what he believes it means to live well, flourish, and thrive as a human being.<sup>13</sup> According to Nussbaum, this shift in perspective is a cognitive one, which she claims is a non-linguistic reasoning process for how all creatures – infants, children, adults, and even animals – see and evaluate objects in their world, as “the general ability to see X as Y, where Y involves a notion of salience or importance for the creature’s own well-being” (5). Although Nussbaum argues that “for all animals, some parts of the world stand out as salient, as connected with urgent needs of the self” (147), she draws particular attention to the “relatively organized and comprehensive conception of the self and its goals” that humans construct, centering on their notions of *eudaimonia* (147). Specifically, she notes that humans are “much more likely to think of these goals as forming some sort of network, and much more likely to include among them persons and things at a distance, either spatially or temporally” (147). In this way, as Ames’ conception of *eudaimonia* changed over the course of his time in prison, so did his network of personal investments, prompting a revised set of judgments and engagements to emerge in the process.

As revealed through the felt life of Johnny Ames, changing one’s emotional judgments and engagements with the world is not easy. Since the transformation process involves changing one’s overall conception of *eudaimonia*, or how one values and judges what it means to live well in the world, it requires internalizing new cognitive-emotional-motivational dispositions and practicing new mental and behavioral engagements. For Ames, this meant experiencing and performing a

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<sup>13</sup> The use of well-being here derives from Nussbaum’s discussion of *eudaimonia* (31-33).

different way of being in the world around white people and written texts that more closely aligned with the positive paradigm scenarios of love, trust, and affection that he experienced with his grandmother. By building a more comprehensive and reflective view of his literacy experiences, Ames eventually acquired a new set of personal investments that valued reading and writing as significant to his well-being and his commitment to helping other prisoners.

The developmental and narrative history of Ames' literacy experiences with reading and writing reveals an important problem when it comes to changing aspects of our felt lives. As LeDoux aptly pointed out in Chapter Two, no matter how hard “we try to willfully dictate who we are, and how we will behave...we are only partially effective in doing so, since we have imperfect conscious access to emotional systems, which play such a crucial role in coordinating learning by other systems” (323). Since the explicit mental content and deliberate cognitive processes we have access to through working memory are limited in comparison to the implicit systems governing our daily interactions, this neurobiological reality poses some challenges for deliberately trying to cultivate a different set of judgments and engagements with the world. However, as the next section discusses, this does not prevent us from intervening with an ongoing emotional reaction or reflecting on our self-world judgments because the emotion process is fused with cognitive processes like appraisal, coping, and regulation.

### **Moved to Act: Significant Laws of Emotional Judgment and Engagement**

In his 1986 publication of *The Emotions*, Nico Frijda argues that “what is interesting about emotion is *the emotional*. Feeling is not cognition, it is feeling – it is responding ‘yes’ or ‘no.’ Striving is not behavior, it is tending-toward, trying to reach or avoid” (5). Echoed twenty years later in *The Laws of Emotion* (2007), Frijda continues to assert that the emotions’ “passionate nature is their most distinctive feature,” in that “emotions are geared to actions. They want

something or relish in something” (25-26). That is, through our emotions we are moved to act, usually urgently and energetically, with the goal of achieving, modifying, maintaining, or abandoning some kind of relational aim with objects, events, or people in our environment.

For instance, in the words of Frijda, “One wants to hit, destroy, or retaliate, to jump and shout, to regain the lost person...One feels listless, lacks interest, would like to leave or to rid oneself of something. One wants to undertake things, to possess, to be with or to care for. One feels powerless or incompetent or full of vitality; or frozen, blocked, incapable of moving” (*Emotions* 231). These *states of action readiness*, as Frijda calls them, are arguably a defining feature of how we experience our emotional judgments and engagements within the context of our felt lives. Even cognitive states like “feeling confused, off balance, uncertain, unable to think clearly, or lucid and clear thinking without effort” are prevalent in our subjective descriptions of emotion (231). And while not all emotions “generate striving and feelings of urge and desire” (30), such as during states of exhaustion, despair, despondency, and apathy, all emotions do seek control over our actions and cognition, particularly in sensitizing our perceptions, interpretations, recollections, beliefs, and overall attention distribution, as previously noted through LeDoux (29).

According to Frijda, *control precedence* is what characterizes the emotion process in our judgments and engagements with the world, meaning “it can interrupt other processes and block access to action control for other stimuli and goals; it [also] invigorates action for which it reserves control and invests that control with the property of intractability or persistence” (*The Emotions* 460). In short, emotions simultaneously re-orient and invest our cognitive and behavioral efforts to meet the perceived needs of our present context. For example, “Long term passions, like love relationships, hatreds, and dominant interests, usurp time, attention, and resources,” whereas in more specific situations, “Work is interrupted when an alarm sounds or when the boss makes a



remark that hurts” (28). For this reason, emotions have historically been known as *passions* for their persistent and seemingly disruptive nature towards our thoughts and actions; moreover, the prevailing assumption has been that we are essentially “passive” to our emotions at the expense of our will and ability to reason.

Even though this characterization persists in our everyday accounts of emotion, Frijda counters the notion that emotions are completely beyond our rational control. Instead, he contends the emotions harbor intentionality, or motivated purpose, behind their expression: “One sees emotions in other individuals: they transpire from their actions, in affection, desire, interest, watchfulness, avoidance and submission. What one sees is not just behavior: it is behavior with intent expressed in interactions with objects and other individuals” (qtd. in DiSalvo 1). From Frijda's perspective, this means that our emotions “serve the useful functions of watching, guarding, and satisfying the individual’s concerns and realigning action toward satisfaction when disturbed” (*Emotions* 371). Put another way, the congruence or incongruence between our most cherished *concerns* or personal investments (important needs and goals, consciously known and unknown to us) and the *situational meanings* or appraisals we construct (based on actual or imagined events) explain the cognitive, motivational, and relational logic of our emotional provocations and responses.

Lazarus, as well, locates the logic of our emotions through cognitive-relational-motivational structures of appraised meaning. He classifies six decision-making components of the appraisal process, as involving *primary appraisals*, or motivation-related judgments, and *secondary appraisals*, or coping-related judgments. As shown in Figure 2.6, primary appraisals are concerned with judging personal investment and well-being in our engagements with the world, while secondary appraisals are concerned with judging how to cope with what is happening,

which includes assigning responsibility and forming future expectations about a situation or problem. Put another way, primary appraisals evaluate “what it means to me and for me,” and secondary appraisals evaluate “whether action is required, and if so, what kind” (Lazarus 145).

Primary Appraisals (Motivation-related)	Secondary Appraisals (Coping-related)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goal relevance</li> <li>• Goal congruency or incongruency</li> <li>• Type of ego involvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blame or credit</li> <li>• Coping potential</li> <li>• Future expectations</li> </ul>

**Fig. 3.2. Appraisal Process: Decision-making components (Lazarus 39).**

These primarily unconscious decision-making components of the appraisal process operate simultaneously and not necessarily in a sequential or complete order. Rather, Lazarus’ theoretical distinction between primary and secondary appraisal components highlights the important point that not all appraisals lead to an emotion. That is, if an individual does not judge an important goal to be at stake, then an emotion will not follow. However, if what is happening is *relevant* to an important goal, then Lazarus claims there is the potential for a positive emotion to occur if conditions are *goal congruent* (such as “happiness/joy, pride, love/affection, and relief”) or a negative emotion to occur if conditions are *goal incongruent* (such as “anger, fright, anxiety, guilt, shame, sadness, envy, jealousy, and disgust”) (264, 217). Furthermore, the type of *ego-involvement*, or self-involvement, that occurs when an individual evaluates a situation’s relevance to his/her goals, and its congruence or incongruence to the fate of those goals, broadly includes “self- and social-esteem, moral values, ego-ideals, meanings and ideas, other persons and their well-being, and life goals” (102). For example, Lazarus writes, “In anger, one’s self- or social-esteem is being assaulted; in anxiety, the threat is existential (to meaning structures in which one is invested); in guilt, it is violation of a moral value one is sworn to uphold; in shame, it is a failure to live up to one’s ego-ideals; in sadness, it is loss of any or all of the six types of ego-identity; in

happiness, it is an overall sense of security and well-being; and in pride, it is an enhancement of the self- and social-esteem of ego identity” (150).

In short, all three primary appraisal components (goal relevancy, goal congruency and incongruency, and type of ego involvement) evaluate the personal stakes and meanings of emotion. Secondary appraisal components further refine which specific emotion we may experience depending on how we perceive the potential to cope with a situation, assign credit or blame for what is happening, or construct future expectations about how a situation will turn out. The following list summarizes how these six decision-making components of the appraisal process constitute our self-world judgments and corresponding emotions, illustrating how our emotions are largely “a response to changing or recurrent judgments about oneself in the world” (Lazarus 129).

<b>EMOTIONS</b>	<b>SELF-WORLD JUDGMENTS</b>
Anger	A demeaning offense against me and mine.
Anxiety	Facing uncertain, existential threat.
Fright	Facing an immediate, concrete, and overwhelming physical danger.
Guilt	Having transgressed a moral imperative.
Shame	Having failed to live up to an ego-ideal.
Sadness	Having experienced an irrevocable loss.
Envy	Wanting what someone else has.
Jealousy	Resenting a third party for loss or threat to another’s affection.
Disgust	Taking in or being too close to an indigestible object or idea (metaphorically speaking).
Happiness	Making reasonable progress toward the realization of a goal.
Pride	Enhancement of one’s ego-identity by taking credit for a valued object or achievement, either our own or that of someone or group with whom we identify.

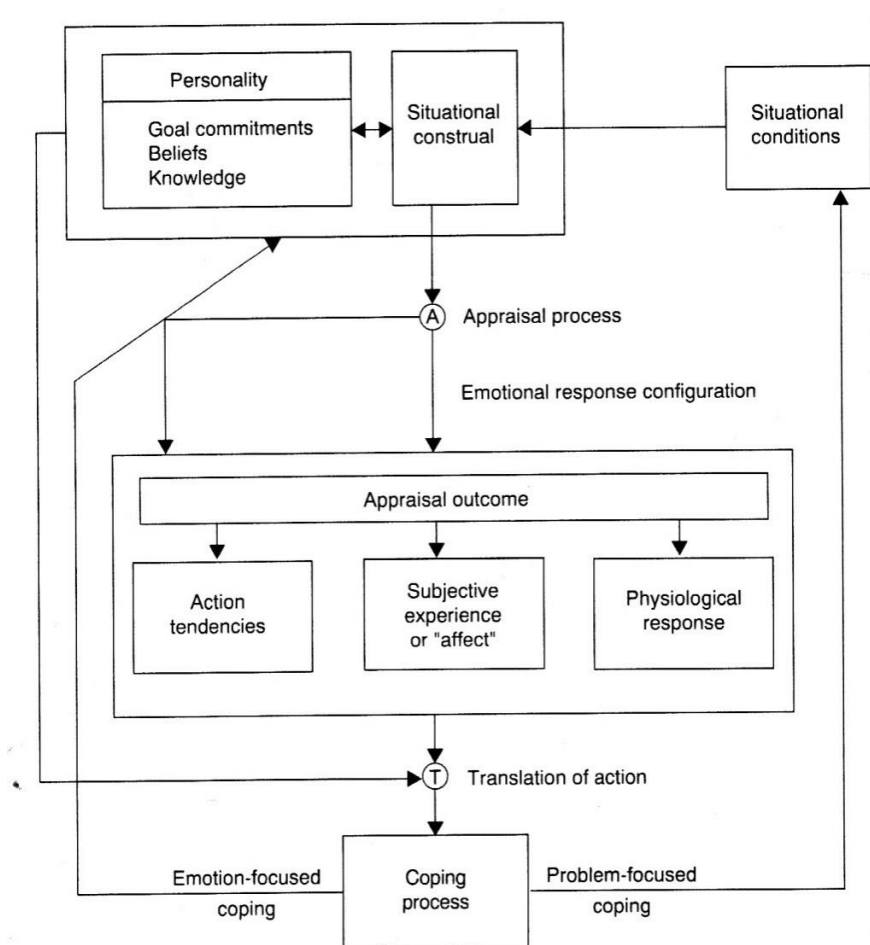
Relief	A distressing goal-incongruent condition that has changed for the better or gone away.
Hope	Fearing the worst but yearning for better.
Love	Desiring or participating in affection, usually but not necessarily reciprocated.
Compassion	Being moved by another's suffering and wanting to help.

**Fig. 3.3. Self-World Judgments for Individual Emotions (Lazarus 122).**

As previously discussed through the broadly conceived types of ego-involvement, judgments about the self-world relationship here include “the well-being of others whom we care about and feel responsible for, as well as to ideas, values, and conditions of life” (103). In other words, the self for Lazarus is more aptly described as a *person-in-the-world*, a concept he defines through the psychologist Erik Erikson to include “roles, relationships, and functions in society” (101). This construct of the self as a person-in-the-world foregrounds the relational dynamics of an individual's felt life, as one that is co-constructed and interdependent with the relationships we have with others and our ongoing and changing interactions with the material and socio-cultural environment.

To model how the appraisal process works on a broader scale, Lazarus and his colleague Craig Smith (1990) created a cognitive-motivational-emotive system (Fig. 2.8) that represents the antecedent variables, mediating processes, and outcomes of an individual appraising and coping with an emotionally relevant engagement with the environment. Briefly, this model posits that there are several *antecedent variables* leading to an appraisal: *dispositional*, the individual's personality (includes goals, beliefs, values, and knowledge), and *situational*, the context-bound environment. Taken together, the self-world relationship occurring between an individual's dispositional traits and his/her situational conditions is interpreted, initiating the *appraisal process* and its subsequent outcome of an *emotional response* and corresponding *coping process*.

Similar to Damasio, Lazarus classifies physiological response, subjective experience, and action tendencies (impulses to act) as characteristic of an emotional state. From this particular *emotional response configuration* and *appraisal outcome*, the potential for further action and participation in the world emerges, along with access to more conscious processing of thoughts, feelings, and behavior. It is at this point that the *coping process* operates in conjunction with the appraisal process, regulating and often reflecting on what is happening at all levels of the self-world relationship: physically, cognitively, emotionally, and behaviorally.

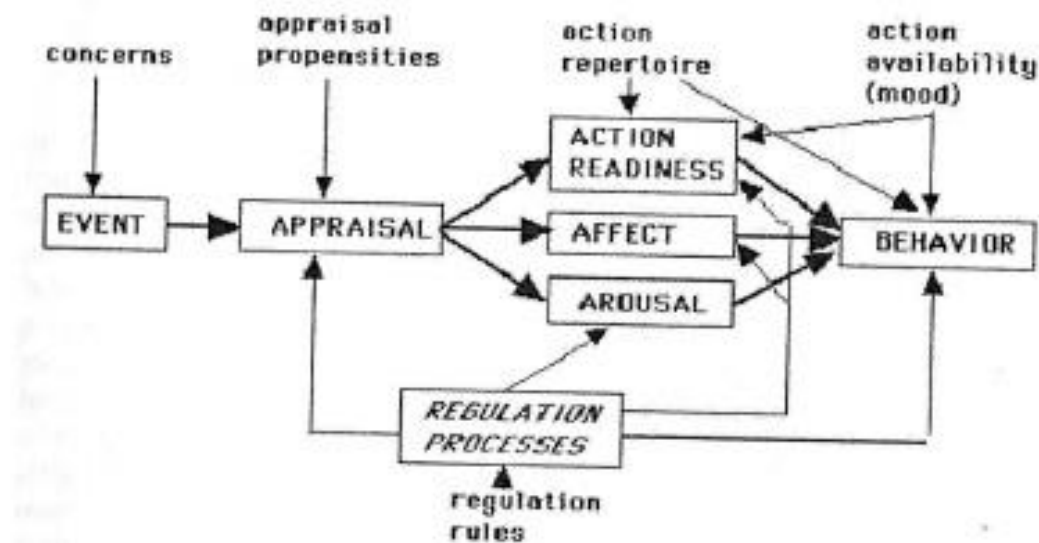


**Fig. 3.4. Lazarus and Smith, Cognitive-Motivational-Emotive System (1990).**

As an emotion regulating and problem-solving process, coping complements the evaluative nature of the appraisal process with either a *problem-focused* or *emotion-focused* response to

“external or internal demands (and conflicts between them) that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person” (112). Problem-focused coping is action-oriented and behavioral, as a way of changing a concrete problem in the external environment, whereas emotion-focused coping is internally-oriented, as an attempt to cognitively address how a problem is “attended to (e.g., a threat that one avoids perceiving or thinking about) or interpreted (e.g., a threat that is dealt with by denial or psychological distancing)” (112).<sup>14</sup>

In support of Lazarus’ model and longstanding work on appraisal, coping, and the cognitive-relational-motivational structure of emotions as self-world judgments, Frijda proposes *laws of emotion* after reviewing the literature on emotion over a twenty year span between his publications of *The Emotions* (1986) and *The Laws of Emotion* (2007), in order to “understand the regularities [of the emotion process] without sacrificing the individualities and personal meanings” (1).



**Fig. 3.5. Frijda, Model of Emotion Process (1986; 2007).**

<sup>14</sup> As previously noted, Lazarus classifies the appraisal process in terms of primary and secondary appraisals. Primary appraisals determine our level of investment (motivation) and self-involvement in what is happening in the environment, while secondary appraisals reflect our potential to cope with a situation, assign credit or blame for what is happening, or construct future expectations about how a situation will turn out.

In Frijda's model of the emotion process in Figure 2.9, these laws are not explicitly represented but theoretically help to explain how these variables and processes operate as an interacting system, while attempting to capture the "underlying mechanisms" that elicit "the motive states from which behavior, feeling, bodily upset, and the coloring of judgment flow" (26).

Frijda contends the elicitation of emotion arises from the relationship between *The Law of Concern* and *The Law of Situational Meaning*. In this model, the dispositional and situational variables that shape appraisals are shown in terms of *concerns*, *appraisal propensities*, and the appraised *event* itself. Concerns represent an array of goals and needs, values and preferences, and attachments and aversions that motivate our future aspirations and actions in the world; simply put, they are "the dispositions that allow us to strive and care, and make us do so" (130). In turn, when an event is appraised as relevant to the stake of these individual concerns, we construct a situational meaning of the event that is influenced by a constellation of appraisal propensities -- previous experiences, stored knowledge, memories, beliefs, evaluations, and expectations -- which often "come ready made" as cognitive dispositions (112). Thus, in conjunction with an individual's concerns, an individual's appraisal propensities are paramount in cognitively structuring the situational meanings and motive states of the emotion process.

Furthermore, the situational meanings we construct are also subject to *The Law of Apparent Reality*. Per this law, "Emotions are elicited by events with meanings appraised as 'real,' and their intensity corresponds to the degree to which this is the case" (8). Whether actual or imagined, this law explains why the immediate, the embodied, and the visual tend to affect us more strongly than the symbolic and the distant future. As Frijda writes, "One is bodily and actively present in the same space as one's emotions' causes and effects. There are no appraisal representations. There is

appraised information coming in from different sources: from a valued object, from its present context, from within oneself, one's body and one's memory store. They interact, and together they shape the situational meaning as well as motivational and behavioral response" (107). The implication here is that we appraise 'reality' from an embodied and situated perspective, where "the world impinges on one's body and actions, and one modifies the world in return, or sets to it, in action readiness and action" (224).

Like Lazarus, Frijda is quick to point out that when we appraise an event happening in either our immediate spatiotemporal context or within our thoughts and imagination (i.e., "when pondering, foreseeing, told about incidents, recollecting" (110)), it is not a process restricted to emotion. In Frijda's words, "Appraisals are continuously made, and appraisal is around anyway, because animals and humans are set to make sense of the environment and what happens there. Their eyes -- their minds -- are set to notice causes, agents, intentions, and emotional relevance" (112). In fact, the 1986 version of Frijda's model identifies a series of cognitive roles describing how the agent's mind meaningfully appraises the environment as it processes both emotionally-relevant and non-relevant information: as analyzer ("information uptake and coding"), comparator ("relevance evaluation"), diagnoser ("context evaluation"), evaluator ("urgency, difficulty, seriousness evaluation"), action proposer ("action readiness change generation"), and actor ("action generation") (*Emotions* 454). Although Frijda's more current model visually represents appraisal as an antecedent to emotion, these cognitive roles acknowledge appraisal more fully as a component and consequent of emotion, as well, which aligns with both Frijda's and Lazarus' view of how the overall appraisal process actually operates in the individual, as an ongoing interpretive process.



Regarded as the “felt phenomena” of emotional response, *action readiness* (motive states), *arousal* (physiological activation), and *affect* (experiential pains, pleasures, desires, subjective thoughts and feelings) once again form a triad of variables that monitor and motivate cognitive and behavioral activity in Frijda’s model. Since different situational meanings produce different emotional responses, “depending on how [an event] is appraised, [and] what aspects are emphasized or focused upon or overlooked” (*Emotions* 195), the states of action readiness, arousal, and affect consequently vary: that is, the relationship between meaning and response is “not always strict,” but it is “always intimate” (*Emotion* 196).

Distinct from the dispositional states of concerns, states of action readiness emerge as “actual, embodied states, or states on the verge of embodiment in action, to be released when circumstances permit” (27). In essence, they are transactional-relational motivations that “safeguard any concern” (33) through one’s actual behavior, or by energizing “the muscles, the thoughts, and the glands” (39) in preparation to act. At the very least, states of action readiness involve engagement and interest for the individual, calling attention to “what one has to do something with or about” because these states of action readiness “clamor for attention and for execution” (26). Some of these action readiness modes are illustrated here in a table compiled by Frijda and his colleagues:

Attend	Paying attention to what is happening.
Interest, savor	Desiring to take in and experience the situation or person.
Shut off	Seeking to shut off stimulation or interaction.
Approach	Desiring to be close by.
Withdraw	Desiring to avoid, to be out of reach, or to protect oneself.
Reject	Desiring to put or keep object at a distance.
Oppose	Desiring to resist or oppose.
Disappear from view	Desiring to disappear, not to be seen.
Be with	Desiring to closely interact.
Fuse with	Desiring to fuse, to lose distance or identity.
Dominate	Desiring to control the behavior of others.

Submit	Desiring to submit to others or to someone else.
Possess	Desiring to possess or get hold of.
Care for	Desiring to be tender, help, comfort, care for.
Amend	Desiring to make up for what has happened.
Undo	Desiring to undo what had happened, to erase the event.
Hurt	Desiring to hurt.
Reactant	Desiring to undertake action to overcome an obstacle.
Broaden and build	Desiring to enlarge range of interactions.
Depend	Desiring to hand the initiative to someone else, to obtain help.
Action suspension	Interruption of striving.
Helpless	Inability to construct meaningful striving.
Relaxed	Desiring to be or remain relaxed.
Tense	Readiness to act without cues to act.
Inhibited	Inhibition of striving or feeling.
Apathetic	Desiring not to do anything, not desiring to interact.
Disinterest	Being disinterested.
Rest	Desiring to return to, or stay in, a state of rest.

**Fig. 3.6. Frijda et al., Action Readiness Modes (35).**

What these descriptions show is that modes of action readiness are primarily felt by the individual as desires or urges in thought and action, whether this eventually translates into observable behavior or not. It is the passion that we feel which seeks to control and energize our attention, thoughts, feelings, and actions. Frijda calls this *The Law of Closure*, in which “[emotions] are closed to the requirements of interests other than those of their own aims. They claim top priority and are absolute with regard to appraisals of urgency and necessity of action, and to control over action” (15). Hence, emotions provide us with the conviction, the passion, and the motivation to safeguard and serve our concerns.

However, it is our affective feelings that signal these motive states of emotion. Whereas emotion infuses our cognition with interest and calls for action, affect motivates emotion’s states of action readiness through its evaluative nature. Specifically, Frijda notes that affect primarily takes the form of evaluative feelings or “‘comments’ to [the] sensations, images, or thoughts” that flood our subjective perceptions of the immediate environment. They do so through their

intentionality: “They have an object. They are about something, at least most of the time. Something is liked or disliked, something appears attractive or repulsive” (65-66). In this way, affects are defined as “the motivations for enhancing or decreasing interaction with their object, combined with generalized behavioral effects such as arousal changes” (31).

The upshot of our affects, then, is that they evaluate our overall functioning in the world in connection to our concerns. When we are functioning well with respect to our concerns, we experience pleasure or contentment; when we encounter interference with our concerns, we experience pain or discomfort; and when we are striving to achieve a particular concern, we experience desire. It is “pain, pleasure, and desire that compel” us to maintain, change, or seek a different kind of relationship with an object in our environment, as it connects to our concerns (*Emotions* 82). Particularly in experiences of pleasure, Frijda argues we are more apt to accept and approach an object (thing, person, activity, event, idea), which in turn creates “the sense that interacting with the object or doing the activity is worth it” (69). Therefore, this feeling of pleasure affords the object with value and significance, and it also affects the individual’s “state of oneself” as willing to invest effort in a relationship with the object.

In monitoring our overall functioning and concern-specific progress, our feelings take on the role of guiding our perspective-taking and frame of reference (*The Law of Comparative Feeling*). They motivate and shape our preferences, priorities, expectations, and pre-existing appraisal propensities; they attribute events in the environment with value; and they form the basis of beliefs and judgments. Thus, Frijda claims we actually base our reasoning and decision-making “upon the perspectives of emotions at some later time” (22). In this way, feelings act as “anchoring points for action and orientation” (142), and even help us evaluate and regulate our emotional responses.

Regulation processes complement the appraisal processes that run throughout the emotion process in Frijda's model. According to Frijda, "People not only have emotions, they also handle them. They take a stance toward their emotions and the consequences of their emotional reactions. They like them or they do not like them. They take action accordingly. They may do so while the emotion is in progress; or anticipatorily, before it occurs. These actions interact with their emotions: They shape the emotions and are part of them" (*Emotions* 401). Frijda's regulatory processes are similar to Lazarus' notion of secondary appraisals and their coping functions, and he specifically attributes *The Law of Care of Consequence* as an opposing force to the control precedence of emotions. In accordance with this law, "Emotions do manifest deliberation, calculation, or consideration" (17). As a result, we can reflect on our thoughts, feelings, and actions, and even reappraise what is happening in our external environment or internal experience.

For this reason, humanists like Robert Solomon make the case that "our emotions become so central to ethics, not just because there are evaluations and appraisals already built into our emotions, and not just because our behavior tends to have ethically significant consequences, but because we are continuously evaluating and appraising our own emotional responses" (*True* 218). This significant feature of a felt life, that adult human emotions are "already infected with reflection and self-consciousness," suggests for Solomon that we are responsible for our emotions because we can evaluate whether or not they are "fair and accurate in their judgments and engagements" (*True* 227). Thus, the important point for Frijda, who has been heavily influenced by Solomon's work, is that "emotions are passions, but we are not passions' slaves" (21). Because the emotion process is fused with cognitive processes like appraisal and regulation, it operates on a balancing continuum "between letting go and restraint, between reacting and acting on one's initiative, between taking control and being controlled, in response to what happens outside as well

as to internal variations in propensity” (*Emotions* 45). In other words, despite being subject to these neurobiological and psychological laws of emotion, we are simultaneously in a position of voluntary control over how we might evaluate, experience, and regulate our felt lives as social beings by reflecting on our judgments and engagements.

At the same time that our emotions can invest and expand cognition through their passionate nature, Frijda argues our cognition “can extend the driving forces of emotion to the spheres of moral responsibility” (22):

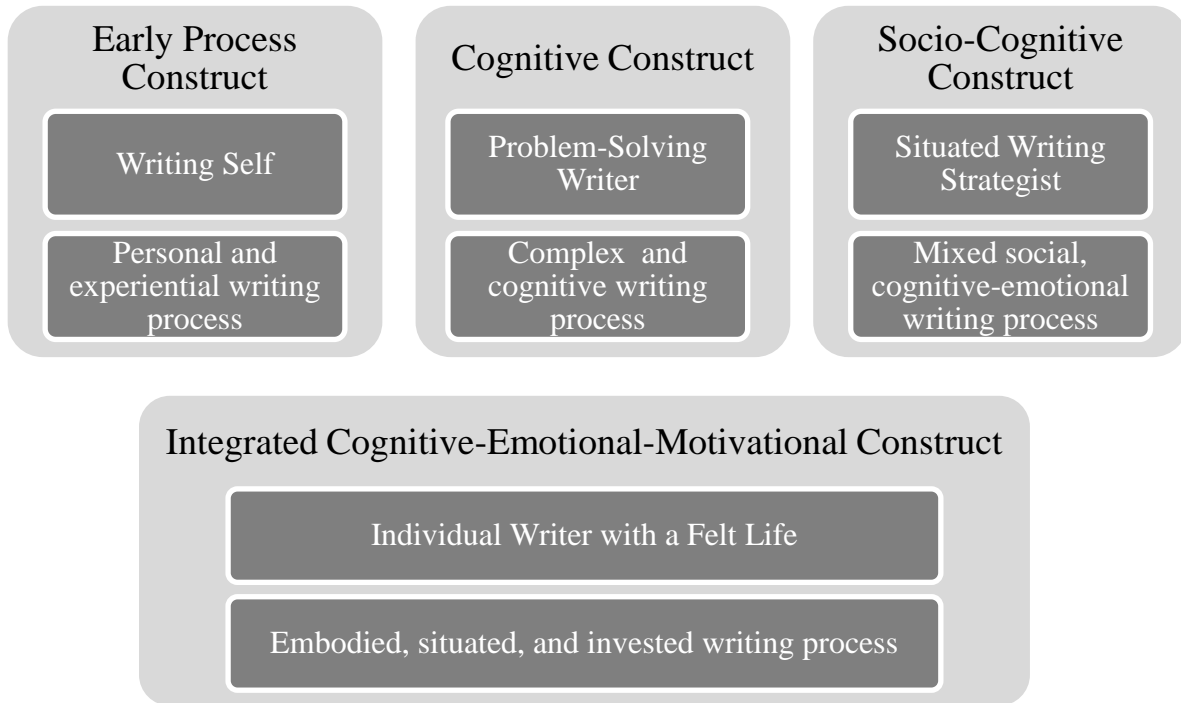
Voluntary control of cognitive capacities allows letting reality – full reality, including long-term consequences – to be what determines emotion. They allow emotions to be elicited not merely by the proximal, or the perceptual, or that which directly interferes with one’s actions, but by all that which in fact touches on one’s concerns, whether proximal or distal, whether occurring now or in the future, whether interfering with one’s own life or that of others. It is accomplished with the help of imagination and deeper processing. These procedures can confer emotive power on stimuli that do not by their nature have it. (*The Laws* 22)

The notion that we can attend to and cultivate deeper levels of cognitive-emotional processing to invest objects with emotive and motivational power that *do not by their very nature have it* has implications for the construct of the individual writer presented in Chapter Four. Bereiter and Scardamalia’s research on intentional cognition, discussed in Chapter One, showed that “meaningfulness ceases to be a property that is ‘found’ or ‘not found’ in external activities and contexts.” Rather, meaningfulness “becomes a property that people invest activities with, by virtue of assigning them a role in their mental lives” (336). Similar to the personal investment Johnny Ames cultivated in connection with his literacy practices, the next chapter applies the felt life model of the individual presented in Chapter Two and Chapter Three to construct an updated model of the individual writer, while asking: How do individual writers invest cognitive-emotional-motivational effort into their engagements with the writing process, and how does this personal investment influence their perspective-taking, judgment, and decision-making choices?

#### CHAPTER 4: CONSTRUCTING A FELT LIFE MODEL IN COMPOSITION THEORY

Throughout this dissertation, I have called for constructing an integrated cognitive-emotional-motivational model of the individual writer and the writing process in Composition Studies, one I claim is grounded in the notion of an individual's felt life. Since I see an individual's felt life as constituted by rich mixtures of cognition, emotion, and motivation that construct one's sense of well-being (quality of life) and reflect one's personal investments (goals, concerns, commitments) in the world, I argue individual writers do not leave their felt life perspectives behind when they engage in the writing process; rather, I propose individuals write from *within* the context of their felt lives. Thus, in Chapter Four, I return to the question motivating my research in composition theory, "What does it mean to write within the context of a felt life," by specifying the felt life model of the individual to the individual writer and the writing process.

Building on the work from previous chapters, the felt life model of the individual writer and the writing process extends the collective contributions of the early process, cognitive, and socio-cognitive constructs in composition presented in Chapter One, those of a *writing self*, a *problem-solving writer*, and a *situated writing strategist*, while incorporating recent research on the emotion process and the appraisal process from the neurobiological, psychological, and philosophical perspectives synthesized in Chapters Two and Three. Within this interdisciplinary framework, the integrated cognitive-emotional-motivational construct features an *individual writer with a felt life* and an *embodied, situated, and invested writing process*, as represented in Figure 4.1.



**Figure 4.1. Constructs of the Individual Writer and the Writing Process.**

In the beginning of this chapter, I first describe how an individual writer with a felt life engages in a writing process that is embodied, situated, and invested by drawing on Sondra Perl's research on *felt sense* ("Understanding Composing," 1980; *Felt Sense*, 2004). I contend Perl's theorizing of felt sense as *retrospective structuring* and *projective structuring* captures the internal processes of a felt life, which dynamically oscillate between an experiential, subjective, and narrative inner mind with a self process (retrospective structuring) and relational, evaluative, and reflective judgments and engagements with salient objects in the writing environment (projective structuring).

Within this framework, I then foreground the cognitive-emotional-motivational processes of a felt life during the writing process, such as *attending* to salient objects, *appraising* personal and situational meanings, *responding* with physiological, psychological, and behavioral engagements, and *coping* with psychological and situational demands. In doing so, I aim to

account for the cognitive, emotional, motivational, and behavioral efforts an individual writer invests into proposing, translating, transcribing, and evaluating written (and unwritten) text (Hayes “Remodeling”; Hayes and Olinghouse).

After specifying the felt life model to the individual writer and the writing process through Perl and Hayes, the chapter takes a pedagogical turn and considers a first-year writing course I developed using key aspects of the model, particularly in designing a sequence of writing assignments for the course. Finally, the chapter concludes with some reflections and implications for future research.

### **Writing within the Context of a Felt Life**

When applied to the writing process, the overall construction of an individual with a felt life from previous chapters does not change. Instead, Figure 4.2 highlights how individuals write *within* the context of a felt life. Even for an individual writer, the felt life model depicts an individual’s cognitive-emotional-motivational involvement with the environment, showcasing how one perceives, evaluates, and engages with the world or the writing process from an embodied, situated, and invested perspective. Since people usually have a stake in pursuing and safeguarding their most important needs, goals, and concerns within an ongoing situational context, the model continues to centrally display well-being and personal investments as primary judgments while writing within the context of a felt life. In this way, the model in Figure 4.2 emphasizes the dynamic relationship between an individual writer’s inner mind and ongoing judgments and engagements with saliently appraised objects in the writing process and environment, as revealed through Sondra Perl’s research on *felt sense*.



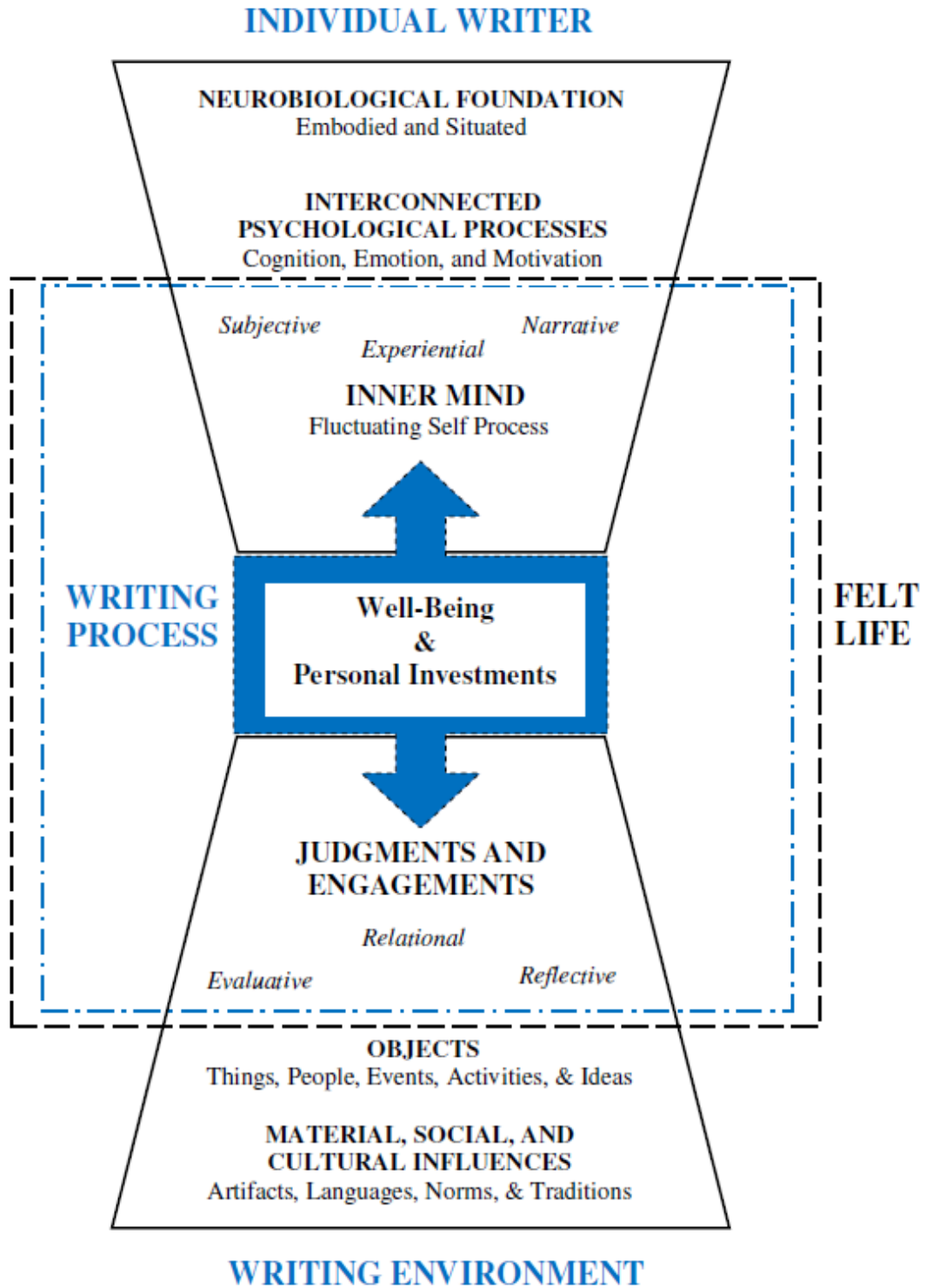


Fig. 4.2. Individuals Write within the Context of a Felt Life.

From her 1980 article “Understanding Composing,” Perl’s case study of Anne captures a brief phenomenological portrait of a working writer. The snapshot Perl presents of Anne’s recursive writing process also points to the felt life that Anne is writing from, as connected to her sense of well-being and personal investments: “My mind leaps from the task at hand to what I need at the vegetable stand for tonight’s soup to the threatening rain outside to ideas voiced in my writing group this morning, but in between ‘distractions’ I hear myself trying out words I might use. It’s as if the extraneous thoughts are a counterpoint to the more steady attention I’m giving to composing” (99). Importantly, what Anne refers to as “extraneous thoughts” or “distractions” in the process of writing are what I see as the rich mixtures of cognition, emotion, and motivation that constitute her inner mind and ongoing judgments and engagements. That is, in trying to focus her attention on “the task at hand,” Anne is also thinking about things that concern her well-being or point to her personal investments: the food she needs for dinner, the dangerous weather conditions outside, and the lingering opinions and ideas of others about writing (most likely about her own writing). Thus, Anne’s conscious stream of attention reveals the meaningful objects she appraises in both her inner mind and her immediate environment, along with the felt life context or “counterpoint” which structures her embodied, situated, and invested writing process.

While the excerpt above does not include the embodied aspects of Anne’s felt experiences with writing, Perl’s notion of felt sense is rooted in consciously attending to bodily sensations and subjective feelings as a critical part of one’s writing process. She observed in her early process research how “[writers] would pause in their composing, would sit silently for thirty seconds or a minute, and then would have a burst of composing energy that often led to the creation of a new idea” (*Felt* 7). Within these moments of silence, Perl theorizes writers are attending to their felt sense and directing their attention to “the images, words, ideas, and vague fuzzy feelings that are

anchored in [their] body” (101). She claims writers draw on felt sense, especially when they are working with language, by turning to their “feelings or non-verbalized perceptions that *surround* the words, or to what the words already present *evoke* in the writer” (101), as internal cues for generating and evaluating their in-process construction of meaning and language.

Perl’s writing process descriptions of felt sense illustrate a broadened view of cognition, acknowledging how implicit meanings (e.g., sensations and feelings) co-exist prior to and with explicit meanings (e.g., language). Similar to Magna Arnold’s definition of the emotion process as “the felt tendency toward anything intuitively appraised as good (beneficial) or away from anything intuitively appraised as bad (harmful)” (qtd. in Smith and Kirby 78), Perl describes felt sense in connection with language as “feeling right” or “not feeling right.” On the one hand, she writes, “When the words that are emerging *feel* right, we often feel excited or at least pleased; we experience a kind of flow. Physically and mentally, we are aligned. In this instance, felt sense is a guide that lets us know we are on the right track” (*Felt* 3). These *feel right* composing moments stand in contrast to those that *do not feel right*: “When the emerging words do not *feel* right, we squirm. We feel uncomfortable. The alignment between our thoughts and our bodies hasn’t yet happened; in this instance, we often become frustrated, jotting any old thing or something close to it but not quite right, just to escape from the discomfort” (*Felt* 4). Therefore, these *feeling right* and *not feeling right* experiences of felt sense represent a range of bodily sensations and subjective feelings during the composing process, which I categorized below using Perl’s descriptive language (Figure 4.3):

<i>Feeling Right</i>	<i>Not Feeling Right</i>
<p>Composing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ free-flowing realm</li> <li>▪ words come quickly</li> <li>▪ hit a stride</li> <li>▪ love what is happening</li> <li>▪ feel satisfied, excited, or pleased</li> <li>▪ “Yes, that’s it.”</li> <li>▪ “Yes, this feels complete.”</li> </ul> <p>Body:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ physical-mental alignment</li> <li>▪ tingles with energy</li> <li>▪ relaxing feeling</li> <li>▪ leans in closer/over</li> <li>▪ sighs of relief</li> <li>▪ internal click of “rightness”</li> </ul>	<p>Composing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ wordless discomfort</li> <li>▪ groping for words</li> <li>▪ plod along</li> <li>▪ do not enjoy what is happening</li> <li>▪ feel dissatisfied, frustrated, or puzzled</li> <li>▪ “No, that’s not right.”</li> <li>▪ “No, this isn’t complete.”</li> </ul> <p>Body:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ physical-mental misalignment</li> <li>▪ uncomfortable</li> <li>▪ overwhelming feeling</li> <li>▪ squirms in the chair</li> <li>▪ anxious and apprehensive</li> <li>▪ unsettling, murky zone of confusion and emptiness</li> </ul>

**Fig. 4.3. Perl’s Descriptions of Felt Sense (*Felt 3-22*).**

Throughout the writing process, then, an individual writer’s ongoing barometer of felt sense gauges internal cues from the body and the inner mind, while also incorporating external cues from the environment, such as written language or feedback.

In this way, according to Perl, we experience felt sense in the writing process as an oscillating, back-and-forth movement between implicitly felt meaning and explicitly expressed meaning:

We can tune into [our felt sense] by breathing slowly, quieting down, waiting for it to form, and then allowing it to lead us to this incipient sense of meaning. We can also tune into it as the words are coming and as we are listening to ourselves write by paying attention to what we sense physically as we express our ideas...And we can stay in touch with our bodily sense of knowing while we are reading our written work and attempting to assess whether we have fully or adequately captured what we are trying to say. These are moves

that occur physically and mentally in our bodies and in our minds...between sensing and wording.... (*Felt* 10)

Particularly in moments when writers are “rereading” or “going back” over written portions of their text, Perl claims their felt sense about a topic, a word choice, or the overall shape of their writing involves a two-fold mental process of turning one’s awareness and attention inward, *retrospective structuring*, and turning one’s capacity for perspective-taking, judgment, and decision-making outward, *projective structuring*. With the first mental movement of retrospective structuring, Perl suggests writers are attending or becoming attuned to what they are sensing, feeling, and thinking as inner experience, using their felt sense to discover or modify the language that will help them convey their intentions and meanings (103). With the second mental movement of projective structuring, Perl suggests writers are evaluating or assessing what they have already written, using their felt sense to judge how well their text or language conveys their intentions and meanings so that “it is intelligible to others” (104). In both movements of felt sense, the writer is implicitly and explicitly constructing and modifying intended meanings and language, moving back and forth from a place of invention to the imagined reception of his or her writing.

To varying degrees, Perl contends all writers perform these “alternating mental postures” as a result of their internalized models of the writing process (104-5). For example, if a writer believes that writing is a linear process, then those moments of “waiting, looking, and discovering” that Perl attributes to turning inward and attending to one’s felt sense, as part of a recursive writing process, might become sources of frustration and most likely formulaic writing products on behalf of this writer (104). Similarly, if a writer is overly concerned with his or her readers’ expectations, judgments, or approval, then the focus of writing may shift away from discovering “a living connection between [the writer] and their topic” in favor of correctness, writing rules and conventions, or simply pleasing the audience (104). Instead, Perl encourages writers to cultivate

a successful balance between “inner experience” and “outer judgment,” so that the writer’s intentions and meanings and the reader’s needs and expectations are more appropriately represented in the text (105). To accomplish this balance, Perl argues that “writers must have the experience of being readers,” for they “cannot call up a felt sense of a reader unless they themselves have experienced what it means to be lost in a piece of writing or to be excited by it” (105). In all of these cases, writers’ mental models of the writing process – what it is, how it happens (or how it should happen), and what it feels like – structure their felt experiences and engagements by orienting their attention, perception, and judgment.

For this reason, I see Perl’s two-fold treatment of felt sense in the writing process as a complementary framework in composition theory for describing an individual writer’s cognitive-emotional-motivational processes in the felt life model, which dynamically oscillate between an experiential, subjective, and narrative inner mind with a self process (retrospective structuring) and relational, evaluative, and reflective judgments and engagements with salient objects in the writing environment (projective structuring). Within this framework of felt sense and felt life, therefore, I contend the cognitive-emotional-motivational processes that constitute and influence one’s inner mind and ongoing judgments and engagements also co-shape one’s felt sense of the writer-text-reader relationship. Furthermore, I suggest the recursive nature of felt sense aligns with the recursive nature of an individual writer’s ongoing appraisal and emotion processes throughout the writing process. That is, similar to the antecedent, mediating, and consequent components of appraisal and emotion operating implicitly and explicitly in the individual, felt sense “exists prior to our language-ing it; it exists alongside the words that come; and it exists as a bodily physical referent after words come” (*Felt* 9). As implicit meaning, felt sense continuously circulates throughout the writing process; however, it can become more explicit by attending to

internal cues from the body and the inner mind or attending to external cues in the writing environment, while also using those cues to evaluate in-process language construction and meaning-making, as discussed in the next section.

### **The Interconnected Processes of Appraisal and Emotion in the Writing Process**

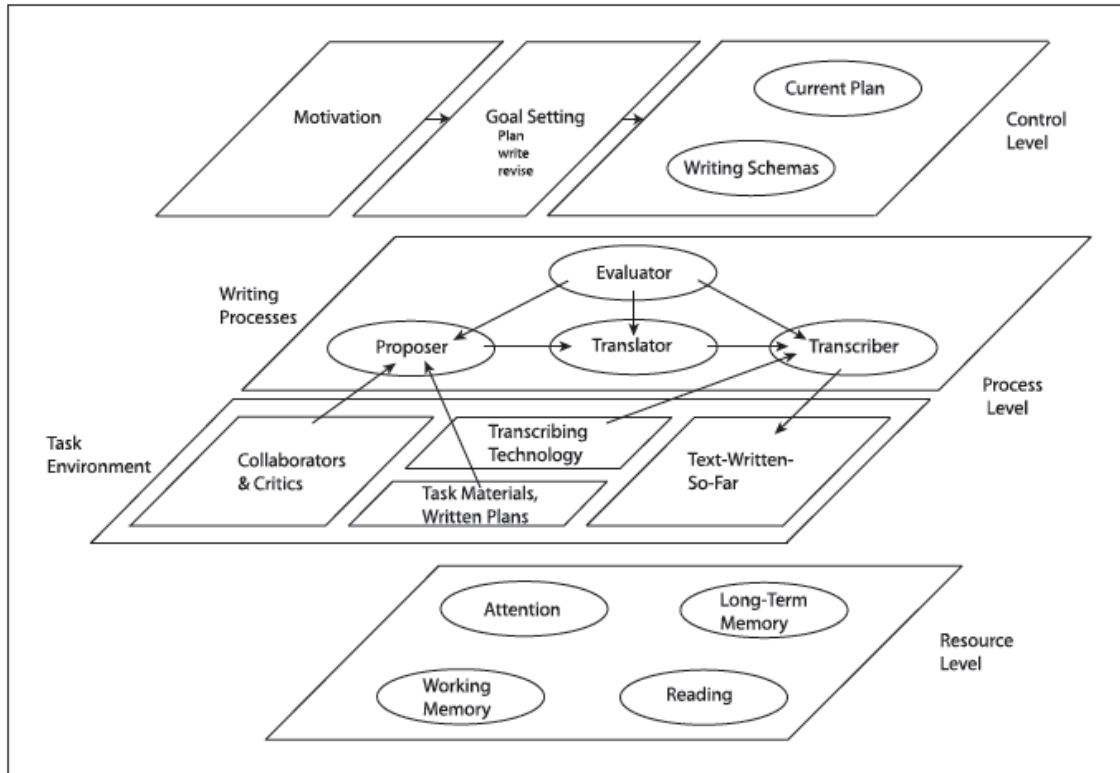
Operating implicitly and explicitly, the felt life infuses our perspective-taking, judgment, and decision-making in the writing process, influencing how we develop a writing identity, solve complex writing problems, and respond rhetorically to different writing situations. Our beliefs, judgments, and other predispositions (i.e. values, goals, expectations, knowledge, and memories) toward a particular writing task, the writing environment, the writing process, or a constructed writing identity often intertwine and sometimes conflict with our broader network of social roles, self-identities, and relationships with others. And whether the writing process is internally motivated or externally motivated, enacted over short bursts or long bursts of time, its recursive movement of attending to and evaluating implicit and explicit meaning often depends on a more deliberate level of attention, investment, and engagement on behalf of the individual writer, who must exert some level of cognitive, emotional, motivational, and behavioral effort in order to write. In this way, the felt life infuses, interacts, and conflicts with the writing process by allowing or preventing us from initiating the activity (dispositional motivation), along with sustaining our progress, slowing it down, or blocking it altogether through varying degrees of attention, appraisal, and overall engagement (transactional-relational motivation).

To more specifically describe how our cognitive-emotional-motivational processes influence the writing process, this section takes a closer look at the interconnected appraisal and emotion processes I propose inform the felt life model (*attending, appraising, responding, and coping*), and considers these interconnected processes in connection with John Hayes' most current

socio-cognitive model of writing (“Modeling and Remodeling”; Hayes and Olinghouse). Even though Hayes provides the most comprehensive modeling of socio-cognitive research on the writing process, he does not integrate emotion into his 2012 account; this exclusion of emotion stands in contrast to his individual-environmental model of writing from 1996, discussed in Chapter One, which notably integrates motivation and affect with cognitive processes. Moreover, although Hayes acknowledges motivation as a driving force for initiating the writing process through goal-setting, his current model only accounts for dispositional motivation “in a general way,” noting that “the representation of motivation in [his] current model is not fully adequate to account for various ways that motivation can influence writing” (“Modeling” 373). Therefore, in my effort to discuss how individuals write within the context of a felt life, I will briefly describe Hayes’ recent socio-cognitive model of writing in relationship to the interconnected appraisal and emotion processes that I propose constitute a felt life.

*Hayes’ Socio-Cognitive Model of the Writing Process (2012):* As shown in Figure 4.4, Hayes conceptualizes three major levels in his model to represent how an individual writer interacts with the task environment and engages in the activity of writing.





**Fig. 4.4. Hayes' 2012 Model of the Writing Process (“Modeling” 371).**

First, the model's *control level* captures dispositional and situational influences on the writing process, such as motivation, writing schemas, and subsequent goals and plans for a particular writing task. These internally constructed or recalled factors “shape and direct the writing activity” (482). Second, the model's *process level* centrally highlights four basic writing processes – proposing, translating, evaluating, and transcribing – which interact with a matrix of social and material influences in the task environment, including collaborators, critics, technology, and written texts. These recursive interactions between the inner mind and the external environment continuously modify and shape the unfolding text and writing process experience. Third, the model's *resource level* highlights systems such as long-term memory, working memory, attention, and reading that work together to accomplish the writing process; these resources also facilitate

other everyday tasks like “speaking, problem solving, and decision-making” (Hayes and Olinghouse 486). In these distinct, yet simultaneous dimensions of Hayes’ model, all three levels reflect the systems, processes, and influences that support and shape the activity of writing.

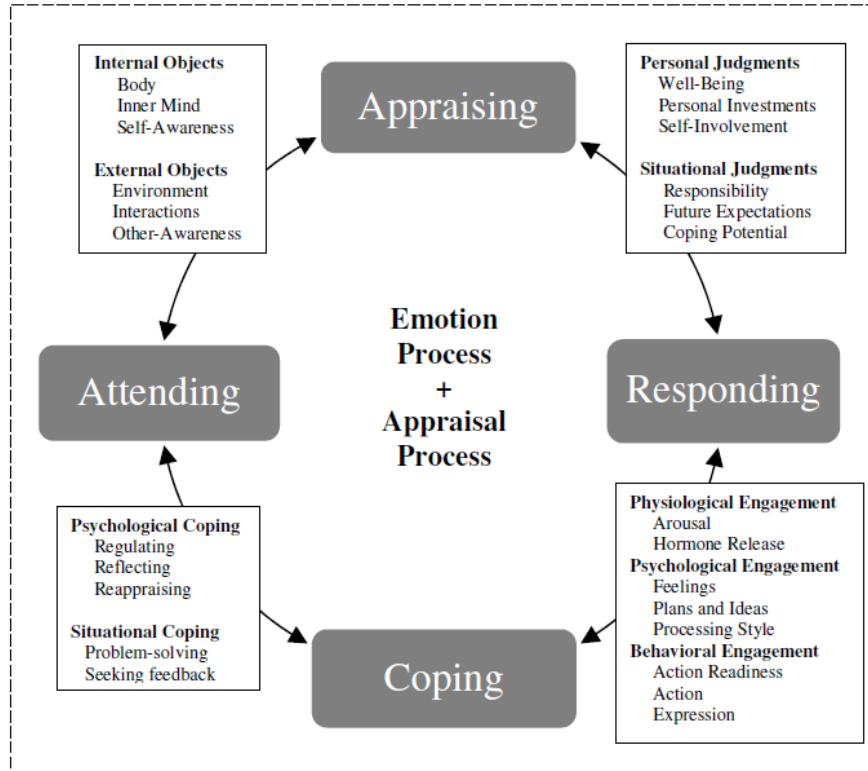
Similar to its primacy in the felt life model, motivation plays an important role in Hayes’ account of writing. Motivation, he claims, determines “whether people write, how long they write, and how much they attend to the quality of what they write” (“Modeling” 373). His model graphically depicts a dispositional relationship between motivation and goal-setting, emphasizing that “without the motivation to write, writing will not happen” (482). Likewise, in the felt life model, personal investments and well-being are centrally featured as primary motivators of individual writers’ thoughts, feelings, and actions. An individual writer’s personal investments embody the active goals and corresponding objects that one cares about or judges important, such as wanting to be a professional writer or striving to meet a writing deadline. And an individual writer’s situational sense of well-being registers how good or bad one feels based on his or her appraised relationship with the writing environment. In this way, individual writers appraise “the fate” of their personal investments within the context of their writing environment and their social world.

Hence, whether writers evaluate themselves as flourishing or floundering in relationship to their goals will determine how they subjectively feel and experience the writing process. As Perl alluded to in her descriptions of felt sense, “feeling right” composing moments evoke satisfaction, excitement, engagement, and pleasure for the individual writer; in this case, one’s emotional state invigorates and sustains the writing process, as a “state of flow” or “hitting a stride.” On the other hand, “not feeling right” composing moments evoke dissatisfaction, frustration, apprehension, and confusion; here, the individual writer’s emotional state interferes and slows down the writing

process, as one “squirms” or “plods along” in a state of “wordless discomfort.” Both composing experiences are saturated with emotion and subjective feelings, motivating a range of physiological, psychological, and behavioral engagements with writing.

Whereas dispositional motivation provides the writer with personal meaning and value connected to a writing task in the felt life model, transactional-relational motivation enables the execution of writing to happen; at the very least, it energizes the individual writer’s “muscles, thoughts, and glands” in preparation to write (Frijda 39). Similarly, transactional-motivation enables the avoidance of writing from happening; rather than energizing one to write, it can also paralyze or inhibit one’s body and mind from acting. In other words, the emotion process motivates an individual writer to think, feel, and act in a certain way, and in turn, these cognitive-emotional-motivational engagements frame the complex ways we attend, appraise, respond, and cope with the writing process.

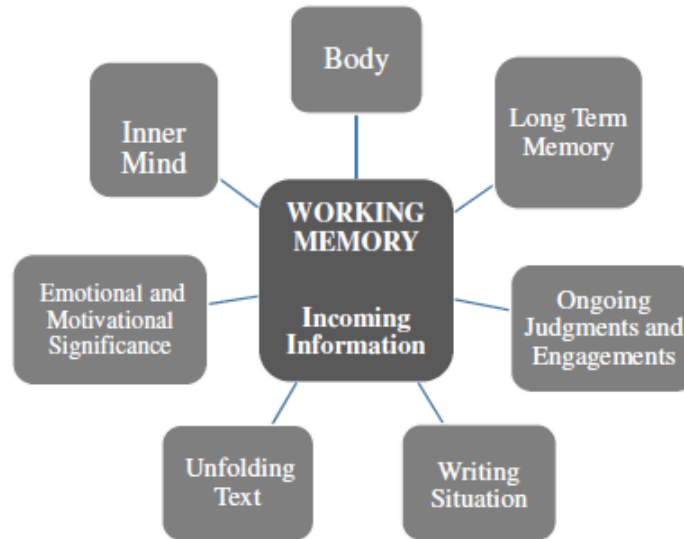
As shown in Figure 4.5, I suggest an individual writer’s interconnected appraisal and emotion processes structure the writing process in the following recursive ways:



**Fig. 4.5. Interconnected Emotion and Appraisal Processes.**

*Attending:* Through attention resources in working memory, writers focus on salient internal and external objects in the writing process. With an internal focus of attention, writers become aware of the body, such as sensations, pains, pleasures, and other embodied feelings; the contents of the inner mind, such as thoughts, feelings, perceptions, ideas, plans, and images, including language; and the self, such as an awareness of one's fluctuating experiential, subjective, and narrative self process, often involving memories, associations, and imaginations. With an external focus of attention, writers become aware of the environment, such as material objects (unfolding written text, accompanying notes and resources, technology) and the physical location (writing space); interactions with others, such as feedback from instructors, collaborators, and tutors; and an awareness of others' needs and expectations, such as real or imagined audience reception of one's own or others' writing.

*Appraising:* Through the executive functions and temporary storage space of working memory, writers evaluate incoming information from a range of internal and external sources (see Figure 4.6 below) in terms of personal judgments and situational judgments.



**Fig. 4.6. Incoming Appraisal Information in Working Memory.**

Personal judgments assess an individual writer’s sense of well-being (survival and quality of life), personal investments (needs, goals, and concerns), and overall level of self-involvement related to what is happening in the writing environment or the inner mind [e.g., “self- and social-esteem, moral values, self-ideals, meanings and ideas, other persons and their well-being, and life goals” (Lazarus 102)]. Situational judgments assess an individual writer’s perceived ability to respond and act within the writing environment, which involve evaluations about responsibility, future expectations of the self and others, and one’s coping potential to manage the ongoing internal and external demands of the writing process.

*Responding:* Based on an individual writer’s appraised relationship with salient objects in the writing environment, an emotional response may occur, which engages all levels of the individual in the writing process: physiologically, psychologically, and behaviorally.

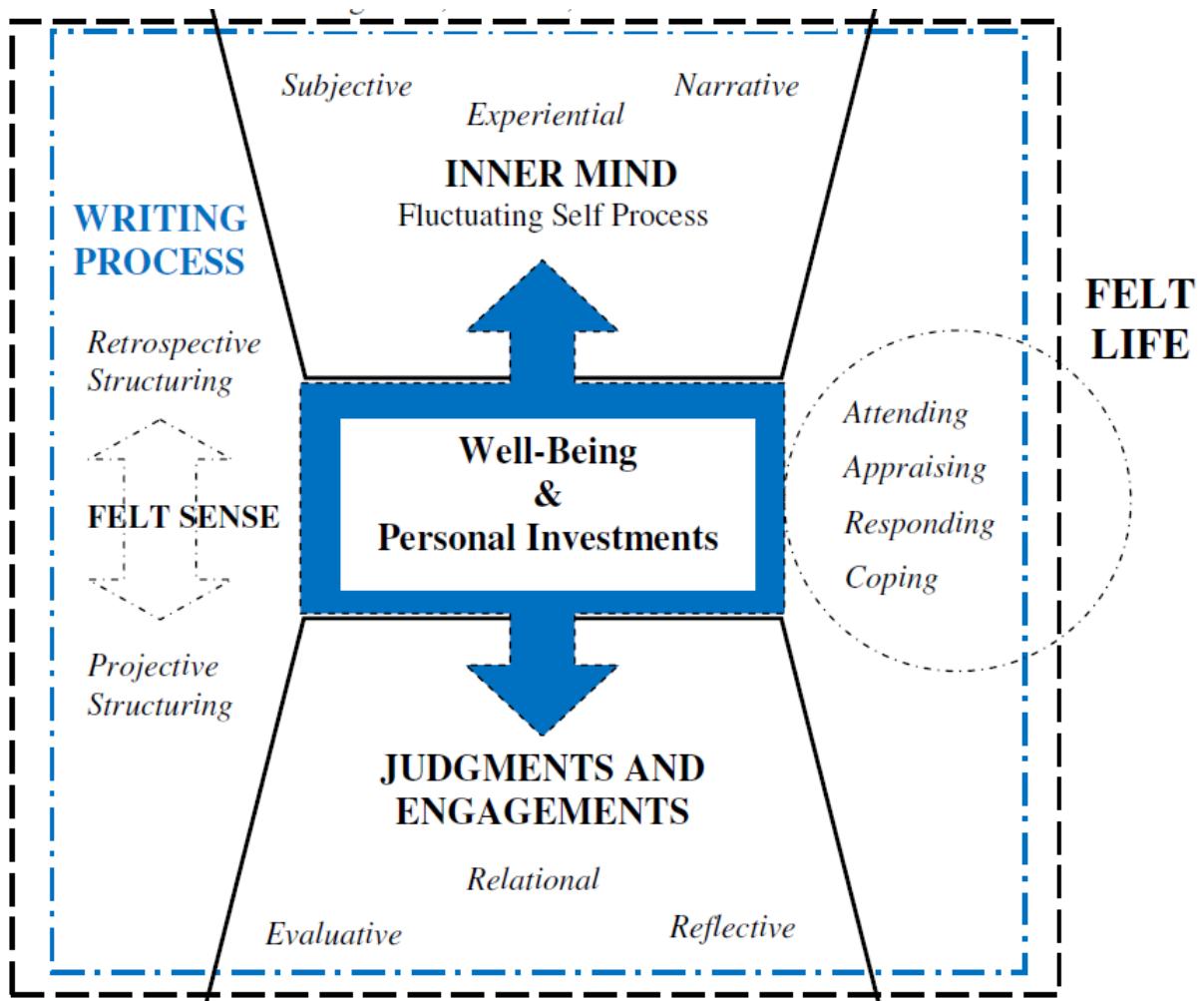
Physiologically, the individual writer's emotional response releases hormones that arouse cognition (e.g., alert) and prime the body to act, making it physically possible to transcribe text. Psychologically, the individual writer's emotional response influences the kinds of feelings, plans and ideas, and cognitive processing style (e.g., slow or fast) that affects the generation, translation, and evaluation of text. Behaviorally, the individual writer's emotional response prompts action and expression or the readiness to act (e.g., writing, seeking feedback, collaborating) within the writing environment.

*Coping*: In a concerted effort to manage the ongoing demands and decisions in the writing process, the individual writer implements psychological and behavioral coping strategies. Psychological coping requires a cognitive-emotional effort to self-regulate one's emotional response, along with reflecting on and possibly reappraising what is happening in one's inner mind or immediate environment. Behavioral coping requires an action-based effort and intervention to circumstantially address what is happening in the writing environment, such solving problems or seeking feedback about one's writing.

Taken together, the interconnected processes of *attending* to salient objects, *appraising* personal and situational meanings, *responding* with physiological, psychological, and behavioral engagements, and *coping* with psychological and situational demands present a recursive framework for describing and understanding individual writers' felt experiences with the writing process. Under this view, cognition is not only embodied and situated but also deeply invested with emotion and motivation, a premise Hayes does not fully incorporate into his writing process model. As an extension to Hayes' model which conceptualizes the internal processes of the individual writer in primarily cognitive terms, such as proposing, translating, evaluating, and transcribing, the felt life model privileges the role of invested thoughts, feelings, and actions as

significantly influencing and interacting with the writing process. Therefore, the felt life model conceptualizes the writing process as recursively embedded within the embodied, situated, and invested perspective of the individual writer.

Figure 4.7 features a section of the felt life model, which summarizes my explication of the individual writer and the writing process in terms of cognitive-emotional-motivational processes:



**Fig. 4.7. Summary of the Felt Life Model and the Writing Process.**

Perl's theorizing of felt sense in the writing process, as involving a recursive mental movement between retrospective structuring (implicit meaning) and projective structuring (explicit meaning),

complements the internal and external dynamics of a felt life, which oscillate between one's experiential, subjective, and narrative inner mind and one's relational, evaluative, and reflective judgments and engagements with objects in the environment. This cognitive-emotional-motivational movement occurs when individual writers attend to salient objects, appraise personal and subjective meanings, respond with physiological, psychological, and behavioral engagements, and cope with psychological or situational demands within a writing environment. Thus, these interconnected processes call attention to an individual writer's sense of well-being and personal investments, which motivate his or her attention, perception, judgment, and engagement with important objects in a writing situation.

In an effort to cultivate and engage students' cognitive-emotional-motivational processes in the writing process, the next section in Chapter Four focuses on how I developed a first-year writing course using key aspects of the felt life model, followed by a conclusion with some reflections and implications for composition theory and pedagogy.

### **Developing a First-Year Writing Course with the Felt Life Model**

Under the felt life model's premise that individuals already evaluate and engage with the world from an emotionally-invested perspective, I strived to develop a first-year writing course that students would find meaningful and relevant to their growing understanding of who they are as both human beings and individual writers, so that writing itself might become an activity students invest with personal meaning and value within the broader context of their lives. In teaching writing as both personal and connected to others, I wanted students to see by the end of the course that writing is rooted in relationships: that it is a disposition, an activity, and an ongoing practice that requires us to empathically and ethically establish connections, again and again, in texts that influence and impact us, just as much as we interact with and create them through our



own personal investments and engagements. To accomplish this relational stance, I developed a sequence of assignments and ongoing assessments which aimed to cultivate an empathic and ethical disposition between the self and others based on the notion that while we may live in the world as individuals with *personal investments*, the kind of writing practice we want to cultivate involves a commitment to forming and enacting *connected investments*. Based around a course theme of “Valuing Work,” I attempted to scaffold three major units (Unit 1: Personal Investments, Unit 2: Multiple Perspectives, and Unit 3: Connected Investments) and a reflective writing process based on this goal-oriented movement from personal investments to connected investments.

In Unit 1, students critically explored a range of perspectives on “Valuing Work” from the book *The Changing World of Work* (Ford). The selections focused on “what work is” (Levine), how to cultivate “right livelihood” (hooks) or “proper motivation” (Lama and Cutler), what qualifies as “achievement of the good life” (Judis), and the changing nature of work in terms of the creative process (Florida), economics and spirituality (Judis), and cultivating a particular professional identity (selections from *Gig*). Each reading presented a different perspective on “how values motivate people to make work-related choices” (Ford 1) and emphasized the relationship between “the motivation to work and the creation of a good life” (Ford 2). Prior to class, students completed online quizzes for each reading that included a content-based question (e.g., “The Dalai Lama and Howard Cutler cite a study that identifies three types of work orientations: job, career, and calling. According to Lama and Cutler, what motivates each type of orientation?”) and a position-taking question (e.g., “Which orientation fits your individual psychology and view of work, and why?”). In-class, these quiz responses facilitated class discussion and were used to talk about student writing; students also wrote prompt-driven blog posts with other students to collaborate ideas (e.g., “Consider your beliefs about work in

relationship to the question, ‘How should a human being live?’”), which were then discussed with the whole group to conclude each class session. The following table outlines the prompts used for quizzes and blogs in Unit 1, in preparation for students writing the major assignment, the Personal Investments Project:

<p><b>Practice Blog: Opening Day</b></p> <p>What kind of conversation did we have today about motivation and work? What values motivate you to pursue a particular major or professional track?</p>
<p><b>Quiz 1: Dalai Lama and Howard Culter’s “Happiness at Work: Job, Career, Calling”</b></p> <p>The Dalai Lama and Howard Cutler cite a study that identifies three types of work orientations: job, career, and calling. According to Lama and Culter, what <i>motivates</i> each type of orientation?</p> <p>Which orientation fits your individual psychology and view of work, and why?</p> <p><b>Blog Post 1: Responding to a Conversation</b></p> <p>Respond to D’s post, paying close attention to “voice markers” and distinguishing between what D states, what Lama and Culter state, and what your group wants to write.</p>
<p><b>Quiz 2: Richard Florida’s “The Creative Class”</b></p> <p>How does Richard Florida characterize the “creative class” of workers in terms of judgment and decision-making? In other words, how does he describe these actions, and how are these actions different from what is expected of the “service workers”?</p> <p>Would your intended profession be considered part of the creative class, according to Florida? Why or why not?</p> <p><b>Blog Post 2: Counterargument</b></p> <p>Disagree with a claim that Richard Florida makes in “The Creative Class,” and provide some reasons why you disagree.</p>

**Quiz 3: Philip Levine’s “What Work Is” and John Judis’ “Value-Free”**

Select and quote some key words or phrases from Philip Levine’s poem “What Work Is,” and make a case for what the selected language conveys about the value of work.

What is Judis’ argument about the relationship between morality and the economy? Give some evidence from the article.

**Blog Post 3: Conceptualizing Judis’ Strategies**

With a partner or small group, use the SmartArt feature in Microsoft Word to visually conceptualize some of the strategies Judis uses to make his argument that “America’s moral flux” can best be explained through “the relationship...between the moral imperatives economic life generates and our broader moral and religious beliefs” (13).

Some strategies might include: examples, juxtapositions, historical review, analogies, philosophical and religious references, and the culture war (as an organizing theme).

**Quiz 4: bell hooks’ “Work Makes Life Sweet”**

What kinds of perspectives does hooks draw on to make her argument about work as “mission” or “passion” oriented? Provide some examples to support your answer.

Our last reading by John Judis did not use personal experience to construct his argument, but hooks incorporates personal experience throughout her essay as an argumentative strategy. Identify some strengths and limitations to the personal experience approach by hooks.

**Blog 4: Perspectives, Strategies, and Persuasion**

In small groups, complete the attached table; then, write a “levels of persuasion” response that evaluates which writers were the most persuasive and the least persuasive in delivering their perspectives on the value of work. Arrange your response in a way that clearly shows how you evaluated the various perspectives.

**Quiz 5: Selections from *Gig***

In your selection from *Gig*, summarize the individual’s perspective toward work, using quoted passages from the interview to support your answer.

Conclude with some thoughts and feelings about how this individual’s perspective represents, clashes with, or enhances your own beliefs about work, including how you have imagined your future professional path.

**Blog Post 5: “Valuing Work” Reflection**

Based on the “Valuing Work” readings, describe which perspectives represent, or align with, your own values and beliefs about work. You could also consider your values and beliefs about work in relationship to the question, “How should a human being live?”

The major project for Unit 1, the Personal Investments Project, prompted students to write a narrative essay describing their own personal investments toward work, while incorporating some of the readings to help them frame their perspective:

### **Unit 1: Personal Investments Project**

#### *Description*

Perhaps the introduction to *Gig* best captures the complexity of what it means to reflect on your personal investments toward work:

You're born, and before too long, you have to start spending most of your time working to sustain yourself. Along with love and your physical being, work is key to your existential circumstances: Who am I? What do I want? What is my place in the world, and my status within it? Am I useful? Am I fulfilled? Can I change my circumstances? Work defines, to a large degree, your external identity as part of the social matrix. But it also looms very large in your inner sense of how you're traveling through life. (x)

Keeping these questions in mind, write a **4-6 page narrative essay describing what motivates your personal investments toward work**. Reflect on what is important and valuable to your life goals, and articulate the kinds of beliefs and judgments attached to your work-related goals and decisions. Some questions to ask might be, "What's worth my commitment?" or "What am I invested in?"

#### *Incorporating Perspectives*

The writers surveyed in "Valuing Work" provide different perspectives on "what work is" (Levine), how to cultivate "right livelihood" (hooks) or "proper motivation" (Lama and Cutler), and what qualifies as "achievement of the good life" (Judis). They also consider the changing nature of work in terms of the creative process (Florida), economics and spirituality (Judis), and cultivating a particular professional identity (*Gig*).

When drafting your narrative essay, **incorporate at least two perspectives from the readings** to help you describe what motivates your personal investments toward work. Additional perspectives outside of the required readings should also be incorporated to help you articulate where your beliefs and judgments come from when reflecting on what you value as a person.

#### *Writing Strategies*

Similar to our conversation about writing an effective personal statement, your Personal Investments Project should be written using some of the same strategies we identified as a class:

- Develop a line of reasoning that informs the writer's decisions and choices

- Think about a larger purpose (goals) and detailed examples
- Aim for “originality” over clichés
- What other strategies might be useful when writing a narrative essay?
- Who is the audience for this narrative essay?
- What personal investments do they have as readers and writers?

In designing the Personal Investments Project, I wanted students to develop an explicit awareness of their perspective toward work, including how their perspective relates to other perspectives (i.e. from the readings and their life histories), and to reflect on how their personal investments connect with their conception of well-being. Since individuals’ personal investments typically form “a goal hierarchy” (Lazarus) or a “goal network” (Nussbaum) constructed around their conceptions of what it means to live well, flourish, or thrive as a human-being (*well-being* or *eudaimonia*), Unit 1 culminated with a project that asked students to consider some important questions related to life goals, such as “What’s worth my commitment?” or “What am I invested in?”

The quoted passage from *Gig* provided a relevant synopsis of why work matters to our sense of well-being, purpose, and livelihood in the world, and I used it as a framing device for reflection. Initially, some students struggled with the notion that their perspective toward work was not the same as other people’s perspectives or that it wasn’t a universal one, while others found it difficult to identify what they were personally invested in right now or in the future. Moreover, when students were able to discuss their work-related motivations, values, beliefs, and judgments, they often stated, “But aren’t I going into a career because it is my personal choice, my personal interest?” Helping students think reflectively about their personal investments, “Okay, but how did that personal choice and interest develop in the first place? What informs that decision,” was a significant part of the writing process for this project and Unit 1.

In Unit 2, we continued to discuss the theme of motivation and work through Daniel Pink’s work in *Drive* and *A Whole New Mind*, but students were also introduced to rhetorical terminology and ways of thinking about argument, analysis, and audience through Lester Faigley and Jack Selzer’s *A Little Argument*. All of the reading selections emphasized the kind of dispositions, mindsets, and strategies students could draw on to facilitate engagement for themselves and their readers. Pink discussed autonomy, mastery, and purpose as the three driving motivations for human behavior in *Drive*, along with the six aptitudes of design, story, symphony (synthesis), empathy, play, and meaning in *A Whole New Mind*, which we incorporated into our discussions about work and the writing process. Through Faigley and Selzer, we established a framework for writing arguments “responsibly” and “respectfully” by attending to the reader’s needs and concerns, representing multiple perspectives, and building credibility through being concerned, well-informed, fair, and ethical (4-6). Since this unit was heavily research-based and required a lot of invention and rewriting, I structured the unit around reflective journal entries, small group discussions, and roundtable feedback on in-progress research and writing to provide immediate and ongoing feedback for individual writers. The following table lists the reflective journal prompts that students drafted as part of their writing process leading up to the Multiple Perspectives Project in Unit 2:

**Journal 1: Posing a Problem**

For a few minutes, generate a list of real or potential problems related to your personal investments toward work that you think are worth exploring more with research.

**Journal 2: The Art of Choosing**

In her book *The Art of Choosing*, social psychologist Sheena Iyengar poses the question, “When making a choice, do you first and foremost consider what you want, what will make you happy, or do you consider what is best for you *and* the people around you?” (3) She states, “Where we fall on this continuum is very much a product of our cultural upbringing and the script we are given for how to choose – in making decisions, are we told to focus primarily on the “I” or on the “we”?” (30)

Respond to these passages from Iyengar while taking into consideration how this dynamic of focusing on the “I” or focusing on the “we” appears in your Personal Investments Project.

### **Journal 3: Locating Multiple Perspectives**

Based on your next major assignment, the Multiple Perspectives Project, describe some initial perspectives you are considering to use in connection with your invested problem toward work.

### **Journal 4: Research Proposal**

- 1) Turn your invested problem into a researchable question: Pose a question.
- 2) Explain what motivates you to research this question, as it relates to your personal investments.
- 3) Identify four or more perspectives and discuss how they are invested in the same problem. Also note where these perspectives come from (actual source).
- 4) Indicate how these multiple perspectives (individually and collectively) build your credibility.

### **Journal 5: Research Proposal (Revision)**

With a partner, review and make final revisions to your research proposal:

- 1) Review the evaluation criteria from Faigley and Selzer (pp. 143-146) and evaluate the sources you are using to represent the multiple perspectives surrounding the invested problem (research question).
- 2) Build a Works Cited page with your sources (pp. 155-170).
- 3) Envision how your project will “look” from the beginning, through the middle, and finally at the end. Map out a rough sketch or outline of how you plan to organize your perspectives.

In the major project for Unit 2, the Multiple Perspectives Project, students had to identify a real or potential problem related to their personal investments toward work and life, and then locate an additional four perspectives from people (stakeholders) who were also invested in the same problem, but from distinctly different perspectives. Then students used the method of rhetorical analysis to understand how other perspectives think and feel about the invested problem (i.e., “What are other people’s personal investments when it comes to this problem?”). I used Pink’s *A Whole New Mind* as a generative model and as a text for students to practice rhetorical analysis with in preparation for the Multiple Perspectives Project. Students were also

prompted to think about how they would present the multiple perspectives to a reader based on rhetorical strategies from Faigley and Selzer and Pink.

## **Unit 2: Multiple Perspectives Project**

### *Description*

Taking inspiration from Daniel Pink’s call for more R-directed thinking in our lives when we work and create, design a project that expands upon your narrative essay from the Personal Investments Project by doing the following:

- 1) Frame a problem related to your personal investments toward work and life
- 2) Locate four or more *distinct* perspectives related to this invested problem
- 3) Use the method of rhetorical analysis to identify and understand what other people think and feel about what you are already invested in (What are other people’s personal investments when it comes to this problem?)
- 4) Present your multiple perspectives in a balanced R-directed and L-directed design (6-8 pages plus a Works Cited page).

### *Multiple Perspectives*

As we read in *A Little Argument*, building your credibility as a writer means that you appear concerned, well informed, fair, and ethical in your project’s research and design.

- Which perspectives will showcase how well-informed you are about the invested problem?
- How will you rhetorically analyze other people’s personal investments in a concerned yet fair manner?
- What is an ethical way to represent these multiple perspectives in your project’s design?

Consider locating your multiple perspectives from a mixture of sources:

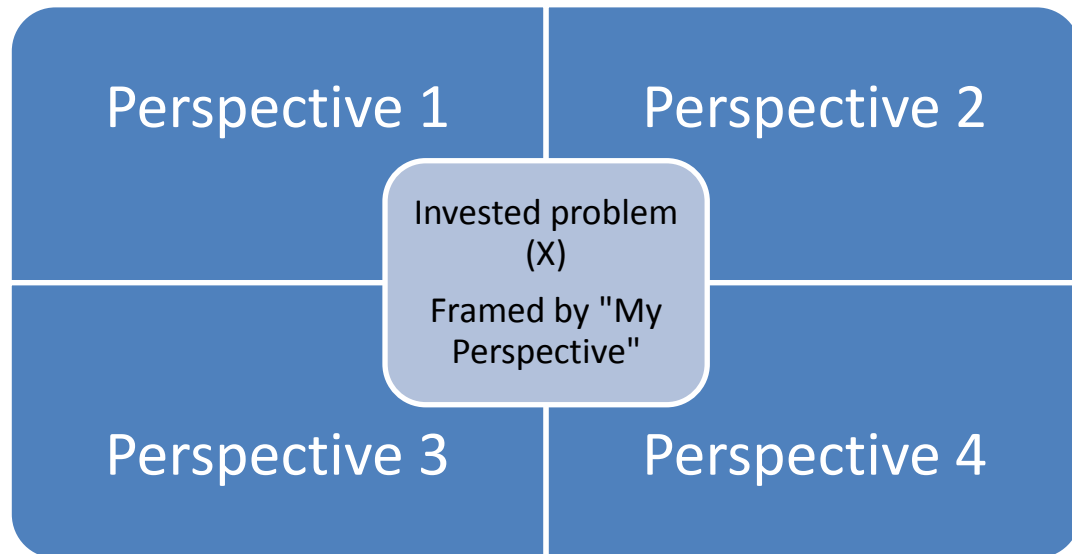
- WSU Library Databases (lib.wayne.edu or through a direct link on our Blackboard site)
- Google Scholar (scholar.google.com)
- Reputable podcasts or interviews through Ted Talks (ted.com/talks), National Public Radio (npr.org), iTunes U (download free lectures and classes), etc.
- Approved interviews, observations, surveys, or other kinds of texts relevant to your invested problem

### *Writing Strategies*

- 1) Clearly present the invested problem for readers early in the project.
- 2) Remember that approaches to rhetorical analysis operate on a continuum between textual and contextual, where “rhetoric is ‘inside’ texts, but is also ‘outside’ them,” and writers “consider the details of the text, but they also attend to the particulars of context” (Faigley and Selzer 27).
- 3) Decide which writing strategies from Pink you would like to draw on to create this project: incorporating pictures, identifying key concepts, distilling principles, etc.



## Unit 2: Multiple Perspectives Project – Drafting Prompt



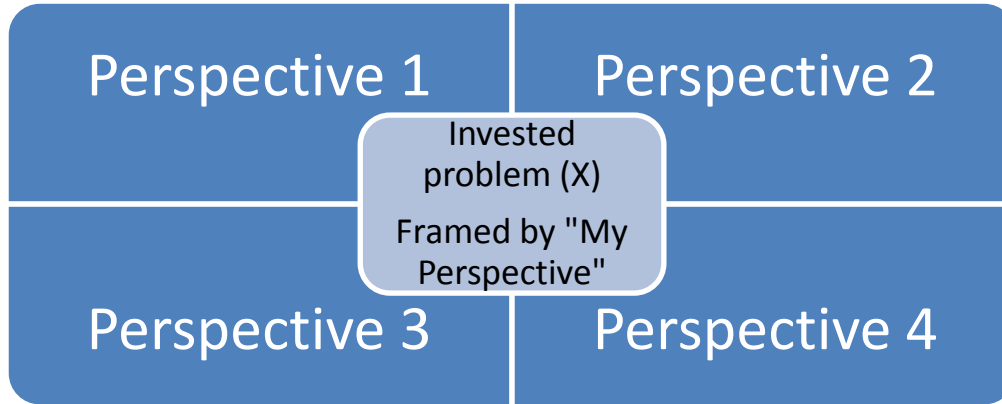
1. Using the chart above, identify:
  - The invested problem (X) framed by your perspective
  - Four distinct perspectives involved with X problem and their personal investments
  
2. Once the problem is framed, and the perspectives are outlined for readers, rhetorically analyze the sources you have chosen to represent the distinct perspectives by considering a combination of the following:
  - Who? = Writer/speaker
  - When? = time/date (publication) – overall context
  - Where? = medium of publication; location
  - For whom? = Audience
  - Why? = Investment (purpose, motivation for publication)
  - What? = Perspective (argument/claim(s))
  - How? = Evidence and Rhetorical Strategies (appeals – logos, pathos, ethos; design – organization, style, etc.)
  
3. Finally, consider how you will balance R-directed and L-directed thinking into the design of your MP Project:
  - How well do you integrate engaging material with analytical material?
  - How does your organization and design enhance or limit the reading experience?
  - How does your credibility as a college writer and researcher appear in the project?

In designing the Multiple Perspectives Project, I wanted students to broaden their personal perspective by analyzing and understanding other related perspectives invested in the same problem. I chose to emphasize the language of *perspectives* over *sources* in an attempt to draw a human connection between different points of view, with the goal of students' exhibiting empathy and concern for a shared problem of investment by all stakeholders. Their readings by Pink emphasized "the ability to empathize [and] understand the subtleties of human interaction" as an important skill for creating connection and understanding with others (52), and this point was further supported by Faigley and Selzer's discussion of argumentative writing as drawing on multiple perspectives, alternative solutions, and points of view to showcase one's credibility as a writer. Rather than remaining one-sided in one's perspective, students had to analyze why other stakeholders were also invested in the same problem, as individuals with their own needs, concerns, and motivations.

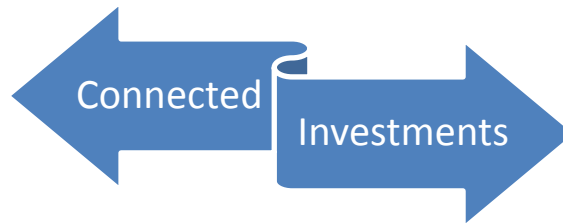
In Unit 3, students turned their attention from analysis to argument in the Connected Investments Project. This project asked students to draw connections between the multiple perspectives by noting where their personal investments connect and where they conflict in relationship to the invested problem. Then students had to propose a solution that addressed the conflicts between the multiple perspectives. More simply, I prompted students with the key question: "Where can you find common ground with these connected investments, and where can you propose a solution that addresses the conflicts?" I also aimed to focus students' attention on their credibility as writers and prompted the question: "What can you revise from the Multiple Perspectives Project in order to improve your credibility in the Connected Investments Project?"

### Unit 3: Connected Investments Project

In the Multiple Perspectives Project you framed a problem related to your personal investments toward work and life, and located and rhetorically analyzed four distinct perspectives related to this invested problem.



Building upon this analytical work from the Multiple Perspectives Project, you will now draw connections between the multiple perspectives in the Connected Investments Project, noting where their personal investments connect and where they conflict in relationship to the invested problem.



Write an argument (8-10 pages, MLA format, with a Works Cited page) that effectively showcases connected investments among the multiple perspectives and proposes a solution that addresses conflicts between the multiple perspectives.

You should integrate the following into the Connected Investments Project (from your previous projects):

1. From the Personal Investments Project, make a connection between what you're invested in and your argument: **Where can you find common ground with these connected investments, and where can you propose a solution that addresses the conflicts?**
2. From the Multiple Perspectives Project, continue to build your credibility as a writer by aiming to appear concerned, well-informed, fair, and ethical in your project's research and design: **What can you revise from the Multiple Perspectives Project in order to improve your credibility in the Connected Investments Project?**

In designing the Connected Investments Project, I wanted students to resonate with the language of *connected investments* in order to create a common ground understanding of the invested problem and propose an empathic and ethical solution to points of conflict between the multiple perspectives, including their own. I highlighted Faigley and Selzer's discussion of writing arguments "in the spirit of mutual support and negotiation – in the interest of finding the *best* way, not 'my way'" (4), as a way of facilitating the goal-oriented movement from personal investments to connected investments. My inspiration for this assignment sequence originated from Martha Nussbaum's account of compassion in *Upheavals of Thought*:

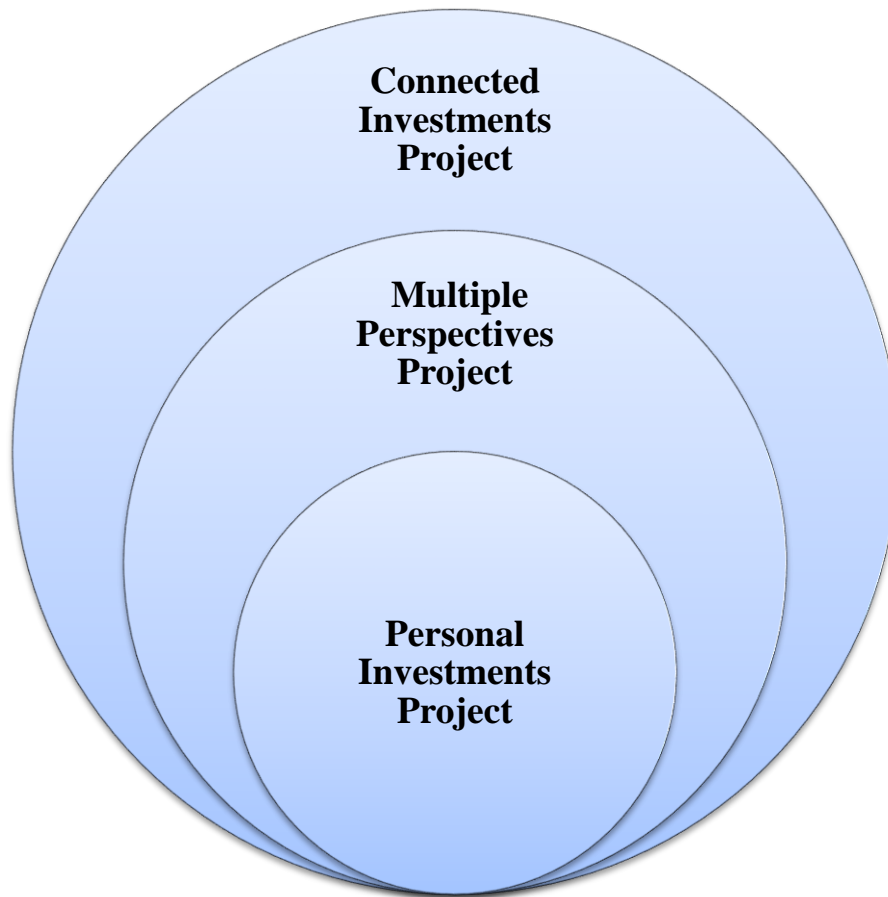
Compassion is our species' way of hooking the good of others to the fundamentally eudaimonistic (though not egoistic) structure of our imaginations and our most intense cares. The good of others means nothing to us in the abstract or antecedently. It is when it is brought into relation with that which we already understand...that such things start to matter deeply. (388)

Likewise, I based the writing projects on the notion that our concern for other perspectives deepens when our understanding of their perspectives and life circumstances is brought into relationship with our own personal investments and well-being. Before students extended their inquiry and analysis toward multiple perspectives invested in the same problem, the Personal Investments Project engaged their cognitive-emotional-motivational processes through a process of reflecting on important life goals. Similar to Nussbaum's reference of Hierocles and his metaphor that "each of us lives in a set of concentric circles – the nearest being one's own body, the furthest being the entire universe of human beings" (388), the sequence of writing projects mirrors this movement of gradually incorporating others into our innermost circle of personal investments, as Nussbaum describes in the following passage:

The task of moral development is to move the circles progressively closer to the center, so that one's parents become like oneself, one's other relatives like one's parents, strangers like relatives, and so forth. In other words, to demand from the start equal concern, or any

other normatively good type of properly ranked concern, is unrealistic; no human mind can achieve this. One has to build on the meanings one understands.... (388)

Thus, the Connected Investments Project strived to build on the meanings students already understood after reflecting on their own personal investments in the Personal Perspectives Project and others' personal investments surrounding a common problem or purpose in the Multiple Perspectives Project (Figure 4.8).



**Fig. 4.8. Sequence of Writing Projects.**

Finally, the course concluded with a Final Exam which asked students to reflect on their writing process experiences and to evaluate the final product of their Connected Investments Project. Since we had already worked extensively with *A Little Argument*, students used the evaluative criteria for building credibility as college writers outlined by Faigley and Selzer, which

I then applied within the context of how we talked about the major projects in the course. Students had to consider, for example, “Which moments in the Connected Investments Project do you appear... Invested in what you are writing about? Concerned about your readers? Well-informed about the invested problem? Fair in representing multiple perspectives? Ethical in your project’s proposal argument and design?” Further questions included thinking about the project’s overall strengths and limitations, along with describing different choices the writer would make in the project, if given another revision opportunity.

### **Final Exam: Reflection Essay**

The purpose of this final exam is to reflect on your writing process experiences and to evaluate the effectiveness of your final writing product, the Connected Investments Project.

#### **Part I. Writing Process Experiences (2+ pages, narrative essay)**

Write a short narrative essay that describes (using specific examples) how your understanding of writing changed throughout the course depending on the following:

- **Content/what you wrote about** (describing personal investments, framing a problem, locating and understanding multiple perspectives, synthesizing connected investments, and proposing a solution to conflicts)
- **Genre/type of writing** (narrative, analysis, argument)
- **Ongoing drafting and revision process** (multiple drafts, regular feedback)

#### **Part II. Writing Product Evaluation (4+pages, rhetorical analysis/argument essay)**

Rhetorically analyze your Connected Investments Project (a combination of the Personal Investments Project and Multiple Perspectives Project) and *write an argument essay that evaluates the effectiveness of this final writing project for ENG 1020 according to your credibility as a college writer.*

Specifically, your evaluation argument should respond to the criteria Faigley and Selzer outline in Chapter 1 from *A Little Argument* about building your credibility as a college writer, briefly listed below.

- Which moments in the Connected Investments Project do you appear...
  - Committed/invested in what you are writing about?
  - Concerned about your readers?
  - Well-informed about the invested problem?

- Fair in representing multiple perspectives?
- Ethical in your project's proposal argument and design?
- Based on the criteria above, how effective/successful are you in building your credibility as a college writer in the Connected Investments Project?
- What are the project's strengths and limitations?
- If given another revision opportunity, what changes or different choices would you make – and why?

In designing the Reflection Essay, I wanted students to have an opportunity to review, evaluate, and reflect on their overall progress and cumulative writing experiences in Part I while also cultivating evaluative judgment about their own writing in Part II. I intentionally built this reflection process into the course by requiring multiple drafting opportunities (first, intermediate, final) for all major projects, providing consistent feedback opportunities in the form of individual conferences, peer review workshops, and round-table discussions of student writing, and having students write a process memo after the Personal Investments, Multiple Perspectives, and Connected Investments projects. For example, in the process memos, students had to summarize revision changes made between drafts, noting some of the more important changes based on reader responses; they also had to analyze their final written product and explain what strategies were implemented that the reader should look for when evaluating the writing. Moreover, many of the feedback opportunities included prompts from Peter Elbow's *Writing Without Teachers*, which I incorporated into individual conferences and peer review workshops in order to emphasize the intimate connection between readers' evaluative judgment (appraisal) and engagement (response). The following table lists some of Elbow's "giving movies of your mind" exercises, as a method for helping students attend to their implicit, affective, and narrative responses as readers.

### Peer Review Workshop

Practice using some of the reader response exercises Peter Elbow calls “giving movies of your mind”:

1. **Pointing:**

“Start by simply pointing to the words or phrases which most successfully penetrated your skull: perhaps they seemed loud or full of voice; or they seemed to have a lot of energy; or they somehow rang true; or they carried special conviction. Any kind of getting through.

Point also to any words or phrases which strike you as particularly weak or empty. Somehow they ring false, hollow, plastic. They bounced intellectually off your skull” (85-86).

2. **Summarizing:**

“Tell very quickly what you found to be the main points, main feelings, or centers of gravity...” (86).

3. **Telling:**

“Simply tell the writer everything that happened to you as you tried to read his words carefully. It’s usually easiest to tell it in the form of a story: first this happened, then this happened, and so on” (87).

4. **Showing:**

“When you read something, you have some perceptions and reactions which you are not fully aware of and thus cannot ‘tell.’ Perhaps they are very faint, perhaps you do not have satisfactory language for them, or perhaps for some other reason you remain unconscious of them. But though you cannot tell these perceptions and reactions, you can show them if you are will to use some of the metaphorical exercises listed below:

- Do a ten minute writing exercise on the writing and give it to the writer.
- Pretend to be someone else – someone who would have a very different response to the writing from what you had. Give this person’s perception and experience of the writing” (87).

As Perl alluded to earlier, “writers must have the experience of being readers,” for they “cannot call up a felt sense of a reader unless they themselves have experienced what it means to be lost in a piece of writing or to be excited by it” (105). By providing students with opportunities to attend to their felt sense of others’ writing through these exercises, I tried to implement some of



the “writing/response” techniques that early process teachers used in their classrooms to help students acquire a feel for judgment in the writing process. That is, I wanted students to become attentive to their felt experiences of a text from a reader’s perspective as a way of understanding their evaluative judgments. In this way, I see students’ experiential awareness and evaluation of their felt sense and emotional responses in the writing process as importantly shaping their empathic perspective-taking, reflective judgment, and ethical decision-making as writers and as readers.

In designing this first-year writing course with the felt life model, my main goal was for students to acquire an empathic disposition and ethical writing practice through their personal investments and connections with other invested perspectives. Through scaffolding the major writing assignments, incorporating a reflective process, and engaging students’ cognitive-emotional-motivational processes with meaningful and relevant material, I aimed for students to cultivate an implicit feel for judgment about their own writing and others’ writing, while also developing an explicit practice of investment, concern, and evaluation. Therefore, by the end of the course, I wanted students to appraise and experience writing as a valuable activity within the broader context of their felt lives, recognizing that even in the writing process, their personal investments and notions of well-being are involved in everything from what they attend to and evaluate to their ongoing engagements with language and others in the writing environment, as individuals writing with connected investments.

### **Reflections and Implications**

In my dissertation project, I conceptualized an interdisciplinary understanding of what it means to write within the context of a felt life by synthesizing a range of perspectives on cognition, emotion, and motivation from composition studies, neuroscience, psychology, and philosophy. In the

course of developing a felt life model of the individual writer, I grounded my synthesis efforts within a lineage of model-building in composition studies [Murray (1972); Flower and Hayes (1980; 1981); Flower (1994); Hayes (1996); Hayes (2012)]. Although these models reflect a shifting focus in composition theory throughout the early process, cognitive, and socio-cognitive turns, their conceptual representations of the individual writer and the writing process collectively capture important contributions to my integrated cognitive-emotional-motivational framework.

In Chapter One, I historically reviewed how the individual writer and his/her writing process have been presented or assumed in the scholarly and research literature through several turns in the field: early process, cognitive, and socio-cognitive. Beginning with the early process construct of a writing self, composition teachers like Donald Murray, Peter Elbow, and Ken Macrorie emphasized a personal and experiential writing process, whereby teachers and students attempted to anecdotally and pedagogically investigate how writing works; in doing so, writers practiced drawing on personal knowledge to convey their lived experiences through written language while also receiving and providing feedback as readers about their own and others' writing choices. In the cognitive construct of a problem-solving writer, Linda Flower and John Hayes proposed a complex and cognitively demanding writing process; using think aloud protocols, their close observations of writers' thinking processes documented an active negotiation of goals, plans, and strategies in the writing process. And through their respective revisions of the cognitive process model with the socio-cognitive construct of a situated writing strategist, Flower and Hayes incorporated a mixed social cognitive-emotional writing process; as a result, writers were afforded thoughts, emotions, and motivations shaped within a social context.

Throughout all these turns, I discovered an ongoing concern in the literature for how writers can learn to cultivate an internalized capacity for judgment about their own and others' writing,

while demonstrating some measure of motivation and interest behind their compositional choices. However, I also noticed an assumption within this literature that depicted writers, primarily students, as invested stakeholders in their development of evaluative judgment in the writing process. Thus, I suggested that by assuming a level of cognitive-emotional investment toward writing that may not exist, pedagogical efforts to develop a more conscious and reflective evaluation process may be hindered. In turn, this led me to conclude that we must first account for how investment and judgment already operate in the individual, as part of that individual's complex felt life, in order to then apply and adapt that understanding to the context of writing.

In Chapters Two and Three, I conceptualized a felt life model of the individual to more comprehensively describe how investment and judgment are interconnected dynamics of an individual's appraisal and emotion processes. I highlighted key terms and interactions in the model that I argued are defining features of an individual's felt life, as mediated by one's interconnected cognitive-emotional-motivational processes. Starting with Antonio Damasio's theory of biological value and consciousness, I incorporated a neurobiological foundation of the individual constructing and experiencing a felt connection to the world through one's embodied and situated engagements; I defined this felt connection in terms of experiential, subjective, and narrative dimensions of an inner mind with a fluctuating self process, encompassing an embodied awareness of one's existence, subjective thoughts and feelings about salient objects in the environment, and an ongoing narrative perspective of one's past, present, and future engagements with the world. I further supported this neurobiological construct of an inner mind with Joseph LeDoux's account of working memory, long-term memory, and other specialized brain-body systems, in order to showcase the underlying workings of cognition, emotion, and motivation as interconnected psychological processes in the model. Building on the neurobiological perspectives, I then

incorporated psychologists Richard Lazarus' and Nico Frijda's appraisal-based research and models of the emotion process, emphasizing the relational, evaluative, and reflective qualities of an individual's judgments (appraisals) and engagements (emotions) with objects in the environment. Through philosophers Ronald de Sousa, Martha Nussbaum, and Robert Solomon, I discussed how individuals relationally engage with, evaluate, and reflect on objects – “whatever an emotion is of, at, with, because of, or that” (de Sousa 109) – based on their implicitly acquired and explicitly learned notions of “good/beneficial” and “bad/harmful,” starting in childhood, and then gradually developing a more complex understanding of the self and its conception of well-being into adulthood.

From the interdisciplinary perspectives, I learned that individuals engage with their world based on unconscious and conscious notions of value, or what is judged as important and even imperative to their survival and well-being. I emphasized how this valuation process involves a perception, evaluation, and often a reflection about the personal meaning and relevance of what is happening in one's body, mind, or environment, as it connects with one's needs, goals, or concerns within that situation. To conceptualize this valuation process in the felt life model, I located well-being and personal investments in the center, as representative of the important cognitive, emotional, and motivational mediation of these two constructs in structuring the conscious contents of one's inner mind and shaping one's ongoing judgments and engagements with salient objects. Furthermore, I graphically used porous outlines in the model to represent the fluid and dynamic constitution of an individual's valuation process and its modifiable influences from both internal (neurobiological and psychological) and external (material, social, and cultural environment) sources. I then applied this valuation process to the individual writer and the writing

process in Chapter Four, underscoring the perspective of individuals writing within the context of a felt life, while engaging in an embodied, situated, and invested writing process.

Future research will need to be conducted in three keys areas in order to compare the model's key terms and interactions with *actual* individual writers' felt experiences and engagements with the writing process:

1. *An individual writer's development and ongoing construction of a narrative perspective.*

Longitudinal studies of individual writers like Anne Herrington and Marcia Curtis' *Persons in Process*, life history interviews like Deborah Brandt's *Literacy in American Lives*, and ethnographic studies like Jennifer Seibel Trainor's *Rethinking Racism* could be used as models and methods to study an individual's narrative perspective or constructed self process, as it relates to writing and literacy development more specifically. In Chapter Three, I presented a narrative perspective of Johnny Ames as an individual with a complex felt life, based on Brandt's life history research. This research allowed me to analyze and understand Ames' felt experiences with writing and literacy development in terms of his early attachments and aversions to writing (Nussbaum), along with tracing how those childhood models/paradigm scenarios of emotion (de Sousa) framed and shaped a dispositional backdrop for appraising other emotionally-relevant objects and events in the future.

2. *An individual writer's thoughts, feelings, and phenomenological experiences during the writing process.*

Think aloud protocols that more comprehensively incorporate attention to emotions and other subjective experiences, like bodily sensations and observations, could be used as a method to study the phenomenological experience of writing. In Chapter Four, I incorporated Sondra Perl's distinction between composing that feels right to the individual writer in contrast with a writing

process that does not feel right, ranging from attention to the body (e.g., tingles, relaxes, uncomfortable), thoughts (e.g., “Yes, that’s it” versus “No, that’s not right.”), feelings (e.g., satisfied, excited, pleased, frustrated, confused), and behaviors (squirring, leaning, sighing); this documentation of felt sense could be further explored and classified according to how individuals attend to and appraise objects in the writing environment, along with how they respond and cope with those psychological and situational concerns.

3. *An individual writer’s judgments and engagements with writing-related objects (language, ideas, people, etc.) as connected to well-being and personal investments.*

Observations and anecdotal accounts of individual writers like Mike Rose’s *Lives on the Boundary* could be used to more closely assess how writers’ judgments and engagements are connected to their well-being and personal investments. In Chapter One, I included several examples of individual writers and their writing situations that could be re-examined in terms of this dynamic. For instance, when the twelfth grade writer from Janet Emig’s study, Lynn, chooses to write about Snoopy instead of her grandmother because “the Snoopy thing is easier to write about,” Emig interprets this topic selection and reasoning as the individual’s way of “not interacting with her feelings” (48-49). When viewed from a felt life perspective, Lynn’s judgment of Snoopy as an “easier” choice could be interpreted in terms of her well-being and personal investments, as preventing, escaping, or avoiding a dreaded outcome (LeDoux 236) or perceived harm (Lazarus), which still involves some level of cognitive-emotional-motivational engagement and effort on behalf of the writer. Likewise, the graduate student in Linda Flower and Barbara Sitko’s study, Janet, struggles to find motivation and meaning with her writing assignments, noting that she writes “with no real purpose at all in mind, you know, just to say something” (245). Her personal situation of returning to school and not emotionally connecting with the assignments posed a

significant conflict for her writing process. When viewed from a felt life perspective, her frustrated response and dissatisfied engagement with the assignments could be analyzed more closely in terms of her judgments, as connected to her well-being and personal investments.

In conclusion, I propose that these three areas of future research (narrative development, phenomenological experience, situated and invested judgments and engagements) will further the field's understanding of an individual writer's felt life, which I defined in terms of the experiential, subjective, and narrative dimensions of an inner mind with a self process and the evaluative, relational, and reflective judgments and engagements with salient objects in the writing environment. At the heart of this felt life, I claim well-being and personal investments are the guiding constructs that best account for *the why* of cognition and writing as deeply invested with emotion and motivation (Brand). The integrated cognitive-emotional-motivational construct of the individual writer I developed in this dissertation, *an individual with a complex felt life*, and his or her *embodied, situated, and invested* writing process remain open for further interdisciplinary investigation and development through ongoing empirical studies and pedagogical applications.

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**ABSTRACT****RECONCEPTUALIZING THE CONSTRUCT OF THE INDIVIDUAL WRITER IN  
COMPOSITION STUDIES: A FELT LIFE MODEL OF WRITING**

by

**WENDY DUPREY****May 2017****Advisor:** Dr. Ellen Barton**Major:** English (Composition Studies)**Degree:** Doctor of Philosophy

Current scholars in composition and rhetoric emphasize how our worldview perspectives and intellectual positions are animated by our emotional investments, attachments, and commitments. However, despite disciplinary efforts to theorize “the writing subject” in Composition Studies from the 1960s on, I argue the field has yet to construct an integrated cognitive-emotional-motivational construct of the individual writer that comprehensively reflects how an individual’s cognition, emotion, and motivation shapes, and is influenced by, one’s writing process. In my dissertation project, I draw on a range of perspectives from composition studies, neuroscience, psychology, and philosophy to develop a model of the individual writer as an embodied, situated, and invested individual, one that I am calling an *individual with a felt life*, which I see as constituted by rich mixtures of cognition, emotion, and motivation that construct one’s sense of well-being (quality of life) and reflect one’s personal investments (goals, concerns, commitments) in the world. Since recent theories of human cognition and the emotion process contend that individuals engage with their world based on unconscious and conscious notions of value, or what is judged as important and even imperative to their survival and well-being, my felt life model of writing showcases how this valuation process involves perceiving, evaluating, and

often reflecting on the personal meaning and relevance of what is happening in one's body, mind, or environment during the writing process, as it connects with one's needs, goals, or concerns within that writing situation or the world more broadly.

### **AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT**

Since graduating with her bachelor's degree in English from Wayne State University in 2004, Wendy Duprey's commitment to helping others with their writing has been motivated by her professional experiences as an ESL tutor, composition instructor, and writing consultant. As an ESL tutor for four years (2005-2009), she taught individualized English lessons to expatriate families living and working in the metro-Detroit area. As a Graduate Teaching Assistant and Graduate Student Assistant for six years (2007-2013), she taught basic, introductory, and intermediate composition courses and tutored undergraduate and graduate students in the Writing Center at Wayne State. After moving from Michigan to Florida in 2013, Wendy has worked as a professional tutor and writing consultant at several Writing Studios and Learning Resource Centers in the Tampa Bay area, including the University of South Florida, St. Petersburg College, and Hillsborough Community College.