

American Women  
Writers, Poetics,  
and the Nature  
of Gender Study



# American Women Writers, Poetics, and the Nature of Gender Study

Edited by

Maryann P. DiEdwardo

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Dedicated to those serving at crisis centers,  
who intervene to save lives  
and deliver hope.

*“Yet, after all, methinks there are no chains so galling as the chains of ignorance—no fetters so binding as those that bind the soul, and exclude it from the vast field of useful and scientific knowledge. O, had I received the advantages of early education, my ideas would, ere now, have expanded far and wide; but, alas! I possess nothing but moral capability—no teachings but the teachings of the Holy Spirit.”*

—Maria W. Stewart (Maria Miller, 1803–1880)

African American domestic servant who became a teacher, journalist, lecturer, abolitionist, and women’s rights activist

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

*American Women Writers, Poetics, and the Nature of Gender Study* investigates pedagogical practices in American women's literature rooted in the foundation of feminine myth.

We study the processes of authors who create voices of characters from the past. Our projects study language, to focus on metaphorical grammatical constructions, unique and specific with form and function. We interpret works to capture the essence of style, as well as the rhetorical function of the basic structures of grammar, diction, and syntax in a literary work as message and meaning. We discuss the useful social functionality of literature as well as theoretical processes of the literary scholar, regarding the power of writing for cultural change. We use a model of linguistics called poetics. In literary studies, poetics question the meanings of literary works.

We frame the works of scholars with a preface and an introduction, and close with notes, a bibliography, a reading list, and a section called "Reading Group Session Based on the Book." We seek more instructional applications of American women writers in academic courses. The book that emerges is not just a story of long hours, little pay, and hazardous working conditions; it is also the uniquely American story of women writers working together to make a new life for themselves. We study the processes of authors who create voices for fictional or real characters, for healing from abuse or neglect.

Maryann P. DiEdwardo, editor and contributor, is a 2016 recipient of the College English Association's Karen Lentz Madison CEA Award for Scholarship, an annual award for a presentation at our annual conference by an adjunct or contingent faculty member who contributes significantly to the corpus studiorum in English. The prize is funded by an endowment from James R. (Dick) Bennett, and serves to recognize the College English Association's immeasurable gratitude to adjunct and contingent faculty in literature and composition studies and to honor their unconquerable esprit de corps and professional dedication.

Editor Maryann P. DiEdwardo is the author of more than thirty-five books and articles, including "Pairing Linguistic and Music Intelligences." Her case study research connects music as representative of culture and relates to the rhetoric found in literary passages. For example, modern songs

with lyrics hold cultural contextual meanings and metaphors, such as “A Thousand Miles,” by Vanessa Carlton. Students compare songs to current multicultural literature and demonstrate connections. For example, the work of Sylvia Plath can be understood through the comparison of her works to the works of modern songwriters. Modern music transforms, and allows the student to learn literature, reading, and writing through the theory that promotes transformation. In 2004, results of Maryann P. DiEdwardo’s case study research suggested that the integration of music in the college classroom improved students’ grades and abilities to compose thesis statements for research papers in courses that emphasize reading and writing skills. In her initial study, Dr. DiEdwardo refined Howard Gardner’s 1993 definition of music as a separate intellectual competence. She currently teaches at University of Maryland University College and Lehigh University.

She is also the author of *The Legacy of Katharine Hepburn: Fine Art as a Way of Life*, her own memoir. It was written in 2004. Her purpose was to revisit an old thesis, the potential historiography of Katharine Hepburn, for educational purposes. She updated the research to include the possibility of a new historiography based on the growing legacy of the famous Katharine Hepburn. Maryann DiEdwardo suggests that: “... the legacy has just begun to change our cultural views of women and education. I produce activities and goals for educators and families to use the legacy of this special actress for improvement of lives” (DiEdwardo, Maryann Pasda, page 79). Her book was published in 2005 and recounts her studies from 1978 to 2005.

Since 1976, Dr. DiEdwardo has taught English, literature, and research in Pennsylvania colleges and universities; she cofounded Pasda Studios School of Art and co-facilitated fine art programs for students of all ages for thirty-two years.

Research interests include: pairing music and linguistic intelligences, literacy, metacognition, pedagogy, social justice, student-directed learning, stage history, and writing as therapy. She is the recipient of the 1978 Northampton Community College Project Aware Outstanding Service Award and a 2016 University of Maryland University College Faculty Professional Achievement Award. Award nominations at University of Maryland University College in 2012 include a nomination for the 2012 UMUC Stanley J. Drazek Teaching Excellence Award (Drazek award) and the UMUC Teaching Recognition Award (TRA), two important awards in the UMUC Faculty Award and Recognition Program.

Proceeds support our local soup kitchen and crisis centers for domestic abuse.

**Maryann P. DiEdwardo, Ed.D., editor**

## PREFACE

The story of our book begins with a 2015 document that I wrote for the Northeast Modern Language Panel, “Call for Papers,” in the topic area titled “Women and Gender Studies.” Upon the announcement of the opportunity to create a panel for the 47th Annual NeMLA Convention of March 17–20, 2016, in Hartford, CT, I submitted the following title and abstract for my session: “American Women Writers: Second-Wave Feminism, Poetics, and Domestic Abuse”; as session chair, Maryann P. DiEdwardo (Lehigh University) (University of Maryland University College), for Women’s and Gender Studies / Creative Writing. “The session invites papers implementing a study of language, to focus on metaphorical grammatical constructions, unique and specific with form and function. We interpret works to capture the essence of style, as well as the rhetorical function of the basic structures of grammar, diction, and syntax in a literary work as message and meaning. We discuss useful pedagogical as well as theoretical processes of the literary scholar, regarding the power of writing for cultural change. Sketches or personal monologues, fiction as well as nonfiction, are welcome.”

My abstract stated a purposeful themed plan which would eventually lead to the book titled *American Women Writers, Poetics, and the Nature of Gender Study*. As chair of the Women and Genders Studies Panel, I blend original trauma narratives and creative nonfiction. For the College English Association International Conference in St. Petersburg, Florida, 2011, I wrote “Writing Between Rivers: Transforming Poverty through Writing Travel Journals and Juvenile Fiction.” I crafted “Overcoming Poverty through Journaling” for the Feminism in Practice Conference: Reflection, Action, Change, at Lehigh University, November 2010. My studies, *Poetics of Place*, formed my reflections and explorations for our book.

The abstracts for the sessions included two contributors to our book: James McAdams and Patricia J. Pasda. I also contributed my study of the short story, “Black Death,” by Zora Neale Hurston, to the short story, “Unassigned Territory,” by Stephanie Powell Watts. The study centers on the observation of the feminine as a spiritual quest. My final outcome tells us that stories are openings into the soul of the suffering. We write from a lens of places where we have been depleted of human dignity at times. I

also felt trapped, like the main characters of both stories in the study. Therefore I ask why certain language happens in a specific place. Why does place memory aid a feminine character in both stories as well? Arguably, researchers tell us that Zora Neale Hurston may be the creator of one of the first creative nonfiction works about a real-life zombie. In *Tell My Horse: Voodoo and Life in Haiti and Jamaica*, her 1938 recounting of her fieldwork in Haiti, she writes an ethnographic study.

Hundreds of writers and artists lived in Harlem in the 1920s and 1930s, and were part of a vibrant, creative community that found its voice in what came to be called the “Harlem Renaissance.” Alain Locke’s 1925 collection, *The New Negro*—a compilation of literature by and essays about “New Negro” artists and black culture—became a “manifesto” of the movement. Some of black America’s foremost writers contributed stories and poems to the volume. The work of these artists drew on the African American experience and expressed a new pride in black racial identity and heritage. Zora Neale Hurston was known during the Harlem Renaissance for her wit, irreverence, and folk writing style. She won second prize in the 1925 literary contest of the Urban League’s journal, *Opportunity*, for her short story, “Spunk,” which also appeared in the anthology, *The New Negro*.

Subsequent to my panel sessions, Cambridge Scholars Publishing contacted me to request that I edit a book. *American Women Writers, Poetics, and the Nature of Gender Study* gathers professionals from the disciplines of academic writing, creative writing, creative nonfiction, fiction, aesthetics, and research writing. I welcome Joseph and Jill, who have contributed to our book with their insights and writing. For the final draft, we feature five scholars in the field: Joseph A. DiEdwardo, Jill Kroeger Kinkade, James McAdams, Patricia J. Pasda, and Maryann P. DiEdwardo.

## Evaluative Prose

The philosophical theory of the functions of signs and symbols of literary texts gives meaning to the literary work and particularly to its least apparent and deepest significance, which would presumably be missed by most readers without the help from the critic, and which explains the work as a totality.

First we consider indicators, which include the relationship of content and/or form of a work, with its author. Next we study the correlation of the work and the society in which the author lived. We also study objectification of relations between components. And lastly we study the

relationship of the work to readers. Intertextualities in Zora Neale Hurston's "Black Death" intermingle while weaving story; "intertextuality" is a term that was first introduced by French semiotician Julia Kristeva in the late 1960s. Intertexts are historical and social, which transform and reflect literary practices. In *The Electronic Labyrinth*, a project and website created by the University of Virginia, the page on intertextuality holds the ideas that writing is an iteration which is also a reiteration, a rewriting which foregrounds the trace of the various texts it both knowingly and unknowingly places and displaces.

In the first paragraph, Zora's passion prevails with intertextuality. The spirituality of the story "Black Death" starts within the next paragraph. Zora tells us that "if a white person were halted on the streets of Orlando and told that Old Man Morgan, the excessively black Negro hoodoo man, can kill any person indicated and paid for, without even leaving his house or even seeing his victim, he'd laugh in your face and walk away, wondering how long the Negro will continue to wallow in ignorance and superstition." Zora reaches out to the reader via intertextual clues about the story to come.

Rhetorical analysis envisions Stephanie Powell Watts as a reflection of the message and gifts of Hurston. Powell Watts uses language within place to create authentic characters based on life experiences in her youth. A devoted writer and craftswoman, Hurston also crafted her characters from life experiences. Proceed with fortitude into the world of Hurston and Powell Watts to find inner truths about the human condition. We visit the process of the use of deep spiritual connection to the process of the writer by a comparison and evaluation of Hurston and Powell Watts. By evaluating the language in the stories, we find ourselves inside the metaphysical soul of the writers. We gain insights into ourselves.

The most important aspect of the short story as a literary powerhouse for both teacher and student remains the fact that reading and writing the genre can elicit personal transformation. Students can write a few pages of text that reveal understanding of the self through interpretations that they learn. By telescoping thoughts and writing into a shorter version, young writers succeed, and we as educators can powerfully change the methods we use to teach. I connect intrapersonal, interpersonal, and linguistic intelligence.

Writing short stories is my multimodal, authentic assessment at the University of Maryland and Lehigh University. The framework I design with the short story as a methodology focuses on the student writer in a creative process, to offer transformative frameworks. Certainly, the short story as a genre transforms through centering a story upon the self-

discovery of the writer, which promotes change and personal growth. Furthermore, I use the short story as an authentic assessment to break down borders between the academic desert of literature as a viewed subject, and literature as an experienced, vast space that transforms.

Chapter one (by Maryann P. DiEdwardo) concerns “Feminist Practice in the Art of Pocahontas Viewed Through Feminist Art Theory” for Lehigh University (Feminism in Practice Conference, November 15, 2008. Bethlehem, Pennsylvania). Archives, interviews, and primary and secondary sources create a paradigm supported by feminist practices, to find new interpretations based on current feminist texts and art galleries as well as scholars. Through the lens of feminism as a theoretical critique of the heterosexual matrix that organizes identities and cultures in terms of opposition between man and woman, I distinguish the feminist critique of male assumptions, and the procedures of feminist criticism of art that depicts Pocahontas.

Chapters two (Maryann P. DiEdwardo), three (James McAdams), and four (Patricia J. Pasda) are the papers which we presented for my panel at the Northeast Modern Language Association Convention in Hartford in 2016. I initiate essayists who present papers on my theme titled “American Women Writers, Second-Wave Feminism, Domestic Abuse, Poetics.” We study processes of creating voices of the past, to analyze and to juxtapose.

Chapter five explores Nellallitea “Nella” Larsen and Lorraine Hansberry (Maryann P. DiEdwardo).

Chapter six (Maryann P. DiEdwardo) explores prayer journaling as intense spiritual writing. Flannery O’Connor’s *A Prayer Journal*, as a theme to investigate poetics, is based on my observances from an ongoing study of my use of grammar to form language, with evidence from observations based in life story writing, a key characteristic of the methods of field study through journaling. A case study on thought processes of my own writing juxtaposes and prepares me to create a useful pedagogy as well as life study on the power of writing for cultural change, as I interpret the poetics of O’Connor. I also study my own unpublished prayer journals to observe place through language, in the context of the topic to expand and to compare.

Chapter seven (Maryann P. DiEdwardo) covers the work of Marjorie Shostak, anthropologist, and second-wave feminism.

Chapter eight is about Hilda Doolittle (H.D.), by Jill Kroeger Kinkade.

Chapter nine is about Clara Barton, by Patricia J. Pasda.

Chapter ten is about Jean Louise Briggs and chapter eleven is about Cather, Morrison, and Ehrenreich. They are short essays (by Maryann P.

DiEdwardo) to inspire us to action in our quest for individuality and expression.





## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

*American Women Writers, Poetics, and the Nature of Gender Study* combines the cooperative efforts of our distinguished panelists, James McAdams and Patricia J. Pasda, and our scholars, Joseph A. DiEdwardo and Jill Kroeger Kinkade.

As we share literary gifts and creative talents, we also join our words to craft artful interpretations of meaningful literary works.

I thankfully honor their kindnesses during the year and a half of writing, research, presenting, and editing. My gratitude goes to them as contributors, for their support and encouragement during the manuscript preparation process with conversations, emails, texts, and editing sessions. As a group of writers, we create tributes with compassion and vision.

I also thank my husband, Amedeo, and my son, Joseph. Appreciation goes to our readers, Mary P. Spengler, RN, MSN, CRNP, and Mrs. Kathleen Dugan, librarian for Lehigh University, who both provided support during the project. Lehigh University's Linderman Library in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, has been a sanctuary. I thank the reference librarians for their kind assistance. I also thank the staff for aiding in the process of the study of specific texts. Thanks to our freelance copyeditor, Beth Mansbridge, whose guidance has been extraordinary.

I also recognize the work of Zora Neale Hurston, Stephanie Powell Watts, Lydia Millet, Dian Fossey, Nellalitea "Nella" Larsen, Flannery O'Connor, and Marjorie Shostak. I thank Hilda Doolittle (H.D.) for writing to re-create the self, and Clara Barton for her writing and service, as well as Jean Louise Briggs, Willa Cather, Toni Morrison, and Barbara Ehrenreich. Lorraine Hansberry, thank you for the inspiration you gave me to be a writer.

I thank our local soup kitchen and crisis centers for supporting those who experience domestic abuse.

I acknowledge Cambridge Scholars Publishing staff and editorial team, and all who have supported our book.



## INTRODUCTION

MARYANN P. DIEDWARDO

### **“American Women Writers, Second-Wave Feminism, Domestic Abuse, Poetics” (Panel)**

*American Women Writers, Poetics, and the Nature of Gender Study* appeals to those who have experienced abuse and who wish to heal through writing. My book also includes the nature of the educational community as viewed through feminist theory, to reveal the curtains surrounding stereotypes, gender status, and power in our postcolonial era. Studied from the lens of critical race theory, I approach my individual case study as a descriptive investigation. In retrospect, the distance learning platform offers the pedagogical structure to allow writers to explore feminism within the themes of postfeminism, which relies on competitive individualism and eschews collective action; it obscures or makes invisible the many ways in which women are often fearful, subject to rape and other kinds of violence, and politically and economically underprivileged.

“Feminist Practice in the Art of Pocahontas Viewed Through Feminist Art Theory” (for Lehigh University, Feminism in Practice Conference, November 15, 2008. Bethlehem, Pennsylvania): Archives, interviews, and primary and secondary sources create a paradigm supported by feminist practices, to find new interpretations based on current feminist texts and art galleries as well as scholars. I cipher the data through cultural, historical, and biographical sources, to produce analytical essays to design and infuse feminist practices within my writing and art. The complexity of the assimilation of Pocahontas in mythic terms reveals the practice of applications of feminist art theory as well as feminist writing. My inquisition extends to feminist art theory present in the study of Disney’s first eco-feminist heroine. I write to preserve, to reveal, and to retain the memory of Pocahontas, and to further develop her assimilation as a representation of the feminine. A museum used in the study is the Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art in Brooklyn, New York. *The Dinner Party*, by Judy Chicago, is a permanent installation. Archives for the study include the Lafayette College Howard Chandler Christy Archive and Lehigh University Special Collection.

As essayists we implement the study of language to focus on metaphorical grammatical constructions, unique and specific with form and function. We interpret works to capture the essence of style as well as the rhetorical function of the basic structure of grammar, diction, and syntax in a literary work, as message and meaning.

*American Women Writers, Poetics, and the Nature of Gender Study* is rooted in my determination to gather support for the works of Zora Neale Hurston, who was born on Wednesday, January 7, 1891, in Notasulga, Alabama, and died on Thursday, January 28, 1960, in Fort Pierce, Florida. My first paper on Hurston—which I presented at the College English Association conference in 2012 in Richmond, Virginia—featured a statement on her story, “Magnolia Flower,” in which I found the use of the river as redemptive. Hurston creates Magnolia, who experiences the abuse of her father because she falls in love with John; she runs away with her lover, and then comes back forty years later with her same lover, John, by her side, to revisit and to find redemption. Hurston uses mythic realism, modernism, imagery of the river, and “The Mighty One” to create a thematic world with allegory and myth, as vehicles for the representation of conflicts and dilemmas. The short stories of Hurston concentrate on the understanding of the themes of literary consciousness. The most important aspect of the short story, as a literary powerhouse for both teacher and student, remains in the fact that reading and writing the genre can elicit personal transformation.

My experience with Zora starts in the 1990s with my reading of her works. Zora has been and continues to be my focus for research. Folklorist and novelist, prolific short story writer and gifted autobiographer, she was one of the most talented writers of her era. Testimonials often combine with specific types of literature. For example, Zora Neale Hurston used folk writing at first. Next, she wrote plays, essays, mixed works, and short stories. She studied anthropology. She travelled to write about Haiti, and wrote an important work titled *Tell My Horse: Voodoo and Life in Haiti and Jamaica*. Then she wrote her novel, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*.

## **Pedagogical Threshold Concepts**

As we identify and discuss the cultural and literary heritage of African American authors and genres between 1900 and the Black Arts Movement (BAM), we persuade an audience to accept and utilize constructive criticism in the revision of written work, by utilizing close reading in the service of developing an argument. We continue to see that Zora was influenced by Nella Larsen in the 20th century. Furthermore, I became

acquainted with the work of Nella when I studied for my online class which I am teaching at UMUC. Both authors show us how to write about real events to make a difference. Hurston's "Magnolia Flower" is in our digital archive at Lehigh University. (Accessed 3-1-2016.)

The first threshold concepts are interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence, which lead to self-efficacy. Hurston's "Magnolia Flower" signifies the interpersonal knowledge which students need to filter the literature into meaningful attributes that echo their own lives. Research by Amy Schmidt, titled "Horses Chomping at the Global Bit: Ideology, Systemic Injustice, and Resistance in Zora Neale Hurston's *Tell My Horse*" (*Southern Literary Journal*, Spring 2014, vol. 46, issue 2, pp. 173–192), and Donna Aza Weir-Soley's *Eroticism, Spirituality, and Resistance in Black Women's Writings* (Gainesville, University Press of Florida, 2009), are postfeminist writings emphasizing the spirituality of Zora. In fact, Zora Neale Hurston takes me to the spiritual side of Zora. I am fascinated by her use of important aspects of voodoo to write the piece. Plus, themes focus on domestic abuse. Characterization is the most important aspect of the story. (Consult. editor Jarrett, *The Wiley Blackwell Anthology of African American Literature: Volume 2, 1920 to the Present*, First Edition. John Wiley & Sons, Ltd. Published 2014 by John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.) I use the text to teach African American studies for the University of Maryland University College Distance-Learning Sessions. I emphasize life writing as a skill which is based in intrapersonal metacognitive thought processes with students, to retain and to preserve the self in the study of literature. Intrapersonal intelligence is a signifier of the abilities of students to write with self-efficacy.

The next threshold concept is based on awareness of one's own thinking. My interpretations of Zora's short story, "Black Death," and her ethnography, *Tell My Horse: Voodoo and Life in Haiti and Jamaica*, rely on the work of Judith Butler, whose books, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990), *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (1993), and *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (1997) influence feminist theory.

Threshold concepts that I develop from my studies of Nella Larsen, Zora Neale Hurston, and Stephanie Powell Watts are deeply embedded in the feminine as a spiritual quest. For example, Powell Watts is a current popular author of literary fiction. Winner of the Pushcart Prize (best of the small presses series, published every year since 1976), her short story, "Unassigned Territory," is the most honored literary project in America.

So, I interpret setting as a semiotic vision and a sign of feminism as well. I have also presented at the Feminisms Conference at Lehigh

University twice, to explain my own writing as redemptive. In journaling sessions, students allow past hurts to extend to a life writing project that's healing. We write a novelette exploring zombies and faith, with pedagogy based on place memory of supernatural or spiritual studies in religion or mysticism or yoga. I suggest that reflection on the process and the designing of a life history project about a living or deceased person's home or vacation spot acts as a metacognitive preliminary assignment which teaches writing in the genre of vampire literary tradition.

Through active learning and with publication as the goal, I teach students to write. Involve students quickly; introductions allow early identity in the course protocol. Writing and thinking activities promote self-efficacy; to build confidence, invite students to create assignments or other requirements, or act as concept mappers of the class environment. Publishing as a goal creates student writers who are going to value the class and its requirements. We create annotated bibliography newsletters, coffeehouse activities with student groups as writers of digital online classroom public blogs for peer review of student writing, and student works as paramount to class design in private wikis for editing and polishing as self-editors. The analysis of key works such as film, poetry, and literary history designs focuses on pedagogy based on pop culture, gaming, and the supernatural, which I use in my classes to teach writing. I suggest that reflection on the process and designing of a life history project about a living or deceased person's home or vacation spot acts as metacognitive, preliminary, imaginative thinking. We listen to music as we write about archetypes in video games and film, to publish creative works of originality as a learning community.

Further study explores American women writers, second-wave feminism, post-postfeminism, and my capstone study of feminism related to post humanity case study of American women writing as a representation of the self through interpretations. In her poetry collection, *Tribute to the Angels*, Hilda "H.D." Doolittle re-creates a self out of writing. She describes an American woman writer, Elizabeth Bradstreet.

On September 17–19, 2015, at the Hotel Bethlehem, in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, a conference in celebration of Lehigh University's Sesquicentennial Anniversary gathered scholars to present papers about H.D. and feminist poetics. Subsequently, I created a blog to reminisce on my reflections of Hilda Doolittle and the impact of the presentations for scholars of feminist poetics. The process of articulation of the thinking process and reflection are threshold concepts to question and challenge. My conference presentation samples (modified list) reflect my study based on the writing of women:

NeMLA. Dr. Maryann P. DiEdwardo, Lehigh University, University of Maryland University College, will present at the 45th Annual NeMLA Convention. 9.23 “The Short Story in the African American Literary Tradition and Authentic Assessment” 9.23 The Composition Classroom (Roundtable).

College English Association in Savannah, Georgia, 2013. “The Nature of Gender Study.”

Lilly Conference. 2012. May. Washington, DC. Based on my book titled, *The Fourth R*, I create frameworks that connect cultures.

PCEA in Scranton, PA, April 2012. Title: “Creative Journaling As the Basis for Writing the Short Story and Methodology for Creating Paradigms for Frameworks in Writing Classes in the University Setting for Traditional and Distance Students.”

CEA in Richmond, VA, 2012 International Conference. Presentation of a paper and chair for Pedagogy: “The Short Story in the African American Literary Tradition with an Authentic Assessment: Transforming Teaching Methodology and Student Learning.”

Annual Lilly Conference on College and University Teaching, Washington, DC, June 2–5, 2011.

College English Association International Conference in St. Petersburg, Florida. March 31, April 1 and 2, 2011. “Writing Between Rivers: Transforming Poverty through Writing Travel Journals and Juvenile Fiction.”

“Overcoming Poverty through Journaling.” Feminism in Practice Conference: Reflection, Action, Change. Lehigh University. November 2010.

“Writing Between Rivers.” The Passing Light. EAPSU Conference, English Association of the Pennsylvania State Universities. A River Runs through Us: Exploring the Poetics of Place. October 1–3, 2010.

Pennsylvania College English Association. Spring 2010 Conference. “Social Justice: Novels of Charles Dickens and Maryann P. DiEdwardo.” Hotel Bethlehem, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

“Feminist Practice in the Art of Pocahontas Viewed Through Feminist Art Theory.” Lehigh University. Feminism in Practice Conference, November 15, 2008. Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

“Hispanic American Literature Techniques Teach Language Skills in the Composition Classroom.” West Virginia University’s Thirty-Second Colloquium on Literature and Film. September 11–13, 2008. West Virginia University, Morgantown, West Virginia.

“‘The Fourth R’ Hispanic American Literary Tradition.” Pennsylvania College English Association (PCEA) 2008 Annual Conference.

“Celebrating American Literature.” April 10–12, 2008. State College, PA. Presenter and session chair.

Readings: Works of Creative Fiction in 2007 by Maryann Pasda DiEdwardo and Patricia J. Pasda. Women’s Cancer Research Event, Lehigh University. English Department. Drown Hall. Bethlehem, PA, October 25, 2007.

“The Fourth R.” Pennsylvania State University ESL Conference, Finding Our Voices: An ESOL Strategies Conference, September 22, 2007. Hotel Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

“Latin American and Latina/o Studies Models, Paradigms, and Frameworks.” Northampton Community College Latino Conference. October 14, 2006. Clearly, Latin American and Latino studies offer an opportunity to forge a new genre filled with a plethora of emotionally charged ideas. Statistical results of research have suggested that the themes connected to the new, emerging genre are grounded in theory and can be applied to K–graduate traditional, enhanced, and distance classrooms globally. Stanford University Press’s Latin American Studies Book Award winner 2005 is *The Guaraní Under Spanish Rule in the Río de la Plata*, sponsored by the Latin American and Caribbean Section, Southern Historical Association. Barbara Anne Ganson is the author. This ethnographic study is a revisionist view of the most significant and widely known mission system in Latin America—that of the Jesuit missions to the Guaraní Indians, who inhabited the border regions of Paraguay, Argentina, and Brazil. It traces in detail the process of Indian adaptation to Spanish colonialism from the 16th through the early-19th centuries. The book demonstrates conclusively that the Guaraní were as instrumental in determining their destinies as were the Catholic Church and Spanish bureaucrats. They were neither passive victims of Spanish colonialism nor innocent “children” of the jungle, but important actors who shaped fundamentally the history of the Río de la Plata region. The Guaraní responded to European contact according to the dynamics of their own culture, their individual interests and experiences, and the changing political, economic, and social realities of the late Bourbon Period.

Following in the footsteps of Henry James and Mary Cassatt and paralleling the paths of Pound, Eliot, and Stein, H.D. lived as an expatriate in England and Europe from 1911 until her death in 1961. Her roots, however, were fully American and provided a heritage that permeated her later life and art. It is well worth knowing about her early life and the meanings she discovered in it because these clusters of associations appear repeatedly not only in memoirs such as *The Gift* (1982), *Tribute to Freud* (1956), and *End to Torment: A Memoir of Ezra Pound* (1979), but also in



much of her poetry and fiction. American women writer H.D. is an example of threshold conceptual thought because she uses awareness, articulation, and reflection to re-create the self through writing.

Chapter five explores my life story related to themes about the study of drama, following the inspiration of playwright Lorraine Hansberry. In chapter ten, the life story threshold concept signifies second-wave feminism in the work of Jean Louise Briggs. Conclusively, chapter eleven details my pedagogical applications of threshold concepts, echoing the messages of Willa Cather, Toni Morrison, and Barbara Ehrenreich.



## CHAPTER ONE

### POCAHONTAS (ARCHIVES)

MARYANN P. DIEDWARDO

“The Nature of Gender Study and Pedagogical Practices in the Distance Classroom for American Women’s Literature” originates with my research and scholarship about Pocahontas, a mythic Native American figure. My approach decodes the myth about Pocahontas through feminist theory, a personal research paradigm which framed my article for the Department of English, Lehigh University, “Pocahontas as Christy Girl,” published in 2008: “The Pocahontas Archive, History on Trial.” I presented my research for the first Feminisms Conference at Lehigh University: “Feminist Practice in the Art of Pocahontas Viewed Through Feminist Art Theory” on November 15, 2008, to investigate the assimilation of Pocahontas in mythic terms, as appropriate for feminist practices.

The thesis for this paper relies on a foundation of the discovery of a model based in postfeminist ideas in 2007 during research studies. As a methodology to approach presentations for articles for a digital archive for Lehigh University and a conference on feminism, I decoded primary source archives used to create images of Pocahontas, to inquire into feminist theory. I sought to confirm that feminist practice is essential in the study of Pocahontas, to preserve, to reveal, and to retain her memory—to further develop her assimilation. I provide a voice for feminist theory with new historicism, historiography, and feminist art theory, to infuse ideas about Pocahontas’s Native American identity. My intentions are supported by scholars who wrote for the recent work titled *Women and Power in Native North America*, by editors Laura F. Klein and Lillian A. Ackerman, who suggest that the myth of Pocahontas is vital to her legend.

“The Nature of Gender Study and Feminist Practices in Pedagogy about American Women Writers,” since 1900, also includes the nature of the educational community in the distance classroom as viewed through feminist theory, to reveal curtains surrounding stereotypes, gender status, and power in our postcolonial era. Studied from the lens of critical race

theory, I approach my individual case study as a descriptive investigation into my 2012 fall class, with the intent to serve as my five-year project.

In retrospect, the distance-learning platform offers the pedagogical structure to allow writers to explore feminism within the themes of postfeminism, which relies on competitive individualism and eschews collective action; it obscures, or makes invisible, the many ways in which women are often fearful, subject to rape and other kinds of violence, and politically and economically underprivileged. I framed my best practices in distance-learning pedagogy by infusing ideas I had gained from a research project at Lehigh University from 2007 to the present, about Pocahontas's Native American identity through art historiography; I studied her assimilation in mythic terms appropriate for feminist practices, and then extended my inquisition to feminist art theory present in the study of Disney's first eco-feminist heroine.

My concentrations on student-directed learning, writing process theory, historicism, reader response theory, film theory, postfeminist theory, identity theory, the Socratic Method, private and public conferences, and authentic assessments such as life story writing in private or public blog journaling, group conferences, YouTube video projects, and Facebook seek change in the methodology of writing with our unique voices. As we explore the art of Pocahontas from the critical race theory—which has its roots in the more established fields of anthropology, sociology, history, philosophy, and politics—we see that the notions of social construction and reality of race and discrimination are ever present in the writings of known contemporary critical race theorists such as Derrick Bell, Mari Matsuda, Richard Delgado, Kimberlie Crenshaw, and William Tate, as well as pioneers in the field, including W.E.B. DuBois and Max Weber. This field has its roots firmly planted in American soil, mainly due to the racial makeup of our country. Through an investigative study of the assimilation of feminist ideas in mythic terms appropriate for feminist practices, I extend my inquisition to the feminist theory present through specific pedagogy, to explore Willa Cather's *My Mortal Enemy*; Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*; and Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English's *For Her Own Good: Two Centuries of the Experts' Advice to Women*, as well as *The Longman Anthology of Women's Literature*, with Mary K. DeShazer, Ed., as a six-month research project. I continue to use primary source material to gain insight through continued writing about my personal experiences with feminist theory.

Real experiences promote student efficacy in distance classrooms. In the webliography area for themed topics, I added a link to the article in the digital archive at Lehigh University and a post of my PowerPoint

presentation for the Feminisms Conference in 2008. Current technology, a YouTube video as an example, aids pedagogy in the distance classroom to promote student efficacy. My conclusions are inherent in those stories of participants who learned through life story writing in the memoir style, to tell of their experiences with a lack of feminist ideals such as abuse, neglect, or abandonment, which they share in private journaling and which expands the skills in research writing of those who apply feminist theory. One student finds herself as a beacon of hope in her posts, bringing pop culture, such as music, to the forefront to experience a distance setting of freedom and equality for all voices.

Therefore I note that I apply my own previous core research theory: That of the path to transformation with spiritual experiences of forgiveness, freedom, and renewal in the educational setting. Within pedagogical structure of the distance-learning community, I set a path for my students to express their own voices in the area of conferences or a private workbook journal, which lead to the writing process for two analytical papers and one authentic assessment.

*Feminism-Art-Theory: An Anthology, 1968–2000*, by editor Hilary Robinson, reviews over thirty years of feminist debate on the significance of gender in the making and interpretation of art; the archival anthology gathers ninety-nine indicative texts from North America, Europe, and Australasia, and embraces a broad range of threads and perspectives.

Interpretation through the vision of feminism establishes my view of the Pocahontas Archive. My paradigm for feminist practice beyond the Pocahontas Archive is to evaluate current works in the Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art in Brooklyn, New York, as well as works collected in the volume titled *Art and Feminism* (Themes and Movements series, 2001), edited by Helena Reckitt, and *Global Feminisms: New Directions in Contemporary Art* (2007), edited by Maura Reilly and Linda Nochlin.

First of all, when I practice feminine reminiscences to detect messages that decode myths about the art of Pocahontas, I model my intentions by collecting data from scholars who wrote for the recent work titled *Women and Power in Native North America*, by editors Laura F. Klein and Lillian A. Ackerman. They found the myth of Pocahontas vital to her legend, which reflects the egocentrism of the artist who wished to further the assimilation of the character of Pocahontas.

The Pocahontas Archive provides views, though they are inherent to the artists' interpretations of her story and assimilation. For example, my documentation voices feminist art theory within the new historicism, historiography, and feminist art theory. In the final illustration of

Pocahontas, we find that “Allen’s use of [Algonquin oral traditions] ... literally requires a leap of faith on the part of the reader,” and it’s a “shame” that a few errors “might justify reader resistance to an alternative history.” Allen’s most important point is that Pocahontas is neither traitor nor victim, but as “Beloved Woman,” was “always in charge, always aware of her spiritual role in a cosmic transformation time. She knew she would be abducted; she knew her death was necessary” (Pocahontas Archive). In addition, Klein and Ackerman refer to the writing of Rayna Green, who finds that “the level and substance of most passion for them [Native American women] ... has been selective, stereotyped and damaging” (Green).

Regarding feminist art theory, in *Feminism-Art-Theory: An Anthology, 1968–2000*, editor Hilary Robinson, in nine chapters, claims that “archives help support the construction of our histories, they have a pedagogical purpose. However ... the aim is not to provide a history of the movement, its chronology, events and people ... but to chart the strands of debate and the areas of concern for feminists. Thus it is the interrelation of the texts that is intended to be productive for the reader.” Each chapter can be presented as a subject for study. The introductions to each chapter are designed for both general and undergraduate readers, and provide a descriptive summary of the discussions in the text.

Can feminist ideals be perpetuated without writing about or representing women, gendered practice, or gendered identity?

By nature, writing about an assimilated woman who is a mythic figure is difficult. In our Pocahontas Archive, #148 (1911), Pocahontas originally was an illustration in *Liberty Belles, Eight Epochs in the Making of the American Girl*, published in New York by the Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1912. There are eight colored plates. The book is the largest, scarcest, and most impressive of Howard Chandler Christy’s books. The section of illustrations comprises: Pocahontas; The Puritan Girl; The Colonial Girl; The Revolutionary Girl; The Pioneer Girl; The Dixie Girl; The Western Girl; and The American Girl. Scholars agree that “Christy defined his idealized ‘girl’ as ‘high bred’, aristocratic and dainty though not always silken-skirted; a woman with tremendous self-respect.’ He saw Pocahontas as not only a ‘Christy Girl,’ but also as one of the eight ‘Liberty Belles,’ famous females of American history who had prefigured the independent young women of his generation, and so had led to their ‘making’ or evolution. He published a book about his ‘Liberty Belles’ in 1912 and developed his image of Pocahontas into a six-foot oil painting” (Rasmussen and Tilton). Costume is essential to his design, as is her demeanor. She is beautiful yet contemplative. Howard Chandler Christy