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MULTIMODAL DISCOURSE AND HERITAGE LITERACY PRACTICES

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MULTIMODAL DISCOURSE AND HERITAGE LITERACY PRACTICES

By

Suzanne Kesler Rumsey

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

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ABSTRACT

MULTIMODAL DISCOURSE AND HERITAGE LITERACY PRACTICES

By

Suzanne Kesler Rumsey

Current trends in meaning making research posit that digital media have revolutionized meaning making practices beyond "reading and writing" in the traditional sense to incorporate multimodality. Multimodality focuses on a reconception of sign technologies that include images, layouts, and sounds (among other modes), and a burgeoning area of scholarship which has explored the form of composition (Jewitt & Kress; Kress & van Leeuwen), the sociocultural implications of these forms (Street; Gee; Heath; and Brandt), and the limits of new media (Manovich; Packer & Jordan; Cushman). However, based on the study I have conducted within my home community, I contend that multimodality has been a meaning making practice for much longer than writing researchers have acknowledged it, quietly being stitched into the fabric of something I call heritage literacy. By reexamining multimodality across four generations of a single family, I offer a means of further investigating multimodality's place within the current scholarship, and I put into check the grand claims of revolutionary meaning making practices that many argue only digital media afford. Further, by looking at a cross section of a population that traditionally rejects many modern technologies, I show how the tools for meaning making cannot be seen as merely instruments divorced from the cultural practices and values that structure their use, but instead are adopted and adapted into traditional practices.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I'd first like to offer heartfelt thanks to the strong women of my family who made this project so amazing. Grandma Great, I appreciate the time you took to talk with me and for showing me how to make pecan pie. I could not have felt more proud than when you told me, "I do believe you're a pie baker." Grammy, thank you for talking with me and for trusting me with your story. Thank you for just being you and for believing in me. Mom, I could not have done this without your support, your prayers, and your willingness to talk about our heritage. Merry, thank you for your laughter, your prayers, and your willingness to help during this project. Mom and Mer, thank you also for collaborating with me, reading multiple drafts, and keeping me laughing when everything looked black. I love each of you more than I can say.

I'd also like to thank my father and my brother. Dad, thanks for being supportive, even when you didn't necessarily understand what I was doing. Thanks for feeding me. Andy, thanks for listening to me ramble about this project and for reading chapters to offer your insights. I love you both.

Next, I offer deepest thanks to my community participants, both Amish and English, for their willingness to talk with me. Each of you took time out of your day to talk with a stranger about your lives and your families. I cannot list you by name, but you know who you are. Blessings on each of you.

I'd also like to thank my committee members: Malea Powell, Marilyn Wilson, and Julie Lindquist. Thank you for your deep and thoughtful reading of my work, for your friendship, and for showing me what it means to be an academic. And to my committee chair, Ellen Cushman, I cannot thank you enough for the impact you have had on this work and on my career. Thank you for being tough on me when you needed to be, gentle with me when I needed it, and for making me laugh. Know that I strive to emulate your passion, your intellect, your ethics within academe, and your respect for all cultures and peoples. Blessings on each of you.

Deepest thanks to my best friend and husband, David. This is *our* success. I love you.

Finally, I offer deepest thanks to my Heavenly Father for calling me to this profession, confirming my place within it, and continually showing me how to honor him with my mind. To him be all glory and honor and praise.

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CHAPTER ONE: HERITAGE LITERACY DEFINED

My scheduled interview with Mary was on a hot afternoon in July. When I drove into her driveway, I was surprised to find that she was mowing her lawn with a bulky, clunky, powered mower of some kind. Mary invited me inside, which was relatively cooler. During the course of our conversation, Mary's 13-year-old daughter, Elaine, interjected comments several times. She was freckled and friendly, and obviously comfortable with me, though I am English[1]. Both women are dressed in plain cotton dresses without pattern or adornment or even buttons, and they wear white coverings over their pinned up hair.

As Elaine talked I found out that she attends the local public middle school instead of an Amish parochial school. Mary told me that she sends Elaine and her siblings to public school because "you have to learn to be out with the public too. I mean, if you are just among yourselves ... you have to be able to communicate with other people too. How can they learn to communicate...." Here she stops with a look of considerable frustration and says "I can't think what I want to say." I gently teased her and asked if what she wants to say is in Dutch[2] in her head. She laughed in agreement.

At this point I asked Mary's permission to talk with Elaine, and she agreed. Elaine told me she is in the sixth grade and has two more years of schooling before she will graduate[3]. It isn't hard to attend public school as an Amish youth, she said, and her friends know that she will finish school in eighth grade. She spoke openly and as

[1] The Amish call anyone who is not Amish "English."
[2] "Dutch" here refers to Pennsylvania Dutch or Pennsylvania German, the language that Amish speak.
[3] The Amish are only formally educated to the eighth grade.

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articulately as any average sixth grader; her speech was punctuated with the occasional "like," which was a marked contrast with her white covering and dark colored dress.

I was particularly interested in how she adapts to public school as an Amish youth so I asked her if there are things she does not participate in because she is Amish. She said she cannot participate in after-school activities because "I wouldn't have a way home since we don't drive." I asked if she avoids working on computers. "No, I work on computers along with the other students. I think they are fun. We type papers sometimes and other stuff. I just do what everyone else does." Elaine tells me that she won't miss using a computer when she joins the Amish church because "I don't know a lot about them."

Surprised at Elaine using computers, I asked Mary how she feels about computers. She says, "Well, I don't know. I think maybe sometime they might need to use one for a job or something if they work out[4]. That's why it's important." I ask her if there are other technologies that make her nervous for her children. They have a gas-powered refrigerator and stove, but no electricity in the house. Mary says, "There's stuff we wouldn't want them to have like a TV or phone. We have a phone booth just down the road that anybody can go use whenever they need it. I think that is enough for us." I note that she doesn't seem to mind my tape recorder either.

This anecdote stands in marked contrast to stereotypes of Amish people living archaically "like they are in the 19th century;" a phrase often used to explain their unique attitudes toward technology and modernity. While stereotypes and tourist publications

[4] "Working out" simply means that an Amish person works outside of the home.

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about Amish focus on the kinds of technologies they do not use, there is far more information present here about what they *do* use, and this information contradicts commonly held assumptions about them. Many see the Amish as a unified culture that wholly rejects technology because technology is "worldly" or the opposite of Godly according to their interpretation of biblical scripture. Such a mindset is certainly a characteristic of the Amish way of life; however, there is no hard and fast rule about what technologies are to be avoided, and to what extent what I call "underlying technologies" are to be eschewed. For example, while most Amish do not use electricity, dairy farmers are required by law to refrigerate milk until it is collected. In order to do so, diesel powered generators are used to run refrigeration; but the generators are creating *electricity*. So while a dairy farmer may reject the use of electricity in his home, in order to make a living he must allow regulated amounts of power into his business.

There is a variation, and to a certain extent contradiction, in technology use even within the same family. The above anecdote illustrates this reality. While Mary's home has no electricity or computers, Elaine uses them regularly in school. Though she does not use them herself and the foundations of her way of life dub such technologies as "worldly," Mary sees computers as potentially valuable for a job so she allows her daughter to learn about them in a public school setting. Further, while Elaine cannot participate in after school activities because of a lack of transportation, Mary is using a lawn mower when I arrive that is most likely powered by fuel just as a car is. Finally, Mary's household does not have a personal phone, but one is located just down the road for community use.

I want to make it very clear that I am not criticizing this family as I point out contradictions in their uses of technology. Rather I see these contradictions as evidence of an ongoing decision-making process about technology use that this community of Amish makes. The reality is that Mary and Elaine's use of technology is mitigated by their social, religious, and cultural values, just as any other person's technology use would be. While these women are Amish who must abide by the dictates of their church in order to continue to be Amish, they are also Americans living in the "information age" and must find ways of existing amidst technological innovation while still adhering to their belief systems. To do so, Mary and Elaine must adopt technologies, adapt technologies, or alienate themselves from technologies.

Such adoptions, adaptations, and alienations are a central theme that emerged from my qualitative research in an Amish community in the Midwest. The multi-generational interplay of technology use is foundational to something I call heritage literacy. Heritage literacy is comprised of the multimodal literacy practices used within any community or family across multiple generations and over time. In learning to read and write, as with using any technology, people must adapt, adopt, or alienate themselves from particular ways of reading and writing in order to maintain cultural boundaries. Heritage literacy offers us a way of conceptualizing how people decide the extent to which they will draw upon intellectual inheritances they've been given from predecessors.

These adaptations, adoptions, and alienations show how multimodal literacy takes place both on *and* off a computer screen. For instance, Mary and Elaine's clothing signifies their reading of biblical scripture and their adherence to the written and spoken

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tenets of the Amish, a topic which will be discussed in greater detail in chapter three. Multimodality outside of digital and computer technologies offers a significant revision of current trends in multimodal research. This anecdote illustrates as well some of the ways that heritage literacy practices manifests across two generations of the same family, which offers a unique perspective into how literacy and technology information is passed between generations.

The following chapter will elaborate these themes and imbed them within existing research in Composition and Rhetoric in order to revise current notions about the extracurriculum of writing (Gere) and reading and writing in communities and cultures (Moss, Guerra, Cushman). My concept of heritage literacy challenges current understandings of multimodal literacy by offering evidence outside digital and computer applications; it also adds to current multimodal research by incorporating a notion of culture into digital meaning making practices (Faigley, Kress and Jewitt). Finally, heritage literacy will also compel us toward an inter-related and global perspective of literacy and generations and a tracing of intellectual inheritance; in other words heritage literacy compels us toward understanding generations in a holistic manner that emphasizes the connections and literacies between different age groups and family members. Such a perspective adds to the scholarship produced in longitudinal literacy studies which study disconnected individuals in separate generations (Brandt, Hawisher and Selfe, Lunsford, Sommers, Haas, Geisler).

HERITAGE LITERACY

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The anecdote I've described above describes several "types" of literacy. First, Elaine is engaged in mainstream academic literacy practices. She writes papers and reads texts that her English peers read and write. She has learned how to exist in an English academic setting. Second, Elaine is learning computer literacy to some extent. While she claims she doesn't know very much, she talks about word processing and doing the same activities as other students. And third, Elaine has Amish literacy, or the reading and writing of texts particularly associated with the Amish way of life and beliefs[5].

Some might question how heritage literacy differs from other sorts of literacies defined in the past few decades, especially when the term "literacy" carries with it a history of colonialism, privilege, myths about social and political gain, and a sense of neutrality where one set of skills is useful in any and all situations and contexts. This history, or "bundles" that literacy carries with it, are the subject of Johndan Johnson-Eilola and Ann Wysocki's chapter "Blinded by the Letter: Why are we using Literacy as a Metaphor for Everything Else?" in Passions, Pedagogies, and 21st Century Technologies. Johnson-Eilola and Wysocki argue that too much history and baggage is packed into literacy to be used as carelessly and freely as it presently is. They work to unpack the term literacy to reveal its histories and connotations in order to reflect on what it means to couple such a term with "technology" or "computer." Instead of literacy, they offer terms such as "articulation" or even "architecture" as alternative words which more accurately represent the tasks completed in a "cloud of sometimes contradictory nexus points among different positions... a process of situating and resituating representations

[5] I classify "Amish Literacy" according to Andrea Fishman's text Amish Literacy: What and how it means, 1988.

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in social spaces" (367). They finish with a call for readers to continue to question literacy and to unpack its bundles and remake new ones.

I use the term "literacy" knowing full well what connotations it holds. However, my concept of heritage literacy is attempting to do what Johnson-Eilola and Wysocki call us to do: unpack the term and remake its bundles. Heritage literacy is more than "just another term" for a place to use a neutral set of skills. It is not a metaphor for all meaning making. Rather it is literacy in context, backed by the ideological "underpinnings" of the community (Street). Further heritage literacy is a remade sense of what counts as reading and writing where the emphasis is on "codified sign systems" rather than merely alphabetic text. By emphasizing the ways that people pass on literacy knowledge between generations, heritage literacy shows that active and imbedded use of technologies in which the users (or readers or writers) are decision-makers who adapt, adopt, and sometimes alienate themselves from technological uses of previous generations.

Heritage literacy is an explanation of how people transfer literacy knowledge from generation to generation and how certain practices, tools, and concepts are adapted, adopted, or alienated from use, depending on the context. It is a lifelong, cross-generational learning and meaning making process that can have many interrelated practices associated with it, depending upon the community. The fact is that heritage literacy is developmental and recursive; it, like all literacies, builds over time. However, heritage literacy describes the generational decision-making process of literacy and technology use. As contexts, objects, tools, and needs change, community members adapt to the changes, adopt the changes, or alienate themselves from the changes. And

then when they pass on their uses of technologies and tools, the next generation must make the same decisions. For example, in the anecdote at the beginning of this chapter, we can see Mary in the process of adapting to the idea of computer technologies while her daughter Elaine is adopting computer use into her repertoire of literate activities. However, Elaine is also using them only in limited ways, or adapting the technology or her beliefs in order to use the technology.

To further elaborate on the term heritage literacy, I offer a fairly simplistic definition of heritage which "consists of those things of value that we have inherited and wish to keep for future generations" (Brisbane and Woods 4). I operate under the assumption that "[e]veryone has a personal inheritance. For some people, there may be family heirlooms in the form of furniture, cutlery, or even houses or land. These have symbolic and associative values for the family to whom they belong, and are held in trust by each generation for the next" (Brisbane and Wood 4). While not all people will inherit something material, all people have an intellectual inheritance, a collection of thinking and meaning-making patterns that, as within the multiliteracies pedagogy, are *designs* for use; basically "we are both inheritors of patterns and conventions of meaning and at the same time active designers of meaning" (New London 65). Street offers his term "literacy practices" to describe not only "empirical occasions to which literacy is integral, but also folk models of those events and the ideological preconceptions that underpin them" (Social 2). In an intellectual inheritance, we each "hold in trust" an inheritance of meaning making practices that can be traced through generations.

In using Street's term "literacy practices" to describe the empirical occasions of literacy use, I also am looking at what he calls "folk models of those events and the

ideological preconceptions that underpin them" (Social 2). Folk models specifically draw from the intellectual inheritances that each of us has gained from predecessors. Humans "hold in trust," as put by Brisbane and Woods, an inheritance of meaning making practices that can be traced through generations. However, such a passage of information and technology use is not linear or steadfast. If this were the case I'd be suggesting a sort of autonomous or neutral view of literacy where the values, beliefs, and social practices of a culture are passed along without any real construction on the part of the learner. This would be an accumulation of knowledge rather than a construction of knowledge. Instead, by emphasizing the ways that community members adopt, adapt, or alienate themselves from various technologies, literacies, and practices, I show that there is reinterpretation, questioning, and critiquing of literacy practices by each new generation.

Examples of heritage literacy show up in Composition and Rhetoric scholarship, although most would not call them by this name. Cushman states that bead working is knowledge making. It "codifies tradition, cultural practices, legends, ways of viewing self within world, clan and tribal affiliations, representational styles and so on, depending on its functional and rhetorical purpose" (Loom). Heath writes that "[p]atterns of using reading and writing in [Roadville and Trackton] are interdependent with ways of using space (having bookshelves, decorating walls, displaying telephone numbers), and using time (bedtime, meal hours, and homework sessions)" (234). In the study of fine arts, Amish quilts exhibit heritage literacy and multimodality because the content of Amish quilts are a text that "clearly represents the Amish desire to remain apart from the distracting temptations and complexities of the 'English' world" (Shaw 172). This desire for separation is seen in the "powerful visual rhythms" in solid colored rather than printed

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fabrics and strong geometric patterns (Shaw 171). Culturally situated literacy is evident in these visual rhythms. These examples are literate activities because they use patterns, textures, alphabetic texts at times, and other modes of literacy to make meaning. They are heritage literacy because they are passed between generations and altered according to new technology needs and new generations' expectations.

As a final example, in Multimodal Literacy, while most of the contributors focused exclusively on print text or digital literacies (which I will further critique in the next section), Kate Pahl writes about 9-year-old Sam making new signs by drawing from "children's popular culture and made artifacts" " (Pahl 143). Sam uses his bedroom floor and these items to create texts and meanings (143). As Sam shares his meaning making with his mother, other forms of multimodal literacy develop throughout the house, down hallways, and on the coffee table.

In sum, heritage literacy can be defined as multimodal literacy practices that are passed from one generation to the next and the decision-making process that each new generation makes about whether to adopt, adapt, or alienate themselves from various literacy tools and technologies. Heritage literacy traces the interdependence of literacy practices between generations as the new depends on the old for their intellectual inheritances, and the old depends on the new for innovations and adaptations, as well as adoptions of literacy traditions. The remaining sections within this chapter position heritage literacy within existing conversations in Composition and Rhetoric research.

EXTRACURRICULUM, COMMUNITIES, AND HERITAGE LITERACY

Heritage literacy, because it emphasizes a more global perspective of literacy and generations, offers a way to rethink several leading ideas in current research in

communities and cultures. Specifically I'll be showing how heritage literacy builds on Ann Ruggles Gere's work in the extracurriculum of writing, Moss's work with African American church literacies, and Cushman's work with people's uses of language tools to live in the inner-city.

Gere's work, "Kitchen Tables and Rented Rooms: the Extracurriculum of Composition," offers a starting place for how to conceive of "writing development [that takes place] outside formal education" (276). Much work has been done on the acquisition of language, but Gere's work emphasizes adult means of continuing writing instruction beyond school walls. In contrast to previous notions of extracurriculum, Gere writes,

> ...my version of the extracurriculum includes the present as well as the past; it extends beyond the academy to encompass the multiple contexts in which persons seek to improve their own writing; it includes more diversity in gender, race, and class among writers; and it avoids, as much as possible, a reenactment of professionalization in its narrative..." (279).

Gere's extracurriculum broadens the scope of what is included in a definition of writing instruction outside academe; her work also purposefully avoids connections to professionalization or workplace literacies.

Gere offers the Tenderloin Women's Writing Workshop and the Lansing, Iowa, Writers' Workshop as examples of the extracurriculum. These workshops offer "opportunities for performance [and] provide a major incentive for writers to develop their skills" (276). Specifically these workshops are examples of "self-sponsored pedagogically oriented writing activities... Just as accounts of literacy practices outside

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the walls of the academy uncouple literacy and schooling, so my account of the extracurriculum of composition separates pedagogy from the traditional pedagogue" (279). In other words, Gere carefully limits her definition of extracurriculum events as being organized pedagogical moments where writing instruction takes place.

Heritage literacy practices certainly include extracurriculum events in the ways that Gere defines them here. For example Amish ministers may work with family or community members to perfect their Sunday message and some Amish do work together to prepare articles for Amish-oriented publication. However, heritage literacy also offers some very different ideas about the nature of literacy instruction outside school walls than does Gere's definition.

First, heritage literacy is multimodal, therefore what "counts" as writing and reading is a much more inclusive list than Gere's. As I will explore in chapter six, quilts make meaning through synergies of multiple codified sign systems including textures, designs, pictorial representations, and even alphabetic text. Because heritage literacy offers a broader definition of "writing," a quilting bee or circle might also be called an extracurricular event as women gather to perfect one quilt while discussing patterns, designs, and technē. Furthermore, there is explicit literacy instruction that takes place as newer quilters are taught methods, experienced quilters learn new designs, and excerpts from quilting magazines are shared with the larger group.

Second, Gere's examples, while they exist outside the walls of academe, still resemble academic methods of composition instruction. Participants read their work aloud and discuss it, much like formal peer evaluation methods. Further, these writing workshops are structured and organized like a class. The events take place at a

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designated time and location for a set amount of time and duration. For example, the Lansing, Iowa, Writers' Workshop takes place on Monday evenings "during the lull between fall harvest and spring planting" (275) and the workshops last for two hours.

My issue with Gere's examples of extracurriculum events is that they so closely resemble the instruction that takes place within schools, yet she claims to "uncouple literacy and schooling" (279). She further states that her form of extracurriculum "separates pedagogy from the traditional pedagogue" (279). Essentially the workshops she mentions are school-like moments outside of school walls, as if the only writing instruction that could be of value to Composition and Rhetoric is that which resembles what we do everyday in our classrooms.

Heritage literacy extracurriculum events are a much less structured and organized learning situation than the writing workshops Gere uses as examples. In articulating how people adopt, adapt, and alienate various literacies and technologies, I am offering literacy instruction and "writing workshops" that operate in ways that hardly seem to connect to formal education in any way. For example, in chapter four I will explore how recipes and cooking are heritage literacy practices, and I specifically point out that there is rarely explicit cooking instruction offered to young cooks. Rather girls learn to cook through observation and modeling as much, if not more, than through what I call purposeful instruction. Such a means of "instruction" demarcates these events and practices from a school setting and stand in contrast to current composition pedagogies.

Instead of the extracurriculum of composition being limited to those events which most closely resemble our classrooms, heritage literacy broadens the scope of composition pedagogy and shortens the gap that Cheryl Geisler calls a "great divide

between expert and layperson" which academic literacy often creates (xiii). Gere's examples of writing workshops put all participants on equal standing and also lessen this gap, but by aligning the definition of extracurriculum only with those workshops which mirror academic settings, Gere has limited the ways that composition teaching and learning can take place outside school walls. Heritage literacy emphasizes those moments of learning and teaching that are embedded in indigenous home-literacy practices.

Non-academic or atypical learning settings have been studied by others, but for different purposes than heritage literacy. Consider Julie Lindquist's study entitled A Place to Stand which explores discourse in the non-traditional setting of a working class bar. In this non-formal setting, bar patrons argue about political issues as a way of creating group identity. These political arguments are a rhetorical genre which suggests a balance between group solidarity and individual identity, as well as a sense of class identity. Overall Lindquist's work offers new insights into the shape and meaning of the sociopolitical identity of the working class and demonstrates how class can be created at the local and purely rhetorical level. While this work offers substantial food for thought about class politics, rhetoric, sociolinguistics, and anthropology, the study doesn't have much to say about the things that heritage literacy is most concerned with: generations and the adaptation and adoption of literacy tools over time.

Another study which addresses literacy learning outside of traditional school settings is Marcia Farr's work "En Los Dos Idiomas: *Literacy Practices Among Chicago Mexicanos*." Farr explores the ways in which literacy is learned outside of school through social networks and used in religious, commercial, civic and educational

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"domains" or contexts. The study focuses on a network of 45 immigrant, working class, Mexican Americans and offers insights into their particular social networks and how these networks impact literacy development.

In particular, Farr's notions of *compadrazgo* and *lirico* are concepts that relate to heritage literacy. "*Compadrazgo* refers to the Mexican system of godparentlike relationships that function as a reciprocal exchange network to facilitate economic survival and provide emotional and social support" (Critical Sourcebook 468). Essentially, *compadrazgo* is an inter-generational network of social and emotional support where surrogate relatives help pass on traditions and values. I believe that *compadrazgo* would be an interesting concept and site of future research in heritage literacy research to explore the generational literacy practices that exist outside of immediate family members, or in a wider community base than the one I have studied here.

Lirico is another concept offered by Farr which relates to heritage literacy, specifically in how it addresses a learning community that exists outside of a school setting. Farr writes that a number of her participants "learned literacy l*irico*; that is, they 'picked it up' informally from others who used only spoken language – not printed materials – to pass on knowledge of the writing system" (Critical Sourcebook 470). Farr later states that although "formal schooling is the route to literacy for many people, schooling is clearly not essential" (Critical Sourcebook 474). Such findings counter Gere's concept of the extracurriculum, as does heritage literacy. However heritage literacy also builds on this work by tracing similar literacy patters across many generations of a family and within a community.

Like Gere's work, Beverly Moss's work "Creating a Community: Literacy Events in African-American Churches" examines literacy in an institution outside of academe. Moss's work examines the literacy events surrounding African American church services; in particular she details the sermon as a literacy artifact and the ways that this artifact create community within each individual church. My own research parallels Moss's because the Amish are primarily a religious or faith-based community. Where Moss focuses on church literacy practices of African Americans, my work in chapter three includes a focus on the faith literacy practices of the Amish. Similarly, Moss's work looks specifically at sermons from three different ministers and my work, while not focusing on sermons, focuses on the ways that participants read and interpret biblical scripture.

However, there are several marked differences between Moss's work and my own. First, Moss uses Heath's notion of "literacy event" as her theoretical grounding for the study. I, too, borrow from Heath, but I specifically chose to align my work more closely with Street's "literacy practices" in order to understand the ideological underpinnings of the literacy practices I observed, not just the moments where reading and writing are used. Moss writes about other literacy events aside from sermons because "it is these other literacy events that provide the context from which the sermon takes place" (160). While I agree that other literacy events can offer the context for another literacy event, I believe that Street's ideological model of literacy requires a deeper inspection of the ideologies that make up the church community, not just the other literacy events that occur within a church service.

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Second, because heritage literacy is multimodal, other modes of literacy meaning making are acknowledged and looked at alongside reading and writing. I do not discount alphabetic, written text. However, as I have noted above and will explain further, I believe that multimodal literacy is not bound to alphabetic text but rather is the decoding of any sign system. Moss offers three examples of sermons within this community: manuscript, non-manuscript, and partial manuscript. In other words, she explores how each of the three church communities operates based upon how their leader preaches; whether that is from a written text, from memory, or from only notes. Moss offers some interesting findings based on these three variations; however, her analysis is still bound to what Kress and Jewitt call the "modes of language, speech and writing" (14), a specific portion of their theory which I argue against in the next section.

What heritage literacy offers to Moss's work is a conception of how the norms and literacy practices of an African American church are passed between generations. Heritage literacy offers an additional layer of context and meaning to the oral traditions exhibited by the preachers and the call-and-response teaching methods because it accounts for how these practices have changed over time. In other words, heritage literacy shows that Moss's study is positioned on a continuum of church history and practices, where it has a history and a future of literacy and technology use.

In another study of communities and literacies, Juan Guerra's work "Putting Literacy in its Place: Nomadic Consciousness and the Practice of Transcultural Repositioning" explains how he came to use the terms in his understanding of the critical consciousness of Marcuse, Freire, or Gramsci. Guerra's main complaint about these theorists is that each "in his own way posits a rigidly linear and developmental stage

model informed by a 'narrative of progress' [Harris]" (25). Instead, Guerra argues that "the change from an unreflective state of mind to a state of self-awareness is neither linear nor progressive" (26). To account for this fact, he introduces the notion of "nomadic consciousness" which emphasizes that no one ever achieves such a state of consciousness that she has no place else to go. Guerra also states that critical consciousness is not only found in older people who have progressively earned it and that once one has achieved a particular level, she does not "possess it on a permanent basis thereafter" (30). In other words, Guerra points out that our awareness is always changing from critical to naïve, or nostalgic, or contradictory (30).

Such a nomadic consciousness is evident in heritage literacy because heritage literacy is the tracing of the changes and decisions people make about their literacy practices over time. In adopting, adapting, or alienating one's self from a literacy technology, changes also occur in consciousness. The uneven, changing, and negotiated understandings of one's world roughly parallel the ways that that person relates to literacies and technologies. For example, if a person moves from a critical consciousness to a nostalgic one where she remembers "the way things were," she may well re-adopt or adapt older forms of literacy or technologies as a result. In this way, heritage literacy and Guerra's nomadic consciousness offer a way of conceptualizing reading and writing within cultures as an evolving thing.

In much the same way that heritage literacy sheds light on the negotiations of consciousness, it also sheds light on the ways that people use literacy tools for a variety of purposes, depending upon their needs at a given moment. Ellen Cushman's work The Struggle and the Tools describes the daily lives and uses of language of people living in

the inner city. Cushman explains the various struggles that her participants have to get resources, access, and respect within the existing social system and the oral and literate strategies that they use to do so.

What heritage literacy offers to Cushman's examination of the power struggles, language uses, and social consciousness is a description of how and why tools are adapted, adopted, or alienated for various purposes over the course of multiple generations. Cushman writes,

> Within the context of day-to-day inner city life, individuals continually develop linguistic skills, skills imbued with oppositional ideologies. Their language tools, as well as their values attendant upon these tools, complicate the notion that overarching power structures are simply reproduced, carbon coy, over and over again. Social structures... are ... continually remade, fissured, and manipulated in everyday interactions. This book reveals the daily linguistic means by which residents make social structures more humane, subvert, and co-opt them for their own ends (3).

In other words, Cushman's work details the ways that individuals work within and around social structures in order to achieve their needs. Heritage literacy, in tandem with Cushman's findings, show that such linguistic and rhetorical abilities are passed to new generations. The passage of such uses of language to newer generations is not a linear, stagnant skill set. Rather it is evolving and developmental as the social structures change, needs change, and individuals make different choices about what tools they will use. In other words, the notion of heritage literacy takes Cushman's analysis and applies it to the

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HERITAGE LITEARCY AND MULTIMODALITY

In a sense I borrow expanded notions of literacy as codified sign system from Gunther Kress and Carey Jewitt's take on multimodality. In their text Multimodal Literacy, they define modes as "a regularized organized set of resources for meaning-making, including, image, gaze, gesture, movement, music, speech, and sound-effect. Modes are broadly understood to be the effect of the work of culture in shaping material into resources for representation" (Kress and Jewitt 1). Note that "a regularized organized set of resources for meaning making" is much like the codified sign systems I have suggested. Further, in discussing multimodality Kress and Jewitt write that the "modes of language (speech and writing) are often central, but need not be present for meanings to be made. For instance, people use images, gesture, and space as a means for communication..." (14).

However, as much as I appreciate the work Kress and Jewitt have done, and as helpful as their definitions are, the essays within their text also are the foil against which I theorize a different understanding of multimodality. The main issue I take with Kress and Jewitt's text is that each essay conceives of multimodality only in *digital* forms. While fields other than Composition and Rhetoric have been researching multimodality in a variety of forms for some time (linguistics, cultural studies, etc.), literacy studies within Composition and Rhetoric have only conceived of multimodality within digital or computer technologies. Though I believe that all forms of literacy and sign system are

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multimodal, the research on multimodality in literacy studies, thus far, seems to be only examining the newest, the best, and the brightest inventions offered on a computer screen. I argue this based upon the fact that in Kress and Jewitt's work almost every example offered, every article collected, is in some way connected to digital media.

I am arguing here that the newest, the best, and the brightest inventions on computer screens are *not new* in terms of their multimodality; hence they are being given undue focus in present research as offering something innovative to the form of writing and the field of Composition and Rhetoric. Moreover, a perception of multimodality as only existing in digital or computer forms is an exceedingly limited way of conceptualizing a theory with such richness and history. To prove my point, I offer evidence of multimodal literacy practices just like those found on a computer screen in a population of people who, at least in principle, reject such technologies: the Amish. In other words, multimodal literacy practices are visible in cultures where one would *least* expect them to be.

Heritage literacy offers a way of contextualizing current digital meaning making in terms of its historical, cultural, and social building blocks. Lester Faigley, among others, suggested such a concept. He writes

> the internet represents a consolidation stage in the 160-year development of electronic communication technologies and the thirty-five-hundred-year history of writing technologies. That the web has expanded so rapidly suggests that it is not so new, because people immediately recognize its uses (181).

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What heritage literacy offers to this existing conversation is the tracing of one family's literacy development through more than four generations. Such a tracing offers a clearer sense of how computers and digital media come to be included in literacies and where they might be headed. Evidence of multimodality in the oldest generations of my family, as well as in a culture where computer technologies are eschewed, opens a more global perspective of literacy learning. Instead of reading and writing technologies being learned only within a school environment, multimodality in computer and digital media are evidence of the ongoing constellation of adaptations, adoptions, and alienations of various technologies over the course of time, both in school and beyond.

Heritage literacy, as will be evidenced in this study, offers a fuller sense of what multimodality means for Composition and Rhetoric. Because heritage literacy specifically deals with "codified sign systems," it counters how Kress and Jewitt have described writing. Kress and Jewitt list "writing" alongside speech as "modes of language;" however, I would argue that Kress and Jewitt are here defining writing as only alphabetic text separate from speech, which has been argued against by sociocultural literacy researchers for some time (Brandt, Gee, Street, Moss). If multimodality is to be useful to Composition and Rhetoric, we need to redefine it according to our standards. If we conceive of writing as more than alphabetic text, can it really be listed as one mode among many as Kress and Jewitt do so here? Instead, I believe that writing, at least in how Composition has come to define writing, *is itself multimodal.* It is a "multimodal mode" if one insists upon following Kress and Jewitt's definitions. The implication of this is that all forms of sign systems in which one could be called "literate" are multimodal. Even pen-and-paper, alphabetic writing is a "multimodal mode" that

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employs hands, visual layout, textures of paper and pens, and sounds as pen scratches paper or as someone reads the product aloud.

Further, heritage literacy, because it is the active response of generations of people on their intellectual inheritance (adopting, adapting, or alienating), suggests a richer sense of how modes are synchronized and synergized for meaning making. Synergies between modes means that alphabetic literacy cannot be hierarchically positioned above any other mode; profound sorts of literacy meaning making occur when many modes play together. For instance, in the anecdote at the beginning of this chapter, while Elaine has the ability to read and write alphabetically, her manner of dress, speech, use of technologies, and relationship with her mother all work together when she constructs meaning.

Finally, heritage literacy offers a way of understanding how digital literacies and non-digital literacies can inform one another in productive ways. Synergies can exist between digital representations and non-digital ones to make richer meanings. Further, a combination of the digital and non-digital lays bare the processes of adoption, adaptation, and alienation that a person may have gone through to construct a particular composition. For instance, some time ago I composed a digital piece to explore my heritage. Consider the following screenshots.

Figure 1: Screen Shot 1

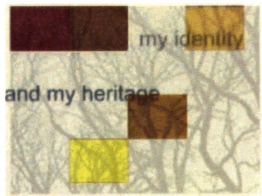

Figure 2: Screen Shot 2

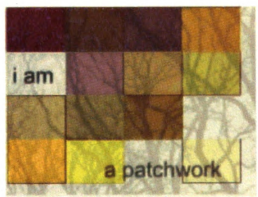

Figure 3: Screen Shot 3

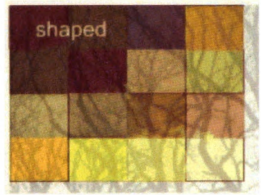

Figure 4: Screen Shot 4

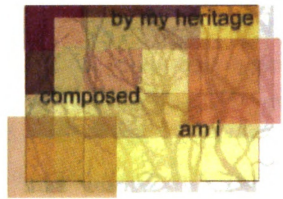

Figure 5: Screen Shot 5

Figure 6: Screen Shot 6

Figure 7: Screen Shot 7

This digital movie allowed me to combine images, text, design, and layout to construct meaning. I used themes that related to heritage in general, such as tree limbs, and to my own heritage specifically, such as the image of an Amish quilt. I also did not include sound within this composition in homage to Amish simplicity. However, because I have adopted and adapted digital technologies and literacies to create this piece, I also used it to show the ways that I have acquired different literacies beyond those used by my Amish ancestors and by my own family members. The final image is of the quilt overlaying the image of tree branches, but there are additional squares to the quilt that do not fit into the image. They overlap and combine with the quilt, but they are also distinct. In this way I was able to take digital technologies and show how they enable me to think about my heritage and outside of my heritage. What this example shows is the ways that all types of heritage literacy are multimodal and the ways that one can take traditional forms of a culture's meaning making and adapt other technologies to make similar meanings. The same thinking patterns and meaning making practices are evident in traditional quilt making and in this computer adapted movie.

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HERITAGE LITERACY AND LONGITUDINAL STUDIES

Heritage literacy builds upon the important work underway in Rhetoric and Composition that explores longitudinal and generational literacy studies. For instance, as recently as the 2006 Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) Nancy Sommers and Andrea Lunsford, as part of a panel titled "Longitudinal Studies," reported on their recently completed 5-year study of freshman writers at Stanford and Harvard Universities respectively, in addition to Lunsford's recently published work in CCC 57.2 with co-authors Jenn Fishman, Beth McGregor, and Mark Otuteye. This study concluded that student writing is increasingly linked to theories and practices of performance, or "'students' live enactment of their own writing" (226). Deborah Brandt's work *Literacy in American Lives* is a study of 80 people born over 90 years time in America. Her work explores the changing conditions of literacy learning based on large scale economic and social changes between 1895 and the present. And Gail Hawisher and Cynthia Selfe's work *Literate Lives in the Information Age* offers 20 different narratives of literacy learning from people age 14 to 60. Their work describes the growing and changing relationship that people have with digital and electronic literacy. The following describes my comparison and critique of each of these researchers work in more detail.

Lunsford, Fishman, McGregor, and Otuteye's work "Performing Writing, Performing Literacy" is an essay which reports on the first two years of the Stanford Study of Writing, a five-year longitudinal study of college writing. Lunsford and Fishman collected writing samples of all kinds, both academic and extracurricular, from students such as McGregor and Otuteye who helped compose this essay. In their writing

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collections, Fishman and Lunsford found that performance is an important, and often overlooked, aspect of students' academic and extracurricular writing.

Performance prompted these researchers "to consider how the act of embodying writing through voice, gesture, and movement can help early college students learn vital lessons about literacy" (226). Such an embodiment of writing is a topic that chapter three touches upon as I outline how faith, as a heritage literacy practice, is the combination of belief and action. However, where my research is markedly different is in the site or location of such performances. Lunsford and Fishman also align their findings with Gere's extracurriculum as a site of literacy performance. I have already explained how heritage literacy differs from Gere's extracurriculum, and the same holds true for the location of Lunsford and Fishman's research. Heritage literacy moves us beyond a focus on academic literacy toward a broader understanding of the ways people read and write in their home communities. While Lunsford and Fishman collect writing samples of "extracurricular" writing, these samples are still measured in opposition to academic writing, not as existing on their own for their own purposes.

Further, though Lunsford and Fishman's study is longitudinal in that it tracks 189 students through four or five years of college, the literacy activities they observe are limited to single individuals who are involved in the same sorts of writing activities within a college setting. Thus, their writing says as much about the college setting that they all have in common as it does about the literacies of this group of people. Instead, heritage literacy traces literacies through multiple generations of people to understand the passage of knowledge between generations. In this study, that tracing is of one family

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and one community, but studies could be done in the future that look at many multi-generational families and the ways that they pass on literacy knowledge.

Lunsford and Fishman's research proposes a call for teachers to use performance as a pedagogical maneuver within our classrooms, again as a way for students to learn about literacy. I argue that heritage literacy calls for a reconception of this performance pedagogy to one that is imbedded in the lived daily lives of people in families and communities. Imbedded pedagogy would mean that people learn "valuable lessons about literacy," as Lunsford and Fishman put it, within their home communities and daily lives, rather than in a school setting or any setting that even resembles formal education. Further, such an imbedding of pedagogy lessens the gap between home and academe, making it possible for students to continually make active decisions about adopting, adapting, or alienating various technologies and literacies.

Finally, in discussing the idea of gesture, movement, and talk as being realigned with literacy, Lunsford and Fishman offer a type of multimodal meaning making. Essentially they are positioning performance as a viable *mode* of literacy meaning making within the composition classroom. For this I commend them. I believe that heritage literacy takes this sense of multimodality and expands it toward considering all modes as equally capable of creating sign systems and codified language. Lunsford and Fishman discuss the manipulation of "not only language, body and voice, but also gender and racial stereotypes as they seek out ways to become legible within the university" (245). Heritage literacy extends this display of multimodal literacy to all modes outside the university.

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Next let me offer a comparison and critique of Deborah Brandt's work. Brandt certainly interviewed a far greater number of people for her study than I did; however, presumably none of her participants had any connections to one another. She specifically states that her analysis focuses on "relationships between individual literacy development and large-scale economic development." Each person's literacy was analyzed in how it related to economic development, and generations are marked by what Norman Ryder calls "their unique location in the stream of history" (quoted in Brandt 11).

If we think of Brandt's study as offering an overarching picture of American literacy development over the past 90 years, we are able to see the *breadth* of American literacy experience, how large-scale economic development impacted individual literacy learning, and patterns in how broad social change affected people of various age groups. I think of Brandt's study as a map of the U.S. with 80 distinct pinpoints of experience represented. However, any connections between these points say more about the large-scale economic development than generational literacy changes within families and communities.

What we cannot see in Brandt's study is *depth* into any particular culture or area's literacy practices over time. Heritage literacy, instead of isolated narratives of literacy and economic development, offers overlapping narratives of *one family*'s literacy usage through four different generations. I offer a very different picture of generational differences that is not based on large-scale economic or political change. Instead, generational differences within my study are seen in variations of technology use and literacy practices because so many other variable are neutralized. In other words, for the most part my great grandmother, grandmother, mother, and sister have similar cultural

systems of belief. We have a commonality of experiences unique to our family. We have similar expectations and experiences. The emphasis of heritage literacy is more fully on literacy and technology change, (adaptation, adoption, alienation) than it is on the outside influences of broad social change on individual lives.

Similar to Brandt's work, Hawisher and Selfe's book offers 20 individual narratives. Their work builds on Brandt's with a focus on technological literacy development in particular but it still offers breadth rather than depth in its literacy narratives. Hawisher, Selfe, and A. Nichole Brown, though, offer a chapter that discusses three generations of black women. They ask the question "What roles do families play in both changing and sustaining generational patterns of literacy practices and values?" Such a question is very similar to my own research questions:

1. How does this Amish community pass on an intellectual inheritance in multimodal meaning making, uses of technology, discourse, and literacy practices?
2. How is heritage a form of literacy knowledge?
3. How does literacy knowledge manifest itself across generations?
4. How do changes in technologies impact heritage, literacy, and generations?

However, Hawisher, Selfe, and Brown present the material as three case studies. Though the women are related biologically and socially, few connections are made between their literacy practices except in the ways that one generation's attitudes about literacy shaped the following generation. Also, this study emphasizes digital and computer literacy, and an important distinction of heritage literacy is that it shows how

the digital extends beyond computer technologies. Finally, this study, just like Brandt's study, offers breadth rather than depth.

In addition to the above studies, Christina Haas, Cheryl Geisler, and Paul Prior have done longitudinal research on single or small sets of academic writers. Christine Haas's 1994 work "Learning to Read Biology" examines the development of specialized literacy by tracking a biology major through her undergraduate years. Cheryl Geisler's work Academic Literacy and the Nature of Expertise in 1994 explored academic literacy, specifically the "great divide" created in academe between experts and novices. Paul Prior's work Writing/Disciplinarity in 1988 explored academic writing in graduate programs in a series of case studies.

Christina Haas's work "Learning to Read Biology" offers a detailed look at one student's academic literacy development over time, which as Haas points out would not have been possible by looking at multiple students' work (as Lunsford and Fishman did in a later study). Specifically, Haas's study looks at how a student becomes literate and familiar with the "patterns of knowing about, and behaving toward, texts within a disciplinary field" (Sourcebook 358). Whereas Brandt's work offers breadth, Haas's work offers depth. Heritage literacy, which also offers depth, focuses not on one person's acquisition of literacy but on four generations of literacy acquisition. This *generational depth* takes Haas's framework to the next level by extending the depth beyond the scope of a single person and a single (college) experience.

Other longitudinal studies offer interesting and fruitful work about academic literacy. Geisler, Haas (as noted above), and Prior, each focuses specifically upon academic literacy, though from several different perspectives. In Academic Literacies

and the Nature of Expertise, Geisler argues that the "cultural movement of professionalization has created a *great divide* between expert and layperson" (xiii). She suggests that academic literacy has this particular problem because it obscures "the ways in which expertise...makes use of the resources of indigenous culture" (xiii). Her study then observed experts and novices in classroom conversations where "a teacher and his students engaged in transmitting expertise from one generation to the next" (213).

Obviously, my own research moves away from academic literacies, as I have mentioned several times by now. However, I note that Geisler also is concerned about the connections between what she calls indigenous cultures and academic literacy and the passage of expertise between generations, two interests that have close parallels with my own work. Heritage literacy, however, offers very different information than Geisler's work. My work is not necessarily concerned with experts and novices, rather it is on the decision making process that each generation must go through in adopting, adapting, or alienating from literacies and technologies passed to them from their predecessors. Further, heritage literacy specifically looks at home language and literacy use, not on how home language and literacy is important to or changes academic literacy as Geisler's study does.

Another difference between Geisler's work an my own is the ways we are conceptualizing multimodality. Geisler writes,

> I see my study of academic literacy and the nature of expertise as multimodal, first, with respect to design and data acquisition.... Also with respect to the analytic activities used once the data were collected... and I

have deliberately tried to address my arguments to more than one academic community (241-242)

Geisler's interpretation of multimodality is in the kinds of data she collects, the ways she analyzes that data, and her audience(s). In contrast, heritage literacy focuses on the multiple modes of composing and meaning making. As Kress and Jewitt call it, "multimodal literacy" is the emphasis of my work. Multimodality, in this way, is more than just differences in the kinds of data collected or one's audience. It is more about the form of language and meaning making and how those forms manifest in various ways across time.

Paul Prior's work Writing/Disciplinarity presents a series of case studies regarding graduate student writing. Prior adds to the existing academic literacy research in that he studies a group of people not previously studied: graduate students, and compares their experiences and literacies with similar undergraduate studies like those discussed here. Prior's research explores "the complex intersections of writing, response, classroom discourse, and disciplinary enculturation that arise as texts are imagined, produced, read, and deployed within graduate programs in the academy" (3)

Obviously heritage literacy does not concern itself with graduate literacy, per se. However, because my study traces four generations of my family, and I have been a graduate student, there are connections between Prior's work and my own. What heritage literacy offers to Prior's existing work is an expanded context for the literacies that graduate students use. For example, I do not write and read in a vacuum, and the context and ideologies behind my literacy do not all come from other academic settings. Rather the academic literacy that I used as a graduate student has a long history of

changes, adoptions, adaptations, and alienations from various technologies and literacies that have been passed to me from my grandmothers, mother, and even across the same generation from my siblings.

In sum, what heritage literacy is offering to the field of Composition and Rhetoric is a deeper understanding of the contexts in which literacy practices exist. Instead of literacy being an individual endeavor, I suggest that literacy exists within time and among many generations, practices, and technologies. Heritage literacy gives a sense of interconnectivity of practices and technologies between generations of families and communities. I offer, in other words, a sense of depth to literacy knowledge that has not been previously addressed.

HERITAGE LITERACY IN SMALLTOWN

In this dissertation, then, I seek to show some specific examples of heritage literacy behaviors that I have observed while collecting ethnographic data from my own community at large, which I call "Smalltown," and specifically within four generation of my own family. Heritage literacy asks that we learn from past generations and reconceive of literacy practices outside of the written page and multimodality outside of digital technologies. McLaren and Lankshear write about the need for a critical literacy which must "be able to identify the characteristics of an individual's 'ethno-methods' – the routine actions, unconsciousness knowledge, and cultural memory from which community members draw in order to engage in a politics of daily living" (405). Because heritage literacy is multimodal, it focuses on this intellectual inheritance as the very foundation upon which other literacy practices are built, and my data specifically

addresses the intellectual inheritance of a particular family with Amish heritage and the surrounding Amish-Mennonite community to provide evidence of my central claims about multimodal heritage literacy.

As part of an autoethnography, a methodology I'll discuss in detail in chapter two, I have collected in-depth interview data with four of the five living generations of my family: my great-grandmother (Cora, 91), my grandmother (Edna, 70), my mother (Lucy, 48), and my sister (Merry, 24). In addition, I collected data during the summer of 2005 from community members in my home area who have Amish lineage or are currently Amish. This broad data collection revealed four patterns behavior that exemplify heritage literacy: *faith, work, coming of age, and gathering and communing.* The data collected from my family members will serve to more fully illustrate how these community-based patterns manifest themselves over four generations of one particular Midwestern family.

Chapter three emphasizes the heritage literacy practice of faith. My focus within this chapter is on what I will call in this chapter "acting out one's faith." In other words, faith as a literacy practice gets at the heart of how Christian faith moves beyond mere religious practice to dictate all secular activity. The literacy artifacts that I will be focusing my analysis upon in this chapter are instances where participants quote the Bible and biblical scriptures. I offer an explanation of the faith practices within this community and an explanation of why faith so deeply impacts who we are and what we do. Specifically I articulate how there are "synergies" between faith as a belief system and faith as a practice, specifically a literacy practice. I describe how and why faith can be a

literacy practice by showing its multimodal qualities that move literacy "off the page" if you will.

Chapter four concerns itself with an exploration of the heritage literacy practice of work. Work within my community refers to specific actions done to complete a task as well as the concept of "work ethic" or the attitudes and beliefs that dictate how one performs daily tasks. In Smalltown, we do not just socialize at a given "get together." We *work* and talk, *work* and laugh, *work* and worship. Specifically I look at recipes as artifacts which are produced within work literacy events such as cleaning, canning, gardening, building, and cooking. This part of the study *s*hows how the Amish do not use recipes as neutral instructions or simply to guide cooking; rather recipes indicate adaptive uses of technologies for meaning making. Meanings are encoded into recipes that articulate the adaptations between (cooking) technologies and users (cooks) which then work together to create the environment in which they are used.

Chapter five offers an analysis of the heritage literacy practice of coming of age, or the significant and timely events that occur in this community which enable group cohesion and are marked by particular literacy artifacts. Specifically, I look at heritage literacy artifacts that center on the interrelated events of "running around," the decision whether to join the Amish church, adult baptism, and shunning. While these events are significant only to my Amish participants and to the oldest generations of my own family, the concept of coming of age is a common theme throughout my data. Also, these events rely on multimodal literacy tools for meaning making. I have selected these events because they so aptly exhibit the use the cooperation required for group cohesion and the ways that literacies are passed between generations of a community.

Finally, chapter six concerns the heritage literacy practice of *gathering and communing*. Within my family and within my community, the concept of gathering together to share a meal, to talk or visit, or to worship binds us together as a community and fosters reading and writing collaboration. I have selected quilting and quilts as events and artifacts to explore further the ways that the community gathers and communes in collaborative literacy. Specifically I select these events and artifacts because they offer means of explaining what I call explicit literacy characteristics and implicit literacy characteristics or the external, obvious or physical characteristics of an artifact and the implied, internal, or subtle meanings they have in a given community.

CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY: AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

INTRODUCTION

I decided to study the concept of heritage literacy before I began my doctoral coursework. I became interested ethnography as a methodology at first because the research that interested me the most was ethnographic. Studies of how communities understand literacy, how they select which literacies to use in a given situation, and which literacies they reject fascinated me. Names like Brandt, Street, and Heath fed a need I had to understand how culture and values played out in the ways a community reads and writes. It was, then, a somewhat logical decision to pursue ethnographic research for my dissertation. I had the models in front of me, I was committed to doing the same kinds of research and work, and my subject matter seemed to fit well within an ethnographic framework.

Choosing to do an *auto*ethnography was a much more complicated decision; the issues, conflicts, and emotionally subjectivity of this methodology are, therefore, the emphasis of this chapter. In Gere's work "Kitchen Tables and Rented Rooms," she refers to the extracurriculum of composition where writing development occurs outside formal education. I was struck by the concept of literacy learned at a kitchen table, the images of home and family in contrast to images of academics, and understanding how my home, values, and literacy knowledge have at times been at odds with the expectations of the academic world. I realized that literacy is always personal. I also realized that I was greatly interested in the values, home, and literacy knowledge learned at my own kitchen table. Finally, I realized that there was a wealth of knowledge, wisdom, lore, and

tradition about home, values, and kitchen-table-literacy that had already been poured into me by my mother, grandmother, and great grandmother. If I was to delve into heritage as a type of literacy practice and study the ways that people pass on an intellectual inheritance, I could not do it without them.

I chose to ask my family to participate in my research because they offered a unique means of examining literacy knowledge across time. In spite of my reservations about exposing my family to the research world, their knowledge, wisdom, and unique attributes offered such richness that I found myself considering it. I knew of no other family with five living generations. I knew of no other multi-generational family whose roots were Amish and who had a daughter pursuing a doctorate. And as multimodality and digital media started to impact my thinking about heritage literacy, I realized that I knew no other family with five generations of progressively technologically savvy women.

So I asked. And they agreed. And as I began to interview them and learn as much about their lives and literacies as I did my own, I had another realization. The other unique attribute of my family was that they were *willing* and able to talk with me. This research offered a way to reconnect, to acknowledge where I come from and *who* I come from. It also offered a way for my family to understand me.

My family has a connection, however distant, to the Amish of northern Indiana. My great grandmother on my mother's side was raised and married Amish and then left the church sometime thereafter. My great grandmother, who I know as Grandma Great, presently lives in an assisted living facility in her own apartment. She has a shiny, red metallic walker, which my sister and I tease her about racing around in, to get to the

dining hall or to the quilt room where she spends a great deal of time hand quilting. Many of her neighbors in the facility were raised Amish and chose not to join the church or are Mennonite. Some still speak Pennsylvania Dutch (hereafter "Dutch"), the language of the Amish, to one another. I've heard my great grandmother settle in and chat in Dutch many times with such people. My great grandmother still has several siblings alive, one of which is still Amish. Other nieces, nephews, and relatives are also still Amish.

My decision to collect data from members of the Amish community surrounding my home town stemmed initially from a curiosity about my heritage and an interest in understanding more about my great grandmother. Because my research emphasizes the passage of literacy knowledge between generations, I wanted to know what lay beyond the answers my great grandmother offered to my questions. I also recognized that by showing multimodal literacy practices among the Amish as well as among my own family's practices, I offered a stronger argument for multimodality outside of digital technologies. And ultimately, with their help, this research offered a means of understanding how literacy is learned at kitchen tables across generations, how multimodality extends far beyond the scope of digital technologies, and how generations of people adopt, adapt or alienate themselves from tools of literacy to the field of Composition and literacy studies.

This chapter sets out to describe autoethnography as a methodology and the ways that my data collections connect and complicate it. I first trace the history of ethnography and explain how autoethnography came to exist within the sociocultural and anthropological research fields. Next I explore, through my data selection process, the

concept of difference as distance; autoethnography, particularly in this study which includes my immediate family members, contests the hallmark of ethnographic research requiring physical distance between a researcher and a studied community. The following section treats a similar issue: difference as othering, or the tendency to be separate than one's research participants. Again, autoethnography, particularly mine, offers an alternative understanding of that difference. Finally, I discuss self reflexivity and the ways I mitigated my position when I collected data within my own community and family.

WHAT IS AUTOETHNOGRAPHY?

Let me start by outlining the specifics of autoethnography and where it fits into various disciplines. I begin with a metaphor from Wolcott, an anthropologist whose work focuses on cultural acquisition, education, and ethnography, to show how the field of anthropology regards the changes and growths within ethnography. Ethnography as a research genre has "endless variations [which are] extending outward like ripples on a pond, the close-in ones more clearly evincing the impact of traditional ethnography, others 'far-out' both literally and figuratively that offer little evidence of the direct impact of ethnography but are discernible as qualitative/descriptive research nonetheless" (52). From this anthropologist's standpoint, ethnography's variations move more and more away from its foundation to become less and less like "real" ethnography.

There is a sense among ethnographers in the discipline of anthropology that this "analogy to ripples on a pond helps to convey the idea of taking studies to be *more* or *less* ethnographic" (Wolcott 52). Creswell, who specializes in research methods and design, qualitative inquiry, and mixed methods research, writes that there has been a growing trend

toward "a distinct lack of orthodoxy in ethnography as a general approach to the description and interpretation of a cultural or social group..." (59). Within the field of anthropology, autoethnography is seen as a dilution of true ethnography and a deviation from many of the basic tenets of the research genre.

Both ethnography and autoethnography examine the routine, daily lives of people through data collections, interviews, and participant observation (Creswell; Fetterman). Ethnographers of any sort examine and record a group's observable and learned patterns of behavior, customs, and ways of life (Harris; Creswell) in order to "demonstrate the basic humanity of their people to an audience of readers living outside of the particular communities under scrutiny" (Deck 239). Ethnographic writing is noted for "thick description" (Geertz).

Autoethnography, more specifically, focuses on self-narrative that places the self within a social context (Reed-Danahay). According to Denzin (1997), autoethnography involves turning that "ethnographic gaze inward on the self (auto), while maintaining the outward gaze... and looking at the larger context where self experiences occur'" (quoted in Olson 6). In other words, as I interview my participants about their literacy practices, I am at the same time examining my own.

Autoethnography's attention to integrating researcher with participants and context has interesting implications, given that my study emphasizes how literacy knowledge is created in context and then passed between generations. In addition, the constant attention that an autoethnographer must show to her participants is reflective of the ways that heritage literacy practices are adopted, adapted or alienated. The changing needs of participants require altering how a researcher relates to them. In the same way,

changing technologies and literacies require that a person reconsider how to adopt or adapt, or whether to alienate herself from them.

Autoethnography explores "intersections of genre and voice, border crossing, multiple identities, dual consciousness, and selfhood, within the changing field of anthropology" (Burdell and Swadener 22). I view these intersections as a way to make the research process more humane toward participants and make the researcher more transparent and vulnerable toward those she is working with. In my case, this meant that I had to offer to my family and my community members something of myself at the same time that I asked them for information. For example, in talking with my Amish participants, I identified myself as a Christian, as a woman who grew up within this area, and as someone who still is close to family in the area. But then I also identified myself as an academic, researcher, and "book writer." In other words, I tried to show myself as multiple. As Donna Haraway puts it, the idea of multiple identities that autoethnography emphasizes has been influenced by feminism and

> [f]eminism loves another science: the sciences and politics of interpretation, translation, stuttering, and the partly understood. Feminism is about the sciences of the multiple subject with (at least) double vision. Feminism is about a critical vision consequent upon a critical positioning in in-homogeneous gendered social space" (192).

All people are multiple, and any situation can be understood only partially. In general, autoethnography embraces this reality with forward facing honesty because the researcher openly acknowledges how she is situated within the research environment.

Ironically, arguments against autoethnography within traditional ethnography focus on the fact that autoethnography lacks distance between researcher and participant and the researcher is not "different enough" to be objective in her study. The following sections further elaborate this and other conflicts within ethnography and show how autoethnography situates itself within these conflicts and vis-à-vis traditional ethnography.

DATA COLLECTION: DIFFERENCE AS DISTANCE

Traditional ethnography relies heavily on the assumption that to do objective and valid research one must be culturally, personally, and even physically "different" than those being studied. "'Difference,' writes Bradd Shore (1996:379), [an anthropologist whose work links multi-culturalism to cognitive psychology], ' is at the heart of all anthropology.' .... Standard categories help the ethnographer by flagging particular arenas of behavior for observation, but it is difference itself to which ethnographers attend" (Wolcott 132). This difference, first, could be categorized simply as being in an unfamiliar place while doing research or, simply, "distance." Traveling, usually abroad, was the "fieldwork antidote to the armchair anthropology" of a previous era (Wolcott 28). In studying another culture, what is important, according to traditional ethnographic research, are "points at which something stands out, something changes or appears discernibly different" (Wolcott 133). Proponents of long-established ethnographic research prefer, indeed assume, that a researcher will travel some distance to conduct research in order to get a "real" sense of dominant ideas, values, and patterns of behavior (Fetterman 27). Indeed, Geertz (1995: 102), who is known for introducing a more metaphorical and literary style to the discipline of anthropology, notes that "*where* [has

been] 'a much more important question, actually, than what we would do... when we got there'" (Wolcott 24). Finally, Wolcott points out that "it is essential to recognize not only the importance of place in the evolution of ethnography but to recognize as well that until recently it did not matter where the place was *as long as it was dramatically different from one's own*" (24, his emphasis).

Chris Eipper, whose work offers a cross-disciplinary approach to social inquiry that is anthropological and sociological, considers this traditional focus on distance from the familiar as an act of humility by the researcher. Researchers who study within radically different cultures "are forced to reassess the relevance and reliability of much of their theoretical and technical equipment," and he notes that any "attempt to do justice to [the people group] is ... overwhelmingly difficult" (314). He also notes that it is for this very reason that "anthropologists have always been dubious about students doing fieldwork 'at home.'... [S]tudents studying their own culture(s) are less liable to have their epistemological certainties experientially challenged than their peers who venture further afield" (314-15). Essentially, he posits that if a researcher studies her own community, it is not *different enough* to provide the "arduous unlearning and relearning that coping with alien lifeways inevitably entails" (315). Similarly, Creswell notes that when selecting a group for research, "strangers" are preferable, "if one can gain access" (Creswell 114).

In autoethnography researchers do not necessarily travel a great physical distance to conduct research; they may conduct research in their own communities and in communities with which they are familiar. According to traditional ethnographic tenets, this lack of physical, and epistemological, distance from the familiar puts

autoethnographers at a disadvantage in their critical research framework and within the field because autoethnographers cannot "objectively" interact with their research participants. However, autoethnographers argue that distance need not be physical to achieve both the clarity of critical research framework and the humility that comes from being an outsider.

In spite of traditional ethnography's argument about autoethnography's lack of distance, I argue that I have as much epistemological distance from my family as any other researcher would have. I also believe that I have more than adequate distance from my Amish participants as any other ethnographer in a foreign culture. Let me explain.

Truth be told, my family's connection to the Amish is not an unusually strong one, at least within the community in which I grew up. The numbers of Amish, Mennonites and other Anabaptist Christian church derivatives is quite large, and many people have more direct connections to Amish relatives that I do. I have an aunt, for example, who has aunts, uncles and grandparents who are still living Amish and she still attends their reunions. My grandmother, raised Amish until she was about eight, knows some Dutch, but not a great deal. She once whispered a translation of some Amish women's amusing conversation about diapers to me when we were in Wal-Mart. My mother knows no Dutch and used to complain when her mother, grandmother, and other relatives would talk Dutch and she couldn't understand them. My sister and I know no Dutch at all.

Yet I have more connection to the Amish than do most Americans and most academics. I grew up among distant Amish relatives and friends. My sister-in-law's father taught in an Amish school. My brother worked for an Amish construction

company as both a builder and their driver. During college I worked with my father at a small grocery store in the heart of the county with the largest population of Amish. I had several Amish co-workers and well over 50% of my customers were Amish. I had connections, but not so much that I can call any Amish district "my home community." Because of this, I would argue that my connection to the Amish is no more personal than it would be had I traveled a great distance to research with them. They are within the area I call my home community, but they are culturally and epistemologically distant.

I would also argue that I am epistemologically distant from my own family. My community is a combination of blue-collar, farming, and general small town laborers. Higher education is not a priority; in fact, the Amish are only educated formally through the eighth grade, and the wider community greatly celebrates high school graduation as a mark of adulthood. College, at least when I was growing up, did not enter into most people's minds. Or mine for that matter.

My parents did not attend college. In fact, but for a very few exceptions, college was not a reality in my extended family either. I am, as it is called these days, a "first generation scholar." Unlike my siblings and most of my extended family, I left home and got a BA. During that time I felt drawn in, intrigued, and finally called to the foreign world of academics. And now I am finishing a doctorate. You might say I didn't just go to college. I left and didn't come back.

I feel distant from my home community and my family after 10 years of higher education. I have physically left the community, but even more so, I am distanced because of my education and the experiences I have had in higher academics. In terms of culture, knowledge, belief systems, and even patterns of speech, I am a foreigner when I

go back home. My immediate family has kept up with my these changes and we are still close, but in the terms of traditional ethnographic research, the sheer fact that I have the knowledge of how to do an ethnography and the capability of doing one distances me as much as if I had traveled a much farther distance and to a people I had never met.

It is for these reasons that I see my study as being caught somewhere between more traditional ethnography and autoethnography as I research both my own family and members of a culture that I am not a part of. What I mean is that by researching within my own family, I research myself and my community. When I research among the Amish, I research a community of people that I have access to but am culturally, socially, and in some ways religiously distinct from; therefore I adhere to traditional ethnography as well.

I note that my research among my family is even more problematic than "regular" autoethnography because I am closer to them than even to my "home community." I was really conflicted about doing this study because I felt that it would be putting my family on display. I hated the thought that I might somehow take advantage of their trust in me in order to advance my career. And if I am honest with myself, I was hesitant to put myself on display as well; for an autoethnographic study of one's own family must necessarily include one's own self. This study delves into my heritage, my family life, my personal history, and my faith in ways that leave me feeling exposed to personal attack from the academic world.

I also hesitated to include the Amish in my study because I was nervous about approaching them for interviews, uncertain of their willingness to participate, and fearful of taking advantage of my connection to them. The areas surrounding my home town

have a tourist draw because of the Amish, and tourism here, like most places, offers a very different picture of the Amish than is true. The thought that I might somehow add to false notions of their culture and belief systems was sobering.

But again, the idea of heritage literacy, the fact that my family was so unusual as a research site, the reality that Amish in my area had such a wealth of knowledge and wisdom, and the fact that I have been raised to offer hospitality and give of myself compelled me to take the risk. I read other ethnographies (Cushman, Fishman, Heath) and autoethnographies (Lindquist, Ellis) enough to know that it is possible to do ethnographic work in an honorable, ethical, and rigorous manner.

I. Participant Selection

The study takes place in what I will call "Smalltown." I grew up in northern Indiana, where the eastern counties have the third largest population of Amish in the United States, after Holmes County, Ohio and Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. The area is still strongly rural, and one can see the seasons change by the way fields of corn look as much by temperature or precipitation. In late fall and winter the fields are a stubble of corn stalks left to break down and fuel the next season's crop. Spring's fields are dark furrows of dirt, and summer country roads are often clogged with tractors or wet with irrigation water as the corn grows high and green.

Amish and non-Amish ("English")[6] homes neighbor one another along county lanes, and towns like Smalltown are where people come for groceries, school, and to a lesser extent, entertainment. Smalltown has a population of less than 7,000. I grew up in

[6] The term "English" is used by Amish and other community members to refer to anyone who is not Amish, much like anyone who is not Jewish is a Gentile. In this way, "English" people within this community may have no ties to England.

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the same county as Smalltown, in a neighboring town of 25,000[7]. More Amish live around Smalltown than do around the larger town where I grew up, so I opted to center my research on the Smalltown community when finding Amish participants.

I knew that I would need to extensively triangulate my data, perhaps more so than most, because I was interviewing my own family. I needed extensive data to analyze, and I needed to be able to consider it from multiple perspectives. I wanted to be sure that a literacy mode I observed in one family was indeed taking place in other families and among the community. In order to ensure that I had depth in my data, information that could lend me a different perspective in looking at my own family, and a framework in which to understand how and why they answered as they did, I opted to include several different "types" of participants. I included in my data collections "key participants" or members of my immediate family, literacy artifacts such as recipes, implements used in adult baptism, quilts, and biblical scriptures as they were used in a variety of contexts, and "community participants" who were either Amish or who had left the Amish church (English). Again, to make my data set richer, some community participants know my parents or grandmothers, and other participants had no connection to my family at all other than the fact that they live in the same area. I will explain the details of all this data in the following paragraphs.

I call members of my family "key participants" because they were my main source of inspiration in thinking about heritage literacy. I interviewed them multiple times and when writing this text I consulted with them and collaborated in making this text as accurate and respectful of all participants as possible. Included in this group are Cora, my great grandmother (92), Edna, my grandmother (70), Lucy, my mother (49),

[7] Populations are rounded numbers from the 2004 census.

and Merry, my sister (24). These women are four of the five living generations in my family. The fifth generation, my brother's children, was too young to take part in the study and I was unwilling to risk their exposure.

In total, I interviewed my great grandmother, Cora, ten times, my grandmother, Edna, five times, my mother, Lucy, five times, and my sister, Merry, three times. These recordings totaled more than 26 hours of audio recorded interviews. I also collected a number of literacy artifacts. I'd like to highlight just a few of the more unique bits of data that is in this body of information. One tape recording is a nearly three hour group conversation including me, my sister, my grandmother, and my great grandmother. I tape recorded my great grandmother, Cora, teaching me to make pie. She has been known for her pies most of her life, and it was a joy to have her show me her methods, especially when she said, "I do believe you are a pie maker." I also taped a conversation with my grandmother, Edna, as we went through boxes of memoirs that she has kept throughout her life. In the box were all sorts of artifacts from the list of her wedding presents to drawings and poems that my siblings and I made for her as children. Grandma also allowed me to read the journal she has kept on and off throughout her life. Finally, my great grandmother showed me more than 40 recipes inherited from her mother and grandmother (my great-great grandmother and great-great-great grandmother), and gave me an ancient tin can that her mother had used to make biscuits.

Interviews with my family members (key participants) were a simple matter of a phone call to set a time and date. Usually the recorded interview data was coupled with as much "off tape" conversation as there was on tape and the dialogue was more of an informal conversation between friends than a formal interview. To an interview I would

bring a set of questions that I wanted to discuss, and these questions helped steer the conversation to interesting and productive information. Other than the group conversation with my sister, my grandmother, and my great grandmother, interviews were one-on-one. The consent form that my key participants signed is in Appendix A.

Some may wonder why I only included female family members in this study. My reasoning is first that I have a connection with the women of my family that many of the men do not understand. My siblings and I were raised as much by my great grandmother and grandmother as by our own parents. Beyond the sheer amount of time we spent at each of their homes, we are emotionally close to them as much as we are to our parents or to each other. There are men I could have interviewed in my mother's family, but they lack an understanding of the depth of our connection, the ways that we share our experiences, and the passage of information between us. The only exception to this rule is my brother who has been blessed with a sensitive spirit and a desire to understand his roots in the same way as my sister and I. He contributed to this study in that he read drafts of chapters to verify accuracy in how I represented both the Amish, our family, and our faith.

I selected community participants based on a few criteria. First, they needed to live in the same area as my family: that of Smalltown, Indiana. Secondly, they needed to have connection to the Amish culture or be Amish presently. Community participants fit into one of two categories: either they were practicing Amish or they grew up Amish and opted not to join the Amish church and are now English. I interviewed 15 Amish community members, and four English community members with Amish heritage. The

following table shows the pseudonyms, cultural affiliation (category), interview date, and interview duration:

Table: Pseudonyms and Interview Times

Pseudonyms	Category	Interview Date	Interview Duration
Deborah	Amish	7/12/2005	27 minutes
Naomi	Amish	7/12/2005	21 minutes
Rachel	Amish	7/12/2005	29 minutes
Sarah and Amos	English	7/12/2005	1 hour, 17 minutes
Martha	Amish	7/13/2005	15 minutes
Ruth	Amish	7/13/2005	35 minutes
Rebecca	Amish	7/15/2005	1 hour, 16 minutes
Leah	Amish	7/5/2005	27 minutes
Annie	English (Mennonite)	7/5/2005	12 minutes
Dorothy	Amish	7/6/2005	33 minutes
Ida and Solomon	Amish	7/6/2005	31 minutes
Jane	Amish	7/6/2005	18 minutes
Marie	Amish	7/19/2005	24 minutes
Miriam	English	7/19/2005	1 hour, 45 minutes
Bethany	Amish	7/18/2005	16 minutes
Mary	Amish	7/20/2005	22 minutes
Emma	English	7/27/2005	55 minutes

My interviews with English participants were considerably longer than the conversations with Amish participants. The English participants, though, were people

with whom I was familiar, though distantly, or they knew my family members. Also, these participants had been through a similar experience to my great grandmother's choice to leave the Amish church, so we had much to talk about in terms of our experiences. I also think that my interviews of Amish participants were shorter because I was interrupting their day, and I was a stranger.

I made contact with community participants in several ways. First, I based my search on suggestions from my family members. Their recommendations led me to both Amish and English participants. Second, to generate more data for triangulation, I opted to find participants that were in no way connected to my key participants except that they lived in the same area. Because I am familiar with the area, each day I drove in a different direction away from Smalltown in order to find participants that represented the full community surrounding the town.

As I was driving, I could identify some Amish homes to stop at and ask for interviews, but other homes I could not distinguish as Amish or English. Homes that are built by Amish for Amish use are easy to spot, but not all Amish live in such homes. Some families live in rented or purchased homes that once were English. I visited the homes I could easily identify as Amish. These homes are painted crisply white without trim of any kind or shutters around the windows. A vegetable garden is usually visible from the road, there is often a buggy parked in the drive, and horses are in the neighboring pasture. No power lines, phone lines, or exterior electricity meters are connected to Amish homes. It also helped to see a few Amish children playing in the yard.

If I identified a home as being Amish, I would drive up, park my car, and knock on their door. If a child answered the door, I asked for her parents. I had a scripted explanation of who I was and what I wanted:

> Hello, my name is Suzy Rumsey and I'm writing a book about families. I'm driving around the area interviewing Amish families to find out how they pass on information between generations. I am interested in how we teach our children and what we learned from our grandparents. My folks live over in Smalltown, and they are part of my study too. Would you be interested in talking with me about your family?

If the adult or family agreed to be interviewed, they'd invite me into their home, usually they offered me a drink or food, and they'd sit me at the kitchen table. It was after I was invited in that I more fully explained the nature of the "book" I was writing as a PhD dissertation that I hoped to publish later. I also more fully explained what the study is and hopes to do. If they still were open to chatting with me, I asked them to sign a consent form, a copy of which is found in Appendix A.

I stopped at more than 30 homes in the areas surrounding Smalltown, but over half of the people I asked to interview turned me down. Some were polite, some were wary, and some were just "too busy" to sit and talk during summer gardening and harvest time. Knocking on strangers' doors in order to impose on them was difficult for me to do, and being turned down was extremely discouraging and often embarrassing. But each day that I set out to interview people, I found a few who were open to talking and interested in the project and in me and my family as well.

II. Description of the Area

The area surrounding Smalltown and the town itself are the setting for my study. As I noted earlier, Smalltown has a population just less than 7000. According to several real estate websites and the 2000 census, nearly 2,500 Old Order Amish live in the town limits or near Smalltown. According to the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada, Smalltown and the town I grew up in have a total of about 4000 Amish. These two towns are a part of the Northern Indiana community of Amish, which comprises one of the three largest communities in the United States.

The population of Amish surrounding Smalltown is Old Order. This means that they adhere to the teachings of Jacob Ammon, the Protestant Christian originator of the Amish movement, as originally conceived in 1693. Old Order Amish maintain a lifestyle similar to that of the early 19th century (in varying degrees) because this is their interpretation of Jesus' instruction to "be in the world but not of the world" (John 15:19; John 17:16)[8]. They dress in solid colored, dark clothing; women wear calf-length, plain dresses and aprons, men wear dark pants, suspenders, and light colored shirts. Women always keep their heads covered by either a white covering, a white kerchief, or, when in public, a black bonnet over their covering. Their clothing is usually sewn at home on a treadle sewing machine. The Amish also choose not to use modern conveniences such as electricity and automobiles. Finally, Amish speak a peculiar German dialect known as Pennsylvania Dutch or Pennsylvania German, which I have been calling "Dutch" to this point.

[8] All Biblical scripture references are taken from the New American Standard Bible. This version is known among biblical scholars as a very accurate and literal translation of the original Hebrew and Greek biblical texts.

It is important for me to note here that each of the Amish individuals and families who I spoke with were different from all others in a variety of ways. The Amish in my study are not a homogenous group, rather they are diverse in their personalities and to some extent their beliefs. Of the 15 Amish participants, probably 15 different districts were represented, meaning that these people offered 15 different perspectives on what it means to be Amish in northern Indiana because they are directed in different ways about how to live Amish.

Amish communities do not operate like a convent and are not cloistered apart from English neighbors, something I will explain more in the following section. In any Amish district there might be 20 or so families represented, many of whom are related. A district is overseen by a bishop, two ministers, and a deacon, all men appointed by casting lots. The bishop dictates how strict his district will adhere to traditional living patterns, what technologies and "conveniences" will be allowed and what will not, and even how people will educate their children.

Behavior patterns and adoption of technologies depended heavily on who the bishop of a district was. Some participants dressed in the darkest colors; others dressed in lighter colors. Some women had only a kerchief covering their hair as they worked in their garden, while others were pinned and bonneted and starched. Most participants had no cars, no electricity, and no phones; but this was not as steadfast a rule as outsiders might think. Many Amish have cell phones related to their business, gas powered vacuum cleaners, and generators to run freezers in their barns. One participant's parents were members of an Amish church in Florida that even allowed electricity but no cars or phones. They even had a computer.

My point here is not to paint any Amish participant in a negative light to other Amish or to outsiders. The diversity among the Amish is a known fact to my participants. Amish couple, Ida and Solomon, even stated that they think the Amish in general are getting "too worldly" with too many conveniences and special things like family vacations. In other words, these people, like any group of people, have a variety of interpretations on what it means to be Amish and what it means to live the lifestyle.

In my data collections, I observed that more Amish live south of Smalltown than live directly west or north. However, north of town there was a large community of Old Order Mennonite, a conservative Christian group with similar religious beliefs to the Amish but which allows "modern conveniences," which makes sense given that a larger city is some 20 miles north. Hence, the further away from this "metropolis" the more Amish lived.

DATA ANALYSIS: DIFFERENCE AS OTHERING

Another way that difference impacted my data collections and this study focuses on the fact that an autoethnography uses multiple perspectives and an ethnographic researcher is contextualized within the study. Within ethnography, two perspectives have been named: the emic and the etic perspective. "The labels 'emic' and 'etic' were derived from technical terms that serve as guides to their origin and pronunciation: *phonemic* and *phonetic*" (Wolcott 136). The emic perspective is the insider's or "native's perspective," and as Fetterman puts it "is at the heart of most ethnographic research" (30), while the etic perspective is that of the social scientific or "external" view of reality (Fetterman 32). The usefulness of these terms is in the ways that they keep in mind the two "worlds" that any ethnographer is part of. On the one hand, an ethnographer needs to pay attention to

emic perspectives that are important within a particular community; on the other hand she must pay attention to etic perspectives in the field and academic readers of ethnographic studies.

Like any ethnographer, I have had to make tough decisions about what to include and what to exclude from my writing. However, because this is an autoethnography, I have had to make those decisions about what to include of my own family members and myself as well as for my community participants. I do have a responsibility to the academic community to be detailed in my descriptions, be systematic in my analysis, and to ground my work in existing research. I would not be an academic if I didn't have a certain amount of curiosity and a desire to share my findings with my colleagues. However, I believe that my most important responsibility in this study is to my family and to my participants. Above any desire I might have to succeed as an academic or publish this text, I want first to be respectful, accurate, and careful in how I represent those who have generously allowed me into their lives.

The decisions over what to include and what to exclude have not always been black and white. I have grappled with the level of description needed for clarity in my argument versus an overly nostalgic or overly critical sounding portrayal. I want to be accurate, but I also want to be careful and respectful. The other difficulty in deciding what to include and what not was in respect for my family and their history. My great grandmother readily talked for hours about her experiences growing up and marrying Amish. The same topic caused my grandmother to become silent and put up walls. The transition from Amish to English was not an easy one and to dwell on it or offer details about the events surrounding it would cause pain and embarrassment. Similarly, while I

could easily discuss the use of computers, academe, and even rhetorical theory with my mother and sister, I rarely broached these topics with my grandmothers. I never want them to feel I look down on them because I have more formal education, so I avoided talking overly much about my life as an academic.

I've found that my mother and sister have been invaluable in their collaboration with me over these points. We passed drafts back and forth and discuss my descriptions of them and my other participants. They have been invaluable in their critique and reading of my work, particularly in how I represent them and my other participants. Their reading ensured that I had multiple perspectives even in descriptions of people.

The benefit of autoethnography, it seems, is the capability of allowing one's self to be part of the study. My collaboration between my mother, sister, and I grays the seeming separation between the etic and emic perspectives. I am both outsider and insider, and by collaborating and then expressing my conflicts with my participants, together we are all able to be outsiders and insiders together.

I. Othering

In a discussion of the emic and etic perspectives, one issue that ethnographers must address is the concept of othering. The oldest forms of ethnography were documents of colonization. Eppin notes, however, that in "recent decades all the emphasis has been upon Othering mechanisms, yet ethnography (however complacent and prejudiced, however marked by unrecognised ethnocentrism), remains unsurpassed as an *anti-Othering epistemological device*" (315, my emphasis). Rather than an *act of othering* or an act of colonization, Eppin seems to stress that ethnography is the humbling act of putting ourselves in someone else's shoes in order to understand them better.

While I think that ethnography certainly has the capacity to reduce the tendency of researchers othering their participants, to say that it is an "anti-Othering epistemological device" seems to be presumptuous. I do think, however, that autoethnography, because it stressed the positionality of the researcher within the context of her study, has an even stronger capacity to reduce othering. One of the reasons that I sought my mother and sister's counsel and collaboration is that I believe this is the best way to avoid othering my participants. I also sent out portions of chapters to show my community members how their interview data was being used. If I ask my participants for their help in my work, the work becomes *our* work and is no longer the researcher abstractly talking about "them."

Autoethnography, specifically, offers a way to make ethnography a study less in difference and more in adaptations to those differences because it emphasizes both the community being researched and the ways that the researcher positions herself within the research. Autoethnography lays bare the inner-conflicts researchers face when they see supposed "differences" and how they react against both those differences and to the knowledge of their own struggle. Lynn Domina, a poet who has written on the work of Zora Neale Hurston, writes,

> Because of the tendency of ethnography to exoticize its object of study, an ethnographer practicing autobiography would be forced to negotiate between a disciplinary practice which can sometimes seem to construct characters as odd or quaint and a simultaneous desire to represent herself realistically rather than romantically; in this sense, autoethnography could

be argued to be an oxymoronic term (Raynaud, "Rubbing" 38; Carby 75-76) (198).

But it is this very oxymoron that compels autoethnographers to examine themselves and their research practices through a critical lens of equality and respect for others. Autoethnography seems to be balancing this oxymoron because, as Wolcott notes, "[d]uring [the] long, slow, but apparently inevitable process of 'coming home,' ethnography lost its single most defining feature as the study of *others*, or at least of others who differed dramatically from the ethnographer" (25). While Wolcott seems to criticize this characteristic of autoethnography, I would argue that this is an immense strength of the methodology.

I sought, then, in this research to balance the emic and etic perspectives in analysis of my data. I began my data analysis by listening to the community participant interviews to look for broad categories into which I could supply more detailed examples from key participant data. Using inductive analysis methods, I collected individual responses about a given question from each community participant and derived generalized conclusions about the heritage literacy patterns of behavior that all my participants seemed to exhibit.

After coding the four patterns of *work, coming of age, gathering and communing,* and *faith*, portions of data that best illustrated each behavior were transcribed from community participant interviews. Key participant data was sorted according to those portions of conversation or participant observation that are particularly illustrative or representative of the larger patterns. Then specific conversations, participant

observations, and artifacts for each category were selected as representative samples to analyze closely.

In general, I tried very hard to be systematic in my coding in order to offer an accurate and respectful picture of my participants. The Amish are often viewed as a quaint reminder of the past, as an abnormality, as "simple minded" or "stupid Dutch," or as a tourist attraction, and I do not want to perpetuate these stereotypes. They are also assumed to be homogenous or identical, which as I've stated already is quite untrue. I seek in my analysis to offer a realistic and respectful account and interpretation of my participants and what they say about themselves, not necessarily what I think I see. Because I used inductive methods to code my four behavior patterns, I was looking across what all my participants had to say about themselves in order to generate patterns. In this way, my participants dictated the direction my analysis went, rather than any preconceived notions about what they might say or stereotypes dictating the analysis. In essence, allowing participants and the data to speak first, and asking participants to collaborate, tempered any tendency I might have to "other" or make them into a spectacle.

SELF REFLEXIVITY IN AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

The conflict of emic and etic perspectives is at the heart of one of the most challenged and argued over concepts in ethnography: *representation.* The issue of representation has been discussed in work by Snow and Morrill, Bruner, Clifford and Marcus, Deck, Geertz, and Middleton. Representation has been addressed in terms of "putting words in other people's mouths" (Ellis, "Heartfelt," 676), of trying to live vicariously through our research participants, and the distinctions between reality,

experience and the expression of them. Geertz writes, "'We cannot live other people's lives, and it is a piece of bad faith to try. We can but listen to what, in words, in images, in actions they say about their lives....'" (qtd in Wolcott 273). Deck quoting Bruner, notes that "'The critical distinction here is between reality (what is really out there, whatever that may be), experience (how that reality presents itself to consciousness), and expressions (how individual experience is framed and articulated)' (Bruner 6)" (Deck 244).

Instead of emphasizing the above issues within representation, my work directly confronts the issues of self reflexivity within autoethnography, or the place of the researcher within a study. Autoethnography openly places the researcher within the story so that readers get a sense of a *moment,* or *a story of a moment*, rather than a story of an entire people. Autoethnography situates the researcher as a component of that moment, rather than as a supposed "fly on the wall" that the participants don't know about or relate to in any way. In this way, I think that autoethnography seeks to dismantle the façade of the impartial observer and reporter and acknowledge that in *any* ethnography, autoethnography or otherwise, the researcher is a presence who impacts a given moment. Autoethnography lays bare the "reality that we can never capture experience. Narrative is always a story about the past, and that's really all field notes are: one selective story about what happened written from a particular point of view at a particular point in time for a particular purpose" (Ellis "Heartfelt" 673).

Self reflexivity concerns the ways I mitigated my position when I collected data within my own community and family. I sought to use "active nostalgia," which, as Cushman and Monberg point out moves us beyond laying bare the distinctions between

researchers and participants, or self reflexivity, to establish, maintain, and develop relationships between researchers and participants (Building Bridges).

As a researcher, I do have impact on my participants as I interview them and as I write up the study for the academic community; hence I represent them. But I also have impact on my participants outside of this study because I am a member of the community and of my family. This reality begs two questions: first, how do I acknowledge myself as part of the study and research while simultaneously turning my reader's gaze to the larger social issues that the data speaks to? Second, how can I avoid coercion of my family members (key participants) when I am part of the family?

The first way that I am able to include myself in the study without taking attention away from the study itself is by simply acknowledging that I was present during data collections. My data did not magically appear. I worked hard to find people to speak with, and I am as much a part of any taped interview as is the interviewee. When I use interview data in this study, I try to explain where the material came from and how I was involved in the collection of it.

To temper how much I focus on myself, I draw from Deborah Brandt when she offers her method of analysis: "The first thing I now do with an interview script once I transcribe it is to pulverize it, to transform it from a conversation with another whole human being into empirical evidence of how literacy works" ("Politics" 43). Hence, by using inductive coding methods I am transforming the collected data from a taped conversation between me and another person toward more generalized information. I cut segments of the conversation that I think evidence a particular literacy practice and then paste these into a new document. I cut similar evidence from other conversations and

paste these pieces into the new document as well. I note only pseudonyms in this new document. Then I have lists of conversation bits and moments that center more upon a given literacy practice (the issue) and less on the particular individual who made a given statement. Similarly instead of focusing on myself and my struggles in the collection and analysis of data, I focus on the evidences of literacy practices shared between me and my participants, between individual participants, and between the Amish and the English.

Finally, I avoid narcissistic naval gazing by collaborating with my participants, especially my mother and my sister. Asking them to participate so actively in the writing of this study tempers how much I talk about myself and what information I include.

The second question, how can I avoid coercion of my family members (key participants) when I am part of the family, is mediated because I (1) made safeguards in the consent forms, (2) I explained to key participants that they could opt out of the study at any time without detrimental effects because (3) I collected extensive data from community members so that they were not the sole focus of the study. In collaborating and sharing drafts so extensively with my mother and sister, I allowed "full strikeout discretion." In other words, they had the ability to remove or change anything they didn't want included. Further, key participants were given drafts of any text which utilized parts of their taped interviews and given full strike through discretion.

I also tried to focus on the *relationships* between various participants and myself, between individual participants, and between the Amish and the English, in order to steer the focus of the study toward the literacy issues rather than the individual players. The reality is, that while this study is about heritage literacy, the Amish within my community, and my family, it is also about me and how I negotiate between these

different players. And those negotiations link back to how I was taught my mother, grandmother, and great grandmother to make sense of difficult situations and read and writing within context.

Self reflexivity in this dissertation also concerns the ways that participants see themselves and interact with the research. Cushman writes,

> In many cultures, particularly some Native American cultures, the direct inspection of another person not only causes a great deal of self-consciousness and unease, but is considered threatening as well (Basso 1979, Cushman and Quinsatao Monberg 1998) ("Politics" 45).

The Amish are one such culture in which any focus on the self causes discomfort and the collective intent of the culture is to emphasize family and community over the individual; moreover, their culture stresses *conformity* among themselves to avoid standing out. In asking them to talk about themselves, I risked violating a cultural belief of theirs: that to focus on "self," or to be the center of attention in any way is to be selfish, prideful, and immodest.

I have done my best to protect my research participants in several ways. First, in the interviews, I admit to them that what they are doing for this research is a sacrifice, and I offered them thanks both verbally and in writing for their participation. I found that by simply acknowledging their struggle and my imposition, they relaxed and were more willing to help me with my study. Also I found that being open with them about these things meant they wanted to participate in the future of the project as well. Second, I gave pseudonyms to each participant. When I sent community participants the portions of the text that directly quote their interviews, I told each one individually what their

pseudonym is so that they could track exactly what I took from them. Several participants wrote to me later in the study and included both their real names and their pseudonym in their signature. Third, I have changed the names of locations and have only revealed enough information to give readers a general sense of where these individuals might live. Before interviews I told participants that I would refer to "northern Indiana" as their location, and this seemed to put them at ease. These precautions helped my Amish participants to be more comfortable because they would not be singled out in my writing and they were able to see the long term benefits of their reflection.

CONCLUSION

In concluding, Domina writes of Zora Neale Hurston's autoethnographic work that Hurston is both narrator and the narrated (198). Further, drawing from Raynaud and Carby, Domina writes

> Because of the tendency of ethnography to exoticize its object of study, an ethnographer practicing autobiography would be forced to negotiate between a disciplinary practice which can sometimes seem to construct characters as odd or quaint and a simultaneous desire to represent herself realistically rather than romantically; in this sense, autoethnography could be argued to be an oxymoronic term(198).

This interplay between representing both me and my participants in a realistic fashion and traditional ethnography's tendency to represent characters as odd or quaint is the precise reason I selected autoethnography as my research methodology. I saw within the Amish community and my own family fascinating literacy tools and practices that I

wanted to explore. In order to do so, I wanted to resist exotizing the Amish as quaint tourist attractions or odd in their rejection of some technologies and literacy tools and acceptance of others. I also wanted to represent my own family, and indeed myself, honestly in terms of technology, literacy, and values.

Autoethnography thus offers the capacity to honor the honesty valued within my heritage and the critical engagement and inquiry valued by the research community of which I am also a part. In order to work within this "oxymoron," the data collected in this study will show the multimodal heritage literacy behaviors of *faith, work, coming of age,* and *gathering and communing.*

The following chapter addresses faith as a heritage literacy practice. In this chapter I specifically look at places where participants quote or use biblical scripture as literacy artifacts which are adopted and adapted in various ways. The emphasis I try to make is that there is a difference between faith as a belief system and faith as a practice; however, one cannot really exist without the other. As I articulate how faith is multimodal literacy practice, I explore this connection between belief and action by talking about "acting out one's faith" or putting literacy knowledge into action.

CHAPTER THREE: ACTING OUT ONE'S FAITH: CONNECTIONS OF BELIEF, LITERACY AND ACTION

INTRODUCTION

My focus within this chapter is one that will be an underlying theme throughout this dissertation: faith. Because faith impacts every other way of making meaning for my participants, the following chapters are in many ways more focused emphases on what I will call in this chapter "acting out one's faith." In other words, because the Amish and my family believe in acting out our faith in all that we do, *work, coming of age, and gathering and communing* are focused examples of our faith "in action."

That fact aside, the heritage literacy practice of faith is the emphasis within this chapter. The literacy artifacts that I will be focusing my analysis upon in this chapter are instances where participants quote the Bible and biblical scriptures. The Bible is the holy book of Christians and as Fishman put it in her research, "The Amish church, society, and concomitant worldview all stem from the perception and acceptance of the Bible as the work of God" (159). The Amish as a religious group believe that the Bible is God's Word. The Bible is useful to an analysis of faith as a literacy practice, necessary in understanding how faith as a system of beliefs manifests itself in action, and how it is passed between generations. Christian faith moves beyond mere religious practice to dictate all secular activity.

In this chapter I am seeking to answer the following questions: 1.) how is faith a literacy practice, 2.) how does faith as a literacy practice articulate heritage literacy and multimodality, 3.) how does faith as a literacy practice represent heritage literacy in ways

that religiosity cannot, and 4.) how does faith "in action" set the stage for other literacy practices within this community?

To answer these questions, I offer an explanation of the faith practices within this community and an explanation of why faith so deeply impacts who we are and what we do. In this section, I also offer ways to differentiate between faith as a belief system, a subject for theologians, and faith as a literacy practice, a subject for literacy researchers. I also differentiate between the terms "faith" and "religion" in order to narrow further how faith acts as a literacy practice. The next section offers what I am calling "living out one's faith" by offering a specific analysis of the Golden Rule. Such an analysis offers an example of how faith works as a multimodal literacy and moves literacy "off the page." Finally, I offer implications for where this analysis might fit within the wider research community, specifically in how we understand multimodality and its behavioral and action modes.

FAITH AS LITERACY PRACTICE

One difficulty in discussing faith in this chapter is the fact that I must distinguish between faith as a literacy practice and faith as a theology or belief system. Amish in my study are primarily a religious community, and their theological stance affects all other aspects of their lives, including their literacy practices. However, how they believe is affected by how they read and interpret scripture. In other words, theology is impacted by faith literacy practices, and vice verse. Hence, the following sections will explain the differentiations I make between belief and action, and those I make between "religion" and faith.

Before I make artificial separations between belief and literacy practice for purposes of this study, let me offer the general tenets of Amish theology and some basic definitions. In this chapter, faith beliefs refer to Christian faith, and more specifically, here it refers to the unique tenets of the Anabaptist Christian tradition out of which Amish and Mennonite theology stems. Christian faith is centered on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, the son of the one true God. Anabaptists are a branch of Protestant Christianity that specifically believes in voluntary adult baptism, rather than infant baptism, and this differs markedly from the theology of other Christian denominations.

Hostetler succinctly outlines some of the ways that Amish and Mennonite theology differs from other church denominations.[9] He writes, "Both the Amish and the Mennonites practice adult rather than infant baptism, nonresistance and the refusal to bear arms, the refusal to take oaths, and both generally refrain from holding public office. Religion is a total way of life, not a compartmentalized activity" (76). It is important to note how their religion, as Hostetler calls it, impacts all areas of their life and is not reserved for church attendance. Based on what I've already outlined as the differences between "religion" and "faith," I would say that Hostetler's comments align with a synchronized internal and external faith practice.

[9] My own faith tradition is a branch of the Anabaptist tradition. I grew up in what is known as the Missionary Church, a denomination in which the doctrine is similar to the Mennonites.

I. Belief and Action

In order to delve into the practice of faith, I need to make artificial distinctions between the belief system, a subject for theologians, and the literacy practice, a subject for rhetoric and literacy scholars. Let me offer the following explanations of how I understand the literacy practice of faith. This study looks specifically at how people read, interpret, use (or "write"), and live according to biblical scripture. In other words, faith as a literacy practice emphasizes actions or outward manifestations of the belief system itself.

This outward display of what is read and believed is indicative of the gray area between textual artifacts of faith literacy and practices of faith and the theological belief systems that cause one to live a particular way. Brian Street's term "literacy practices" is helpful in explaining how these gray areas can exist at the same time that I focus on the literacy practices.

The phrases "literacy event" and "literacy practice" are ones that stem from this history of research, and I borrow these terms from Heath and Street to perform my analysis. Heath defines a literacy event as "any occasion in which a piece of writing is integral to the nature of participants' interactions and their interpretive processes" (Critical Sourcebook 445). Essentially, if reading and writing are part of an event or situation, this is a "literacy event." Street more fully develops Heath's term by looking at what he calls "literacy practices":

> The concept of 'literacy practice' is pitched at a higher level of abstraction and refers to both behavior and the social and cultural conceptualizations that give meaning to the uses of reading and/or writing. Literacy practices

> incorporate not only 'literacy events,' as empirical occasions to which literacy is integral, but also folk models of those events *and the ideological preconceptions that underpin them* (Social Literacies 2, emphasis added).

Street's phrase incorporates both the physical action of reading and writing during a literacy event as well as the ways that a given community thinks about those events. Ideology is often associated with political beliefs, but I think such a definition is far too narrow, given Street's overall emphasis on the cultural beliefs, attitudes, and values exhibited by a culture. In other words, a literacy practice takes into account *both* the physical acts of literacy *and* the belief systems that surround such acts. These "folk models" or the ways a community thinks about its literacy events, offer a richer understanding of how literacy impacts a community and how community members use literacy.

I use the term "literacy practice" because it more holistically conceives of how a community interacts with various kinds of texts and sign systems. Heritage literacy as a whole seeks to articulate how "folk models" and physical artifacts are passed between different generations of people. These longitudinal movements of literacy knowledge have also been discussed in work by Cushman, Lunsford, and Haas; however, their work emphasized the development and movement of literacy within institutions or classrooms. Heritage literacy looks at how literacy practices move between generations of an individual family and within a specific community of Amish people. Such a perspective about the development and passage of literacy between generations offers the research community a way of conceptualizing how multimodal literacy develops and changes with

the passage of time, depending on how or why a community adopts or adapts a particular tool.

Faith literacy events in this community include church and worship services, hymns, prayers, and anytime biblical scripture is read or reproduced. Many Christians in the community make a habit of reading the Bible every day; often they follow a self-study on the Bible or are a part of a group Bible study. In addition, there are several Christian themed radio stations; some stations play only music while others mix music with broadcasted sermons and lessons. Several homes I visited had Bibles laying on side tables in their living rooms. My great grandmother has a Bible next to her recliner and she reads it daily. She also attends a worship service that her retirement community has in the community center down the hall because she cannot make it to church very often any more because of her age and health. My mother and sister also have Bibles that they read daily.

Some might question if a Bible's value isn't so much in what it says, but in their capacity to be symbols of piety or class/ethnicity markers. David Nord, whose work looks at religious literacy practices in antebellum America, notes that "a book could have meaning for a person, including a nonreader, purely as a physical object. Indeed, people often owned books, especially Bibles, as totems" ("Critical Sourcebook" 254). I would argue that faith in action, in the form of regular reading, is evidenced by the condition of the books and by how often the Bible is quoted. My great grandmother's, mother's, and sister's Bibles have worn pages and bindings. Also, there are often slips of paper or bookmarks used to mark particular pages, underlined text and notes in the margins within the Book itself, and study guides, notebooks, and journals kept nearby. Finally, my great

grandmother, mother, and sister are able to carry on lengthy discussions about what they have read in scripture. These evidences of faithful study show that for these women, the Bible is most valued for what is contained within its pages and not as much as a marker of piety.

II. Faith and Religion

My decision to call this literacy practice "faith" rather than "religion" is a deliberate one. While some might see only semantic distinctions in these words, their meanings, based in the ideologies of my community, differ greatly. In this community, Christian *religion* alludes to the obligations, the rules of conduct, and perhaps the ceremony within a church service. Often it is referred to as "legalism" or that more attention is paid to the rules set forth in the Bible than the spirit of those rules. Legalism might be illustrated in exclusive attention to what one wears, how one speaks, or how much money one donates to her local church rather than the state of one's soul. In other words, the outward expressions of piety overshadow the inner belief system of Christianity. Christian *faith* alludes to the lived out reality of a life dedicated to Jesus Christ. What such a reality means for my research in literacy is that faith as a belief system and faith as a literacy practice are synchronized. One does not overshadow the other.

Such synchronization is an existing reality within the community's literacy behaviors. For example, verses in the Bible allude to this synchronization. James[10] 2:14-

[10] All quoted biblical scripture is taken from the New American Standard version. This version is known among biblical scholars as a very accurate and literal translation of the original Hebrew and Greek biblical texts.

26 offers a prime example of how Christians are taught to coordinate their faith and their works. Portions read:

> What use is it then, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him?... Even so, faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself. But someone may well say, 'You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works.' ... Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected.... For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.

These verses outline the exact difficulty I face in this chapter: making artificial distinctions between something that should be synchronized and coordinated. A belief system finds fulfillment, in other words, in works such as the practices of reading and studying the Bible, attending church and Bible studies, prayer, and in meditation and reflection about Biblical instruction. In the same manner, works such as literacy practice do not make sense without the belief system to back them.

Rebecca is one participant who expressed the way that she tried to pass on both the faith and the works of being a Christian. Her first husband passed away while the children were very young. She said,

> After I was a widow, I always tried to live a pure life. I didn't do any running around or smoking or drinking or partying. I was always just at home trying to take good care of them. That's all that meant anything to

me was my family. I always said I wanted to live a life that you never have to be embarrassed to tell anyone that's my mother. A Christian life, but not just say I'm a Christian, live it!

Note that Rebecca wants to do more than say she believes; she wants to live according to what scripture teaches. Her belief system is coupled with actions, like living chastely and taking care of her family. While these actions are not necessarily literacy events, they still evidence the combination of faith and works that I'm trying to explore here.

In the community, literacy artifacts alluding to the combined meaning of belief and action are found in quoted scripture on everyday items like calendars, checks and checkbooks, book titles, and even in needlepoint or quilt blocks. Also, a few participants wrote letters to me many months after our interview. Both Rebecca and Rachel included scripture in their letters and in their closing. Finally, I've often heard people within my faith community say that true Christianity isn't a religion, it's a relationship. Such an adage is additional evidence that belief and practice, including literacy practice, is something that Christians in this community strive to combine.

The point here is that *faith,* as a combination of a belief system and the outward works or signs of that system, is an apt means of conveying literacy according to Street's definition of practice. *Religion*, because it emphasizes only the outward signs of competence in Christianity, only narrowly conceives of literacy. This would be like a person owning a Bible as an object of social value or piety, but never reading the book or thinking about what the book says. Another example would be a person performing the actions of a Christian, but doing them for personal gain or notice from people, which is a direct contradiction to what the Bible says. Such outward actions belie a person having

read and interpreted scripture with both the actions *and* the belief system in mind. If I were to have used the term religion as I have defined it here, I would be aligning my research with conceptions of neutral big "L" literacy that ignores the ideological underpinnings of the community.

Faith as literacy practice also helps me convey how literacy can be passed longitudinally between generations of people. People are taught by their predecessors how to read scripture based in a passed on belief system. Similarly, people pass on a belief system which colors the way descendents read and write.

III. Data Examples of Church, Prayer, and Reading of Scripture

When I asked participants what is most important to them, faith-based responses vary widely. Some answered according to faith as a belief system by alluding to a sense of morals like being modest, honest, or sincere. For instance, part of Rachel's response was "No need cheating, just doesn't pay." Similarly, part of Rebecca's response was "To be honest, always be honest. Don't tell a lie... Try to be nice so that other people like you." Rachel and Rebecca's responses do not allude to a specific scripture or religious belief. Rather these responses allude to a general sense of "morals" that is customary within the community.

Other participants who gave faith-as-belief responses directly quoted scripture or made strong statements about their beliefs in Jesus. For example, when asked what is most important, Dorothy said, "To live a Godly life and accept Jesus as my Savior." Similarly, the other part of Rachel's response was "To follow in the footsteps of Jesus, lead a Christian life."

Some participants gave responses that centered more heavily on faith as a literacy practice, or combination of belief and action. Among these participants, responses centered on literacy events like church attendance, prayer, and scripture reading. These participants also expressed a desire to pass on these practices to their children.

Among those who mentioned church attendance, Bethany said, "Try to live a Christian life. Accept Jesus as my Savior and live as he teaches. *Learn from parents and go to church regularly*" (my emphasis). Note that Bethany first offers the belief system that she adheres to then she gives examples of how that belief might manifest itself in her life: learning from parents and going to church. Similarly, Jane said of her children, "I want them to know about Jesus and God, that going to church is very important and about forgiving one another."

Prayer and reading the Bible are also literacy events or practices that many participants said their parents and grandparents passed to them. My grandmother said, "I remember when I used to stay [at my grandparents'] that every morning we had prayer in Dutch. We had to kneel down by our chair for the prayer. We'd be down on the floor with our heads on the chair by the table. He'd always say the Lord's Prayer in Dutch." While it is no longer customary, according to Rebecca, for Amish to pray in such a way, I know that experiences such as this one shaped how my grandmother understands faith, prayer, and God. Similarly, Sarah said, "I remember we would all pray together and my dad would read the scriptures. That was important. I always felt like they cared a lot." Sarah's memory of her parent's faith as literacy practice has laid a foundation for her own faith practices. Finally, after Dorothy expressed that the most important thing in her life is to "live a Godly life and accept Jesus as my Savoir," she said that her family has

Bible devotions (scriptural lessons or conversations) every night after supper. She said that her parents passed to her that "It's important first of all to follow God's will and then the rest all falls into place."

READING THE BIBLE FOR ONE'S SELF

Reading and interpreting biblical scripture is a foundational part of faith as a literacy practice. Western Christianity has strong connections to literacy. Many literacy programs and initiatives have come about from a desire for more people to be able to read Biblical scripture for themselves. Nord's work outlines how the American Tract Society published, distributed and sold religious books throughout "western" states in Antebellum America. Worchester is noted as helping to translate the Cherokee language into a Bible (Bender). While not all literacy initiatives were positive by any means, they existed and continue to exist because Christians believe so strongly in reading the Bible. There is a unique connection that Christians have to the text of the Bible because they believe that it is "God inspired" or God's word spoken through human writers.

The ability to read and interpret scripture for one's self that points to several reasons for divisions of church denominations and what I call the differences between cultural and practicing Christians. In other words, for some, faith is the central focus of their lives, while for others faith is one factor among many in their lives. This is not an issue of being "more" or "less" Christian. Rather, I liken this to the difference between a cultural Jew and a practicing Jew. Someone can be culturally Jewish because she is born into this ethnicity. In contrast, practicing Jews are born into this ethnicity but they also make their faith the central focus of their lives. Both are Jewish, but there are differences

in how the faith impacts their daily lives. Hence, some of my participants seemed to be what I would call "culturally Amish Christians." These participants are Christians because they were born into the Amish culture and church but their faith seems more focused on the cultural traditions of *being Amish* than on the faith practices of *Christianity*. Others were both cultural and practicing Christians who gave definitive faith statements in addition to their observable lifestyle as Amish.

Many participants have a strong conviction that their belief system is based on what they read in the Bible, and whatever a leader says to them in a sermon or in prayer must match their reading of the Bible. Emma is one participant who left the Amish church because she felt that her district relied more on cultural norms than on the Bible to direct their actions. She said she left the Amish community because "I didn't enjoy going to church, didn't understand anything and got nothing out of it. I wanted to know more, but people were being shunned because they wanted Bible studies. I couldn't have a relationship with Jesus in that kind of environment." In Emma's district, apparently the bishop only allowed interpretation and scriptural readings during church services when done by ministers or other leaders. Fear of disagreement and dissention causes these sorts of rules and regulations.

Similar to Emma, Amos left the church because he wanted to read the Bible for himself and live a life the way he interpreted scripture. He said,

> All we ever heard was you had to do this and that and the other thing and it had nothing to do with scripture whatsoever as far as I could see when I was old enough to understand. We were taught basically that anyone who

> wasn't Amish wasn't going to heaven. I said, so be it. If that is the case, I still don't want to be Amish.

Amos left his Amish community and joined a Mennonite church where he read the Bible for himself and began to live a life that he felt more accurately reflected the direction of scripture. Amos described this as "a spiritual awakening."

Ida and Solomon, who are Amish, talked to me about how their Amish lifestyle adds meaning to how they understand the Bible. I asked Solomon why he chose to remain Amish. He said,

> I guess I never gave it a thought to not. That's what I wanted and that's what I hope my children [want]. Not because the Amish is going to save us. An Amish name isn't going to get them to heaven, you still have to do the works of God. But is still something that if my grandparents with the hope that they would go to heaven, if you got parents, you watch your parents, and if they die, you think 'well they done the works.' I mean it'll still take grace to get to heaven, but why couldn't I do it? That just made sense to me.

Note here that Solomon sees a connection between faith practices like living and dressing Amish and the grace or faith as belief system. Also note that Solomon bases this connection on the example his grandparents and parents set for him. The synergy of faith practices and belief structures offers a specific example of the ways faith, as a literacy practice, is passed between generations of people. Both the practice and the belief system are passed on to color how one reads and writes.

For example, Nord points out that the colporteurs of the American Tract Society in Antebellum America were pleased by how well worn some Bibles were among the people they visited ("Critical Sourcebook" 254). Reading and studying scripture with dedication was a valued practice in Antebellum Protestantism and it has been passed on to the generations that impacted me. I learned from my relatives that consistent reading and studying of the Bible is beneficial and necessary for understanding the text. Other examples, which I'll describe in more detail later in this chapter, are found in the ways that the Amish interpret various scripture to validate their social practices, and the ways that their learned social behaviors impact how they read scripture.

Also, note that Solomon has adopted the faith and literacy practices of his ancestors as closely as possible. To adapt the ways that his grandparents or parents read and interpreted scripture, or the ways that they lived their lives accordingly, would mean alienation from the family and possibly the Amish lifestyle entirely. Amish codes of conduct are rigid, and while there is some variation between districts, an adaptation of how one reads the scriptures is not simply a slight change or altering; it is considered a rejection of the faith tenets of the Amish.

In general, then, a foundational part of faith as a literacy practice is the ability to read the Bible and interpret the words for one's self. If one interprets the words vastly differently than she was taught, or adapts the traditional interpretation too much, and then acts on that alternate interpretation, she runs the risk of alienating herself from her family and possibly church. Some participants experienced this risk first hand, but their convictions about what they had read in the Bible spurred them to action.

LIVING OUT ONE'S FAITH

The synergies between faith as a belief system and faith practices are reflected in the ways that people live their lives. Similarly, the way people live their lives is indicative of how they read and interpret biblical scripture. Hence, "living out one's faith," as I call it here, is a marker of a particular interpretation of biblical scripture within the community. Such an interpretation allows one's belief system to dictate all activity, both secular and sacred. This interpretation is not unique to this community, however the manner in which people live out their faith is. I'll be analyzing how The Golden Rule is read, interpreted, and acted upon, based on the community's ideological underpinnings.

It is important to note before delving into descriptions of how participants live out their faith that the Bible is an intrinsic part of their lives. Not only is it valued to be able to read the scriptures for one's self, reading them daily and reading them to resolve almost any issue is foundational to their faith practices. Many consult the Bible before making any major decisions or taking any steps.

Different participants gave different responses to how they live out their faith. Almost always when someone talked about living out their faith, they directly quoted a verse or verses from the Bible. My mother quoted Matthew 22:36-40 as how she understands acting out one's faith. In this passage, in response to a Pharisee (a man who was very religious) who asked "which is the greatest commandment in the law," Jesus "said to them, '"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." On these two commandments depends the whole Law and the Prophets.'" My mother said of these verses,

> My first priority in life is to know God, realize and accept His love for me and allow Him to change me and use me in whatever way He wants. The second thing is almost as important as the first. It is to love other people with the same love as God loves me.

My mother is expressing first how she reads and interprets the above scripture; second she is explaining how she acts based upon that reading. She puts God first and her number one goal is to please God and live as the Bible teaches. It is only as she lives this way that she is able to love other people, because it is God that gives her love for all people.

My mother also noted that she has had to "unlearn" and "relearn" the order of these priorities. She was taught a very different order when she was growing up. In other words, my mother's present reading of this passage is an adaptation of the ways her family read the Bible and lived. She said,

> I grew up with the idea that the most important thing in life was family and then friends. This was never something spoken, but lived out over and over again. Helping and being helped by Mom and Grandma... The memories of that go back to the very beginning of what I can recall.... God came in a very poor 3rd or 4th place, if that... It's only as I have my relationship with Jesus Christ in order that I'm able to give to others anything of significance or treat them like they deserve.

My mother's family lived more as "cultural Christians" for a long time, and my mother, once she read the scriptures for herself, adapted their practices to align more with how she understood the Bible. Because my mother is English, her adaptation of practice

according to her reading of scripture didn't alienate her from her family. Non-Amish theology is more diverse and more flexible than Amish theology. As she reads these verses, my mom takes the command to love God first literally, so she acts on this reading in how she lives. She points out that when she loves God first, she has more to offer to other people.

Hostetler gives some insight on the biblical verses that are most prevalent in to the Amish and the ways that most districts interpret these verses. He writes, "The individual Amish member is admonished to be 'unspotted from the world' and separate from the desires, intent, and goals of the worldly person. Amish preaching and teaching draw upon passages from the Bible that emphasize the necessity of separation from the world" (75). Hostetler notes that the two passages of scripture that are most quoted and "epitomize for the Amishman the message of the Bible" are Romans 12:2 and II Corinthians 6:14. While Hostetler is speaking of the wider Amish community, his words make sense with what I've learned among my community.

Romans 12:2 reads, "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." The way that the Amish, including those in my study, read and interpret this verse forms the basis for how they live; specifically their reading of this verse dictates their way of dress and the ways that they keep themselves separate from mainstream society by eschewing various modern conveniences. II Corinthians 6:14 reads, "Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?" Again, this verse speaks to the manner one should live. To the Amish, this verse means that they

cannot intermarry outside of the wider Amish community and that they cannot go into business with someone outside the community. In a way, this way of reading this verse sets up how members of the Amish community must adopt the exact ways of reading as one's ancestors. To adapt this reading means alienation.

In my own data, the verse that seemed to be quoted the most often by participants was Matthew 7:12, "In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets." This verse is known as "The Golden Rule" and the most recognizable translation would be "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." This verse is similar to the second half of what my mother quoted. It emphasizes how people should treat one another, but not necessarily how people should treat or respect God.

Naomi was one participant that quoted the Golden Rule. When I asked her what is the most important thing she said "To live right and do what's right. To treat others like I want to be treated, the Golden Rule." I then asked her to describe what she meant by living right and the Golden Rule. She replied, "Live like the Bible says so that I have a chance to go to heaven. It makes me feel better to live this way. I can live in peace and not have a guilty conscience." Naomi, in quoting this verse to me, is trying to explain how she lives out her faith. What she reads is translated into action.

Other participants responded in the same manner. Ruth said that her parents taught her to treat people with respect. I asked her what it means to treat someone with respect. She replied, "The Golden Rule basically; treat them like you want to be treated." Bethany also said that her parents taught her to "treat people with respect." Emma said a variation of the verse: "I've learned to not be judgmental and to accept people as they

are." Finally, participants expressed the desire for their children to live by the Golden Rule. I asked Deborah how she hopes her children act toward others. She said, "well, treat them with respect and treat them like they'd like to be treated themselves."

The Golden Rule commands believers to treat others as you want to be treated. The interpretation of this verse may seem obvious, but not every person will read something, believe what it says, and alter her actions accordingly. Such a reading and action upon belief is part of what makes this community unique.

It is important to note that The Golden Rule is not unique in its command of how to treat others. The Jewish Talmud states, "What is hateful to you, do not do to anyone else." Likewise, Confucius told his followers, "Do not to others what you would not wish done to you." However, Jesus' command is put in the positive, telling followers to proactively offer help, kindness, and love to others; whereas Confucius and the Talmud command followers to avoid doing to someone else what you don't want done to you.

The living out of one's faith is taken so seriously in this community that it is counted almost as a vocation or calling. Vocation is a word that has long been used in Catholicism and other Christian traditions. "In baptism each person is called by God to follow Jesus in a life of holiness and service. This call may be lived out indifferent vocations: in marriage, as a single person, or as a priest, brother or sister" ("Vocations.ca"). Another way of putting it would be to say that vocation is "in religious terminology, a calling from God to some particular living out of the believer's baptismal commitment. This calling is to a way of life rather than to a particular job" ("Glossary"). I would add that this calling is to a way of reading and acting on what is read as well as a way of life. Christians, as I noted earlier in this chapter, continually reference what the

Bible says about all sorts of situations in order to conform their actions to its guidelines. In this way, the vocation or way of life is in many ways dependent upon a person's literacy ability in reading and interpreting what the Bible says.

FAITH AS MULTIMODAL LITERACY

Living out one's faith is multimodal literacy. Multimodal literacy does not use one mode continuously to make meaning; rather it is the play between and among several modes to make meaning. Faith as a literacy practice is the synergies between belief and performance, between the written word and the actions which stem from belief in those words. Altering one's life ways based on what one reads in the Bible connotes that a person understands what she has read. She is evidencing her literacy by aligning her actions to the text.

Faith as a heritage literacy practice moves literacy research away from a primary focus on print text and even oral language. Instead it focuses equally traditional literacy practices and on other practices of communication that are not usually called "literacy." New London wrote about multiliteracies in which "the textual is also related to the visual, the audio, the spatial, the *behavioral*, and so on (70, emphasis added). Heritage literacy, along with writing, reading and speaking, includes behaviors and practices like clothing, beadwork, quilting, home décor, farming practices, family and community traditions, religious and political ceremonies, food and recipe practices, and humor. Faith, as a literacy practice, allows communication of belief systems through action. Much like non-verbal communication gives meaning to spoken words, faith in action gives meaning to

the written word. Both convey meaning, both rely on "letters." Both are codified means of sending a message.

There is a play between word and deed that delves into the ways that literacy is a practice of both the ideologies and the text itself (Street). Reading and writing must consistently be balanced with what a person knows or has been taught aside from the text. Wysocki and Johnson-Eilola write

> If we understand communication not as discrete bundles of stuff that are held together in some unified space, that exist linearly through time, and that we pass along, but as instead different possible constructed relations between information that is spread out all before us, then ... *living becomes movement among (and within) sign systems* (365, emphasis mine).

If people continually come together, understand, make meaning, create artifacts of literacy, and then continue on, people are living among and within sign systems. Moreover, I would add that the movements of people, text, and action are themselves a sign system.

Under social semiotic research, Kress and Jewitt's understand signs "as constantly newly made, in a process in which the signified (which is to be meant) is realized through the most apt signifier (that which is available to give realization to that which is to be meant) in a specific social context" (10). The available way a Christian has to convey the signified (message of the Bible) is through her actions (which give realization to what is meant). Dance or musical performance has the same capacity to create synergies between the sounds, notes on a page, director's words, and body movements to convey

meaning. While the daily life of Christians isn't exactly a dance, the intention to convey a message through action is the same.

Further, Ong writes that by "distancing thought, alienating it from its original habitat in sounded words, writing raises consciousness... writing provides for, thereby accelerating the evolution of consciousness as nothing else before it does" (23). Because I believe that writing is multimodal and that all modes are equal (Kress and Jewitt 2), I would say that any activity that has the capacity to distance thought and alienate it from its original habitat has similar characteristics to writing. Action, like those of "acting out one's faith," distance thought in a way that causes us to examine them differently. It raises consciousness much like Ong thinks of writing raising consciousness over speech.

An example of faith as a multimodal literacy practice is evident in clothing choices that my community members make. While clothing connotes group cohesion, it also connotes a particular reading and interpretation of biblical scripture. Romans 12:2, quoted in full earlier in this chapter, commands Christians "do not be conformed to this world...." In response to this verse, the Amish have maintained their clothing practices for generations, even centuries. Hostetler describes the basics of Amish clothing:

> Men must wear a full beard; black, simple clothing with no outside or hip pockets; suspenders; and black hats with a three-inch brim. For women there must be no silken, showy, form-fitting garments; dresses must be within eight inches of the floor; and hair must remain uncut, with no adornment or curling. Aprons, shawls, and bonnets of proper size and color must be worn at the appropriate time. Young children must not be adorned in worldly styles.

While Hostetler does not say that the Amish dress because of the above verse, he does say that clothing symbolizes unity and group cohesion. I extend the meaning of their clothing to literacy practices because the unity among the Amish is meant to convey particular messages about what they believe about the world. The patterns, fabrics, and even the homemade quality of their clothing are a sign system that codifies the message of their world view. To read and understand the message conveyed by this sign system, one must know the ideological underpinnings that surround this "text," such as biblical scripture.

Hostetler offers an example of clothing that has come to be associated with specific scripture. In speaking of women's bonnets, kerchiefs, or caps, he says,

> Among partially assimilated Amish or Mennonites of Swiss-German origin the cap has become a 'covering,' 'prayer cap,' or 'veiling' required of women 'when praying or prophesying' (I Cor. 11:5). The most traditional Old Order Amish typically do not make this association" (240).

In other words, some Amish have adopted a scripture to justify their clothing. Whereas the most traditional sects do not make this association, others have felt compelled to adapt their practices to create a synergy between belief and action.

Other adaptations of clothing as signifier have been made among those who have connections to the Amish but who are English. My family dresses modestly partly because of our upbringing and partly because of our faith. We wear nothing flashy, formfitting, or revealing. While we wear patterns and bright colors (and pants!), the clothing is all modest. Such clothing is an adaptation of Amish tradition. My family is

no longer Amish, and we use modern conveniences, but we still recognize that our clothing signifies our belief system.

IMPLICATIONS

This chapter emphasized how faith is a literacy practice. Moreover, the emphasis has been on the synergies that exist between faith as a belief system and faith as a practice, specifically a literacy practice. I count faith as a literacy practice first because it so richly involves texts such as the Bible and biblical scriptures. Moreover, I count faith as a *multimodal* heritage literacy practice because this practice moves literacy "off the page" if you will. The concept of acting out one's faith lends a new perspective to multimodality. A person might be able to read the scriptures, but most Christians would say that reading them isn't enough and does not show that one truly understands them. Only through action do Christians show that they understand what they've read. It is action that "proves" literacy. If literacy is truly embedded in the values and culture of a given community, then in order for one to be literate in faith, one must *show* it.

Evidence of the synergies between faith and action are found in how my mother altered her practices to first honor and respect God and then honor and respect other people second. She commented that when she does what the Bible instructs her to do; she puts God first and then has more to offer to other people. Amos read the Bible and he was spurred to the act of leaving the Amish church. Since then he tries to balance what he reads in the scriptures with his daily activities and how he treats people. Finally, The Golden Rule exemplifies this connection of belief and action. Not only did participants quote it to me, they lived it as they welcomed me, a stranger, into their homes.

In addition, most Christians I know would point out that it isn't "works" or this acting out of faith that makes one a Christian, but rather it is a relationship with Jesus Christ. This too is related to multimodal heritage literacy. Remember that in multimodality all modes are assumed to be equal, so to speak. The mode of acting out one's faith is equal to that of a spiritual awakening or being "born again." One doesn't necessarily make sense without the other. Only if the two modes are considered equally or in light of one another does the entire literacy practice make meaning.

Such a concept has merit in terms of understanding multimodality. If all modes are equal, and the practices of meaning making use multiple modes, it seems that only when all modes are considered together to we really "read" or "write" a text. The fact that action and text work together for faith to make sense evidences this fact. Multiple modes working together make meaning.

Another part of faith as a literacy practice is the ability to read the Bible for one's self. This ability presumes that a person has learned to read and write in school or elsewhere. Group cohesion is tempered by the fact that individual members of the group read the Bible and interpret it. Often readings are offered to the group and discussions follow such that part of the group's functioning purpose is to help individuals read and interpret. However, as was the case when Emma and Amos each left the Amish church, the function of the group was to eschew any alternate readings of scripture.

Such differing functions of the group allude to an interesting implication for adoption, adaptation, and alienation. Inflexibility in a group means that adaptation doesn't really exist as an option for individual members of the group. Adoption or alienation are the only options. This was the case for Amos and Emma as each

questioned how his or her district interpreted the Bible. For groups with such defining features as the Amish, rigidity is actually a marker of their identity and their literacy practice and such firmness is passed between generations. In groups without such strict codes of conduct and interpretation, such as my mother's church and upbringing, adaptation is expected. Various denominations of Christianity exist because the Bible can be read and interpreted differently.

I want to make a note, however, that the passing down of faith may come in many forms. Cultural Christianity (vs. practicing Christianity) is the most obvious form of passing on a belief system; although I would argue that this is not faith as I have defined it in this chapter. For example, families still get together to attend Mass or church services for Christmas and Easter, even when some members of the family obviously reject Christianity.

The passage of faith as I have articulated it here is more complex. I've heard it said that God does not have any grandchildren, only children. To be a Christian, one must accept Jesus as Lord and Savior. One cannot accept Jesus vicariously through one's parents or grandparents. Hence, I am a child of God, not a grandchild. To pass on faith, then, is to pass on knowledge and belief systems, with the hope that a child will accept these systems as her own and then actively live out this faith as they have taught her.

The following chapter focuses on the literacy practices of *work*. Work refers both to a particular task and to the work ethic or attitude that a person has while doing this task. In particular I'll look at recipes and cooking as literacy artifacts that show us how heritage literacy is multimodal, how literacy is best understood in its context, and how generations adopt or adapt various cooking tools depending upon the context. I also offer

three stages that a person passes through in learning to cook and suggest ways that these stages could apply to other literacy learning. In all, work as a practice, shown in recipes and cooking, further explains heritage literacy and the ways that literacy exists across time.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE LITERACY PRACTICE OF WORK: COOKING AND RECIPES

INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the heritage literacy behavior pattern of *work*. Work within my community refers not only to specific actions done to complete a task but also as well as the concept of "work ethic" the attitudes and beliefs that dictate how one performs daily tasks. Both work and work ethic are deeply informed by core Amish values of responsibility, modesty, and hospitality (Hostetler), and these core values are evident among the responses given by those currently living Amish and those whose heritage is Amish but who live English. In other words, the same sense of integrity, responsibility, hospitality, and morality is evident in all participants regardless of what their lifestyle or livelihood.

To illustrate how work functions within my community, I analyze recipes as literacy artifacts. Recipes represent the larger literacy practices within the community, specifically women's work, insofar as they show the "cultural ways of utilizing literacy that people draw upon during a literacy event" (Barton 5). Recipes and other cooking technologies have either been adopted and adapted to conform to the values and beliefs of the community, or these technologies have been rejected because community members choose to alienate themselves from them. I will suggest the ways that recipes act as adopted and adapted tools which are imbedded within the cultural and ideological framework of the community.

The concept that literacies are best understood when examined their context is not a new one. This argument has been made for decades by sociocultural literacy

researchers such as Brian Street and Shirley Brice Heath. Specifically I use Street's term "literacy practice" as a combination of the actual events of literacy (Heath) and the cultural, social, and political underpinnings. Work, the focus of this chapter, makes sense given my use of Street's term. The combination of empirical literacy artifacts of recipes, the literacy events of cooking and learning to cook, and the "folk models" or ways of conceptualizing these events together make this a literacy practice. In this chapter I'll examine this practice in order to answer the following questions: How 1.) is work heritage literacy, 2.) is work multimodal, 3.) do participants use recipes as a literacy tool, and 4.) do participants develop facility with this literacy practice?

To answer these questions, I first offer a detailed description of the concept of work as described by my participants. Then I analyze cooking and recipe tools and practices as a type of work practice performed by women in the community. I show how cooks create connections between technologies (recipes) and their cultural values and how recipes are tools best understood within their context. Contextualized understanding of this literacy practice allows me to further develop and describe the specifics of heritage literacy and how my participants pass on an intellectual inheritance. Context also allows me to show what factors impact the adoption or adaptation of literacy tools longitudinally over time.

THE LITERACY PRACTICE OF WORK DEFINED

This section offers the ways that my participants understand the concept of work and how and why work should be understood as heritage literacy. When asked what parents or grandparents had taught them, almost every participant promptly responded "to

work." Their responses center on work as specific action (e.g. Miriam stated that her parents taught her "*to work:* to can, sew, garden, and work the fields. They taught [her] to live Amish and to cook") or on "work ethic" (e.g. Naomi listed "how to work" and "morals" in the same sentence, and Deborah said "there's a lot of things they taught me, you know, work and be respectful...").

For members of this community, the attitude they have while performing a given job or chore matters far more than the task itself. John Hostetler states "The attitudes that are of utmost importance in Amish society—cooperation with other human beings and learning to like work—are acquired informally by working with others in the family and community, not by attending school" (Hostetler 247). The attitude and work ethic of members of my community are directly related to a deep and inherited sense of their faith and guiding principles of Biblical scripture, as I discussed in chapter three.

I asked several participants to describe what they meant by work. Emma described her inherited work ethic as "being there everyday, doing a good job at whatever I do.... When I'm on the job, I hold up my end." Similarly, Sarah and Amos, English participants who were raised Amish, said that this work ethic "means that you are dependable, not afraid of work; there's a lot of integrity. You work hard and are honest." Finally, Marie said, "Mom taught me to work, be on time, and be honest. The one thing Dad always said, 'Do it right the first time because if you don't have time to do it right the first time, how are you going to find time to do it a second time?'"

There is a strong work ethic reflected within the actions of my own family members. My sister, Merry, recalls her memories of our grandmother Edna:

> I remember when we were there she never sat still for very long. To get a clear picture of her is hard, I know this sounds weird, but there's this blur. All the sudden she'd be moving from the kitchen to the living room. Vacuuming. Or mopping. I remember she mopped a lot. Or she'd go to the kitchen to the bedroom and back. I'd just see her walk by. I didn't follow her; I'd be doing my imagining thing [playing] and all of the sudden she'd drift into the picture and take us to a picnic or whatever. She always kept busy, but I never knew doing what. That was Grammy, and she's still that way. She vacuumed more than any person I ever knew.

Merry is noting that our grandmother always seemed to be busy at physical work, whether cleaning, cooking, laundry, or other chores. Her recollections make clear that as a child, she was allowed time to relax, play, and use her imagination, but it was a special occasion for Grammy to stop work and take us on a picnic.

My mother, Lucy, relates similar memories of Edna, her mother, during her own childhood. I asked how much she remembers Edna reading. She replied, "Mom was never still long enough to read... Mom did everything at home. Mowed the lawn, the garden... Mom didn't drive until I was 7 or 8. She couldn't go anywhere. She did everything." Again, it is important to note that work seemed to be the focus of my grandmother's time; rarely did she have time to read or do other things she enjoyed because work took precedence. Now that her children are grown and she is a grandmother, my grandma still cleans but she also has time to read and go to musical performances. I also note that the kind of work that Grandma did was always physical work. Working with one's mind, as an academic would, seems to not count as work.

Finally, my great grandmother, Cora, relates similar stories about her mother's work and work ethic:

> My mom was very particular about her food and her house... on Fridays the upstairs were cleaned and the beds changed and everything... and then the downstairs was cleaned on Saturdays. We'd scrub the kitchen real hard with a broom, then we'd go out on the porch and the porch would have to be scrubbed. Everything had to be scrubbed. The windows had to be washed every Saturday. Everything was clean and then the baking was done.

Great Grandma remembers that work was done thoroughly and with pride. Note that the floors were scrubbed "hard with a broom." Also note that cleaning "had to be" done. Hard work and cleanliness, apparently, was not an option, and the quality of one's work directly correlated to how physically hard it was. As in the previous recollections, "work," in these contexts is always physical work.

While the description of the Amish work ethic is thus far positive, often work ethic and "doing a good job" translates into working all the time or being constantly busy "doing." My own family members, as is shown in the above quotes, have a history of constant work. Because work is tied so closely to the Amish perception of morality and integrity, guilt often results when a person perceives herself to be not working or not working "hard enough." Emma said, "Sometimes I feel guilty if I'm not working." My grandmother, Edna, recalls memories of her aunt and namesake: "Aunt Edna said that if she ever had one regret, it was that she didn't take time when she had company to just sit and visit. Except on Sunday. She thought she had to keep working." Rebecca, my great

grandmother's sister, remembers the strain this type of guilt placed on her mother and grandmother as they lived in the same home:

> [Grandmother] was ambitious. She'd always get up early [even though] she didn't do her own cooking, washing or sewing; there was no need to get up so early. It bothered my mom to take a nap at noon if Grandma knew she was not working... Mom never wanted to be caught resting if Grandma knew it. Mom shouldn't have been that way; it was her home.

It wasn't that there was a competition between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. Rather, Rebecca's story emphasizes that her mother took immense pride in the quality and quantity of the work she did. Rebecca noted that her own daughter, who is English, "thinks that the Amish think it is a sin to rest." Rebecca goes on to say, "They don't think it is a sin, but they don't rest. A lot of them don't, but maybe not all of them. They do teach not to be lazy."

As I shared portions of this chapter with participants, Rachel wrote me a letter in response. She noted that while her family does work hard, they also play. She wrote,

> I can still hear my mother say, 'All work and no play makes Johnny a dull boy,' so we had 'Fair Play.' My home life consisted of having 'Family Time,' a quiet time [where] each of us read a good book, going on a picnic, the whole family putting together a big picture puzzle, or going to a small town park... We were taught to help plant seeds when quite young, and we taught our children the same. This too was good family time. Children were more appreciative for our garden goodies....

Rachel's response offers some interesting insights into the nature of work within this community. First, as noted above, play is an important part of family life, just like work. Also, there is work ethic evident even within the acts of play that Rachel describes. Planting seeds and sharing this activity as a family is *both* work and play. Work and play together, then, together create group cohesion, a part of heritage literacy that will be addressed more fully in chapter five. Finally, Rachel's description puts into perspective that while there is a strong sense of work ethic and hard work within the community, this sense is tempered by a commitment to social activity and *gathering and communing* for pleasure as well as work, which will be covered in chapter five.

My observations of community members and my own family reflect both the positive and negative aspects of work. During my data collections, when I would arrive at the home of a participant, she would be working. Bethany, Ruth, Becky, Deborah, Martha, Jane, and Leah were all caring for children of various ages at the same time as doing other tasks. Solomon had just come in for lunch from working his fields, and as we chatted, his wife Ida cooked their lunch. I caught Rachel as she was about to start hoeing in her garden. Dorothy and her daughters were coming out of their home with paint splatters covering them from a day painting the living room. Yet these people, who obviously were hard at work, were generous with their time and hospitable to me as I stopped them in the middle of their workday. I stopped at many homes and Amish businesses where interviews were declined because they were too busy. It was summer, the height of garden harvests, yet so many people kindly offered me 30 or more minutes of their time for something that could easily be seen as "restful."

These illustrations of work ethic show that for my participants, passing on attitudes and integrity is as important, if not more so, as the methods and tools for work activities themselves. The connection between these illustrations of work ethic and the literacy artifact of recipes, which I discuss in the next section, is to offer an example of the culture and values of the community, in which literacy artifacts are used. Literacy activities involved within work are tools imbedded not only in the physical activity, but also the attitude that surrounds the activity. As Street put it, literacy practices are both literacy events and "the ideological preconceptions that underpin them" (Social Literacies 2). Tools used to perform work are imbedded in the entirety of work as a literacy practice.

RECIPES AS LITERACY ARTIFACTS

As an illustration of the ways in which work functions as a literacy practice within my community, I analyze recipes as literacy artifacts. Recipes represent the larger literacy practices within the community, though recipes are primarily part of women's work, insofar as they show the "cultural ways f utilizing literacy that people draw upon during a literacy event" (Barton 5). Recipes act as adopted and adapted tools that are imbedded within the cultural and ideological framework of the community.

I have selected recipes as the literacy artifact on which to build an analysis of the heritage literacy practice of work for several reasons. First, food could be seen historically and traditionally as a "centerpiece of women's work" (Schenone xii) and therefore a representative sample of the work done by the women interviewed for this analysis. Second, cooking has a long history of technological advancement and change.

Third, cooking is representative of multimodal meaning making passed between generations of women. "For generations, women's ways of cooking were never even put into written words but rather were passed on largely through action, from mother to daughter, friend to friend, and only recently, via diaries and cookbooks and the faded ink of recipe cards" (Schenone xv). And fourth, cooking, recipes, and food are a deeply important aspect of any cultural heritage, including my own community.

Cultural heritage, according to Stern and Cicala, researchers of ethnicity and culture, is directly linked to food. They quote Janet Theophano, a researcher of the interplay between culture and food:

> In the study of American ethnic groups, food has been viewed, like language, as an indicator of the degree to which the group has retained or shed its culture of origin. In fact, it has been argued that food is one of the last aspects of culture to be discarded, that food is particularly resistant to change (Stern and Cicala, Creative Ethnicity, 42).

Additionally, Stern and Cicala posit that food is "one of the last aspects of culture to be discarded" and that it is "particularly resistant to change." Food is an obvious way a culture passes on intellectual inheritances and is a rich source of evidence of the ways in which community adopts and adapts or alienates themselves according to the constraints of their cultural environment.

SPECIFIC ANALYSIS: HICKORY NUT CAKE

This section analyzes a specific set of recipes in order to explore how participants adopt and adapt this literacy tool according to their culture and values. My great

grandmother, Cora, has a tablet of paper in which her mother and grandmother kept recipes. The pages are yellowed with age and smudged with fingerprints and perhaps spilled ingredients. The tablet is bound at the top and all the recipes are handwritten. Here is a picture of the tablet and other loose papers kept in their original box:

Figure 8: Tablet and Papers

Some recipes within this collection are attributed to whatever cook bequeathed them to my ancestor. For example:

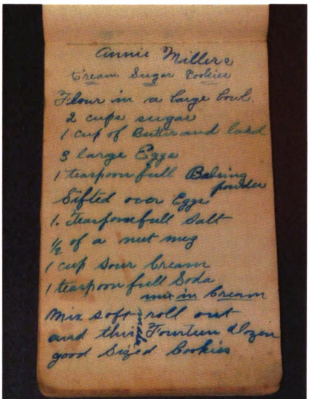

Figure 9: "Annie Miller's" Cream Sugar Cookies Recipe

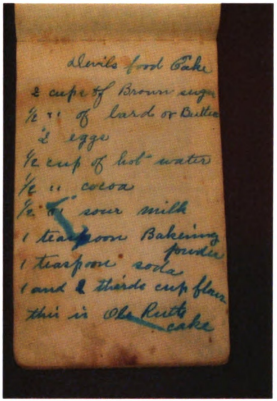

Figure 10: Devil's Food Cake Recipe

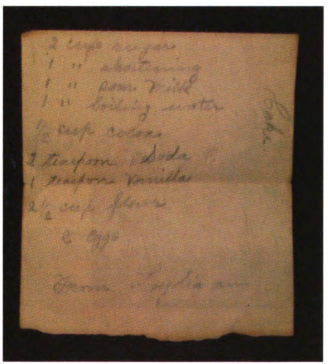

Figure 11: Lydia's Recipe

Other recipes bear no identification of the writer, and at times, of the food being prepared.

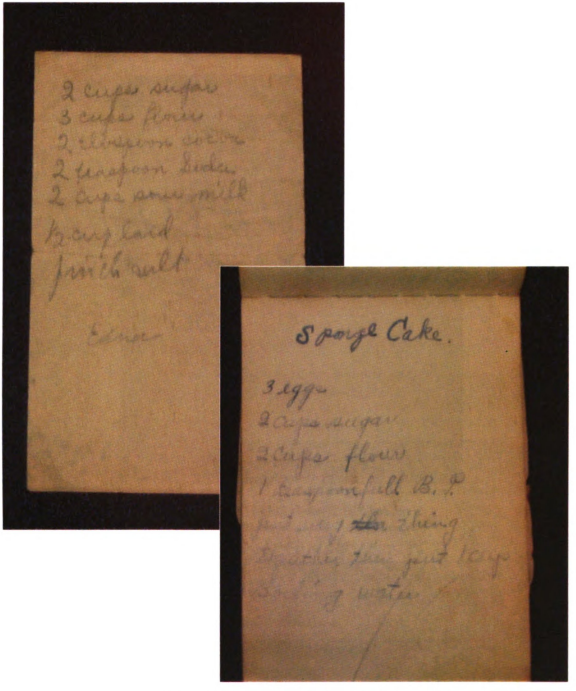

Figure 12: Edna and Sponge Cake Recipes

Most of the recipes within this collection are for desserts. I've selected one recipe because it is representative of the lot and because it exhibits distinct characteristics of contextualized knowledge. The recipe that I will be analyzing in particular within this chapter is one for Hickory Nut Cake:

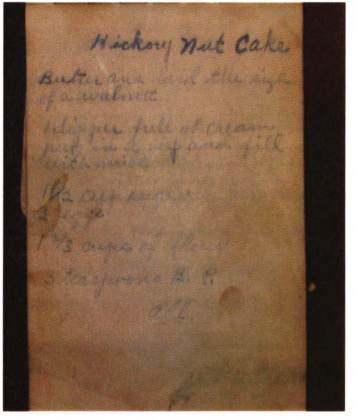

Figure 13: Hickory Nut Cake Recipe

Hickory Nut Cake

Butter and lard the size of a walnut
1 dipper full of cream put in a cup and fill with milk
1 ½ cup sugar
2 eggs
1 2/3 cups of flour
3 teaspoons B.P.
All.

This recipe makes sense only when considered in its cultural context. Without understanding what Street called a 'literacy practice,' which as noted above includes both the behaviors and the social and cultural conceptions that that help readers and writers make meaning (Social Literacies 2), readers cannot use this recipe for its intended purpose. First, the recipe uses both standardized and non-standard measurements. The writer of this recipe could have been "in process" with learning standardized measurements, as these standards began to be fully used in the later half of the 1800s. However, even the "non-standard" measurements were standard for the writer. The size of a walnut is obviously a familiar size to both the person who wrote this recipe and her intended audience. Similarly, the "dipper" that measures cream was a standard measurement in that household. For someone outside the household to make this recipe, extensive questions would have had to be asked. Perhaps these measurements were a way to protect the recipe from copying or to require the social aspect of conversation to pass on the knowledge. Either way, the recipe's measurement system is evidence that this recipe is best understood in context and that the tool of literacy to read this recipe isn't the same "kind" as the "all purpose" academic kind emphasized by politicians.

This recipe made sense with the constraints of the time period as it did with standard and non-standard measurements. Note that there are no instructions on assembling this cake except for the underlined "All." There is no oven temperature, no baking times, or serving suggestions. Finally, note that there are no hickory nuts! These are crucial elements to creating this cake, and yet they are missing from this recipe. However, the seeming "lack" of information makes sense in the context of the time period. Instructions were minimal because the knowledge of techne for cooking and

baking surpassed a need for detailed instructions. Baking a cake was commonplace enough that instructions were not necessary. Finally, the significant lack of hickory nuts in the list of ingredients could have resulted from several constraints in the writer's environment. First, hickory nuts are listed in the title of the cake; therefore a cook should know that they would be in the mix. Secondly, perhaps this cook had a hickory nut tree on her property. Rebecca, Cora's older sister, notes that at her home growing up they had a walnut tree. Most of their desserts contained walnuts because of the ready supply. Perhaps the same was true for the cook who gave this recipe to my great great grandmother.

Finally, this recipe as a tool is indicative of the financial constraints of the writer. The vast majority of recipes available in Katie's book are for desserts. Considering the possible financial constraints that this cook faced, this recipe, along with other dessert recipes, was an extravagance. If a recipe cost a lot to prepare, it would be reserved only for special occasions. The recipes that a cook made daily were never written, from what I can see but instead were memorized. Only those recipes which were rarely made were written down, and this act of recording by hand implies that those recipes were highly valued as well.

Another way of looking at how recipes are best understood in context is to look at the tools used to make this recipe. The cooking tools to create the hickory nut cake needed to fit within the limitations of kitchen cooking and early 20th century Amish cultural values. The Amish did not use, and still eschew the use of, electricity and the technologies that rely on electricity. First, note that this recipe is handwritten in a bound notebook. While typewriters, type face, and printing were available when this recipe was

written, handwriting is the default for recipes because of convenience and because of financial constraints and social values. Similarly, no electric mixers or other electronic cooking aides are listed. While at the time the recipe was written these technologies did not exist, the Amish still do not use them. My mother recalls that not having an electric mixer greatly shaped how and when particular desserts were made. Because of the amount of time needed to whip egg whites or cream by hand, certain recipes were, again, reserved only for special occasions. Mom said because they were poor,

> I grew up without a mixer. We didn't have one. We grew up mixing everything by hand, even egg whites. We'd make this one kind of cheesecake where you had to beat Millnut by hand...it's kind of like evaporated milk... it was a brand sort of. It was a big deal to make because it took so long to make because of the Millnut and the Jello and the Cool Whip. We all loved it, but now it sounds pretty horrid.

Consider that ovens at the time the Hickory Nut Cake recipe was written were wood burning; hence no temperatures are listed (although other recipes from this book note "medium oven"). Serving suggestions were not relevant as food having the capacity to "entertain" was not a relevant concept within the community. Food was important, but not necessarily as a way to entertain or impress strangers. Rather, food was to nourish, to be shared, and to be eaten as family and friends gathered at the dinner table. True, women did and continue to take pride in their cooking, but food as a source of entertainment was a foreign idea.

The final constraint within this recipe is the list of ingredients. The recipe uses very basic ingredients. While women took pride in their cooking, meals were generally

very simple and made from easily accessible ingredients. Miriam noted that they cooked whatever was on hand, so again the hickory nuts were a constraint that my ancestors worked within and around. Miriam also noted in our interview that cooking has changed for her because she has different ingredients to work with. "When I was at home, we cooked with whatever we had in storage: meat, potatoes, vegetables. Now I shop at stores that have a much wider variety of foods to choose from."

In general, this recipe is best understood in context and within the constraints that surrounded cooking at the time it was used. I've asked my great grandmother if she remembers how to make the recipe, and could she teach me. Her response was to laugh, say no, and then say, "That's just how they wrote recipes back then." It is possible to recreate the cake today, but not without extensive experimentation, which costs time, money, and a lot of flat, burnt cake.

STAGES OF LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

In contextualizing the literacy knowledge of work and recipes, there are several "stages" that occur as a person becomes more adept at reading, writing, and making connections between literacy and context. This section outlines the "stages" that a woman might pass through on her way to becoming literate in recipes and cooking. These stages reveal the specific moments and phases in the process of passing on a literacy inheritance, and reinforce my argument that heritage literacy is multimodal and best understood in context. There are three "stages" of cooking literacy development: observation and modeling, purposeful instruction, and personal responsibility. There is a sort of apprenticeship that occurs. A girl passes through a progression of responsibilities

that is dependent upon her age and elders' perceptions of whether she can "handle" additional responsibility. Girls and women adopt and adapt recipes learned from their mothers and grandmothers during this apprenticeship.

This three-stage process of the adoption and adaptation of recipes gives us insight into how generations pass on literacy knowledge and how technologies and tools are imbedded in cultural practices and values. Janet Theophano, a cookbook and cooking researcher, writes that generally,

> modifications and modernizations of old recipes and the invention of new dishes in a woman's cookbook represent the combined efforts of many people. Contributions [came] from past generations and from individuals living side by side in small communities, connected to larger social circles, sometimes from one or more cultures.... And while we tend to think of cooking as a delight to our senses, the relationships formed through the creation of these culinary compositions are social, cultural, and economic (Theophano 12).

Note here that cooking is multimodal, passed between generations, and built in layers of understanding and context. By examining the process of acquiring this literacy, it is more apparent how literacy is a combined effort of an individual, the community, and the context.

Stage one is o*bservation and modeling*. Girls are taught to cook by observing the activities in a kitchen from their earliest years and "helping" by stirring gravy (in the case of my mother) or setting the table (Rebecca, Cora's older sister). Rebecca recalls that cooking, like other activities, was part of *work*:

> We had responsibilities. There were so many of us, we sorta had to take our turn to wash dishes. One would wash and the other one would have to wipe them. After a while there was another one along and we kind of passed on to something different. At a certain age, dad would be doing chores, and mom would be fixing breakfast. She'd call me downstairs to set the table. We all ate breakfast together... We had fried potatoes so often, big round skillet full of fried potatoes. And when she'd put them in the pan of hot lard, they'd make a loud noise. When I heard her dump the potatoes in the hot skillet and I wasn't up yet, boy I was up in a hurry to set the table.

Rebecca is sharing with us how her chores were age-dependent. Once she was old enough, and there was another child coming up behind her, she was shifted into a new role. She learned to do a given task by watching older generations, and when she was old enough she was given the responsibility. Also, Rebecca's story of the potatoes in the pan illustrate how important it was for her to have a good work ethic even at such a young age. Timeliness, dedication, and consistency were valued attitudes and were taught during chores as basic as setting the table for breakfast.

The implications of stage one are first that cooking and baking are a highly gendered activity within the Amish community and to a lesser extent within my own extended family. After a girl finishes the 8th grade and graduates, her "apprenticeship" is to learn to run a family home, cook, and raise children: the skills most necessary for a woman who is Amish. My immediate family is vastly different as my father cooks daily and my brother and husband are more than capable in the kitchen than their respective

spouses, but cooking within this community as a whole and within my distant family is exclusively a female practice. Secondly, observation and modeling is often part of play. Young girls pretend to be cooking long before they are old enough to approach a stove. This is commonplace for anyone who has toddlers. Examples in my own family are when my mother allows my niece to wash her plastic play dishes at the sink.

The second stage is *purposeful instruction.* At some point in a girl's upbringing, between the ages of 10 and 13, specific cooking lessons are given by mothers and grandmothers. This stage is somewhat blurry in most community members' minds. Direct instruction on cooking most certainly occurred; however most women couldn't recall a specific incident or moment when they were taught to cook. When asked how she learned to cook, Naomi responded "I just picked up cooking. My mother and older sister probably taught me when I was 10 or 11." Naomi's response is representative of most of the community members' response to the same question.

More in-depth examples of purposeful instruction are evident in key participants' memories: my mother distinctly remembers that her grandma (my great grandmother) Cora taught her to make pie. This past summer my great grandmother also taught me to make pie. I remember my mother showing me specific ways of cooking and how to use particular technologies to achieve specific results. For example, she always instructed me to mix muffin batter with a fork so that you would not over-mix it. And finally, this past November, I sat in my sister's tiny apartment and helped her learn to cook with what was on hand in her freezer. She had tacit knowledge, long imbedded from our mother, such as putting a lid on a pot of water to bring it to boil faster, but she needed instruction in how to create a meal from what she had on hand without specific recipes.

The implications of stage two are primarily that "learning to cook," like any literacy acquisition, is an ongoing and inexact process. While some women remember receiving specific instructions, most do not. Instead, guidance was mixed with observation, assistantship, and small tasks as girls increased their abilities. This type of literacy learning distinguishes itself from the ways that most participants learned "to read" in school at designated times and locations. While learning to read is a graduate acquisition in a print-rich environment, there are still specific moments in school designated for this purpose. Unlike such purposeful moments in school, learning to cook is expected to be a gradual process that is imbedded within the framework of family and culture.

Stage three is *personal responsibility.* At some point in the development of this literacy practice, women are considered capable of creating dishes and meals on their own. Some women recall learning to cook without a recipe. In Miriam's case no specific recipes were passed on, only the practice:

> I remember that my mother used to say to us girls at noon, "It's time to fix dinner." Mother wouldn't tell us what to fix, we had to figure that out for ourselves. We used to get frustrated because it would have been easier for us if mother had said what we should fix, but we learned to cook from what was on hand in the cellar. This ended up being one of the best things mother could have done for us.

My sister struggled with the very task that Miriam describes: to create a meal, rather than a single dish, from what was available in her cupboards. This is literacy that must work within the constraints of available ingredients and time.

Other participants noted specific examples of learning to cook which did involve recipes. Deborah recalls that she watched her mother cook a lot then "she handed the recipes over and we had to kind of just follow direction... I mean, she helped us but we had to learn on our own." Similarly, Dorothy mentioned that what is set on the table for her family on a given night depends greatly on who is doing the cooking. "My older daughters, especially the oldest two, really enjoy cooking and they always like to *try new recipes.*" Dorothy emphasized "try new recipes" when describing her daughter's cooking because they really enjoy this process. While for some, cooking is a necessary part of daily life, for Dorothy's daughters, it seems that to cook new dishes and meals is made exciting by the addition of new recipes.

Personal responsibility in cooking presupposes literacy learning. Note that Deborah's mother handed over the recipes and then set her off to cooking. There is an assumption there that Deborah, at age 10, was capable of reading the recipes and had a knowledge base of the technologies and techniques needed to create a dish.

Dorothy's older daughters have, perhaps, reached a more advanced and more abstract level of literacy because they are most adept at moving from written recipe instructions to their working knowledge of cooking. They like to experiment, which means they are comfortable with recipes, but comfort with recipes usually leads to creation of one's own recipes.

IMPLICATIONS

The work ethic displayed among my participants, my analysis of Hickory Nut Cake and the three-stage process detailed above offer several implications toward how

literacy and composition researchers understand multimodality and heritage literacy. First, multiple modes evidence the ways that context and literacy interact. Second, heritage literacy is developmental and recursive. And finally, heritage literacy is the process of passing on tools used in context, knowing how to contextualize new tools and technologies into an existing environment, and knowing when and how to alter a context to allow for new tools and technologies.

The multiple modes exhibited in the example cited in this chapter include pen and paper recipes, images, spoken instructions, smells and tastes of food during preparation and at meals, the layout of a home or kitchen, movements between sink, refrigerator and stove, the layout and order of a recipe, and the tactile connection in learning to make pie crust. These modes, coupled with the work ethic and practices of cooking and sustaining of community that surround these modes, create a rich environment of literacy and cultural context. Note that multiple modes here require physical connections between people and context and literacy. Note also that the same tasks are completed over and over again, evidencing both the connection between literacy and context and that heritage literacy is recursive.

Heritage literacy practices such as work, and specifically cooking and recipes, illustrate how connections between context and literacy play out within a community and a set of values. For example, the literacy artifact of a recipe is not just about "pen-and-paper literacies." Cooks create dishes to convey feelings, to nourish, to entertain, or to fulfill obligations. The meaning in the recipe is portrayed by the sight, the smell, the feel, and the image of a particular dish; it is not abstractly contained on a piece of paper with a list of ingredients. In other words, the tool is best understood in its context.

Heritage literacy is developmental and changing. Connection of object to context is always evolving and always growing because objects change and the context changes over time. The object changes because people adopt and adapt new or different technologies and literacies, such as my mother getting an electric mixer or a wider variety of ingredients being available in grocery stores. Also, recipes' measurements and instructions have become standardized, and ovens' temperatures can be regulated. Similarly, the context changes as families such as mine leave the Amish community and adopt electricity and other conveniences, as the expectations of a particular Amish district alter due to the bishop overseeing it, and as the needs of a family or a single person dictate how a recipe is used. What the community considers "work" changes the context as well. In my great grandmother's recollections of work ethic, only physical labor was considered work, whereas writing a book such as this one might not be considered work in the same way.

Further, heritage literacy is recursive. As contexts and objects change, people adapt to these changes and change how they pass on their intellectual and literacy inheritances. The recursiveness of heritage literacy occurs because as tools and contexts change, older generations must depend on younger generations as much as the younger depend on the old. As a member of a "younger generation," I need the work ethic that my great grandmother, grandmother, and mother have lived for decades before me. I also need to understand the basic ways of food preparation. I learn that work ethic and their adoption of various tools and literacies from them. But as tools and literacies evolve and change, I often come into contact and adjust to these technologies before the members of previous generations do. The women in my family have allowed me to help them adjust

to new technologies like new cooking techniques, or new cuisines. I also pass on this information to my sister as we continually balance what we are learning with what we already know.

This need to continually balance the new, the old, and the changing in terms of tools, technology, and cooking alludes to the fact that heritage literacy is an ongoing process. One does not learn to read and write longitudinally and recursively once. Rather, tools and contexts change, and people must adapt to the change, adopt new technologies, or choose to alienate themselves from technologies.

The contextualized understanding of heritage literacy does not permanently negate the tendencies of instrumental neutrality and the disassociation of humans from technology use. Heritage literacy is this process of passing on tools used in context, knowing how to contextualize new tools in new processes, and knowing when and how to alter a context to allow for new tools and technologies. Members of this community are constantly in the process of adopting and adapting cooking methods, food choices, and recipes. The dipper of cream is now ¼ cup, my mother has an electric mixer but chooses to make pie crust by hand, my great grandmother is now diabetic, so desserts are made with artificial sweetener, and she has developed a penchant for Mexican food. Similarly, participants who used tools in contexts of physical work, now use tools in "mental" work. They continually must find ways of reinserting old tools into new practices and new tools into old practices. They must decide which tools and which practices to keep or adapt, and which to set aside (alienate) in order to ensure the continuation of their community values.

The following chapter deals with the heritage literacy practice of *coming of age*, or the moments and processes that a person goes through to become an adult and full member of a community. Specifically the *coming of age* process of deciding whether to join the Amish church, of "running around," of adult baptism, and of shunning will be examined. These examples will help to further define heritage literacy as a way of ensuring group cohesion, and of involving all members of a community in support of a particular practice. Group cohesion helps to signify who is and is not a member of the community and what are and are not valued tools and literacies within that community. This group cohesion offers an understanding of the longitudinal movement between documents and coming of age.

CHAPTER FIVE: COMING OF AGE: THE DECISION WHETHER TO JOIN THE AMISH CHURCH

INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the heritage literacy pattern of *coming of age*, or the significant and timely events that occur in a community which enable group cohesion and are marked by particular literacy artifacts. These moments of coming of age center on becoming an adult and a full member of a community. To take part in these moments, one must be ready for the responsibility that the actions imply.

Specifically, I look at heritage literacy artifacts that center on the interrelated events of "running around," the decision whether to join the Amish church, adult baptism, and shunning. These are the various parts of the process of becoming a member of an Amish community. Hostetler notes that the choice whether to join the church is one of the greatest decisions an Amish youth must come to terms with (177). Joining the church is an expressly voluntary activity (though familial and community pressures do exist) and the choice to join is left to the individual. When a person is old enough to make the decision whether to join the church, she is an "adult" and ready for all that this entails.

These events are a significant part of living Amish, and they are significant for maintaining group cohesion and passing on literacy knowledge within my community. My own family only experienced these particular events first hand when my great grandmother went through the process in the 1930s. Still, the literacy practice of coming of age was apparent in responses given by my key participants, though their experiences differ from my Amish participants. Other coming of age moments mentioned by my key

participants included: graduating high school, getting married, having children, and learning to drive a car.

Literacy as a factor of group cohesion is something addressed by most literacy ethnographers in some way. Shirley Brice Heath's work describes the literacies of two North Carolina Piedmont communities; Beverly Moss's work looks at literacy events in African American churches, and Marcia Farr's work describes the literacy practices among Chicano Mexicanos. I borrow from these examples the emphasis on how a group upholds its boundaries through literacy and identifies insiders via literacy. I build on the work of these researchers by suggesting that this group cohesion and literacy is something that is passed within an individual family and is recursively taught and learned through generations of people. My emphasis is on the adoptions, adaptations, and alienations of literacies and tools that my family and community use during coming of age moments. I also seek to more fully articulate how literacies impact group cohesion and the connections between the events, artifacts, and "folk models" (Street) of this literacy practice.

In this chapter I am seeking to answer the following questions: 1.) how is coming of age multimodal, 2.) how is coming of age heritage literacy, and 3.) how do the specific events and artifacts within the decision to join the Amish church underscore the overall heritage literacy practice of coming of age?

To deal with these questions, I offer a basic description of coming of age and an explanation of why the process of joining the Amish church is what I selected as an example and literacy artifact. Next I offer more detailed descriptions of each part of the process of joining the Amish church: running around, the decision whether to join,

baptism and the act of joining, not joining the Amish church, and leaving after one has joined. In these sections I also offer explanations of how these events are heritage literacy, what literacy artifacts and community practices are imbedded within them, and how heritage literacy, as a concept, sheds light on the longitudinal passage and recursiveness of this information. I finish with a set of implications based on this analysis.

THE LITERACY PRACTICE OF COMING OF AGE DEFINED

When asked what grandparents or parents had passed on, many participants responded "to be Amish." Deborah expressed what she hopes to pass to her children: "I hope they want to follow in our footsteps and stay Amish." Similarly, Martha hopes that her children "remain Amish because that's the way I was brought up." These moments show a recursiveness or longitudinal repetition of heritage literacy practices across time: A child is born, starts school, graduates, joins the church, gets married, has children, raises children, and grows old and dependent upon those children who in turn start the process all over again with another generation. Coming of age documents, as heritage literacy artifacts, impact this repetition because they are one way the community holds on to generational traditions.

Within the recursiveness of coming of age, I also want to point out that there is a "remarkable degree of continuity across Amish home, school, and community contexts. Yet no methods, content or purposes are superimposed on home, school, or community to enhance transfer artificially. Instead, the methods, content and purposes arise from a culturally unified worldview... (Fishman 153). Fishman is pointing out that there is

continuity across all the kinds of documentation in her research community because that community of Amish shares a "unified worldview." Such a common worldview is evident in my own community, shown both by my participants expressing their desires that their children remain Amish, and by the ways that coming of age documents are used to reflect heritage, identity, and language within the wider community and against pressures to assimilate.

To explore coming of age as a heritage literacy practice, I will be specifically analyzing the artifacts and events surrounding Amish baptism to show the play between group cohesion and those artifacts. I selected this series of events to get at coming of age because while it carries significant religious and faith implications, it also acts as a significant marker between childhood and becoming an adult. Fishman writes that the "community's unique contribution to literacy comes through the church as baptism instruction" (152), meaning that the specific teaching and learning that occur before, during, and after a baptism offer a glimpse of a particular literacy practice that is unique to those with Amish heritage.

John Hostetler offers additional insight about the significance of baptism, He writes,

> Membership in the Amish church-community is attained by becoming an adult and voluntarily choosing instruction and baptism. Baptism signifies repentance, total commitment to the believing church-community, and admission to adulthood. This vow embodies the spiritual meaning of becoming an Amish person, an acceptance of absolute values, and a

> conscious belief in religious and ethical ends entirely for their own sake, quite independent of any external rewards (77).

Baptism is a religious experience; however, baptism also signifies the joining of a person to a community; note that Hostetler says "total commitment to the believing church-community" and admission to adulthood, which is why I've opted to analyze it in terms of the literacy practice of coming of age. Baptism, as a literacy artifact, is a tool and requires other tools. It is an apt example of how the Amish in my study have adopted and adapted some technologies and literacies while purposefully alienating themselves from others.

I. Running Around

Before an Amish child decides whether to join the church, she "runs around" while also working outside of the home. Generally this period begins after a child has graduated from the 8th grade at age 16. For example, one participant, Naomi, recalled that she "ran around with the young folks" before she joined the church and got married. This running around can be innocent fun with other teens, or it can be a time of rebellion against parents and the Amish culture. Hostetler writes,

> The individual must establish a certain degree of independence from family and community. The family relaxes some of its control. The church has no direct control over the young person who has not voluntarily become a member....The young people are thereby allowed some freedom to taste the outside world that they are expected to reject voluntarily when they become church members (Hostetler 177).

Though young people in the stage of running around may rebel against all that an Amish family holds as sacred, church custom dictates that young people be given the opportunity to experience what they will be missing if they choose to join the Amish church. My great grandmother tells me that this stage exists so that an Amish youth will not "feel pressured" to join the church and can make her decision for herself without undue parental influence.

I remember during college that I worked for a summer in a small grocery store in the heart of Amish country with my father. One of the employees was an Amish young man I'll call Samuel. Samuel turned 16 during that summer. The day before his birthday, Samuel looked and acted like every other Amish youth that I knew: "bowl" haircut that is long around the ears, dark pants, suspenders, plain button shirts, and dark shoes. The day *after* Samuel turned 16, he came in looking like a "typical" English youth with a short-cropped haircut, blue jeans, tennis shoes, and a hockey parka; and he sported an intense hangover.

Another example of a person running around came several years later. Shortly after starting graduate school I was trying to sell my well-worn convertible and find more reliable transportation. My father enjoys such things, so I put him in charge of finding a buyer for this "starter car." I and my husband (then fiancé) happened to be visiting home when one young woman that I'll call Inez came to look at the car. My father had told us she was coming to look at it and that she was Amish. Inez and her older brother were dressed like any typical English high school students: jeans, casual t-shirts, and tennis shoes. After we met her, my husband said he couldn't even tell that she was Amish. I laughed and said that I was just thinking the opposite: I could tell Inez was Amish. It was

apparent to me, as a member of this community, that she was an Amish youth in the "running around" stage of her life. Although she looked English and was looking at buying my car, her hair was to her waist, her speech was inflected with Pennsylvania Dutch accents, and she had innocence about the world that only an Amish person has.

Not all youths will react to their new freedom as Samuel did. My great grandmother, Cora, described her experience running around as "going with the boys. I went to singings and parties. I didn't dress English, but some of the boys did. Also some of the boys had cars. [I also went] with Mennonite boys because they had cars." While Great Grandma's running around period occurred 75 years ago, the Amish in my study have taken strides to remain unchanged. Hence, her experiences are likely very similar to the experiences of today's Amish within my community.

Great Grandma went on to explain more about this time in an Amish youth's life. She said that boys generally rebelled more than girls when she was young and that it seems to still be true today. She said that when she was young, if a girl cut her hair while running around, she could not join the church. Finally, she said that the running around time period is an indefinite amount of time. If a person is single and running around, they have the right to live that way until they make a decision. But if that person marries an English person, they cannot join the Amish church; and if they want to marry an Amish person, they must join the Amish church. Essentially, then, marriage is inherently linked to whether a person will join the church and is a marker of the end of running around.

Running around as part of the literacy practice of coming of age, exhibits several kinds of multimodal literacy. First, before a person can reach the running around stage,

she must pass through the 8th grade in compulsory education; hence she has obtained a certain level of academic literacy. Her academic literacy would be equivalent to any other 15- or 16-year-old youth, including reading fiction and nonfiction, writing reports, associating images with descriptions, and for many, computer or digital literacies. After an Amish youth graduates from the 8th grade, their education rounds out through apprenticeships, part time employment, and helping the family. Samuel is a good example of this. He was 16 when he started running around, and was already working 25 hours a week at the grocery store where my father and I worked. He had the academic literacy that I note above, but he was also adept at doing his job at the store: unloading trucks in a particular order, stocking shelves such that labels face a particular direction, bagging groceries without breaking eggs, bruising bananas, or squishing bread, and assisting customers in a polite manner. More specifically, a person who is running around is in the process of learning "worldly" literacies such as shopping for English clothing by reading tags and observing English cultural norms, procuring a driver's license and driving a car, and in Samuel's case, finding access to alcohol and learning how much one can drink at a given time.

The significance of this coming of age "moment" is it's relationship with the literacy artifact of baptism. Community members coordinate their effort and share responsibility for their group identity. Parents, the bishop and ministers, and community members all relax their structured rules as one in order to "keep pure" the literacy artifact of baptism; no one should be forced to be part of this community. One of the tenets of the Christian faith is that a person is free to make his or her own decision about salvation. The Amish in my study likewise believe that an individual must decide for herself

whether to join the Amish church, and she should not be unduly pressured by others one way or another. Essentially, in order to really be an adult, one must be able to properly "read" baptism in light of its consequences. I think it is also significant that as cooperative and focused parents and ministers are in raising their children to be Amish, they are equally coordinated in their efforts to ensure that a person is joining for the right reasons. Baptism, while a tool of this literacy practice, is only offered to those who truly want it.

II. The Choice

At some point a person must decide whether they will join the Amish church and remain Amish or not join the Amish church and be English. Of particular note is the fact that this is a *decision* that an individual must make because group membership is not assumed. In fact, the group enforces the decision and actively marks it as a coming of age moment. Also, this decision is predicated on a host of multimodal literacy knowledge that emphasizes how heritage literacy is passed in a longitudinal and recursive manner. Group membership centers on this decision and sets apart this community from others where group membership is more implicit. Certainly one must choose to be part of any culture, but the explicit decision and process of baptism illustrates how this decisive moment occurs in various literacy events across time.

One of the reasons I included a description of the decision whether to join as a part of coming of age is because it illustrates how a person will adopt, adapt, or alienate himself from various literacy practices. An applicant will either adopt the lifestyle and literacy practices of the Amish, or alienate himself from both the literacies and the

lifestyle. Adaptation occurs in either instance based on familial norms, leadership within a particular district of Amish, or adjusting to an English life after being raised Amish.

My participant Deborah spoke of her siblings who are in various stages of the church-joining decision. She, along with several of her siblings, has chosen to join the church and remain Amish. Then she has two younger siblings who "are still out there I guess, like they say, sowing their wild oats." Joining the Amish church and settling down with a family is such a large part of growing up and accepting the responsibilities of adulthood that when describing the siblings who are still "sowing wild oats" Deborah says "they still haven't done anything for themselves."

According to John Hostetler, several factors impact a person's decision whether to join the church. He writes,

> When young people reach late adolescence, they naturally think about becoming members of the church. In their sermons, ministers challenge young people to consider baptism. Parents are naturally concerned that young people take this step. In most cases, persistent parental urging is not necessary, since it is normal for young people to follow the role expectation of their peers. No young person can be married in the Amish church without first being baptized in the faith (78).

While ministers are overt in their challenges to youth to join the church, other factors offer a more subtle influence. Parents, peers, and marriage partners also impact a person's decision, although Hostetler points out that peers and marriage partners are the strongest persuaders.

Among my participants, parents of young people openly expressed either the desire that their children become Amish or a concern for their children's decisions. I pointed out earlier how Deborah expressed what she hopes to pass to her children: "I hope they want to follow in our footsteps and stay Amish." Similarly, Martha hopes that her children "remain Amish because that's the way I was brought up." Finally, Ida expressed that it was partly because of her parent's influence that she chose to be Amish: "I guess to me my parent's approval...gave me a satisfaction."

Peer expectations play a large part in a person's decision to join. When interviewing Mary, her teenage daughter was present. Her daughter said that she plans on joining the church "because all my brothers and sisters have all ready joined the church, and I'm the only one who hasn't. They are an example to me, and I just think that I want to be Amish." Mary notes that her other children have all joined the Amish church, but it is a bit unusual for them to join so young. They don't run around with those kids who are "running around" but they have social things they do with other young people who have joined.

Finally, the decision of whom to marry impacts whether a person joins the church. When I asked why she chose to remain Amish, Marie said

> Not for the best reason at all, my boyfriend wanted to... but now I've joined and I think this is really what is right for me. It is the way I want to raise my kids. Because I think it is more of a protection against the world you know that's out there. It is just what I really want. I always told my mom I was what they'd call a bum church member. I'm glad to say I've grown up and matured things look a lot different now.

Similarly, my great grandma reflected that her husband got baptized so they could get married. Marie says joining for her boyfriend wasn't "the best reason," which evidences the number of other influences in the decision, and the fact that my great grandfather got baptized in order to marry my great grandmother shows just how powerful an influencer marriage is in the decision.

My data offers another strong reason why many chose to be Amish that reflects "upbringing" that isn't necessarily parental pressure. Rather it is a certain comfort level with what they've always known. Jane decided to remain Amish because "I just thought that is the way I wanted to live." Ida said, "I knew it was the right thing to do." Rachel stayed Amish because she believes in "being modest." She felt that "I was raised that way and wouldn't feel comfortable any other way." Leah also said that "we were taught to stay with our upbringing.... I guess I didn't have any desire to not be Amish. I felt comfortable doing this." I ask Ruth why she chose to be Amish. She replied,

> Well I never gave anything else a thought. It's what we grew up in and I respected the church. It was the right thing to do. I think that a lot of people... it's not that the church isn't what they want it's the material things... You know, sometimes it sure would be nice but I think that it still keeps us where we belong. I don't think it is wrong for other people to drive a car, but it is wrong for me.

Ruth's reasons for staying are varied, but her strongest reasons center on how she was raised. Similarly, I asked my great grandmother why she joined the Amish church. She responded, "That's all we knew. We thought we had to. It was what everyone did." I asked if she felt that she was pressured into the decision and Great Grandma replied, "Oh

no, they didn't pressure me. I wanted to join. That's all we knew." It is interesting that while Great Grandma says she joined because that is all she knew and she thought she had to, she does not feel that the community pressured her into the decision. The influences of the community, then, are not always as explicit as a minister's sermon from the pulpit.

Linked to a person's comfort with the Amish way of life is a fear or uncertainty of the unknown English world, the literacies required to function within that world, and a fear of regretting a wrong decision. Marie, quoted above, talks about joining the Amish as "a protection against the world." Dorothy said she is Amish because she never knew anything else and because she couldn't imagine life as an English person. She said,

> I was content in staying here and just living the life that I knew. There are times where you think "gee it'd be convenient to have a car and just quick go here and there" but there are so many other things that go with that, I'm content with the life we've got. I think it is fast paced enough and I can't imagine how it (the life of English) would be because everybody says life is so fast paced and the Amish have such a slow pace of life and I think it is fast paced enough! How would it be to try and keep up?

It seems that Dorothy's discomfort with the idea of an English lifestyle is centered on their uses of technologies and literacies such as operating a car. Leah also gave insight to the uncertainty of the English lifestyle:

> You asked why I wanted to remain Amish and I was thinking it just seems that I've heard it so many times that they regret it once they leave the Amish in my study and they are not so happy anymore. It seems that their

> children drift even further away from the Amish faith. It seems like they do regret it when they leave. So if you are happy where you are I see no reason [to leave].

Leah worries that she will regret it if she leaves the Amish. She also is worried for her children that they will become more worldly if she were to step away from the Amish lifestyle. Finally, she offers the advice: if you are happy where you are, stay there. This advice makes sense given her commitment to her community and the steadfastness exhibited in the work ethic discussed in chapter three.

If a man decides to join the Amish church, he also implies that he is willing to take on the role of minister. The Amish in my study do not ordain ministers as other Christian groups do. Rather, they believe in being lay-led or lead by a layperson who is on equal footing with all other members of a community. Generally the Amish cast lots to select the bishop, deacon, and two ministers who oversee an Amish church district. So any man who has decided to join the Amish church has the potential of being selected. Fishman notes,

> Authority is not sought in this society; its status derives from the awesome responsibility it entails that members believe they must assume.... Parents, ministers, and teachers take on these roles because God directs them to do so... for the greater communal good. Those chosen do not feel particularly able to lead or teach; in fact, they have no special skills or preparation....Therefore what may appear to be blind obedience in parent-child, minister-congregation, or teacher-pupil relationships is actually a

> concept of cooperation, of how life is most successfully organized for individual and communal benefit" (Fishman 153).

Note how this kind of leadership is essential to maintain the boundaries of the culture. Leadership is imbedded within the group, and any decisions that a leader makes impact him, his family, and the wider community he is in leadership over.

My participant Dorothy's husband is a minister within their church district. I asked what the differences are between the different leaders of the church. She replied that

> the bishop is set over the minister. There's one bishop, two ministers, and a deacon. The deacon acts kind of like a treasurer and distributes [money] where it is needed. Ministers preach. Bishop has the duty to oversee the church. He also preaches sometimes. They take turns. We have church in our district every two weeks and then on the "in between Sundays" we go to a neighboring and visit. They get to know other people and hear others preaching. Because other districts also take turns and then visit other places, ministers take turns in neighboring districts. It keeps the whole community together.

When Dorothy's husband was first ordained, she didn't want to travel with him to other districts to meet with other Amish people, though now she enjoys it. There are specific literacies involved in the decision whether to join. If a man joins the church, he may be expected to read scriptures and write sermons that will impact the entire community. The wider community maintains its overall boundaries against outside influences by having

different districts visit one another. In this way, there is a consistency of beliefs, both spiritual and communal.

The factors which impact a person's decision to join the Amish church tell me something significant about literacy. Literacy to be used or accepted by a person must make sense to them in light of all else that they know. For instance, baptism into the Amish way of life cannot make sense to applicants without the groundwork laid by parents, ministers, and other community members. As Hostetler pointed out, ministers preach sermons about joining. Parents like Dorothy, Deborah, Martha, and Ida expressed the desire for their children to remain Amish. These children will be raised, most likely, in the same ways that their parents were: in a way that the decision to be Amish is an obvious one, as it was for Jane, Leah, and Ruth. Also, these parents will most likely raise their children such that the lifestyle of the English is somewhat foreign to them. The decision to join, then, is made in part because a young person knows exactly what it will mean to be Amish. Finally, as with Deborah's siblings who have yet to join, Dorothy's observations of the fast paced lifestyle of the English, and Leah's knowledge of people who regret leaving, the decision to join is impacted by evidence that participants see outside of their community. In other words, the decision makes sense given what they know.

Further, this literacy practice is contextualized in the Amish worldview. Members cooperate in their attitudes and practices, including literacy practices, to imbed baptism into the very fabric of the Amish way of life. Because of this, my artificial separation between the cultural moment of baptism and the spiritual significance

(covered in chapter six) really would not make sense to my Amish participants. As Fishman notes, the Amish community's

> universal trust and accountability produces social organization equally consistent across context....When there are turns to be taken [at leadership responsibilities], everyone shares equally. When the group has a goal, anyone may – and everyone is expected to – help achieve that goal without regard to who volunteers most or least. This relates to literacy and its transmission because it produces the assumption that everyone is or will become literate, according to the community definition of that term" (Fishman 154).

Community members share the responsibilities for group cohesion, including leadership, goals, and literacy acquisition. Also, the Amish in my study imbed leadership within the group and their literacies and actions reflect their understanding of their social makeup. The efforts of the community to maintain its boundaries and borders are evident in the ways that they adopt and adapt literacy practices. The decision whether to join the Amish church and be baptized as a multimodal literacy event and a heritage literacy artifact, evidences the choices that the Amish in my study have made about who is and is not "literate" within the community, or baptized into the fellowship.

III. Baptism and Joining the Church

When a person decides to join the Amish church, preparations are made for her baptism. Baptism, in addition to the active decision that must be made whether to join this community, is a heritage literacy event and this ceremony marks a person as being

part of the community. To join the church is a serious decision. As Hostetler points out, the Amish "accept other people as they are, without attempting to judge or convert them to the Amish in my study way of life. But for those who are born into the Amish society, the sanctions for belonging are deeply rooted" (Hostetler 77). Of particular importance in Hostetler's statement is that while the Amish are generally not judgmental of outsiders, there are strict rules and regulations for those inside their community. Baptism is both a spiritual ceremony and a marker of the depth of community among the Amish in my study. Hostetler writes that Amish unity is

> based upon the understanding of the church as a redemptive community. To express this corporateness they use the German term *Gemeinde* or the shorter dialect version pronounced *Gemee*. This concept expresses all the connotations of church, congregation, and community (74).

In other words, the concepts of church congregation, community, and "insider status" are marked by the act of baptism into an Amish community.

To join the Amish church, according to my great grandmother, "you take lessons most of the summer... [where] you learn the rules of the Amish like how to dress and how to behave." Hostetler writes that this class is known as "*die Bemee nooch geh,* or literally, 'to follow the church'" (78). Within these lessons, great "emphasis is put upon the difficulty of walking the 'straight and narrow way'" (Hostetler 78), which is a distinctly biblical principle meaning one must follow the "rules" of Christianity to perfection without straying[11]. However, Great Grandma said that in her lessons "there was some Bible... [but] there wasn't that much." These lessons, for my great

[11] These "rules" of Christianity will be discussed in detail within chapter six. In addition, the concept of "rules" will be contrasted against what I call "living out of one's faith."

grandmother at least, were as much about the lifestyle and culture of being Amish as they were about the expression of one's faith.

The conclusion of these lessons is a baptismal service. On the baptismal Sunday, after several hours of sermons, those joining the church come forward and kneel. The deacon holds a bowl or bucket with water and a ladle. The bishop lays his hands on each young person's head and says "*Auf deinen Glauben den du bekennt hast vor Gott und viele Zeugen wirst du getauft in Namen des Vaters, des Sohnes und des Heiligen Geistes, Amen* ('Upon your faith, which you have confessed before God and these many witnesses, you are baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, Amen')" (Hostetler 80). My great grandmother said that the bishop cups his hands upward over the young person's head. Then the deacon dips water out of the pail and pours it into the bishop's cupped hands. The water drips down over the hair and face of the applicant. After the baptism is completed for each young person, the bishop helps them to their feet and greets each by saying "*In Namen des Herrn und die Gemein wird dir die Hand geboten, so steh auf* ('In the name of the Lord and the Church, we extend to you the hand of fellowship, rise up')" (Hostetler 81).

What I have just described is a fairly standard baptismal service in any Christian group, although differences exist for the age of the applicant, the performance of the baptismal service, and whether the water is poured, sprinkled, or full immersion (the applicant is dipped fully under a body of water). While the words spoken and the "text of the Amish vow" are not significantly different than other Christian traditions, what "is significant is the promise to abide by implied rules not explicitly stated in the vow. By inference or otherwise, the strict Amish churches include in the vow the promise to help

maintain the *Regel und Ordnung* ('rules and order') and the promise not to depart from them in life or death" (Hostetler 81-82). Again, the significance of an Amish baptism is that an applicant is promising to do more than live a Christian life. They are also inferring their compliance and adherence to a code of conduct and lifestyle.

Baptism for the Amish in my study is a multimodal literacy tool which employs scriptural texts, artifacts such as a bowl and dipper, performance literacy and ceremony that alters the state of a person's life – much like a minister pronouncing a couple man and wife after a wedding ceremony – and water as a tool for entrance into a body of Christian believers. Let me offer some evidence for these multiple modes and build on the practice I've been describing.

First, print modes are evident in the scriptures read during a baptismal service. In a recent letter, Rebecca wrote me to more fully explain an Amish baptism. She writes that she doesn't remember exactly what the sermon was about the day of her own baptism, but that part of it was in the biblical book of Acts, chapter 8. Acts chapter 8 references several baptisms during the early days of the Christian church. First, it depicts how a man named Simon, who practiced magic and sorcery, heard the words spoken by Philip, one of Jesus' apostles. When Simon heard about Jesus, he stopped practicing magic and was baptized, as were many people who had followed him. Second, Acts 8 tells the story of how Philip met an Ethiopian eunuch on a road. The eunuch was reading the book of Isaiah, specifically portions that prophesied Jesus' coming, but could not understand it without help. Philip explained these prophecies to him, and described the life and teachings of Jesus. Then the eunuch said, "'Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?' And Philip said, 'If you believe with all your heart, you may.'

And [the eunuch] answered and said, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God'" (Acts 8: 36-37).

Rachel's letter to me also offered scriptural references that occurred during her baptismal service. She writes, "After baptism, Romans chapter 6 is used." Romans chapter 6 questions how someone who has believed and been baptized as a Christian can continue to sin. Verses 2 to 7 read:

> How shall we who died to sin live in it? Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in the newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin.

These verses question how a person who has claimed to be a Christian and who has been baptized could continue to sin as if they had never known Christ. Being baptized into the death of Christ means a Christian's sinful life and lifestyle was killed along with Christ. Then, baptism in the resurrection means that a Christian is a new person who is freed from sin. In being baptized, a Christian is sharing these experiences with Christ and with other believers.

These passages of biblical scripture, then, show the depth of commitment, faith, and tradition that are present when an applicant is baptized into the Christian church. The baptismal stories of Simon and the eunuch offer written examples of the performance literacy I mentioned above. They show how the act of saying one believes and then being baptized with water alters the state of a person's life. Similarly, Romans 6 explains the transformation that occurs in the heart of a person who is baptized.

For my Amish participants, to go through this literacy event is to both believe as a Christian and join this body of believers, and it also means they join the Amish community and will live an Amish lifestyle the rest of their lives. As I've already pointed out, baptism includes the implied lifestyle decision is what marks the Amish baptismal service differently than other Christian baptismal services. It is an event, moreover a literacy practice because implied within the reading of scripture and the performance of a baptism is the adherence to the social and cultural norms of the Christian church and specifically the Amish community.

The literacy artifacts of a dipper and bowl, along with water, act as multimodal tools. Much like a pen and paper are tools for writing a letter, a dipper, bowl, and water are tools for baptism, admission into adulthood, and entrance into a particular church community. These tools are used in auditory, tactile, and performance modes of a baptismal service. In heritage literacy, to signify one's self as part of an Amish community or other church community is to adopt these tools. Adaptations of these tools occur when some Christian communities pour the water or immerse the applicant in water. And those who opt not to be baptized alienate themselves from these technologies and tools.

Finally, the ceremony also signifies the heritage literacy practice of coming of age because it alters the state of a person's life. To go through a baptismal service and be offered "the hand of fellowship" as Hostetler put it, is to change because of spoken words. When a minister commands a baptismal applicant to "rise up," there is a physical change that has come about because of spoken literacy.

Rachel wrote in her letter, "Our baptism is based on our faith in the Trinity, the Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost. Baptism shows submission to Christ and willingness to live God's way and an identification with God's people." The artifacts of dipper, bowl, and water signify the ending of one way of life and the beginning of another. Water alludes to the washing away of sins; when a baptismal applicant is submerged and then brought out of water, she leaves behind her sin. The dipper, bowl, and water act as tools in the reading and writing of group cohesion.

Coming of age, as part of heritage literacy, emphasizes how baptism is part of group cohesion for the Amish baptism as much as it is a spiritual act. Baptism as a literacy event and the literacy artifacts used during it are part of the heritage literacy practice of coming of age because they show the passage of these early Christian traditions to the present day, and the interconnectivity of new generations with old. The examples of baptisms in Acts and one's own baptismal experience, allows a Christian to be part of the longitudinal passage of literacy practice.

IV. Not Joining the Church

The alternative to baptism and joining the Amish church is simply to not join the Amish church – in some sense choosing to alienate one's self from all that she knows, in

another sense adapting the tools into another church or social context. Some young people know early on that they will not be joining, while others grapple with the decision even up to the point of baptism instruction. Hostetler notes, "The applicants are told that it is better not to make a vow that to make a vow and later break it; on the Saturday prior to baptism they are asked to meet with the ministers and there they are given the opportunity to 'turn back' if they so desire" (Hostetler 78). Also, Romans 6 addresses the issue of a person who has believed continuing to sin. For those who struggle with the decision, the ministers offer many chances to "turn back" from their decision to join before they go through with it. He points out that it is better for the applicant and the community if she opts not to join rather than joining then leaving. The factors that lead a person to not join the church are similar to those that lead to joining: parental influence, peers, and marriage.

Though parents want their children to follow in their footsteps and remain Amish, most are supportive of their children no matter what decision they make. Rebecca speaks of what she told her children when they chose not to join the Amish church:

> I told them they could go with my blessing, if that is what they choose. It doesn't hurt me so much now if you don't want to be Amish like I am. It would make me very happy to stay where I am, but I said if you go to Mennonite church and be a good member, help build up the church and grow and be faithful and grow in it, you can go with my blessing. I would rather you go now than if I forced you to go to the Amish then after you were with the Amish you decide I can't make it here and up and leave it. That would hurt me much more than if you go now.

As with Hostetler's quote above, Rebecca preferred that her children simply decide not to join, rather that to join and then leave. Leaving, to her, would be hurtful. It would be a breaking of their promise that I described in the section on baptism and an act of turning away from the death and resurrection of Christ. Deborah offers further explanation. She said she has one sibling who's "married and they're Christians too, they go to church and they just chose not to be Amish." Deborah loves her siblings and is not hurt by their decision not to be Amish. Rather she focuses on the fact that they are Christian people who simply opted not to follow the Amish way of life.

Still, when a person opts not to join, she does so knowing that she has disappointed her parents. But marriage and peer influence can outweigh parental expectations. When she was deciding whether to join the Amish church, Miriam started dating the man she is now married to. He was not going to join the Amish which cemented her own decision to be English. She said it was really hard to go against her parents' wishes. After they were married and chose not to join the Amish church, they didn't go home for six months. She had cut her hair and felt that they wouldn't accept her. She commented that though she wasn't shunned, she still felt that she had gone against her parents' wishes and that they were disappointed in her.

Others opt not to join because of the technological constraints that the Amish lifestyle demands. Sarah's parents left the Amish church because they didn't agree with a lot of the stipulations and the stringency. Sarah said, "My dad was a farmer, and you know how the Amish can't use certain equipment. My dad didn't agree with it and he didn't like it, so that's basically why they left, I think." Similarly, Rebecca's son didn't join the Amish because he felt he needed a car. Her husband had died and her son felt he

needed to earn money to take care of the family. He further said he had to have a car because they were day laborers who needed a way to get to their jobs.

Finally, some choose not to join for more spiritual or personal reasons. Amos grew up Amish but chose not to join because "I didn't want to be Amish. I didn't want to live the way they lived. All we ever heard was you had to do this and that and the other thing. It had nothing to do with [Biblical] scripture whatsoever as far as I could see." Amos felt that the baptism and the Amish church tradition were more concerned with the lifestyle of being Amish rather than any spiritual decision. He opted instead to go to a Mennonite church, and then later the church I grew up in, to find Biblical teaching that satisfied him.

In its relationship to the literacy tool of baptism, choosing to not join the Amish church is an act of alienation. Those who leave the community, in many ways, are leaving behind their upbringing and the literacy knowledge that comes with being a part of a community. From the strictest Amish perspective, those who choose not to join alienate themselves from their home culture and their faith: two signifiers of group cohesion. They may still understand a particular literacy event, such as baptism into the Amish church, but they are no longer part of the community in the same way.

This alienation is in marked contrast to how those who join the Amish form a collective community who alienates themselves from technologies such as electricity, cars, and computers. In a sense, the coming of age moment surrounding baptism necessarily requires adoption of one set of skills and literacies and alienation from another. Alienation, like adoption or adaptation of literacy practices, is contextualized. As with recipes, the literacy practice of coming of age is best understood in the context of

the group a person chooses to be a part of. Rather than the subtle gaining of literacies and skills as a person is part of a group, such as their family, and the forced gaining of literacies and skills in compulsory education, coming of age, in this instance, is an obvious *decision* to accept particular literacy knowledge and adjust one's life accordingly.

The conscious decision to accept or reject a particular literacy shows that while heritage is something that is often bestowed upon new generations, not every person wants what is being offered to her. Heritage is a personal thing, and many people would rather alienate themselves from their pasts and their ancestors to make their own way in the world. Still, the principles of heritage literacy, the passage of literacy knowledge longitudinally across generations and the adoption and adaptation of tools to imbed them in their contexts, are present even when a person alienates themselves from his or her actual heritage.

Even when my great grandmother left the Amish church, she carried with her some portions of her upbringing. She chose to alienate herself from the Amish way of life, but she adopted another way of life that was similar. She alienated at the same time she adopted and adapted. One cannot alienate without then adopting another practice. For instance, when a person leaves the church and perhaps chooses to not be a Christian at all, all other things in her life are done in reaction or opposition to her heritage. She may adopt and adapt new practices based on what will take her as far from her origins as possible.

Another factor of the conscious decision to adopt and adapt is that it is a constantly changing decision. One cannot decide one time to alienate himself from his

entire heritage and the ways that they read and write. He may leave a community, he may make decisions to stop practicing in a particular way, but new challenges will force him to continually reevaluate his alienation. The same goes for group cohesion and the decision to adopt or adapt. Every new circumstance, external or internal, will create another decision of how to "remain" literate by adopting or adapting tools.

V. Leaving the Church after Joining: Shunning

Hostetler writes that the "Amish make no effort to evangelize or proselyte the outsider. It is their primary concern to keep their own baptized members from slipping into the outer world, or into other religious groups (Hostetler 87). To choose not to join the church can cause rifts in the family, however it is far worse to join the church then leave it later. When a person joins the church, then leaves it, many Amish districts practice shunning. Shunning, also called social avoidance (*Meidung),* is based in the German word *Bann* or excommunication. Shunning is the act of restricting how community members associate with a person who has left the church after joining (or has been excommunicated for some other infraction) (Hostetler 85). Based on their interpretation of Biblical scripture, Amish community members cannot eat or keep company with a shunned person. They are, essentially, to avoid that person (Hostetler 85).

My great grandmother offered further information about the practice of shunning. The bishop, ministers, and the family of a rebelling person give a series of warnings about inappropriate behavior. If the behavior does not stop, the bishop will order the community to shun that person. Members of the community may not accept goods,

services, or favors from a shunned person, and a shunned person can no longer eat at the family table.

My great grandmother left the Amish church after joining it and she was shunned for a time. She said her husband and young children left the church because

> we had trouble. We had a telephone in the house and they told us we couldn't. Our horse got hurt because the neighbor's bull jumped the fence and gored it. It was our driving horse so we had to get a car. We wanted to join a church, but we couldn't be Amish anymore, so we had to go to the Mennonite church.

Note that there were a series of warnings before the shunning took place, and that the shunning finally occurred because Great Grandma was trying to adapt too many outside practices into her Amish lifestyle. Great Grandma remembers being shunned by her family but her memories are indistinct. It may have been because, as Hostetler points out, some church districts are not as strict as others. While some districts will shun a person until they come back to the Amish, the "milder interpretations are that a shunning should continue only until an excommunicated person is restored to some other congregation or branch of the Anabaptist faith" (Hostetler 86). By joining a Mennonite church, my great grandmother may not have been shunned in the same way a person who left the faith entirely might be.

However, after she and her family left the Amish church, my great grandmother divorced her husband and then she remarried several years later. Great Grandma recalls that it wasn't really her family that shunned her, although they didn't agree with her decisions. She was visiting her mother's home and there were other people there. At

lunch the visiting people refused to eat with her. She says, "I could sit at the table but they wouldn't let me dish out my own food. Now I think, 'why did I take that? Why didn't I get in my car and go to Smalltown to eat.' It hurt me at the time." Great Grandma recalled with some pain that this event really hurt her. She was no longer Amish at this point, but she still found herself allowing the shunning without resistance, and indeed tolerated it rather than leaving.

Miriam never joined the Amish church, so when she chose to be English, she was not shunned. Her sister, however, joined then left and was shunned for 40 years, a fairly extreme example of shunning. Her sister is still bitter about it. Her father said they must shun her because "she promised on bended knee to remain Amish" and to go against her word was unforgivable. The family's district was only moderately strict, but the district that her sister had joined was very strict. Three family members shunned her sister: her father, one brother and one sister. This brother and sister were the only two of 9 who remained Amish.

The shunning continued for 40 years. The sister was allowed to come to family meals after a while, but she could not serve herself food, and she couldn't physically participate in many activities; she could only observe. She also couldn't accept money from anyone Amish. After she left the church, she married a divorced man, which only cemented further her shunning by her father. When she had left the church she was unmarried. The shunning was finally lifted only when the bishop who demanded it died. Her father has also passed away, and most of the family never joined the Amish, so there was some reconciliation in the family.

Within Miriam's narrative about her sister I want to point out the specific ways that alienation affected the entire group. The sister's act of choosing to alienate herself from the Amish culture had repercussions on not just the way she existed within her family but also how her family was required to act toward her. Her act of alienation meant that her family had to alienate her in return. Alienation, in this way, affects the entire community and not just a single person who opts to remover herself.

As I explained earlier, one of the factors that contribute to a person's decision about joining the church is a fear of the unknown. In the same way, a fear of rejection and fear of disappointing family is a strong influencer in keeping those who have joined the Amish church "on the straight and narrow." Hostetler writes,

> With greater mobility and ease of travel and communication, Amish solidarity is threatened. Members who may wish to have automobiles, radios, or the usual comforts of modern living face the threat of being excommunicated and shunned. Thus the ban is used as an instrument of discipline not only for the drunkard or the adulterer but for the person who transgresses the *Ordnung.* It is a powerful instrument for preventing involvement in outside loyalties (87).

Hostetler's quote focuses most heavily on the shunning that would occur if an Amish person were to adapt English conveniences into an Amish lifestyle. Moreover, I want to point out that a ban acts as a disciplinarian not only for the repercussions it would have on the person, but on the repercussions and demands it places on the family and community.

Shunning implies that a person has "gone too far" in the adaptations of the Amish church or that too many English conveniences technologies and literacies have been adopted. There is a play here between literacies and between what is permissible within the community in terms of their boundaries. Heavily tied to their cultural boundaries are the technologies and literacies which surround baptism. Uses of technologies and various kinds of literacies are strongly dependent on what is acceptable and expected by those who are already within the community.

IMPLICATIONS

First, coming of age is reliant upon the cooperation of the community to allow entrance to an applicant. Without the group upholding traditions, literacies, and tool usage that aligns with its perceptions of identity, there would be no group for the applicant to join. Similarly, only in agreeing what is and is not permissible within the community are participants able to articulate who is and is not a member. They do so because they agree about the purposes for their community and the ways that they live. The same might be said for their literacy practices. Only those literacy practices that make sense within their community and lifestyle will survive within the community and prove to be useful. For instance, because the Amish are first and foremost a religious group, only through the literacy event of baptism do people gain entrance into the community. The literacy practices *have to be* imbedded within their culture and values, for it is culture and values that guide their cohesion.

Second, coming of age, as part of heritage literacy, consists of tools and literacies passed from generation to generation. Since the beginning of the Christian church,

people have been baptized with water as an act of joining a body of believers. Baptism "in the name of Christ" is a performance literacy practice that began with the early church and has continued to the present day. In the past century, a cup with water has been used. And within the Amish community my participants belong to, the code of ethics, manner of dress, and lifestyle are passed, relatively unchanged, between generations. There is an interconnectivity of generations in such a community as this; the oldest generations have been through the same time-worn practices as the newest generations. The literacy practice of coming of age recursively occurs for every new generation as it did for the previous one.

The Amish in my study could not have survived for so long when facing pressures to assimilate if they had not made a conscious effort to pass their systems of belief and lifestyle on to younger generations. The passing of literacy practices, including tools, technologies, and the value system of the community, does not always transfer easily to the next generation. Young people may or may not rebel, fear, uncertainty, and peer pressures impact decisions, and the pull toward modern conveniences is an ever-present reality. Literacy learning of any sort, then, is not a smooth dispersal of information. Rather it is built in layers of transfers over and across time.

Third, when a community is indeed focused on group cohesion and the shared responsibility for maintaining that cohesion, the passage of literacy knowledge is much more likely to occur. Within the bounds of a community, literacy has meaning and purpose. Without the bounds of a community, if literacy is taught in a vacuum or as neutral, learning is hindered.

Fourth, coming of age in the Amish community and literacy learning seem to be like a rock dropped in a pond. The ripples outward from that point of entry represent the various ways that the initial literacy of Amish baptism has been adopted, adapted, or alienated from an individual's worldview. My own family has long been removed from the center of Amish culture. However, I still see evidence of the same tendency to coordinate effort in keeping the family together, to rely on our Anabaptist church tradition in the ways that we view baptism, and marking coming of age moments with literacy tools such as baptism.

The next chapter covers what I call *gathering and communing* as a heritage literacy practice. Gathering and communing refers to the ways that community members come together to collectively read and write literacy artifacts. In particular I'll be analyzing how quilts are multimodal literacy because they are sign systems that must be decoded, how they are part of gathering and communing, and how community members adopt and adapt the tools for their creation. Quilts, as multimodal literacy artifacts, aptly exhibit explicit characteristics (the outward, physical or obvious message of a text) and the implicit (the values, affection, or meanings implied in a text). Overall, gathering and communing, as exemplified in quilts, offers a way to understand the ways that people pass literacy knowledge across time and generations of people.

CHAPTER SIX: QUILTING: GATHERING AND COMMUNING AS HERITAGE LITERACY PRACTICE

INTRODUCTION

The final heritage literacy practice that I observed within my home community is that of *gathering and communing*. Within my family and within my community, the concept of gathering together to share a meal, to talk or visit, or to worship binds us together as a community and fosters reading and writing collaboration. Certainly cooking and recipes are a gathering and communing moment, as is baptism and worship, the topics of chapters three, four, and six. However, in order to articulate exactly how this practice occurs within my community, and to analyze a different sort of heritage literacy artifact, I have selected quilting and quilts as events and artifacts to explore further the ways that the community gathers and communes in collaborative literacy.

Gathering and communing, as part of heritage literacy, could be categorized as what Heath calls a "literacy event" or "any occasion in which a piece of writing is integral to the nature of participants' interactions and their interpretive processes" (Critical Sourcebook 445). However, gathering and communing is distinguishable from Heath's term. A literacy event, according to Heath, examines the "forms and functions of oral and literate traditions and co-existing relationships between spoken and written language" (Critical Sourcebook 445); whereas the emphasis in gathering and communing is on an empathetic collaboration toward reading or writing a multimodal literacy artifact, a much narrower definition. Included in gathering and communing would be church events such as worship or a Bible study, canning or cooking with several people, reading a book as a family, or a quilting.

Another way that gathering and communing is narrower, or more specific, than Heath's literacy events is the fact that it emphasizes the connections community members make between what I call explicit literacy characteristics and implicit literacy characteristics. This chapter emphasizes the fact that any given literacy artifact, event, or practice has several layers to its meaning. On its face, a literacy artifact is concerned primarily with "being lettered." Specifically, traditional literacy research understood it as alphabetic technology, according to literacy researchers such as Ong and Havelock. In particular, Havelock's work attributed higher value to alphabet technology than to cuneiform, character, syllabary, or hieroglyph (Cushman et al., "Divides"). In general, these traditional literacy scholars were studying the effects of sign technologies on social and cultural institutions. I'm arguing here, though, that these social and cultural institutions have effects on the use of sign technologies as much as sign technologies affect them. In fact, the sign system and the social and cultural underpinnings must work together for meaning to be made.

As a system of signs, a literacy artifact makes meaning by being coded and decoded by readers and writers. I call this set of attributes explicit characteristics because these are the attributes that educators, politicians, and the general public most readily associate with literacy. In a sense, these characteristics are the "obvious" ways an artifact makes meaning. No less important, but certainly less obvious, are the meanings of a literacy artifact created by their ideological underpinnings (Street). These implicit characteristics are the values a community gives to a particular literacy event or artifact and the subtle ways that an artifact makes meaning, given those values.

Heritage literacy artifacts, specifically quilts in this chapter, have explicit and implicit characteristics. I will argue in the next section that quilts are sign systems and patterns that convey meaning in the same manner that a "lettered" artifact might. The pattern itself, for example, is a type of text when someone knows how it works as a sign technology, and she can decode it and relate its story. Quilts also offer insights to the values and ideological underpinnings of this particular community. The implicit meanings made during a quilting offer insights to how gathering and communing operates within the community and how and why it is heritage literacy.

Beyond their actual "lettered" aspects, quilts are *multimodal* literacy artifacts. As chapter one articulates, multimodal literacy researchers such as Kress, Jewitt, and van Leeuwen study the ways that any literacy is comprised of many modes, not just alphabetic letters on a sheet of paper. Other modes include visual, pictorial, spatial, and auditory. I would also consider modes to include the tactile and the kinesthetic. In multimodal literacy, all modes are considered to be "equal" so to speak (Kress and Jewitt 2). Instead of creating a hierarchy where pen-and-paper literacies are set above all other modes of composing, multimodality sets them all on equal footing.

Walter Ong made the claim that "'True' writing is defined as not the representation of things but the representation of sounds. It therefore excludes pictograms, semiotic marks of various kinds, syllabaries, and even the Semitic alphabet..." (Street, *Social,* 154). In this mindset, text is a lettered message or pattern to be decoded. However, with the advent of multiliteracies (New London) and multimodality, it becomes apparent that a decoding of patterns and textures in a quilt might also be an encoding of meaning. Note that the textures in fabric are TEXTtures. If

all modes are equal, the patterns contained within fabric and stitches must also be decoded for meaning to be made.

When a tool (literacy or otherwise) is viewed as neutral, the explicit characteristics of literacy are elevated above the implicit characteristics. The value of a tool is based on what it can *do,* rather than on who created it, why it was created, or what the surrounding assumptions are about it. Put in another way, literacy is valued for the pen-and-paper words and sentences produced in an academic setting, for example, but no attention is given the ideological climate or underpinnings of the piece of writing or the context in which it was written.

Gathering and communing is a combination, a collaboration if you will, of the explicit and implicit characteristics associated with a heritage literacy artifact. In this chapter, I focus on quilts as having both the explicit or "lettered" qualities of a literacy artifact and the secondary or "community values" qualities as well. Also explicit refers to the tools used for crafting a quilt and implicit refers to the social and personal values that "underpin" (Street) its meaning. As an example of gathering and communing, quilts show us how the connection of explicit and implicit characteristics helps us imbed an artifact in its context, see the literacy in light of its use within the community, and understand how the adoption and adaptation of tools impacts the context and the community.

This chapter focuses on quilts as literacy artifacts, quilting as a moment of gathering and communing, and the ideological underpinnings of these things. I seek to answer the following questions: 1.) how is gathering and communing heritage literacy;

2.) how is quilting a multimodal literacy practice; and 3.) how do participants use quilting as a literacy tool?

To get at these questions, I first offer reasoning for including quilts as multimodal literacy artifacts based upon existing research (Kress and van Leeuwen, Kress and Jewitt, and Manovich). This section offers the explicit text messages that many quilts contain as well as an argument for counting the patterns and textures of a quilt as encoded sign systems. Next I explain why I selected quilts to represent the heritage literacy practice of gathering and communing. The following section offers data examples of the practice of quilting, the tools used to "write" a quilt, and how my participants view quilts and quilting. I offer a specific analysis of several of my family's quilts to show the generational passage of this literacy practice and to reiterate the multimodality of quilts. I conclude with implications and the ways that gathering and communing and quilting help me describe the unique attributes of heritage literacy among other theories of literacy.

QUILTS AS MULTIMODAL LITERACY ARTIFACTS

In order to explain how quilts and quilting exemplify gathering and communing, I must first explain how and why I consider quilts to be a literacy artifact. Literacy, primarily, means something is "lettered." More broadly, literacy is a system of signs, symbols and patterns that convey meaning. Simply put, a quilt is a patterned piecing of symbols that conveys meaning.

Perhaps the most obvious example of my argument is found in African American narrative quilts. These quilts used patterns and appliquéd pictures to convey stories,

moral lessons, and political stances, much like early literacy initiatives by the Christian church relied on pictorial representations of biblical stories. Olga Idriss Davis, a researcher of Black rhetoric and narrative, writes that the rhetoric in African American quilts "points to the legacy of a people struggling for symbols of expression through pieces of cloth and a myriad of colors. The quilt uncovers the choice of symbols black women used within their community to create a shared, common meaning of self and the world" (67). Davis' quote makes plain that the choices of color, pattern, image, symbol, and even cloth signify, just as letters on a page. Floris Barnett Cash, a researcher in African Studies and History, writes that "the voices of black women are stitched within their quilts" (Cash 30). In other words, the identity of a sewer is present in a quilt. Also, quilts convey stories; as Cash puts it "quiltmaking [is] craft history" (33). Narrative quilts, according to Cash, are a "distinct American art form" (34) that have been used in conjunction with the African method of using textiles to record political and family histories (Cash 34) to make a uniquely African American literacy artifact.

Amish quilts also convey codified messages, although their messages are more subtle than African American pictorial quilts. Amish quilts are distinctive because they use bold, solid colors in rigid, nonrepresentational geometric patterns. Robert Shaw, a expert on American folk art and traditional crafts, writes about the meanings conveyed by Amish quilts when he describes them: "...solid-colored rather than printed fabric... employed color in painterly ways, juxtaposing large or small squares, diamonds, bars or triangles of similar value or intensity to create powerful visual rhythms" (Shaw 171). The Amish also use a great deal of black in their quilts because black is the color of joy in their culture.

The meaning conveyed in geometric patterns might seem inexact in terms of literacy. Shaw writes

> The content of an Amish quilt stands in marked contrast to the prevailing concerns of the greater American society and clearly represents the Amish desire to remain apart from the distracting temptations and complexities of the 'English' world. Amish quilts belong to a different world, a world reduced to essentials and infused with constant worship and spiritual reflection, where matters of the spirit are an integral part of everyday life, and word and deed are one and the same (Shaw 172).

The Amish identity is clearly signified in their choices of color and design. Of particular importance in the above quote is the way that Shaw outlines their lifestyle of worship and separation from mainstream culture. To fully "read" an Amish quilt, one must be literate as the Amish are literate.

In addition to the symbolism of quilts, often quilts are inscribed with lettered messages such as who made it, for what purpose, and for whom. For example, my husband and I were given a handmade quilt from David's aunt when we married. On the back is the message "For Dave and Suzy on your wedding, Love Aunt -----." My great grandmother wrote a similar message on a quilt she made for me before I was married. Like signing her name at the end of a personal letter to me, she wrote "Love, Grandma Great" on the back along with the date. Another example, which will be analyzed in more detail later in this chapter, is hanging in one of my mother's bedrooms. My father's ancestor was a circuit riding preacher. One community that he served made him a quilt

as payment and thanks. Each woman that helped with the quilt hand stitched her signature in the center of flower shaped blocks.

If literacy is a system of signs which are codified methods of transferring meaning, multimodality is included within such a system because it is "a regularized organized set of resources for meaning-making, including, image, gaze, gesture, movement, music, speech, and sound-effect. Modes are broadly understood to be the effect of the work of culture in shaping material into resources for representation" (Kress and Jewitt 1). Under such a broadened definition of literacy and what it means for something to be "lettered," even pen and paper are multimodal because they employ hands, eyes, fingers, pens, paper, text positioning on the page, and the gestures of the person reading it after it is written. If pen and paper literacy is multimodal, it is apparent that multimodality and literacy can be extended to quilts. As I noted above, quilts offer a system of signs, patterns, and modes to convey meaning.

Note that in a quilt, as a multimodal literacy artifact, the modes are considered equally. Since alphabetic text isn't favored as "superior" in this artifact, meaning is conveyed equally through all available modes. Whereas a pen-and-paper literacy artifact conveys its explicit message through lettered text, the explicit characteristics of a quilt are not related to the "lettered" bits. Instead, the lettered mode of a quilt alludes to its implicit characteristics.

Both the implicit and explicit meanings of a quilt are encoded into it as people gather and commune during its creation. This process of gathering and communing is the topic of the next section and offers a means to analyze how and when quilts are given their meaning.

QUILTING AS GATHERING AND COMMUNING

I use quilts and quilting to show gathering and communing because of their multimodality and the fact that quilting is so often a group activity. Gathering and communing, as a literacy practice, articulates the ways a quilt's explicit and implicit characteristics are simultaneously valued, and the significance of a quilt's meaning to the wider community. Multimodality considers all modes equally *and* it emphasizes the play between and among different modes in the creation of meaning. In other words, meaning is created by synergies created between the sigh systems, patterns, images, and I would add, tactile creation of a quilt. Gathering and communing emphasizes the multiplicity of a literacy artifact as many hands work to create it, and many modes "work" together to convey the meaning of a quilt.

I borrow a description of the significance of quilts from Hostetler in order to explain how quilts and quilting show gathering and communing. Hostetler writes:

> Quilts are emblems of affection. They symbolize a message of warmth. They are an extension of parental affection to the family, the kin group, and to the wider world. Quilts underscore the importance of the transgenerational family.... Quiltmaking is a creative family and group enterprise (166).

Hostetler suggests that a quilts meaning is "affection," "warmth," and the "importance of the transgenerational family." These three conveyed "messages" are synergistic, multimodal, and collaborative. This passage offers reference to the explicit meaning of quilts, the implicit meaning of quilts, and the significance of quilts in community members gathering and communing.

The explicit meaning of a quilt might be linked to its functionality or as Hostetler noted, "warmth." Although Hostetler is probably referring to emotional rather than physical warmth, I refer to warmth as a physical attribute for the purposes of explanation. A quilted blanket offers physical warmth as, perhaps, its primary characteristic. Amish homes do not have electricity and many are heated with a wood burning stove, and Indiana winters are generally well below freezing. The first message a person might "read" in a quilt is the warmth and protection it offers from cold.

The implicit characteristics or messages conveyed by a quilt are varied. First, as Hostetler puts it, a quilt offers evidence of "affection." The implied meaning of a community or family made quilt is that whoever made it cares for the recipient. Such caring is implied in the amount of time, energy, and costs associate with making a handmade quilt. Also, a lettered message sewed into a quilt, such as the examples offered above, offers this same implicit meaning.

Finally, Hostetler's quote stresses "the importance of transgenerational family" and here is where there are synergies between the explicit and implicit messages I've just described and the meanings in a collaboratively created literacy artifact. The explicit physical "warmth" is quite literally sewn with implicit affection and caring. The significance of gathering and communing is that a group of people joined together to create these synergies, or this synergized artifact. More is conveyed in gathering and communing than a simple "event" where literacy is present (as Heath's "literacy events" might imply). Instead, conveyed in the creation of a quilt are explicit and implicit messages that in turn foster group cohesion for those creating the quilt.

The group cohesion that a quilt might foster is clearly seen among generations of people who gather together to create it. I offer several more specific examples in the section titled "Specific Quilt Analysis" about my own family gathering and communing over a quilt and how the practice has carried over, been adapted, and continues on with younger generations.

DATA: THE PRACTICE OF QUILTING

Within this section, I will give detailed descriptions of the practice of quilting in order to convey how quilting works as an example of the literacy practice of gathering and communing. To do so, I'll articulate: 1.) the practice and tools used to "write" a quilt, 2.) how this practice is viewed by my participants, 3.) when and where this practice most often occurs, 4.) the functions that quilting serves in the community, or it's explicit and implicit characteristics, and 5.) those things that hinder people from quilting. These things show the explicit and implicit characteristics of a quilt working together to make meaning.

The act of gathering and communing over the creation of a quilt goes by many names. I've italicized specific terminology in the following examples. Quilting is often used as a noun to describe this activity; it is often referred to as *a quilting*. One participant, Rachel, called the act of gathering to quilt a *sewing circle* where once a month 12 to 18 women get together to talk and exchange news while hand quilting. Another participant, Dorothy, said that women in her community often get together *for a quilt.* There's a once-a-month *sewing* in her church district.

Other terminology goes along with this gathering and communing practice. My great grandmother said, "When I got married, my mother-in-law *had a quilt in* most of the time." Bethany told me about the quilt that was in her dining area: "In April I *put it into frame*." Bethany and my great grandmother are referring to the way that a quilt is framed for hand quilting. Framing is one of the technologies used in creating a quilt.

In order to fully understand the practice of quilting as a literacy behavior, let me offer a detailed description of the technologies involved. A quilt is comprised of three layers. The top or face is "pieced" or comprised of sewing smaller pieces of fabric together to form a design. The middle layer is batting, the cushioning that adds weight and warmth to a quilt. The bottom layer is backing, which is traditionally white or beige muslin. These three layers must together be held taut in order for a quilter to sew them together – sewing these layers together is "quilting."

As I noted above, one of the specific technologies of quilting is framing. To hold the layers of a quilt together, one must frame it. The frame is made of wooden or metal rods that have a strip of cloth stapled or nailed to one side of their surface. A quilter will pin or baste-stitch the three layers of a quilt (the backing, the batting, and the quilt face) to this cloth on opposite edges of each layer. The quilt is stretched taut and one side is rolled to make the quilt more manageable to work with and able to fit easily into most rooms. Each end of the rod is held up on specially designed legs which hold the surface of the quilt at the height of a table. Women sit in chairs around the taut, elevated quilt to hand stitch through the three layers of the quilt. As work progresses, the unfinished side of the quilt is unrolled, and the finished side is rolled on to the opposite rod. This way the unfinished, flat surface of the framed quilt is always easily accessible.

To analyze these processes and technologies, I'm applying the three-part description of explicit and implicit characteristics that I described in the last section. The tools of quilting help us see how the explicit and implicit literacy characteristics of a quilt are created, and the ways that the two work together to make meaning.

First, the explicit meaning of a quilt is, as I noted, the physical warmth it offers. This warmth is crafted by several layers of fabric and batting working together. In some sense the explicit meaning is a utilitarian one. A quilt need not have affection or connection to whoever made it to offer warmth. Also, a quilt need not be attractively constructed, or even pieced at all. Consider for example a store bought, machine made comforter which has layers of fabric and stitching holding it all together. It has the same explicit meaning of a hand crafted quilt, but it lacks the same implicit characteristics I'll describe next.

The implicit characteristics of the above technologies and processes are what set quilting apart as a literacy practice, and specifically as a part of the practice of gathering and communing in heritage literacy. In effect, the batting and the backing are utilitarian, but the care used in sewing a pieced quilt top and hand quilting the layers together show the implicit characteristics.

The fact that a quilt is made with such implicit characteristics is what makes this a literacy artifact, much like a letter or a diary of events. While a utilitarian blanket made in a factory carries with it implicit messages, it lacks the significant systematic codification of meaning that a hand made quilt has. The act of women joining together, of *gathering* and *communing*, to create a message in fabric, thread, patterns, and stitches, makes quilting an act of literacy and a quilt a literacy artifact.

The gathering and communing of quilting signifies the ways that community members have adapted their traditional practice. Because many things prohibit quilting for the Amish women in my study, quilting remains a largely communal activity. In addition to the social aspects of quilting, multiple hands alleviate some of the difficulties of quilting as an individual. Also, overcoming such obstacles shows the depth of their affection for the recipient of a given quilt and for the act of gathering and communing over a quilt.

First, the sheer size of a framed quilt keeps women with smaller homes from being able to have one in frame in their house. One participant, Ruth, noted that her home isn't large enough for quilting or to have church there. To have a quilt in frame means taking up a large portion of a room and sacrificing that space to a "leisure" activity. The act of hosting a quilting means a sharing of space resources and an adaptation of what could be an individual activity.

Second, hand quilting takes time, even for an experienced quilter. Simply, having many hands help with a particular quilt enables the process to go faster. Bethany told me about the quilt that was in one of the rooms in her home: "I had at least three days that I had friends over. I invited some ladies and they helped me quilt. But now I'm just working on it on my own, but this time of year it is too busy for much of that. There's too many outside things to do." This quilt had gone through several gatherings, and it still was not completed. Bethany was trying to finish the quilt on her own time, but summer work loads were prohibiting her finishing. While many English quilters have turned to machine quilting to mechanize this process, for the Amish in my study, to adopt such

technologies would violate the basic underpinnings of their identity. Hence, the only way to speed up the process of hand quilting is to have many hands to do the work.

Many women commented during our conversation that they will quilt only if it is in a group. Marie noted that while she enjoys sewing, she only quilts if she is in a large group of women. Similarly, Martha likes to go and help with a quilt, but she would not do it on her own. Jane said that she likes quilting "if I get invited to a quilting." Naomi likes quilting "once in a while" but not as a hobby she'd do on her own. However, she likes and does all her own sewing on her treadle sewing machine. For these women, quilting is valuable only as a group literacy practice where gathering and communing take place.

Also part of the implicit characteristics in a quilt is the fact that many generations often gather together to perform this activity. Putting a quilt into frame can be done by a single person; however, it is very difficult without many sets of hands. Similarly, a single person could hand quilt an entire quilt, and there are those women who enjoy this as a solitary activity. But most women I spoke with seemed to enjoy quilting most as a group activity. The fact that most women enjoy quilting as a group activity, and the fact that a quilt is more easily crafted with many hands, articulates the importance of the "transgenerational family." Several factors prohibit gathering for quilting, yet women still make a way to come together for this activity. Consider the following example.

Dorothy noted that while she loves sewing and working with quilts, she doesn't always get to attend quilting functions. I asked Deborah, the mother of several children under the age of 6, whether she quilts. She said, "Now that I don't do. I just don't find time. It is hard enough trying to stay ahead of [daily sewing needs]. Sometimes I get

invited to a quilting and that I enjoy, but just to do it on my own... forget it for right now." Amish women are responsible for clothing their entire families, so quilting is not always a priority. Quilting is a luxury of time, resources, and space that many women have to work hard to make space for. It is interesting to note here that Dorothy doesn't have time to quilt, per se, but she makes time to attend a quilting if she is invited. The act of gathering and communing while creating (or "writing") a quilt is important, enjoyable, and significant enough for her to fit it into her life.

Such prohibiting factors aside, quiltings serve several necessary literacy functions in the community. Quiltings provide a means of getting women outside of their usual or daily tasks, especially childcare, which takes up the largest part of my Amish participants' days. Because so many women gather for a quilting, multiple generations are present and there are many hands to help with childcare. Hence, a quilt, to a quilter, offers an implicit meaning of enjoyable conversation, a break from the daily grind, and gathering together to share the burden of childcare.

Gathering and communing over a quilt offer the Amish in my study another means of connecting generations and remaining close as a family, all surrounding a literacy event. The Amish in this study have large families, and generally they all continue to live in close proximity to one another. When I asked participants how often they got together with their extended families (meaning adult children, their parents, and their children), most replied "once or twice a month." Church is obviously a time of gathering; however, families are large enough that one family most likely will not all live within the same district. Similarly, while many participants expressed dismay that they

must make excuses to see one another, many families have set up "family night" or "ice cream supper" where the extended family gets together for dinner, dessert, and visiting.

Quilting offers a means for women to bring money in without working outside of the home. Rachel's mother taught her to sew, and she then taught her daughter. Her daughter, at the time of my visit, had pieces of a quilt she was working on all over the house. This quilt, according to Rachel, is one that will be sold to an English lady to give as a Christmas gift. Also, I note that in this particular family, the practice is passed between generations through direct instruction.

Quilts that are not made for profit or for home use are often made for charities. Solomon's mother goes to a quilting every month to make quilts for poor people and 'Galilean Children's Home' which is a home for homeless and handicapped children. Similarly, though Rebecca refers to it as a "hobby", she too sews and makes quilts for charities. I asked Rebecca if she likes to sew. She said

> That's been my hobby all my life. After I quit working at the factory, after I retired, I got active in relief sewing. I helped make comforters and quilts and sometimes we'd sew with patterns for clothes that we'd send to Haiti or wherever. I never was good at making [English clothes]... I knew the Amish way of making clothes, but [not the English].

Relief sewing often takes the form of clothing, and it is interesting that Rebecca commented on the difficulty of English clothing patterns. She better understands quilting, and it seems that quilts are an item that more easily "translate" between cultures than clothing.

Finally my data shows that learning to sew or quilt is not dependent upon family necessarily to pass along the technical knowledge. Whereas Annie learned to sew and quilt from her mother, many women learn from someone other than their immediate family. My great grandmother learned to quilt from her mother-in-law. She said,

> When I got married, I quilted some before, but not too much. When I got married, my mother-in-law had a quilt in most of the time. The way I started to quilt, I'd take a needle and thread that didn't have a knot in it. Then I'd just keep sewing away and pulling it through to practice. Finally, I got so I quilted.

The fact that her mother in law had the space to have a quilt up all the time enabled my great grandmother to learn. I imagine that her mother-in-law showed her the basics of quilting then my great grandmother had to just practice until she got it. Jane did not learn quilting from her immediate family; rather her husband's grandmother taught her. What is important to note is not who teaches someone to quilt, or even that the practice of quilting is passed on. Rather the importance here is on the literacy practice of gathering and communing that is passed on.

SPECIFIC QUILT ANALYSIS

In light of the above description, I'd like to offer a specific analysis of some family quilts in order to more fully explain how the literacy practice of gathering and communing creates synergies between explicit and implicit characteristics. Let me begin with a brief description of each quilt.

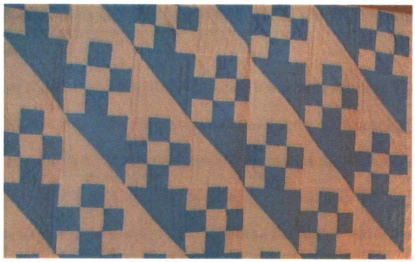

Figure 14: Grandmother's Quilt

The above picture is one of my grandmother's quilt. Currently it is hanging in a room of my parents' home that we call "Grammy's Room" because it has been decorated with her in mind. The quilt was pieced by my great grandma (her mother) and then hand quilted by all of my grandmother's aunts, her mother, and her grandmothers. The pattern is called "Drunkard's Path" which my grandmother wasn't very happy about at the time the quilt was made.[12]

The quilt signifies several things. First the color scheme and pattern connote Amish identity, in spite of the irony of the specific pattern name. The Amish, as I noted earlier in this chapter, use only solid color fabrics in bold geometric designs. There is symmetry in this pattern as well, with alternating nine-patch and bias squares; however, the alternating quilt blocks also show unevenness, which might explain the name of this particular pattern. At the time this quilt was made, my great grandmother had left the Amish church, so my grandmother was no longer Amish either. It is interesting that her

[12] The pattern "Drunkard's Path" has been applied to a variety of quilt blocks, many of which look very little like this one.

relatives would make her a quilt signifying Amish identity when she no longer was a part of the community.

Another signifier present in the quilt is how it was hand stitched. The quilt is hand quilted by "stitching in the ditch," which means that the quilting is done along the seams of the pattern. By stitching in the seams of the pattern, the pattern of the quilt top stands out rather than the hand stitching. In contrast, my great grandmother recently quilted a piece for one of my cousins. This quilt has a flat surface that is not pieced. The focus of the quilt is on the hand stitching rather than on a pattern.

Finally, the location of this quilt signifies its story. The quilt for as long as I can remember was on my grandmother's bed. The bedroom was decorated around the quilt, meaning that all other decorative pieces in the room were blue or white to compliment the quilt. I remember reading books with my grandmother on her bed, under that quilt. I napped under that quilt and wrestled with my brother and sister on its surface.

But fabric wears, and now the quilt is a wall hanging in my mother's home. The room is decorated for my grandmother, in blues and whites, but the quilt can no longer take the wear and tear of its intended use, so it is on the wall. It still dictates how the room is decorated, it still tells the story of my grandmother hating the name "Drunkard's Path," and I still see my grandmother in it, but its explicit characteristic has been adapted.

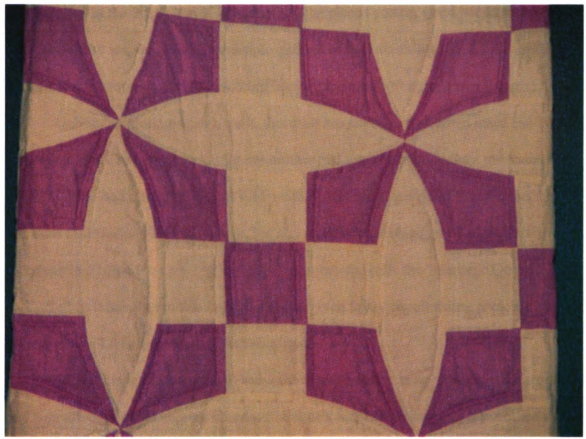

Figure 15: Mother's Quilt

This picture is of my mother's quilt. It was made around 1975 and pieced by my great, great grandmother Katie. All the female family members on that side of the family helped to quilt it, including my great grandma (Cora) and her sisters (perhaps even Rebecca who is part of this study), my grandmother (Edna) and her sisters, and many women from the other side of my mother's family as well. My mom told me that she herself put a few stitches in it.

Like my grandmother's quilt, this quilt signifies Amish identity as it uses solid colored fabric in an abstract geometric pattern. Unlike my grandmother, my mother was never Amish, even for a short period of time, so the fact that my great, great grandmother Katie made it the Amish way alludes to the strong ties of family and lineage. This quilt is

also stitched in the ditch. Aside from making the pieced pattern stand out, stitching in the ditch is an easy way to allow for multiple quilters of various ability levels. Anyone can come and put a few stitches in it without fear of "messing up" a particular pattern.

Unlike my grandmother's quilt, this quilt has never lain on a bed that I can remember. I did not even know that my mother had it until she brought it out to decorate another of her bedrooms. My mom told me that she almost got rid of the quilt because she didn't particularly like the colors, but she saved it because so many of her family members had helped to create it. It hangs in a room she calls the "Heritage Quilt Room." The other quilt hanging in this room is the one given to my circuit riding preacher ancestor, who I mentioned earlier in this chapter.

While this quilt has many of the same characteristics as my grandmother's quilt, and they have the same explicit characteristics of a blanket for warmth, my mother's quilt lacks the depth of implicit characteristics that my grandmother's has, simply because it has been packed away in a closet for so many years while my grandmother's laid on her bed. My grandmother's was the site for literacy learning, for laughter and play, for coats during family gatherings, and for summer afternoon naps. My mother's quilt is only now finding implicit meaning in being a wall hanging under which activities occur.

Similarly, while the physicality of a book carries with it explicit characteristics of literacy ability, wealth, and perhaps a belief system (e.g. a Bible), there are implicit characteristics that come with use. The words within a book are best understood in how they relate to what a person knows, or to a particular ideological stance. Implicit meanings, it seems, are connected to use of literacy.

The final example I have of quilts within my family that show gathering and communing as a literacy practice comes in the form of a comforter rather than a quilt. My sister and I no longer have the comforters that I am using for this analysis, so I have no pictures. A comforter is distinguishable from a quilt because it is "tied" or "knotted" rather than quilted. Also, a comforter is usually made with a single fabric on its top, instead of a pieced design.

To tie a blanket, threaded and knotted through the three layers of the blanket, rather than quilted in many tiny hand stitches. At even intervals of six or eight inches over the face of the blanket, the sewer will make a single stitch with the yarn. At the end of a strand of yarn, the sewer will cut the yarn in between all the stitches and then tie a knot above each stitch. The excess yarn is trimmed away leaving small knotted tassels of yarn all over the surface of the blanket. In time, these tassels will "fuzzy" with use.

Knotting a blanket may seem a digression from my focus on quilting; however, the blankets I describe here are an adaptation of the technologies used to make a quilt. The technologies of knotting are different than hand quilting, however the gathering and communing and the basic literacy practice remain steadfast. Let me begin an explanation of this adaptation with a description of the comforters my sister and I had growing up.

My sister and I were "children of the 1980s," and this is reflected in the appearance of these comforters. Instead of purchasing expensive themed bedding, my mother frugally purchased only the themed flat sheets and batting to make into comforters. Both comforter tops were Strawberry Shortcake themed. My sister had a Holly Hobby themed back, and I had a hand-me-down Star Wars sheet from my older brother on the back.

Several adaptations of technologies are apparent in these comforters. First, instead of the solid colored cloth in geometric patterns that signify Amish identity, these blankets were made with pop culture cartoon character themed fabric. My immediate family had no real connection to the Amish culture when I grew up, even though our ancestors and heritage come from the Amish. Hence, the messages constructed within this blanket aligned us more with mainstream culture and ideals. We kids wanted to have the commodities that our friends had, and my mother found an inventive way of achieving this.

However, our desire for mainstream identity markers was mitigated by the fact that these blankets were still homemade versions of the factory-made blankets our friends had. In addition, the process of putting these homemade blankets together was still steeped in the traditional gathering and communing literacy practice my great grandmother had passed down to us.

Making meaning with pieces of popular children's characters or pop art is a multimodal meaning maker as much as quilting is. Kate Pahl writes about Sam, a child she studied during ethnographic research about literacy. She says,

> Sam created meanings using his bedroom space, and his bedroom was change through adding new furnishings, curtains and artifacts. I regarded Sam's bedroom as a text to be 'read', and as I explored the meanings created within the room as well as recognizing it as a space for new meanings to be made (Kress and Jewitt 141).

Like a quilt, Sam's bedroom floor was a space for systematic coding of messages using various tools and technologies. Of particular note, however, given my current analysis, is the fact that Sam's

> house drew on a number of different texts, moving from Parmijit's interest in design magazines, and how things looked, to Sam's reading of his Pokemon magazines, and interest in tiny figures. These 'voices' interwove within the texts of the household; their echoes could be heard both in the surroundings, in the home and in their texts (Bakhtin, 1981) (Kress and Jewitt 142).

Where the meaning constructed on Sam's floor used his mother's (Parmijit) magazines and Sam's Pokemon magazines and toys, my sister's and my quilts used Strawberry Shortcake, Holly Hobby, and Star Wars to convey meaning. Pahl writes

> In order to make new signs, Sam drew on children's popular culture and made artifacts using cultural resources which acted as 'tools of identity', supporting and upholding who he was (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain, 2001, p. 42). Sam took artifacts out of context, from on 'figured world' such as the imaginary landscape of Pokemon, to another, for example, his bedroom floor, and recontextualized them, placing them in another context (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain, 2001, p. 41; Bernstein, 1996). In doing so, he deployed cultural resources that in some cases, he chose to support this identity formation.

Just as the Amish use plain cloth and geometric designs to signify their identity, Sam used children's popular culture. Where Sam took artifacts out of context such as

Pokemon and placed them into a growing text on his bedroom floor, my mother and grandmothers took artifacts like Strawberry shortcake and placed them into a blanket made in the traditional way. The blanket, then, supported both my ancestral identity and my available cultural identity. It was a synergy of explicit and implicit characteristics.

The practice of putting these comforters together is similar to that of a quilting, and it is the gathering and communing while crafting the bedding that is the emphasis of my analysis. My great grandmother and grandmother came over to our home to help my mother make these blankets. They stretched the bottom sheet, the batting, and the top sheet of one comforter on a quilting frame. Then the three of them sat around the comforter to knot it. My sister and I were too young to really offer much help, so we gathered toys and dolls and played underneath the framed comforter. In an email, my sister said,

> I remember them setting up the strange contraption and laying the quilt across it. I remember crawling underneath, like it was one of the forts we used to make on rainy days behind the couch. I would just sit underneath and stare up at the shadows of hands moving about--pushing the needle in, pulling a thread through. I don't remember what they talked about, but I can hear Grandma Great's laugh and Grammy's giggle. Their voices were constantly chatting, though. I remember helping to "tie" the little knot things.

I love the way that my sister remembers my mother and grandmothers' hands moving as their voices talked and laughed. In addition to the connection of newer and older identity

markers, the blanket's explicit characteristics of warmth and beauty are connected with the implicit characteristics of the communing that occurred during its creation.

This memory of mine and my sister's is one that aptly explains how quilting is a heritage literacy event, how the practice is passed between generations, and how gathering and communing is a valuable, contextualized, and embedded literacy. I think that the Amish practice of quilting circles is a series of events that connect the actors (Amish women) to objects (the quilts), technologies, and expertise that both create and perpetuate communing. Communing as a practice values both the practical and representational (the explicit and implicit if you will) qualities of a quilt. My family members gathered together to craft a systemized, codified message in yarn and cloth for my sister and I.

I asked my sister why sewing and quilting is important when we can all can just go out and buy a blanket or a quilt. Moreover, I asked why she thought the Amish bother to quilt as a social activity rather than just sitting and talking? Merry replied:

> There is a need within to create something, to do something with your hands that lasts. The cords that hold the quilt together are not merely bits of thread, but an act of love, in some cases. As for it being a social event, of course it is! Let's sit around doing a monotonous (but beautiful) task to free our mind to gossip, chat, recall and pass on stories. Though I have never quilted, there is a part in me that wants to learn. I know it is a lot of work, but in the quilting, it almost connects me to my grandmas.

While Merry has never quilted, she has attended quiltings and she knows the messages that quilts convey. She knows that my grandmother's quilt that hangs on my mother's

wall was once on a bed. She remembers, as I do, that the quilt was a site for literacy learning, for napping, and for play, and that these events are imbedded in the quilt as implicit literacy characteristics that can be "read."

Gathering and communing is social, it can be "hands on", and it can be monotonous but for the investments of those gathered. I wonder if Merry is yearning for the activity of quilting, or if she is yearning for the practice of joining together to perform a task and sharing while doing the task. The quilt, in this way, is the vehicle for the actual practice of gathering and communing. The quilt as a tool is useful and understood best when it is imbedded in the values of the community.

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

One thing that I am noticing about the literacy practice of gathering and communing is that it always seems to involve or center on some other practice. While a group could gather together and commune, generally within the community an "excuse" is needed to get people together. We gather and commune over food, while we work, and before, after and during worship. There seem to be more instances of gathering for a specific purpose such as these or a quilting, for example, than there are instances of gathering just to be together. Gathering and communing is greatly impacted, then, by the work ethic discussed in chapter four.

To expand on this, I know that even when my grandmother, mother, sister and I get together "just to hang out" we always end up working on some project together. It is as if we feel compelled to be doing something "productive" while we chat. My husband often comments that we cannot visit my folks without me working on something while

I'm there. As Merry put it, we "sit around doing a monotonous task to free our mind to gossip, chat, recall, and pass on stories." Merry's comment makes me think that we may feel compelled to work as we visit, but also that the work itself spurs on the visiting.

As an artifact of gathering and communing, quilts offer a tangible example of multimodality moved off of the page and off of the computer screen. Multimodality assumes that all modes are equal, such that meanings can be made as easily with the patterns and TEXTures of a quilt made with needle, thread, and fabric as they can with pen and paper or mouse and keyboard. All available modes work together for meaning making; in other words, synergies are created between explicit and implicit characteristics through the existing modes.

The implicit and explicit characteristics refers to the obvious or outward meanings and the less obvious and "internal" meanings of a literacy artifact. In this chapter I referred to these various meanings as "affection," "warmth," and "importance of the transgenerational family" according to Hostetler's explanation of the ways that the Amish value quilts. Explicitly, a quilt offers physical warmth made from layers of fabric. Implicitly, a quilt offers affection to a recipient and many generations of family may well piece and quilt the blanket.

Of significance in explicit and implicit characteristics are the ways they bring to light the ways that multimodality broadens literacy and conceptions of text. Whereas a pen-and-paper literacy artifact conveys its explicit message through lettered text, the explicit characteristics of a quilt are not related to the "lettered" bits. Instead, the lettered mode of a quilt alludes to its implicit characteristics. Thus, all modes being equal, in

some texts the lettered modes are explicit while in other texts the pictorial, tactile, or behavioral might be the explicit characteristics.

Again, the significance here is in the play among modes in creation of meaning; the synergies that are created when modes work together and when explicit and implicit characteristics function as one. In a sense, the when literacy is considered more holistically, deeper and more significant meanings are conveyed.

The implicit and explicit characteristics of a quilt are helpful in articulating how heritage literacy is defined against other theories of literacy. Generations of people within a community or family pass on to their offspring the implicit and explicit meanings of a particular literacy artifact. A literacy artifact such as a handmade quilt offers to "readers" a way of contextualizing the practice and the artifact in what matters within a community. Instead of a "neutral" tool that can translate to any and all situations, a quilt is understood when the explicit and implicit characteristics are considered at once. Many hands create a quilt, and those hands imbed within this artifact a host of tradition and memory and story that embodies the past for future generations.

The gathering and communing of quilting signifies the ways that community members have adapted their traditional practice. Because many things prohibit quilting for the Amish women in my study, quilting remains a largely communal activity. In addition to the social aspects of quilting, multiple hands alleviate some of the difficulties of quilting as an individual. Also, overcoming such obstacles shows the depth of their affection for the recipient of a given quilt and for the act of gathering and communing over a quilt.

The following chapter offers a summary of this chapter alongside all other chapters in this text in order to see my argument as a whole. In arguing that multimodality is not new, and that heritage literacy is multimodal, I have sought to show that the tools used within heritage literacy practice are not neutral but imbued with the values and beliefs of the community. The final chapter of this text, then, situates this overall argument back within the context of other literacy ethnographies and offers a comparison. Finally, the last chapter will offer other research areas that need to be addressed in the future.

CHAPTER SEVEN: A FINAL REFLECTION

I've heard it said that research is often a person's way of understanding herself. After conducting a literacy ethnography among my own community and within my own family, I must confess that I understand the wisdom of such words. For in studying how literacy is learned at kitchen tables across generations, how multimodality extends far beyond the scope of digital technologies, and how generations of people adopt, adapt or alienate themselves from tools of literacy I have learned about my own literacy practices, my own heritage, and my own "ideological underpinnings." I have come to value the ways that ideology, tradition, faith, and behaviors frame the ways I read and write. I have come to understand that these things offer something to the field of Composition and Rhetoric that to this point was missing. And I have learned and developed my own literacy and tool usage as I explored this topic.

Heritage literacy has given me a way of describing the processes I have gone through to become proficient in the practices of academe. Prior to this research, I grappled with how to explain to my family how I could be a Christian and be an academic and how I could still value my family when I lived "so far" away. I struggled in my own mind to justify how I could read against the grain, critique, and rhetorically analyze everything I read and write, while still believing that the Bible is God inspired. And I struggled to find ways of connecting practices like hospitality and food to an often cold and distant feeling profession.

Heritage literacy has helped me find synchronizations between my faith beliefs and my actions as an academic. It has shown me how adoption of some tools and practices of academe need not alienate me from my upbringing but rather they require

that I adapt what I already knew. Finally, this research allowed me the freedom to explore and discuss these concepts with the people I care the most about, my family. I was able to call upon their wisdom as equally significant as any concept offered by academe. I was able to connect and collaborate rather than alienate and distance.

APPENDIX A

CONSENT FORMS USED IN DATA COLLECTIONS

NOTICE OF INFORMED CONSENT

Community Participant in the study titled "Multimodal Discourse and Heritage Literacy Practices"

My name is Suzanne Kesler Rumsey, and I am a doctoral student in Rhetoric and Writing at Michigan State University. I am collecting interview data to learn more about the Amish heritage and literacy practices. My study is titled "Multimodal Discourse and Heritage Literacy Practices." It is intended to show how people use heritage to understand the world and how heritage is passed on to new generations. I am also interested in how technology and heritage work together.

Your participation is voluntary and can be rescinded at any time. All information collected will be kept confidential and stored in a secure location. Your privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law. Pseudonyms will be used to protect your identity and location. If you agree to have your interview video taped, your identity and voice will be obscured. All information collected will be used solely for educational purposes.

With your permission, I will be using a tape recorder during the interview. However, if at any point you feel uncomfortable being recorded, you may ask that recording stop, and I can continue the interview without a recording device or you may stop the interview entirely.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at (517) 214-8847 or keslersu@msu.edu, or contact my research supervisor, Dr. Ellen Cushman at (517) 432-4031 or 291 Bessey Hall, Michigan State University, E. Lansing, MI 48824-1033. If you have questions or concerns regarding your rights as a study participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact anonymously, if you wish - Peter Vasilenko, Ph.D., Chair of the University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (UCRIHS) by phone: (517) 355-2180, fax: (517) 432-4503, e-mail: ucrihs@msu.edu, or regular mail: 202 Olds Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824.

Your signature below indicates your voluntary agreement to participate in this study.

_____ _____

Signature Date

NOTICE OF INFORMED CONSENT

Key Participant in the study titled "Multimodal Discourse and Heritage Literacy Practices"

My name is Suzanne Kesler Rumsey, and I am a doctoral student in Rhetoric and Writing and Michigan State University. I am collecting interview data to learn more about the Amish heritage and literacy practices. Specifically I am interested in the ways our family has adapted to and uses new technologies when we come from and live in a community of Amish. My study is titled "Multimodal Discourse and Heritage Literacy Practices." It is intended to show how people use heritage to understand the world and how heritage is passed on to new generations.

Your participation is voluntary and can be rescinded at any time. While your participation is valuable, I will be interviewing many other people in the community. Hence, even if you choose not to participate, this study will continue. All information collected will be kept confidential and stored in a secure location. Your privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law. All information collected will be used solely for educational purposes.

With your permission, I will audiotape, take notes during, and videotape interviews and conversations pertaining to this research. Copies of video and audio recordings may be reproduced in scholarly publications and/or digital environments. I will also be collecting literacy artifacts. With your permission I may make photocopies or digital copies of this data and may reproduce this data in scholarly publications and/or digital environments. You are free to withhold any materials that make you uncomfortable or you regard as private. You will be given copies of all interview materials and you may delete any information you wish.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at (517) 214-8847 or keslersu@msu.edu, or contact my research supervisor, Dr. Ellen Cushman at (517) 432-4031 or 291 Bessey Hall, Michigan State University, E. Lansing, MI 48824-1033. If you have questions or concerns regarding your rights as a study participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact anonymously, if you wish - Peter Vasilenko, Ph.D., Chair of the University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (UCRIHS) by phone: (517) 355-2180, fax: (517) 432-4503, e-mail: ucrihs@msu.edu, or regular mail: 202 Olds Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824.

Your identity will only be revealed in the manner you indicate. Please initial one of the following:

_____ Your first and last name will be used to identify your work.

_____ Your first name only will be used to identify your work.

_____ Your real name will be withheld, and a pseudonym will be used to identify your work.

_____ _____

Signature Date

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