CHAPTER 5

Writing Sensation: Critical Autoethnography in Posthumanism

Summer Dickinson

Writing Shame

Toward the end of my doctoral studies, my eating habits became a topic of conversation quite often with fellow classmates as many commented on my eating—or lack thereof—regularly. Two years earlier, I had written an autoethnography, a paper many of my colleagues knew about, which discussed my eating habits, referenced prior events in my life related to destructive behavior, and mentioned my struggle with low self-regard at times. Because of how much I had divulged about my personal choices with eating, the topic was raised every few days in various forms from then on, built out of concern and genuine interest. I welcomed the discussion, at least most the time. I didn't eat in public as much as others—at least not during the program. To my fellow classmates' credit, I had voluntarily chosen the autoethnography topic and been vocal in regard to my reasons, and their concern was polite and quite often justified. After two years, it was as if the autoethnography had invaded my life, moving around my inner circle of friends, becoming the *thing* under the surface

S. Dickinson (✉)
Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Indiana, PA, USA

S. Holman Jones, M. Pruyn (eds.), *Creative Selves / Creative Cultures*, Creativity, Education and the Arts,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-47527-1_5

of conversations and lingering longer than expected. While voluntarily exposing part of self through the writing and experiencing ripples for months afterward, I began to understand what Elspeth Probyn (2010) calls *writing shame*. Not the shame of exposure of self, but the possibility that writing in the manner I had—about affect, about senses, about emotions—was not "equal to the subject being written about."[1] My audience had walked away from my writing thinking the story revolved around staying slender and self-worth. I had failed to engage the reader in the actual story I meant to tell. Most of this was my fault. I had written the autoethnography couched in terms of self-image and self-worth when I really meant the political and sensorial force of food on bodies and social positioning. The writing from two years prior was inspired by the daily mingling of social politics and food consumption and its interaction within and through bodies, including my own; yet it was hidden behind a normative tale of food and body image.

Probyn's idea of writing shame "forces us to reflect continually on the implications of our writing. The insights provided by different kinds of writers will show that writing shame is a visceral reminder to be true to interest, to be honest about why or how certain things are of interest" (Probyn, 2010, p. 73). Where was the story, then? What had I failed to tell the first time? When I consider the question, I remember back to a department meeting in my first teaching job, which had provided the faculty with dinner—cheese pizza and some sort of soda—and where I could not ignore the post-dinner bloating while discussing program curriculum. Glancing at my colleagues, I wondered if others had the same post-eating sensations and, more importantly, was there anyone else who felt distracted by it with a sudden urge to hide within the meeting?

Catherine Malabou believes, "My body is a token of my own immediate worldly presence; it presents to the mind what Husserl calls hyletic data (the body's perceptual, sensory content, like touch, look, voice, kinaesthesia). In this way, the body becomes the worldly presence of an intentional subject's mental life."[2] I go back to that department meeting where the sense of overeating pizza and collectively discussing program agenda forced me to consider my body individually and yet wonder about the phenomena of the moment. For Malabou, "[s]ensation means that the thing reveals itself in the flesh and stands there before our eyes as something given to itself and in actuality" (Malabou, 2015, pp. 13–14). How do I write what I'm sensing without reducing the story to an

individual description of body? Stacy Holman Jones' (2016) call for critical autoethnography suggests:

> Theory asks about and explains the nuances of an experience and the happenings of a culture; story is the mechanism for illustrating and embodying these nuances and happenings. Because theory and story exist in a mutually influential relationship, theory is not an add-on to story. We cannot write our stories and then begin the search for a theory to "fit" them, outside of cultures and politics and contexts. Instead, theory is a language for thinking with and through, asking questions about, and acting on—the experiences and happenings in our stories. (p. 229)

Theory provides me with a way to tell the story I should have told the first time and now have a chance to tell over again: to exhibit Foucault's idea of displacing and disassembling the self into the social rather than reveal the inner self in my story.[3]

Sensing Posthuman Theory (in)Story

Through a cultural lens, food ethics, food/identity, and food studies provide historical and contextual accounts of the interaction and connection of food within social aspects. The cultural politics of food shows how food is used to make sense of life while mapping the social aspects of food production and consumption (Watson & Caldwell, 2005). However, my story yields itself to the language of Davide Panagia's (2010) theories regarding the political life of sensation, in which he argues that sensation, in fact, drives perception, political power, and positionality. Weaved through are John Dewey's writings on art as experience and Immanuel Kant's writings of aesthetics with multiple object-oriented philosophies. Focusing mainly through an aesthetic-political lens, the story begins in what Panagia (2010) calls "moments of interruption" where sensation disrupts common sense (pp. 2–4). These moments challenge my construction of the sensations revolving through the space connected to the present moment and throw off pre-conceived understandings of what is and will take place at a given time, allowing for an open space of experience. Panagia notes that people live their lives with an understanding of continuous continuity; yet sensation can break down those moments and interrupt thoughts, emotions, and assurances (Pangia, 2010, pp. 2–4). That is the theory where this story begins, and I'm reminded that "[p]

erhaps the best we can do as critics or as theorists is to toggle back and forth between sensation and criticism or theory" (Hawhee, 2015).[4]

Not Just a Cookie

Throughout the second year of graduate school, I had become a bit more comfortable in my own skin. Averaging a size smaller than the year before, my daily routine was fairly healthy. Yes, I still counted calories daily and balanced writing with my gym pass. In contrast to my undergraduate years, I was proud of being an average-petite weight. I ate regularly—a task I didn't always accomplish in my younger years when I took quite drastic measures to avoid eating. I had arrived at my early thirties hopeful. My self-regard just a decade before had bordered meek. However, feeling uncomfortable with consuming food publicly continued to be a residual side effect of the disordered eating in years past. After being with my doctoral cohort for the second year, I learned to relax a bit. I consumed food at dinner gatherings and in front of friends—something which took great effort still. In the late summer session of a particularly busy month, I spent the evening enjoying the company of a few cohort members and one guest from a different program at the same university. We ate. We laughed. The evening had become a place of safety surrounded by trusting friends. The visiting guest—whom I knew only a bit—sat next to me. The night had been enjoyable, and with that I relaxed about my eating even more. I reached over and grabbed an Oreo—the first cookie I had consumed for weeks as I generally avoided such things. As the Oreo touched my lips, the guy visiting our home cracked a joke, "Boy, Summer sure likes Oreos."

Theory (in)Story

I heard his words in my bones.

I wonder if the story should be told through the politics of affect or affective dissidences or a physical mode of engagement with the world through my body's interrelatedness with the meaning of his offhand comment. Panagia (2010), following the philosophy of Jacques Ranciere, suggests that individuals perceive the world based on what a person senses (pp. 4–6). We perceive based on the sensation created, interpreted, and/or experienced; yet what is being sensed is shifted by other sensing. In essence, that oreo tasted different after I heard his comment. My mouth had a visceral reaction. Panagia uses the term *organoleptic correspondence*, which means the connection, interaction, and negotiation between per-

ception and the significance of the event (2010, p. 3). What was my organoleptic correspondence? In short, this guy's a jerk. Said better, his flippant commentary on my food consumption at that moment triggered a sensation-inspired narrative in my mind, suggesting I put down the food and reconsider what I was eating. The senses being part of the political moment tied to his language and the food entangled in the moment.

Karen Barad (2003) considers that bodies and matter are given the potential to affect through "iterative intra-activity of the world in its becoming" (p. 83). To Barad, "intra-actions are constraining but not determining. That is, intra-activity is neither a matter of strict determinism nor unconstrained freedom."[5] While it is difficult to be retrospective as to the effect of a sensation as the sensation is occurring, the awareness that the sensation has an affect is essential and could provide an understanding in itself. Politically speaking, the Oreo guy's comment had a greater and more powerful affect as I sensed the food in my mouth. The affect created by his words gained momentum because my senses absorbed the meaning of his comments at the same time as my mind. Dewey (1934, 2009) reminds us that "thinking is often regarded as something cut off from experience, and capable of being cultivated in isolation" (p. 84). In essence, "experience is then thought to be confined to the senses and appetites; to a mere material world, while thinking proceeds from a higher faculty (of reason), and is occupied with spiritual or at least literary things" (Dewey, 1934, 2009, p. 84). Yet, thinking about and sensing that Oreo while hearing the language used and feeling the space I was in suggests that sensation, space, and thought are interlinked and interactive with each other. The cookie, the comment, the taste, the tone, and the darker thoughts of mine that followed is a complex, interwoven system of elements constantly in flux and complicated by the elements which enter my world before, after, and during that moment.

Almost Sweet

After that cookie moment, I walked to the lecture hall with a sweet lady from my circle of friends. In a rather affectionate manner she said, "It's not always about food you know." I felt her concern and tried to politely say, "For you it isn't." In Panagia's (2010) construct of sensation, he asserts "sensation interrupts common sense" and sensory experience affects the perception of a space and interaction (pp. 2–4). While sensations, at times, may be rather temporal, a series of temporal moments within a condensed timeframe can, in turn, create moments when agency,

autonomy, and awareness are questioned, affected, and interrupted. Panagia (2010) calls these "moments of interruption," which challenge a person's prior construction of what is unfolding in the present moment and throw off pre-conceived understandings of what is and will take place at a given time (pp. 2–4). Was I thrown off by the Oreo comment? Or was I more thrown off by a sweet friend suggesting that I think too much about something I shouldn't?

For Panagia, these moments interrupt assurance and distract our train of thoughts. I wonder if saying, "for you it's not" created a moment of interruption that allowed for levels of disjuncture and enhanced the subjectivity within myself or the listener. Panagia (2010) says, "moments of sensation punctuate our everyday existence, and in doing so, they puncture our received wisdom and common modes of sensing" (p. 3). To Dewey (1934/2009), the unconscious influence of our surroundings is "so subtle and pervasive that it affects every fiber of character and mind" (p. 13). At that moment, everything my voice was and is added to that woman's unconscious absorption of what I was saying. My mind could only be communicated through creating a sensational moment which punctuated her systematic way of knowing the world which she had accepted and suggests that my being and sensing is my thinking.

Post-Phenomenological Perspective

Diana Coole and Samantha Frost (2010) claim that as soon as materiality is considered:

> [w]e seem to distance ourselves from it, and within the space that opens up, a host of immaterial things seems to emerge: language, consciousness, subjectivity, agency, mind, soul; also imagination, emotions, values, meaning, and so on. These have typically been presented as idealities fundamentally different from matter and valorized as superior to the baser desires of biological material or the inertia of physical stuff. (p. 24)

I keep going back to that Oreo. That Oreo mattered. How much it matters and to what degree it matters is the messy part. What is really the *object* in my story? If I distance myself from that Oreo as being materially part of myself, I easily slip into emotive response, perception of self, the signification and representation of that Oreo. What if I said that Oreo was a material inviting attention upon itself?[6] Thomas Rickert (2013) and Jane Bennett (2005) establish that agency is frustrated and unstable and it is

not just the way we talk about objects that give them agency. We give attention to objects and acknowledge their agency (Latour, 2005).

A posthuman(ist) approach questions the focus on human as central. In response, frameworks which suggest that nonhuman elements should not only be acknowledged but recognized for their agency and power have gained considerable momentum: Barad (2003), Latour (2005), and Bennett (2009). Under the umbrella term of New Materialism, these frameworks bring particular attention to nonhuman objects as participants (Fowler & Harris, 2015; Jordan, 2015; Keane, 2003; Lemke, 2015). For many posthuman philosophies, materials and things do *act*. For example, Latour's object-oriented rhetoric considers objects/things as doing rhetoric work. Rather than simply apply object-oriented ontologies to the way objects are situated or talked about in my story, I hope to question how my story involving an object can question the idea of how bodily perception is blurred by our senses.

Authors Coole and Frost (2010) note, "At every turn we encounter physical objects fashioned by human design and endure natural forces who imperatives structure our daily routines for survival." (p. 1). Is there a separation of how materials are viewed in our daily lives and how we discuss those materials in our autoethnographic writing? More importantly, can the objects within our writing—the texts we create and the stories we rely on to create them—be a place to explore the discursive materials within the stories themselves?

In Autoethnography, We Landscape

Jacqueline Royster (2003) states:

> What we choose to showcase depends materially on where on the landscape we stand and what we have in mind. The imperative is to recognize that the process of showcasing space is an interpretive one, one that acknowledges a view and often re-scopes that view in light of aesthetic-sensibilities-values, preferences, beliefs. We landscape. (p. 148)

Royster's landscaping metaphor—regarding the types of knowledge disciplines highlight—tells us something, I believe, about the human condition in stories. The metaphor suggests that individuals—writers, students, teachers, autoethnographers—landscape stories, narratives, and writing itself. What writers choose to focus upon creates the landscape they enact

in their writing. Coole and Frost (2010), in their new materialism critique, suggest that "foregrounding material factors and reconfiguring our very understanding of matter are prerequisites for any plausible account of coexistence and its conditions in the twenty-first century" (p. 2). If that's the case, then should we be foregrounding the material factors in our writing and reconfiguring our understanding of the matter embedded in the stories we produce and with the objects within them?

Borrowing Bruno Latour's term *actants*, Bennett describes the quasi-agency of non-human materials. In her *Vibrant Matter*, Bennett (2009) suggests that "What is also needed is a cultivated, patient, sensory attentiveness to nonhuman forces operating outside and inside the human body" (p. xiv). It seems plausible that the place for such a sensory attentiveness begins in the writing created for our stories. Yet an attentiveness to such nonhuman forces has potential to demystify our understanding of human power. That's the point Bennett makes when saying "[demystification] presumes that at the heart of any event or process lies a human agency that has illicitly been projected into things. This hermeneutics of suspicion calls for theorists to be on high alert for signs of the secret truth (a human will to power) below the false appearance of nonhuman agency" (p. xiv). Bennett (2009) and Coole and Frost (2010) raise questions for me as I consider objects in autoethnography, including the Oreo within my own narrative. Do we allow the material detail within our stories to challenge the idea of details as fixed and allow for material discursiveness to use objects to show life, become life, or become alive? In exploring these questions, I believe objects can become the thing that challenges us to explain the assemblages of life.

First, writers rely on objects to serve roles in writing. Embedded in our narratives and weaved throughout our stories, objects can provoke, provide context, signal metaphor, become symbolic to those reading them. In his controversial book, Alan Watts, author of *Does it Matter? Essays on Man's Relation to Materiality* (2010) suggests that the problem is "we confuse the marvelous facility of description with what actually goes on, the world as labeled and classified with the world as it is" (p. x). Even if a writer selects a material which signifies the exact perception or aesthetic sensation intended, the reader may confuse the description of the object with what the object actually is intended to mean. What does this mean for our own stories we tell? Do we describe object and place based on the sensorial reaction we hope to invoke rather than actual physical descriptors? Watts argues that individuals "need to be liberated and dehypnotized

from their systems of symbolism and, thereby, become more intensely aware of the living vibrations of the real world." (Watts, 2010, p. xii). To Watts, readers fall prey to the description rather than the sensations the object creates. Are readers aware of the vibrations within a narrative text that lead to their perceptual meaning making? To some, not all objects carry a social/cultural meaning within the writing we see in our courses. In considering this, I'm drawn to the concept of discursive sprawl—objects that are relocated and repurposed beyond the boundaries of what those objects generally represent—which teaches us that materials in writing can generate the open space Coole and Frost (2010) discuss.

Material and Object as Sensorial Judgments

For non-representational materials in stories within autoethnography, I turn to *Ambient Rhetoric*. Rickert's ambience—the material environment, our embodiment, and various ecological pieces—refers to the role of the material environment in interactions. His Spanish and French cave art examples demonstrate how, even the earliest visual artwork is, in fact, multisensory. Archeology has found that the creators of these paintings selected their location for the auditory sensory that is experienced when standing in front of them. In this case, the sensorial elements experienced delimit the experience to visual only. Painters choosing location based on the multiple sense experiences suggests that the creators of the first visual artwork made clear, specific choices regarding the sensorial elements of experience. For Rickert (2013), the concept of ambience also questions Heidegger's concept of "wakefulness." In other words, what is recognized, or even perceived, contributes to how ambience is acknowledged.[7] To reference Rickert's example, if the paintings aren't considered paintings or if the position of the paintings is ignored, then the recognition of sound as part of the experience is lost. If a nonhuman object is considered less than its human counterpart, then the experience from the autoethnography could be lost. Meaning, it's important to know, see, and acknowledge the Oreo. Rickert (2013) further states:

> [N]ot until we attend to other sensory registers and forms of intelligibility can a richer understanding emerge. When we do so, we can understand the sounds and sights […] immerse us in a multisensory, spatial environment, one pulsing with strong affective and persuasive forces that inflect but also extend beyond our cognitive focus. (p. 138)

I suggest that not only are human decentering, object recognition, and sensorial intelligence needed for Rickert's call but we must realign to what constitutes object experience and rediscover experiences with materials in story beyond the boundaries which previously entangled them: to write within sensation; to know not only what the Oreo signifies but the circulation of the Oreo within the social world.

Sensational Narratocracy

Rickert (2013) suggests that "ambient rhetoric organizes an experience, not so much to persuade in any direct sense, but to attune and inflect our sense of bodily inhabitance and the cradle of intelligibility within which we comport ourselves" (p. 138). I turn now to the idea of sensational narratocracy, which concerns itself with the prevailing concept of narrative privilege but not the type of privilege associated with race/economics/social class: the "privileging of narrative as a genre for the exposition of claims and ideas in contemporary political thought," which Panagia (2010) calls narratocracy (p. 12). In other words, narratocracy is used as a primary method for analyzing sensations. This, as Panagia reminds us, is how we make things readable: how events become communicable to those not invested in the political phenomena in which they are described. Through the narrative, we organize perception in order to communicate the experience to another. Writers categorize, order, highlight, preference, and put pieces in an order to pass along what is understood to come from our sensations and/or sensory moments. Narratocracy becomes the *standard* for communicating experience. What makes this questionable for some? Communicating an account of a perceptual experience leads humanity to connect to each other through the act of reading someone else's account. Yet, when perceptual understanding shifts further away from the sensorial moments between individual(s), signifier, and meaning, we must ask the shift's effect. We already understand that choices in writing stories matter. Yet, even on a subconscious level, the misinterpretation that can occur and the perceptual understanding of particular moments is an unavoidable end it seems when using materials in writing. As Panagia (2010) claims, "Narratocracy commits vision to readerly sight while partitioning the body into specific areas of sensory competency" (p. 12). Ways of *corresponding* perception and what counts as a subject of perception are tied to our ability and methods of extracting experience into the structures of communication.

(in/being) Posthumanist

To reconcile Panagia, acknowledging various kinds of materiality—*actants*, such as breath or air—as conditions and agential forces allows for a material-discursive writing practice that considers a focus on forces—sensations, vibrations, breathing—as agents in the story process. Enacting such a practice suggests posthumanism—in its various frameworks—as an autoethnographic practice highlighting flows of relation, forces, and energies of materials, allowing us to give "materiality its due while recognizing its plural dimensions and its complex modes of appearing" (Coole & Frost, 2010, p. 27).

Object Sensory Autoethnography

As theory provides the language of my story, I do question how equipped I am to access the senses intertwined with perception, which so easily distracts me. As body-based phenomenology opens access to sensations, my own pursuit of understanding my sensations blurs my capacity to feel my body for what occurs within and through it. Yet theory moves throughout and inside of the story, creating a whirlpool of rhetorical energy. In accounting for the objects within the story, I do not privilege myself or instrumentalize the everyday objects which shift and shape the telling of the story. I seek to account for materials, not simply to trace the phenomena of material ontology, but to suggest that the space of critical autoethnography enables the authenticity of the stories we tell about the objects in our lives. Pursuing object sensory autoethnography does not hope to capture the specific sense of an object unattached to the story. Rather, describing the interaction with the object with myself "can represent numerous sensorial experiences including the five western senses as well as sensorial experiences that are less commonly acknowledged" (Pink, 2011). The objects in our stories are not tools, representations of self, but "vibrant agents of measurable power" (Cooper et al., 2016). The world is bloated full of fluctuating elements—objects, language, thoughts, sensations—which dwell with us, budge us, and labor alongside us and with rhetorical intent. Capturing this world requires not just attention or surveillance of objects but attunement, an attunement which flattens the divide between human and all other elements.

Notes

1. Probyn (2010, p. 72): "There is a shame in being highly interested in something and unable to convey it to others, to evoke the same degree of interest in them and to convince them that it is warranted. The risk of writing is always that you will fail to interest or engage readers. Disappointment in yourself looms large when you can't quite get the words right or get the argument across. Simply put, it's the challenge of making the writing equal to the subject being written about."
2. Malabou's foreword in "Plastic Bodies" introduces Sparrow's ideas of beyond phenomenology (2015, p. 13).
3. See Gannon (2006).
4. Hawhee (2015) writes that "Rhetoric's Sensorium" discusses how the term sensation has been discussed within a specific journal; however, her declarative statement here provides insight related to my own ideas.
5. Barad (2003) writes, "intra-actions are constraining but not determining. That is, intra-activity is neither a matter of strict determinism nor unconstrained freedom. The future is radically open at every turn" (p. 826).
6. See Maryland Cooper on *active mediators.*
7. Rickert (2013) writes, "Staying with this insight, which itself requires an attunement, we can see that rhetoric construed from an ambient perspective cannot simply dissolve the subject/object and human/world binaries without taking the necessary next step of acknowledging that rhetoric's work is distributed and ecological and wholly incorporating that idea into rhetorical theory. Rhetoric is not solely human doing, as Bruno Latour, Jane Bennett, and other theorists help demonstrate. Nonhuman elements and forces are always in play as part of human doing, making, and saying. The accomplishments of rhetorical practice are entwined with (re) organizations of the world. Further, my claim that an ambient rhetoric is worldly encompasses more than the idea, deployed by Heidegger, Burke, and numerous others, that world is the world of meaning. It is that, but world, including meaning and involvement, is neither imposed, assigned, nor extracted exclusively by the efforts of human beings" (p. 121).

References

Barad, K. (2003). Posthumanist performativity: Toward an understanding of how matter comes to matter. *Signs, 28*(3), 801–831.

Bennett, J. (2005). The agency of assemblages and the North American blackout. *Public Culture, 17*(3), 445.

Bennett, J. (2009). *Vibrant matter: A political ecology of things*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Coole, D., & Frost, S. (2010). Introducing the new materialisms. In J. Bennett, P. Cheah, M. A. Orlie, & E. Grosz (Eds.), *New materialisms: Ontology, agency, and politics* (pp. 1–46). Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Cooper, M. M., Muckelbauer, J., Teston, C., Zabrowski, K., Sackey, D. J., Hart-Davidson, W., et al. (2016). *Rhetoric through everyday things*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.

Dewey, J. (1934). *Art as experience*. New York: Penguin.

Dewey, J. (2009). *Democracy and education: Complete and unabridged*. Lexington, KY: Feather Trail Press.

Fowler, C., & Harris, O. J. (2015). Enduring relations: Exploring a paradox of new materialism. *Journal of Material Culture, 20*(2), 127–148.

Hawhee, D. (2015). Rhetoric's sensorium. *Quarterly Journal of Speech, 101*(1), 2–17.

Holman Jones, S. (2016). Living bodies of thought: The "critical" in critical auto-ethnography. *Qualitative Inquiry, 22*(4), 228–237.

Jordan, J. (2015). Material translingual ecologies. *College English, 77*(4), 364.

Keane, W. (2003). Semiotics and the social analysis of material things. *Language & Communication, 23*(3), 409–425.

Latour, B. (2005). *Reassembling the social: An introduction to actor-network-theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lemke, T. (2015). New materialisms: Foucault and the 'government of things'. *Theory, Culture & Society, 32*(4), 3–25.

Malabou, C. (2015). Foreword: After the flesh. In T. Sparrow (Ed.), *Plastic bodies: Rebuilding sensation After phenomenology* (pp. 13–20). London: Open Humanities Press.

Panagia, D. (2010). *The political life of sensation*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Pink, S. (2011). Multimodality, multisensoriality and ethnographic knowing: Social semiotics and the phenomenology of perception. *Qualitative Research, 11*(3), 261–276.

Probyn, E. (2010). Writing shame. In M. Gregg & G. J. Seigworth (Eds.), *The affect theory reader* (pp. 71–92). Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Rickert, T. (2013). *Ambient rhetoric: The attunements of rhetorical being*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Royster, J. J. (2003). Disciplinary landscaping, or contemporary challenges in the history of rhetoric. *Philosophy and Rhetoric, 36*(2), 148–167.

Watts, A. W. (2010). *Does it matter?: Essays on man's relation to materiality*. Novato, CA: New World Library.

Summer Dickinson, doctoral candidate at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, researches materiality, sensation, and spatiality in rhetorical and writing studies, with her most recent work exploring the ability of objects to expose unexamined properties of writing and communication. Her papers have been presented both internationally and domestically at various universities including: Monash University, Australia; Smith College, Massachusetts; and University of Aberdeen, Scotland. Her most recent publications involve writing sensation through aesthetic literacy. She is currently an English department faculty member at Middle Tennessee State University.