ABSTRACT

BURR, JONATHAN THOMAS. Self-Sponsored Writing at America's First Public University. (Under the direction of Dr. Christopher Anson.)

This dissertation explores the self-sponsored writing of 12 college students from disparate time periods: the Antebellum (5 students) and the present (7 students). Diaries discussing college life as a student in the 1840s were gathered from the Antebellum students. Blogs, on the other hand, were gathered from the 21st century students. In order to explore how these students used language in different contexts, these self-sponsored writings were analyzed using Linguistic Inquiry Word Count. Through an in-depth analysis of the linguistic and psychological characteristics of both the blogs and diaries, it is ultimately argued that bloggers tend to create community while the diarists write to escape community.
Self-Sponsored Writing at America's First Public University

by

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Chapter 1

Self-Sponsored Writing: Two Genres in Two Contexts

As I peeked into the doorway of the classroom for my soon-to-be first teaching experience, I was greeted by the blue haze created by the stand-by screens of rows and rows of computers. This was not the traditional classroom of desks and chairs that I had expected. Nevertheless, I immediately began brainstorming ways to utilize such an environment, ultimately deciding that a classroom blogscape was the answer. Though I had never kept a blog (or taught composition, for that matter), I discussed the potential of blogs within and without the composition course during a program workshop before the semester. I touted blogging as a way to incorporate the electronic writing that our students are becoming so familiar and adept with into the classroom. I also believed that having students keep a blog and post on their classmates' blogs would create a sense of community. However, as that semester came to a close and I peered into the blue haze of an empty computer lab on the last day of class, I was less enthusiastic about my classroom blogging experiment.

In a program workshop after this teaching experience, I was hesitant to recommend using blogs to my colleagues. I cited varying degrees of participation (students posting at the last minute or not posting at all) and content of questionable quality, such as writing relatively little on one's own blog and providing brief or few comments to others (such as described by Homik & Melis, 2006 and Krause, 2004). At the same time, there were also some successes regarding the strength of the classroom community. I described to my fellow composition instructors, for example, the joy of “social banter” that is common in almost any
community occurring on my students' blogs (such as conversations regarding playing pool or going to lunch after class) being mingled alongside discussions of their writing process. I also described how some students exhibited a sense of ownership over their blogs, changing the colors, templates, and fonts.

When the dust settled, however, I ultimately declared the experiment a failure. But, as the years have passed and I've had more time to reflect upon my experience, my attitude has changed. I've been drawn towards the notion of strengthening the classroom community as well as tapping into all of the writing that our students do. For these reasons, I began to reexamine the foundations on which this attempt at classroom blogging was based.

While I was experimenting with the usage of blogs at a medium-sized institution in North Carolina, a significant push to explore student writing was underway at Stanford University. Jenn Fishman, Andrea Lunsford, Beth McGregor, and Mark Otuteye's (2005) Stanford Writing Project gathered data from 2001 to 2006 and sought to understand the nature of all student writing, not just academic work. The data collected featured a variety of types of writing from 189 students, including both school-sponsored and self-sponsored works such as essays, e-mails, resumes, poems, and journals. Though their research is ongoing, one of their general findings supports a notion that I had expressed in workshops on blogs: the majority of student writing is taking place in electronic environments. To further explore their data and the value of self-sponsored writing to college students, Fishman et al. conducted student interviews, finding that some students described their self-sponsored writing as “more personal” and therapeutic and that their writing processes for such work
may be driven primarily by freewriting and might lack the structure of an academic essay (p. 230). Students also suggested that self-sponsored writing was beneficial because it helped them feel confident, courageous, and brave with their composition. From the research of Fishman et al., it seems that there is little doubt that college students treat their school-sponsored and self-sponsored writings differently, that there is a clear value to self-sponsored writing, and that electronic writing is particularly significant to the 21st century college student.

The Stanford Writing Project is just a beginning towards understanding the totality of student writing. As such, it, at the very least, opens the doors to exploring student writing at other universities. Moreover, their preliminary finding regarding electronic writing also raises questions regarding the nature of student writing prior to the rise of the technologies that now dominate communications in the 21st century. Do electronic environments, for instance, completely change student self-sponsored writing across the board in content, process, purpose, and style? Or, in the absence of digital technology, do similarities between print-based self-sponsored writing and electronic self-sponsored writing remain? Research of such an idea would require, of course, historical study of college students prior to the presence of e-mail, Facebook, LiveJournal, and all other similar social media and communications technologies that students regularly use for self-sponsored writing.

But, importantly, the value of such a pursuit goes beyond just the study of student writing in the absence of digital environments. Robert J. Connors (2003), for instance, provided the following reasoning in “Writing the History of Our Discipline”: 
We may not always be able to claim that we see far because we stand on the shoulders of giants; we do, however, stand on the shoulders of thousands of good-willed teachers and writers surprisingly like us, who faced in 1870 or 1930 problems amazingly similar to those we confront each time we enter the classroom. Listening carefully, those of us who have begun to try to hear their voices have found much there we can learn from. (p. 203)

Following Connors's instruction, we may listen carefully enough to hear the voices of those who walked the college grounds long before us and for whom our pedagogy is dedicated: Our students. Their voices provide much insight into life within and without the classroom. For this reason, a comparison of print and digital self-sponsored writing at a single institution would reveal much about the contexts for each, the values of self-sponsored writing to the student writers, and the significance of digital and non-digital technologies for self-sponsored writing.

However, given that much student writing—particularly self-sponsored writing—is not kept and is typically lost or destroyed over time, limited resources make the completion of such a study extremely difficult, if not impossible. Since electronic writing environments have caused many genres to fade out in favor of a digital alternative, it is much more feasible to study the newly created, electronic genre and its antecedent. But, what genres of self-sponsored writing should be explored? The answer to this question lies with two genres that are striking in their similarities and their significance to college students in disparate time
periods: the blog and the diary.

Between March 2003 and April 2006, blog-tracking website *Technorati* indicates that the blogosphere doubled in size every 6 months and included approximately 35 million blogs. Moreover, as of 2011, Nielsen reports that there are more than 150 million blogs in existence (though many, of course, are not regularly used, if at all). Given this growth and the sheer number of blogs in existence, there is a clear interest in blogging within the public realm.

Blogging has also become a subject of fascination for academics. Research on the genre has boomed as recent studies cover diverse topics, ranging from the motivations of blogging (Baker & Moore, 2011; Hsiu-Li, Su-Houn, Smih-Ming, 2011), the genre's social components (Baker & Moore, 2008; Rains & Keating, 2011), and connections between blogging and gender (Liu & Chang, 2010; Somolu, 2007). Research on blogging has also flourished in educational contexts. The genre has been explored in numerous settings beyond writing classes, including science (Colombo & Colombo, 2007; Sawmiller, 2010), foreign-language (Sun, 2010), and even physical education (Papastergiou, Gerodimos, & Antoniou 2011).

The print-based antecedent to the blog is generally considered to be the diary. Many scholars have drawn this connection, often considering the blog to be an “online diary.” Carolyn Miller and Dawn Shepherd (2004), for instance, explore the rhetorical significance and development of the blog, describing its antecedent genres and ultimately drawing comparisons between the blog and such examples as the log, commonplace book, broadside,
editorial, and the diary. Since the publication of their landmark article, blogging has continued to be a prominent tool for information, education, and entertainment. Laura J. Gurak and Smiljana Antonijevic (2008) build upon the work of Miller and Shepherd by invoking a description of the blog as an “online diary” because “a blog is always a record, a (reverse) chronological trace of one’s activities, experiences, and/or thoughts. Blogs, therefore, enable temporal structuring of a person’s activities, experiences, and/or thoughts, which is the function of traditional diaries” (p. 64). There is thus a direct relationship between the writing that a student would do in a diary and a digital forum like a blog.

Prior to the blog developing in the 20th century, the diary was one of the primary forms of self-sponsored writing. As discussed by Miller and Shepherd, diaries are “part of the blog family tree.” This comparison is based upon the genre's connections with the two types of blogs identified by Rebecca Blood (2000) in “Weblogs: A History and Perspective”: personal blogs and collections of links. The former blog type is easily comparable to the diary as a place for expressing one's own thoughts and recollections, and the latter represented by the notion that diaries provide a “window on history” (Miller & Shepherd, 2004).

However, the question remains: What purpose would such a study of student blog and diaries serve? In a broad sense, this study seeks to explore self-sponsored writing of college students at a single university in disparate historical contexts. Given the indicated significance of self-sponsored writing to students, this comparison could reveal much about how students' approach to self-sponsored writing has changed over time. A more specific
purpose, on the other hand, is unveiled through this study's historical context and the artifacts chosen for analysis.

Given the unique relationship that blogging creates between the blogger and his/her audience (Gurak & Antonijevic, 2008), one historical period particularly worthy of study is the 1840s, a time when important social and individual changes were taking place. Specifically, the notions of adulthood were transitioning dramatically away from an emphasis on the community to one on the individual. For one, as described by E. Anthony Rotundo (1993), the notion of the individual as part of a fixed family line or hierarchy was fading out in favor of the individual as one who pursues their own abilities and accomplishments:

People believed that a man could now advance as far as his own work and talents would take him. . .that the individual, not the community, was the fundamental unit of society. . .The individual was now the measure of things and men were engrossed with themselves as selves. The dominant concerns were the concerns of the self—self-improvement, self-control, self-interest, self advancement. (pp. 19-20)

This context is of particular significance to blogging because—though most blogs are authored by a single individual—these individuals are often not writing for themselves but, instead, for their community of readers. In Technorati’s 2011 “State of the Blogosphere,” for example, it was found that the most common response from bloggers to the question “Why do you blog?” was “To share my expertise and experiences with others.” The same response was also the most frequent for a similar question, “What is the primary reason why you
There is thus a clear and interesting relationship in the blogosphere between the blogger and his/her audience. The situation in the 1840s is interesting in this context. With the changes occurring during this historical period, individuals would be going through a transition from acting totally for their community and family to now acting as individuals. Given the likelihood that individuals would use their diaries to write about their personal experiences, entries could provide a window into the writer grappling with the individual/community dichotomy. For this reason, this study also has the purpose of exploring the great potential for a comparison of the genres in the context of these changes and how diarists and bloggers consider their relationship to their audience and the value of their writing to themselves.

Though there are millions of blogs to choose from, locating diaries for comparison is difficult. Some universities, however, maintain extensive archives and, at the same time, have adopted student blogrolls as a means for documenting student life. Due to its historical significance as the first public university in the United States and extensive archives, an ideal location for such a study of student writing is the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-CH). With a vast archive of primary documents dating back to the university's charter in 1789, the library's collection of self-sponsored writings is diverse. Several student diaries from the early 1840s, for instance—a period of significant growth for the university—have been archived. Most of these examples cover a single year of the student's college life and discuss everything from the mundane (such as the weather, class, and prayer attendance) to the extraordinary (such as fights, feuds, drinking, and drug use).
Furthermore, leaping a span of 170 years to when the blog is a digital, more popular alternative to the diary as a means for recording one's thoughts and recollections, the digital media context for student writings can be represented through Tarheel Blog, a blog community of UNC-CH students who submit posts detailing their lives as college students. Posting on a monthly and sometimes weekly basis, the students provide a first-hand perspective of college life. The site has current bloggers as well as “alumni bloggers” who have graduated from UNC-CH and thus have since abandoned their blog. Numerous other universities (including Harvard University, Cornell University, Seattle University, and Augusta State University) maintain student blogrolls comparable to Tarheel Blog to “tap in” to student life on campus.

Since these forums are often maintained by the admissions office of the university in question, this study adopts a nuanced definition of self-sponsored writing. To articulate this definition, it is necessary to turn to James Britton's (1975) and Janet Emig’s (1971) descriptions of the functions of writing. Britton, for example, provides the transactional, expressive, and poetic. Where transactional writing is intended for an audience and entails “participation in the world's affairs,” poetic writing presents the “verbal object as a work of art” (p. 83). The expressive function, however, is most connected with personal thought and thus the closest to matching with what a student would do in a blog or diary. In The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders, Emig discusses reflexive and extensive writing. She defines reflexive writing as “the mode that focuses upon the writer's thoughts and feelings concerning his experiences; the chief audience is the writer himself; the domain
explored is often the affective; the style is tentative, personal, and exploratory” (p. 4).

Though the student blogs are personal, they are not particularly fitting for Emig's other descriptors of the reflexive style. They, for instance, have a significant audience and are not particularly affective or exploratory. At the same time, Emig's definition for extensive writing includes “conveying a message or a communication to another; the domain explored is usually the cognitive; the style is assured, impersonal and often reportorial (p. 4). The student bloggers' writing fits several of these characteristics, such as conveying a message and the regular adoption of a cognitive, reportorial style. Even though their writing is more in line with the extensive style typically associated with school-sponsored writing, this study still considers the student bloggers to be self-sponsored writers. This reasoning is primarily driven by their impetus to write. They write as much or as little as they want, and they write whenever they want. The constraints created by the context for their writing, however, results in student blogs that are self-sponsored but written in more of a school-sponsored style.

Figure 1.1 provides a visualization of the current appearance of Tarheel Blog. The site features profile photographs and brief autobiographical details for each blogger along the right-side of the screen and threads every post on a single page. In addition, visitors to the site have the ability to comment upon student blog posts. These characteristics of the blog are important because, prior to the fall of 2008, Tarheel Blog was in a much different, less community-focused format.
Figure 1.1. The updated version of Tarheel Blog

The original version of Tarheel Blog appears in Figure 1.2. This site, for one, did not allow for visitors to comment on blogs. Instead, potential students were encouraged to email the student bloggers directly. Another difference on the old site was the presence of a single section of the site for each blogger, so posts were not threaded together. Finally, the old blog had fewer authors (10 compared to 18 on the updated version).
This study seeks to, first and foremost, contribute to the growing knowledge base exploring the diary and blog as antecedent genres. Examples of such work include studies like Yi and Hirvela's (2010) discussion of how someone might, for example, keep both a blog and a diary but for different purposes. Their research found that an individual who keeps a diary may use it for more private, personal thoughts while his/her blog is filled with public, community-driven correspondence. Another example is Guzzetti and Gamboa's (2005) discussion of an individual who also kept both a print diary and an online diary but used one (the diary) to draft ideas for the other (the online diary). The present study can be seen as a bridge between the analysis of self-sponsored blogs and self-sponsored diaries, a continued exploration of the already partially uncovered gap that is the analysis of how antecedent genres might be used for different purposes, and the beginning of a new discussion on the
role that historical context has upon self-sponsored writing.

Given the unique historical context of the diaries and the particular relationship between identity and community common in blogging, this study explores each of these connections by examining the content of UNC-CH student blogs and diaries. In doing so, the argument that this project puts forth is that bloggers and diarists negotiate the individual/community dichotomy differently. Bloggers, ultimately, write to create community, and diarists write to escape community.

Though the term community is used here in the context of both the diarists and bloggers, different meanings are adopted for each. For the diarists, community can be thought of within Tönnies' (1979) classic distinction between Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft. Where Gesellschaft refers to society, Gemeinschaft refers to community and generally includes a shared location, history, and value system. These characteristics can be, and often are, traced through the family unit and, in turn, the fixed family line. Within the geographic community represented by a college campus and its surroundings, the Antebellum UNC-CH students sought to escape the notion of Gemeinschaft and become professionals. The Tarheel Blog community, however, is much different than that surrounding the diarists. This difference is, in part, driven by the bloggers' writing in an online environment. Several characteristics of the community can be discussed to make clear the ways that Tarheel Blog both is and is not comparable to other online communities. Baker and Ward (2002) describe such online communities as information intersections made possible by technology and thus escaping the limitations of geography. This is certainly the case with Tarheel Blog as the
design of the blog provides a place for information to be shared with other users through commenting and posts. They also indicate that online communities can supplement offline communities by “[permitting] members of a geographically defined community to interact and maintain the communications flow of ‘community interest’ without requiring a concurrent proximate physical or temporal presence” (p. 210). Moreover, like what is discussed by Carolyn Wei (2004), there is also a shared set of community norms. The design and content of posts are, generally, comparable. At the same time, the work of Castells (2000) suggests that the relationships created in virtual communities will be predominantly weak ties rather than strong ties. This is certainly the case with Tarheel Blog; however, the ties are so weak that they are, in essence, often non-existent. Community members (the Tarheel bloggers) rarely communicate with one another on the blog, and visitors to the community are often anonymous. In this sense, unlike the vibrant virtual communities described by Rheingold (1994), the bloggers do not seem to use the community to extend or enrich their interactions with others. Like the diarists, the bloggers have a shared sense of place and interest, but use these commonalities primarily for what is, essentially, a one-way sharing of information.

Due to the important relationship between emotion and writing (Brand, 1990; Brand & Powell, 1986) and the growing corpus of research on the significance of language to one's personal thoughts and identity (such as Simmons, Gordon, & Chambless, 2005; Kahn, Tobin, Massey, & Anderson, 2007; Holmes et al., 2007; Kacewicz, Pennebaker, Davis, Jeon, & Graesser, 2009; and many others), this study will use an innovative software program—
Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC)—to analyze the writing of the student bloggers and student diarists. Such a fine-tuned analysis reveals relationships between linguistic, emotional, and psychological processes present within each individual's work. Since this study focuses on the emotions present in the writing of student bloggers and diarists, its foundations are grounded in expressivism. Generally rooted in the work of such scholars as James Britton, James Berlin, Peter Elbow, Donald Murray, and Donald Stewart, this approach centers on the significance of the author's emotions to composition. Berlin's expressivism, for instance, is described through how “he deduces 'expressionism' from Platonism and argues that an 'expressionist' writer seeks subjective truths through a Neo-Platonic 'private vision' that 'exists prior to language'” (Jones, 2002, p. 274). Within this context, this project explores how college students express their emotions through self-sponsored writing in disparate historical contexts and the impact that genre (i.e., diary writing versus blog writing) has upon one's language choice when self-sponsored writing. Therefore, the research presented here makes a significant contribution to our understanding of the self-sponsored writing of college students, the usage of antecedent genres, and composition history.

Moreover, the relationship between blogs and diaries and the university context leads to the following research questions:

1. Why would a college student keep a self-sponsored blog or diary outside the classroom?
2. What content fills the pages of these self-sponsored blogs and diaries?
3. How does student writing change from the beginning of a self-sponsored blog or diary to its end?
To delve into these questions, the self-sponsored writings of twelve students at UNC-CH—five from the Antebellum period and seven from the 21st century—were analyzed. This study explores these three research questions through seven chapters. Chapter 2 reviews the literature on self-sponsored writing in regards to adolescents, college students, and the adaptation of self-sponsored writing to school-sponsored contexts. Chapter 3 provides an overview of the archival and interpretive methodology adopted for this study. This methodological chapter explores both the research process that led to the development of the current study and a discussion of the growing significance of LIWC since the early 1990s, including numerous studies that have utilized the program for linguistic inquiry. Chapters 4-7 provide an analysis of the collected data. Chapter 4 is an overview of all student diarists and student bloggers, providing an idea of the degree to which they engaged in self-sponsored writing and the types of topics discussed. Most of all, this chapter is intended to be an introduction to the data collected. Chapter 5 is the first chapter that utilizes in-depth linguistic and psychological analysis and explores all twelve introductory posts and entries of the student writers. In addition to inquiry through LIWC, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to conduct independent samples t-tests and bivariate correlations to locate significant relationships between linguistic, psychological, and cognitive variables. Chapter 6 focuses in on two specific bloggers (Katie and Yolanda) and the totality of their writing as participants in a blog community. They are a focus because—one of the twelve bloggers—they are the only two to both begin and end their blogs. All other blogs either faded away or halted abruptly. Chapter 7 is an in-depth investigation of the diary of James.
Lawrence Dusenbery. All of his entries (written from 1841 to 1842) were analyzed with LIWC and SPSS. Due to similarities in the sample sizes, his writing (n = 45) was often compared to results obtained from analysis of Katie's blog (n = 38). This chapter also includes a discussion of some important historical contexts significant to Dusenbery's writing. Finally, Chapter 8 concludes this study with a discussion of the implications of this research, possible limitations, and some areas for further study.
Chapter 2

Literature Review

Outside of the valuable work of the Stanford Writing Project, there has been relatively little research on the self-sponsored writing of college students, particularly in regards to
diary writing and blogging. The school-sponsored writing of college students in these genres,
however, has been an area of focus. Studies include Jeremy Williams and Joanne Jacobs's
provision of blogs as a way for students and professionals to present unfinished pieces of
writing to peers; Jo Ann Oravec's (2002) suggestion that they could be a tool for helping
students achieve a sense of voice in their writing; and the work of Michele Dickey (2004)
and Lucinda Kerawalla, Shailey Minocha, Gill Kirkup, and Gráinne Conole (2008) exploring
the usage of blogs within distance education programs. Most school-sponsored examples of
research on blogging share the approach of Sylvia Read's (2006) effort to make school-
sponsored writing more like self-sponsored writing. She, for instance, has students choose
their own blog topics and encourages them to show a sense of ownership.

Moreover, school-sponsored studies of the personal diary primarily focus on making
clear the potential benefits and means of integration into the classroom. Toby Fulwiler's
(1987) *The Journal Book* is one of the most commonly cited examples and contains
numerous approaches to integrating journals into a diverse arrangement of educational
contexts, such as Geoffrey Summerfield's discussion of how every piece of writing is a social
act and Peter Elbow and Jennifer Clarke's suggestion that there are times when ignoring one's
audience can be beneficial to writing. Similar to these examples, Anson and Beach (1995), Parsons (2001) and Probst (2004) discuss how journals improve reflection and engagement.

**Self-Sponsored Writing of Children and Adolescents**

Though this project focuses on college students, the research on self-sponsored writing has its roots in the writing of high school students through such studies as Janet Emig’s (1971) *The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders*. Her work explores the writing of eight students from six Chicago-area high schools that varied in their racial and economic diversity. Each of the eight students met with Emig for four different writing sessions. During the first session, each student composed on a subject of his/her choosing and was given a prompt for the next meeting. In addition to composing a response, students brought any prewriting they did for this prompt to the second session. Concluding this meeting, students were told that the next session would require them to recall all writing—both school-sponsored and self-sponsored—that they had ever done. To document their “writing autobiography,” students were encouraged to speak with teachers and relatives and to seek out writing samples. Finally, students were asked to bring an example of “imaginative” writing with all prewriting to the final session that they had written in the days before (p. 30).

Based upon the results of these sessions, Emig suggests that students compose in two different modes: extensive and reflexive. As discussed in the previous chapter, the extensive mode is associated with school-sponsored writing and “occurs chiefly as prose; the attitude toward the field of discourse is often detached and reportorial. Adult others, notably teachers, are the chief audience” (p. 91). Reflexive writing, on the other hand, is generally composed
for the self and is characterized by its exploratory and poetic nature. Other findings include the ideas that prewriting was more extensive for students engaging in self-sponsored writing; self-sponsored writing results in more contemplation; and students are more likely to revise self-sponsored writing than school-sponsored writing (p. 91). Emig suggests that one implication of her study might be that “teachers will abandon the unimodal approach to writing and show far greater generosity in the width of writing invitations they extend to all students” (p. 100).

Birnbaum (1980) also studied the school-sponsored and self-sponsored writing of students. Her subjects, however, were from the fourth and seventh grades and were thus slightly younger than Emig's. Each student was recorded composing silently on three occasions and composing aloud on one occasion and was allowed to write for as long as he/she wanted and in any mode. After analyzing her data, Birnbaum discovered connections between the proficiency of a writer and how they composed. She found, for example, that “more proficient writers approached composing with the intention of representing their meaning to an audience, the less proficient writers tended to approach it with the intention of writing a neat, error-free paper” (p. 203). She also found that the more proficient writers were more likely to engage in self-sponsored writing than the less proficient writers (p. 205). The implications of her findings indicate the need for a change in how writing is viewed in the lives of the less proficient writers. Instead of writing being primarily the result of the school-sponsored demand for “a neat, error-free paper about an imposed topic,” it should be viewed as central to other important processes like “talking and listening” (p. 209).
Another study by Birnbaum (1982) also explores the composing processes of adolescent students. Similar to the previous study, she gathered data from eight students. This project, however, required students to be recorded on six occasions, alternating between reading and discussion of a chosen text and composing about a “a memory, a poem or story, and about a lesson that he or she had learned” (p. 244). These varying prompts were intended to result in the expressive, poetic, and transactional modes (p. 244). Like the earlier study, Birnbaum discovered that more proficient writers were more likely to engage in self-sponsored writing. The more proficient writers also tended to compose and revise in response to internal demands (the overall meaning of the text to the writer, for instance) while less proficient writers relied more on external demands (such as grammatical concerns). Birnbaum calls for “further investigations of children's reading and writing histories and the nonacademic and academic environments in which they learned to use written language” (p. 257).

Additional research of the school-sponsored and self-sponsored writing of children and adolescents is Sally Hudson's (1986) study of elementary school writers. Her research was conducted in three phases: 1. Questionnaires, 2. Group meetings, and 3. Parent interviews, additional meetings, and written product collection. Hudson also focused on a slightly larger group of students than Emig and Birnbaum, selecting 20 as opposed to the 8 student sample size of their studies. The provided written products were representative of both self-sponsored writing and school-sponsored writing. Through discussions with students, Hudson explores the composition of each written product in regards to the
following factors: ownership, setting, audience, purpose, and genre (p. 300). Her findings indicate that students engaging in self-sponsored writing tend to have a greater number of audiences in mind (peers, adults at home, self, etc.) when they compose than when engaging in school-sponsored writing, and they also found more varied purposes (interaction, creation, facilitation, etc.) for their self-sponsored writing. Hudson suggests that her findings make clear the need to “discover ways to help children retain the freshness of their written language while adapting it appropriately to meet the demands of adult writing situations” (p. 312).

Self-Sponsored Writing Case Studies

Mahiri and Sablo (1996) continue this discussion of the differences between the self-sponsored and school-sponsored writing of students by describing in-depth the writing of two African-American youths. Their study focuses on Keisha, a 10th grader, who wrote many songs and poems, and Troy, an 11th grader, who was an aspiring rapper. Like Keisha, Troy devoted much of his writing outside of school to songs. In regards to their motivation to write, Mahiri and Sablo found that these students generally preferred their self-sponsored writing to their academic writing: “it is erroneous to conclude that writing, in and of itself, was unimportant or “uncool” to these students; rather, they resisted what they viewed as the unauthentic nature of many of their experiences with academic writing” (p. 174). With their self-sponsored writings exploring the world around them—their families, their surroundings, and their lives—it does not come as a surprise that these students are able to sense some artificiality to their academic writing. Mahiri and Sablo's work is essentially a suggestion that
teachers ought to find ways to “be informed by the voluntary writing practices of students like Keisha and Troy” (p. 179). Such efforts are reflected in the amount of research conducted to adapt self-sponsored writing practices to the school-sponsored context.

Some studies of children and adolescents explore the two genres of direct relevance to this study: self-sponsored blogging and self-sponsored diary writing. Guzzetti and Gamboa (2005) analyze the self-sponsored writing of two high school girls (Janice and Corgan). These girls differed from each other in the way that they used online journals for self-sponsored writing. Janice, for instance, kept both an online diary (on LiveJournal) and a print diary. The print diary, however, existed primarily as a place for her to write ideas down that would later be transferred to her online diary. In addition to writing in her own diary, she spent a significant amount of time reading other individuals' diaries. Interestingly, before joining LiveJournal, Janice was a blogger; however, she quit updating the blog after entering the LiveJournal community, citing the blog's lack of features. In regards to the content of her entries, she primarily used her online self-sponsored writing to express emotion regarding events in her life and refining of her own literary practices.

Corgan's usage, on the other hand, was much less frequent than Janice's, typically included content that was not as emotional, and was restricted so that strangers could not read her entries. She tended to do more reading online than she did posting, including being a member of several online groups (such as Vegan People and Craftgrrl). Guzzetti and Gamboa describe that she posted more about such matters as politics, social issues, and literary practices. They highlight the manner in which Corgan and Janice bridged the self-
sponsored and school-sponsored contexts:

these girls stand as examples of youth who blur boundaries, both in terms of the literacy acts and the contexts in which those acts are performed. Each of the girls obscured the line between out-of-school literacy practices and in-school literacy by connecting and interchanging their electronic journaling with their in-school discussions and assignments. (p. 199)

Another example of self-sponsored blogging and diary writing is Yi and Hirvela's (2010) discussion of both the diary writing and blogging of a Korean female at a Midwestern high school. The student (who they refer to as Elizabeth) engaged in several types of self-sponsored diary writing in both English and Korean, including a print-diary and two computer-based online diaries. Over a six month period, data was collected through weekly interviews, written artifacts, and field notes. Her writing for each type of diary differed. The print-diary, for instance, was by far more private than the two computer-based diaries:

her print-based diary was more private, personal, and secretive and contained what may have been her most intense out-of-school writing, since there was no need to fear negative audience reactions and she could “speak” as freely as she wanted to. (p. 100)

The online diaries, in contrast, served as a way to keep in touch with friends, to discuss her day-to-day activities, and to share media. Yi and Hirvela found that—upon interviewing Elizabeth—she recognized the difference between the diaries, acknowledging that it was the private nature of the print-diary that caused it to be filled with personal self-sponsored
writing, and the public nature of the online diaries that resulted in writing that seemed more focused on the community. They make clear that

Elizabeth seemed to enjoy negotiating her private and public worlds through different forms of diary writing and uses of technology (print, online), just as she negotiated conflicts, questions, and opportunities she encountered through interaction with different groups of writers and readers (p. 106).

Additional studies of the self-sponsored writing of adolescent students have discussed such topics as instant messaging, online magazines, and e-mail. Lam (2000), for example, explores the writing of a Chinese high school student named Almon through e-mailing, a home page, and instant messaging. The student ultimately used writing as a way of “constructed his identity in English with a transborder group of peers on the Internet (p. 476). Other examples include Lewis and Fabos's (1999) study of how two middle-school girls utilized instant messaging for communication because it provided them with “more space for play, parody and performance” (p. 12); Merchant's (2001) analysis of the online writing in chat rooms by teenage girls, and Knobel and Lankshear's (2002) study of how adolescent students creating online magazines known as “e-zines” demonstrate themselves to be “active and often critically sophisticated participants in and creators of culture” (p. 184).

Self-Sponsored Writing of College Students

Though the self-sponsored blogging and diary writing of college students has not been an area of particular focus, there is little doubt of self-sponsored writing's importance to
composition studies. In his CCCC address, “Who Owns Writing?,” Douglas Hesse (2005) divides the areas of writing studied by composition into five categories: vocational, academic, civic, personal, and belletristic (p. 349). He further divides these groupings into the two broad classifications of self-sponsored and obliged writing. Hesse defines self-sponsored writing as that which “people do for reasons of expression or social affiliation” and school-sponsored (or obliged) writing as “writing that institutions require and sanction” (p. 350). Essentially, he calls for the valuing of both types of writing within the field and indicates a focus on the growth of the civic sphere through self-sponsored technological contexts such as personal blogs and wikis.

The work of Brand and Powell (1986) also demonstrates the significance of self-sponsored writing to students and to composition studies. Their research explores the emotions of college students before and after engaging in self-sponsored and school-sponsored writing. Of the 87 participants in the study, 70 were from English classes and 17 were volunteers from a Psychology course. Emotion was assessed through the Brand Emotions Scale for Writers (BESW) and its two forms: the Trait-form and the State-form. The Trait-form assesses general emotion and frequency of emotion, and the State-form “is concerned with how people feel before, during, and after writing a particular piece” (p. 281). After obtaining and analyzing their data, Brand and Powell reached some conclusions regarding writing in general. For instance, participants had a tendency to experience more positive emotion over the course of writing, and the intensity of emotion felt tended to be influenced by the writer's skill. In regards to emotions felt when self-sponsored writing
versus those felt when school-sponsored writing, they found that, somewhat surprisingly, students experienced more negative emotions when engaging in self-sponsored writing. This finding, however, is explained by Brand and Powell through the idea that students use their private writing as an outlet for emotion (p. 284).

Brand (1990) continued this research by expanding the number and type of participants. Using the same BESW, she gathered data from 191 college students, professionals, and teachers. Her general findings were similar to the previous study, suggesting, for instance, that positive emotions increase over the course of a piece of writing. In regards to the different types of writers, Brand found anxiety was the most commonly experienced negative emotion but tended to decrease after writing for all groups except teachers who felt greater anxiety during writing and little change after. Brand also came to some conclusions regarding emotions and their connections with self-sponsored and school-sponsored writing. She discovered that participants who engaged in self-sponsored writing “felt better about writing in general and tended to perform better” (p. 297). Moreover, similar to her previous findings, Brand found that individuals engaging in self-sponsored writing experienced more negative emotions. This finding was particularly true for participants who were also poets; they tended to experience strong negative and positive emotion when self-sponsored writing.

Self-Sponsored Writing of College Students in Digital Contexts

As indicated by Fishman et al. (2005), electronic writing is of central importance to students in the twenty-first century. One discussion of self-sponsored electronic writing is
Lee's (2007) analysis of the instant messaging of college students. She gathered data from 19 students primarily through interviews and observation. Interviews covered such topics as the participant's purpose for using instant messaging, strategies for communicating online, and social issues. Lee's findings hinge on the language usage of participants. For instance, the participants tended to write in different languages based upon what they needed to communicate. Moreover, participants also utilized what Lee refers to as “code-mixing,” which refers to the usage of multiple languages within a single instance of communication. In this particular study, code-mixing typically included the insertion of English words with Cantonese. She concludes that the online self-sponsored writing of these students favors efficiency of expression over the formal accuracy typically demanded by the school-sponsored context: “my informants are indeed well aware that the IM context allows them to write more casually and to ignore accuracy in grammar. In other words, to these young people, expressiveness and communicativeness override accuracy online” (p. 298).

Another study representative of the electronic context central to this project is Leslie and Murphy's (2008) discussion of the purpose of blogs for college students. Their data was gathered from a cohort of 309 students in a program at Dubai Women's College. Importantly, this study represents a gray area between school-sponsored and self-sponsored writing because students were required to create a blog as part of their program but were not required to write in it. From the 309 students, 9 were selected based upon their usage of the blog for “social presence and interaction and knowledge construction” (p. 5). Leslie and Murphy found that social exchange occurred through commenting on blogs; however, there were few
examples of extended conversations going on through comments. The students also tended to use their blogs in a personal way; they, in other words, recorded information about their lives outside of the school context. These types of posts also generally garnered the most comments from other participants in the cohort. Leslie and Murphy also found that the students had a tendency to avoid disagreeing with one another: “Writing responses or comments that demonstrate dissonance or disagreement with another person involves a certain level of risk and potential loss of face on the part of both participants” (p. 10). In the context of school-sponsored and self-sponsored writing, this study is of particular interest because it was determined that the social function of the blog community—not the instructional function—was the primary benefit cited by the student participants.

**Self-Sponsored Writing of College Students Outside the Digital Context**

Like Mahiri and Sablo's (1996) research on high school students, the print-based self-sponsored writing practices of college students (such as journal writing and sketching) have been discussed. The work of Elizabeth Chiseri-Strater (1991) in *Academic Literacies: The Public and Private Discourse of University Students*, for example, provides critical insight into the purpose of both school-sponsored and self-sponsored journal writing. Though her study is primarily an ethnographic exploration of the academic writings of two students—Nick and Anna—Chiseri-Strater does discuss in some detail self-sponsored writing. A private journal, sketches, and various scribblings, for instance, were of particular importance to Nick. She describes the significance of the diary to him:

> Nick's personal journal is neatly and legibly printed in black ink in
fountain pen, the entries always dated and the time recorded both at the beginning and the ending of each entry. . .Within the rubbery quality of Nick's life, he had built a “ramshackle” identity partially through the medium of this journal itself: writing in Nick's personal life is a way of knowing. (pp. 95-97)

In comparison to his school-sponsored writing, Nick's self-sponsored work often seemed more “authentic,” “personal,” and “intimate” (p. 154). Outside of the critical eye of his professors, he created cartoons and sketches that provided commentary on the course's content. Moreover, when asked to write personal essays for his courses, Chiseri-Strater remarks that Nick often “taps in” to his experience as a self-sponsored writer (p. 155). These examples, at the least, make clear the potential significance of self-sponsored writing to a college student.

Anne Ruggles Gere (1994), on the other hand, studied self-sponsored writing through groups that exist outside of college courses and the composition classroom, such as writing workshops and the writing center. These groups, which she refers to as the extracurriculum of composition, provide a multitude of benefits for participants, including “Positive feelings about oneself and one's writing, motivation to revise and improve compositional skills. . .the belief that writing can make a difference in individual and community life” (p. 78). More specifically, Gere places her focus directly on “self-sponsored pedagogically oriented writing activities outside the academy” (p. 80). After providing numerous historical examples of composition's extracurriculum (including ladies literary societies and self-help associations),
she turns her attention to the writing center as a location that is critical to self-sponsored writing outside the classroom walls. Gere concludes by suggesting that there is a need to bridge the school-sponsored and self-sponsored contexts: “We may discipline their bodies with school desks and hand positions for keyboarding, but they write outside and beyond us in an extracurriculum of their own making” (p. 91).

Where the studies of self-sponsored writing mentioned thus far have been analyses of the writing of students in the present, the archival research of self-sponsored writing has also been an area of interest. Of particular relevance to this project is Weidner's (1994) discussion of the diary of Lydia Short while a student at Butler University in 1860. Through an analysis of the history of Butler University and excerpts from Short's diary, Weidner describes how Short was able to create a positive, optimistic learning environment in an often hostile mid-19th century coeducational context. Weidner describes how she was one of 14 students in her class and how the historical and cultural context made it such that Short often did not see her writing as important or serious in comparison to that of her male colleagues. Of particular relevance to this study, Weidner describes Short's devotion to discussing her rhetorical training and to critiquing the speaking of her classmates: “Writing about a speaker's approach to audience, arrangement, style, and delivery became for [Short] second nature” (p. 9). The situation at Butler is comparable to UNC-CH in its curriculum focused on belles-lettres; however, the literary/debate society for women—the Sigournean Society—was just beginning at Butler while Short was a student, offering somewhat of a contrast to the long entrenched debate societies (the Philanthropic and Dialectic) at UNC-CH. Weidner includes
some compelling entries detailing Short's thoughts on the new literary society as it joined the already present Pythonian and Mathesian societies.


Conclusions

This literature review has identified gaps in the following areas of research on student blogging and diary writing: 1. Studies of why students kept diaries outside the classroom and the content of their writing; 2. Studies of why students kept blogs outside the classroom and the content of their writing; 3. Studies of how student writing in blogs and diaries changes over the course of an individual's academic career. First, Weidner's (1994) research of Lydia Short at Butler University is one of the few analyses of a college student's diary in its entirety. Though individual diary entries provide glimpses into the life of the college student in question and the context for their writing, the study of the whole provides an idea of how their content and relationship to the diary changes over time. At the same time, there have also been few studies of college student blogrolls like that of Tarheel Blog. Two studies with some similarities are that of Williams and Jacobs's (2004) discussion of the Harvard MBA blog and Leslie and Murphy's (2008) research of student blogs at Dubai Women's College.
An analysis of such a blogroll is important because it provides clues into how students present themselves to an audience that is assumed to have a shared interest with the blogger. Finally, this study revisits the work of Brand and Powell (1986) and Brand (1990) within a digital context by exploring the connections between emotion and writing over the course of blogs and diaries. This facet is significant both in that it entails a comparison of two antecedent genres and its context at a single university. Though examples like Yi and Hirvela (2010) and Guzzetti and Gamboa (2005) discuss the blogging and diary writing of single individuals, this study explores both genres at one university within disparate historical contexts. For these reasons, the current project addresses some important issues in the study of student diary writing, student blogging, and composition history.
Chapter 3
Methodology

The purpose of this section is to provide an understanding of the archival research process that led me to study blogs and diaries and how the data was collected and interpreted. The overall archival methodology for this study can be summed up into three general steps: Collection, Analysis, and Interpretation. Collection refers to the steps leading up to and including data collection (such as accessing the archives, choosing sources, and photographing primary documents); analysis refers to specific methods used to examine the data and to identify trends; interpretation refers to the process of drawing connections, contextualizing, and evaluating trends. In addition, since collection was an exploratory process, much of this description of methodology is written in narrative form to provide a timeline of events leading up to the present study; the second part of this methodology is a description of the analytical and interpretive process including an in-depth overview and explanation of Linguistic Inquiry Word Count (LIWC), an automated content analysis program central to the conclusions reached.

Collection

Though I graduated from UNC-CH in 2004 and spent a significant amount of time in Wilson Library (the location of the university's archives) as an undergraduate student, I had never visited the Southern Historical Collection prior to the days leading up to this project. Therefore, when I first entered the well-known collection in August of 2009 for an unrelated environmental communication project, I was somewhat awed by the depth and richness of
the materials. At the time, I was primarily interested in quantitative methodologies and was thus dedicated to approaches steeped in systematic precision. In that same year, Ramsey et al. (2010) argued for the need for an in-depth methods section to accompany archival research in composition because it allows the audience of a history to decide whether or not to trust a historical account, to see the construction of a history, and to see what types of evidence were and were not used (pp. 73-75). I aspired to heed the call of Ramsey et al., but, as I would soon discover, adherence to systematic methodologies is difficult in the archives.

While in the Southern Historical Collection for this unrelated project, I considered using my time there to explore other ongoing research interests, such as the history of composition instruction at UNC-CH and the institutional history of UNC-CH. With these broad ideas in mind, I developed a preliminary research question primarily focused on the role of the English Department and other departments on campus in teaching composition. These initial searches, of course, branched out and led to other documents, and, ultimately, the hunt was on. Unsurprisingly, I wasn't the first to be immersed in the archives in this way. Discussion of archival work as a “hunt” was made popular by Robert J. Connors (2003). He suggests that—though most any historian will enter the archives with some hypothesis or research question in mind—the path taken often becomes more exploratory than linear. The full phrasing he provides for this adventurous sort of research is “an August mushroom hunt” (p. 227). In this context, time spent in the archives may fulfill many unexpected goals and is best thought of as an adventure rather than a march: “I am looking for information on my specific question; I am looking to increase my own general knowledge. . .I am looking for
fascinating anomalies. . .I am hoping for unexpected treasures” (p. 227). So, even the preliminary searches I was doing on the history of composition across departments at UNC-CH took me to unexpected places.

Therefore, from the onset of my research, the methodology guiding data collection seemed more exploratory than the precision that I was used to in the past. Both Susan Miller (2003) and Michael R. Hill (1993) discuss a similar sense of exploration and discovery to that of Connors. As it is put by Hill in Archival Strategies and Techniques, “Investigations in archives simply cannot be predicted or neatly packaged in methodological formulas that guarantee publishable results” (p. 6). With such ideas in mind, I proceeded with my original research questions regarding the role of various departments in teaching composition, gathering such documents as university meeting minutes dating back to 1795 and descriptions of early 20th century campus writing initiatives. All the while, however, I imagined that there were other sources to be explored, and the hunt, so to speak, was not complete.

From August of 2009 through January of 2010, I began to investigate the masses of primary documents related to the history of composition at UNC-CH. Moreover, I continued to question the exploratory nature of the archival research process. I familiarized myself with the more systematic step-by-step approaches that some scholars have put forth, hoping to apply my growing body of research to their framework. Glen Elder, Elizabeth Clipp, and Eliza Pavalko's (1993) Working with Archival Data: Studying Lives, for instance, provides the following steps for connecting research questions and data: Problem Specification,
Search for Appropriate Data, Preparation of Research Proposal, Analysis of Archival Data, Decision to Recast Data, and Sequence of Analysis (p. 22). Continuing my search, I came across another approach to the archival research process through Linda Groat and David Wang's (2002) indication that the archival historian moves through the following steps: Data/Evidence, Identification/Organization, Evaluation, and Narration (p. 137). Importantly, Wang suggests that interpretation is continuous throughout all four of these categories. I was also aware of the three central concepts presented in Connors's (2003) “Dreams and Play”: “present awareness, archival retrieval, and the realization of prejudice” (p. 222). Knowledge of the present is significant because historians are able to see the effects of the past and to observe current problems that might be answered by turning to history. Regarding archival retrieval, Connors explores different types of primary sources and the usefulness of secondary sources. Finally, while the historian navigates the library or archive, he/she must be aware of the prejudices that he/she brings to the research. Knowledge of these frameworks helped me to understand that the way that I was attempting to “make sense” of archival documents was in line with the recommendations of prior researchers. Though I wasn't following a methodology that felt as systematic as what I was used to, the work was still adhering to the rigors required to accurately collect and interpret archival documents.

Soon after entering the archives to research composition instruction across departments at the university, my project narrowed somewhat when I discovered Erika Lindemann's (2004) True and Candid Compositions in February of 2010. Where much of my earlier research focused on the status of writing at the university in the 20th century, her
collection of documents drew my attention much earlier to the Antebellum period. Lindemann's online archive consists of six chapters, each of which covers an important period in UNC-CH's early history: 1. 1795-1819 – UNC's founding; 2. 1820-1829 - The value of higher education; 3. 1830-1839 - University life; 4. 1840-1849 - Student assignments; 5. 1850-1859 - Dialectic and Philanthropic societies; and 6. 1860-1869 - The Civil War. As I combed through the collected letters, diary entries, speeches, academic writings, poems, and other documents, I began to follow her lead and seek out work from the rarely studied student writers of the Antebellum period.

After making this decision to focus on writing during the Antebellum period at UNC-CH, I met with Lindemann in December of 2010 to discuss her *True and Candid Compositions*. In the days leading up to my meeting with her, I decided to narrow my project even further to the student writings of the 1840s. With multiple diaries from the period and at least one piece of academic writing from every junior and senior in the Southern Historical Collection and North Carolina Collection, there was little question that the writing was plentiful and of interest. Before our meeting, I used the library catalog to locate and gather the first two diaries for this study: the William Sidney Mullins and William Hooper Haigh diaries. In this context, “gathering” entailed accessing the documents and taking around 600 photographs. While meeting with Lindemann at a café on Franklin Street, she informed me of a new resource that she was finishing up exploring the life and diary of another Antebellum UNC-CH student, James Lawrence Dusenbery.¹ With this new information, I

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¹ She was working on *Verses and Fragments: The James L. Dusenbery Journal (1841-1842)*. http://docsouth.unc.edu/dusenbery/
added an interest in Dusenbery and a new direction for the project. We also discussed a
couple of other diarists with primary writings in the archive: Edmund DeBerry Covington
and Joseph John Summerell. Given that I already had two diaries and many photographs, a
focus solely on these five students (Mullins, Haigh, Dusenbery, Covington, and Summerell)
was taking shape. So, a semi-serendipitous meeting with an expert just finishing up a project
of her own related to my general topic played a role in my research process.

Such valuable and often unexpected findings outside the archives are common in
composition history. David Gold (2008), for example, describes how one of his archival
projects—*Rhetoric at the Margins*—began while sitting at a coffee shop: “I picked up a copy
of the local newspaper. . .In the local section was an article on a ceremony honoring Ilah
Wright, 106 years old, a 1915 graduate of the city's historically black Huston-Tillotson
College” (p. 14). Though the college was located nearby, it was this single newspaper article
that began his journey through the archives. Moreover, Gesa E. Kirsch’s (2008) research on
Mary Bennett Ritter shows that even one's surroundings can impact a historical project.
While in California to access the archives of the University of California at Berkeley, Kirsch
stayed at the Bancroft Hotel, which she later found out was the former site of a women's club
that Ritter was a part of:

> Upon discovering Ritter's portrait, I asked the hotel proprietor about the
> plaque, its origin, and information about the Prytanean Society. He
> responded with a phone number. . .I spoke with five different women. . .
> each of whom had new nuggets of information. (p. 21)
After my meeting with Lindemann, I had several new paths to take, and I knew that I needed to gather the remaining three diaries of Dusenbery, Summerell, and Covington. These examples were photographed (around 300 photographs total) and added to my growing collection of primary documents in the Summer of 2010.

The final step in the data collection process took place approximately a year later when I began in earnest to explore a parallel 21st century context. As part of this stage of the project, I discovered Williams and Jacobs's (2004) discussion of how some universities are integrating blogs to capture some component of student life. A quick internet search in December of 2011 revealed that UNC-CH was using such a resource and, after perusing Tarheel Blog, I determined that the student bloggers would be a useful addition to this study. Though there are eighteen students who currently write for Tarheel Blog, the seven “alumni bloggers” were my focus because they are the most comparable to the Antebellum diarists. Like the diarists, these bloggers began and ended their self-sponsored writing as UNC-CH students (whereas the writing of most others bloggers on the site is ongoing). The blogs of Autumn, Andrea, Berkley, Brandon, Calvin, Katie, and Yolanda were added to the study between December 2011 and January 2012 by gathering all entries and user comments.

Analysis and Linguistic Inquiry Word Count (LIWC)

After collecting the student diaries and student blogs, I was left with a mountain of primary documents. I thus devoted much of 2011 to analysis, including a Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) presentation on the student diarists in
April of that year. Connors (2003) describes how the archival historian must engage in three steps for turning historical data into scholarly work: external criticism, internal criticism, and synthesis. External criticism is the initial, decision-making stage of the method in which the historian chooses what sources to gather; internal criticism is an examination of the quality and credibility of the gathered sources; and synthesis is an analysis of connections between sources. Where external and internal criticism occurred while photographing and transcribing materials in late 2010 and most of 2011, synthesis is ongoing. Connors discusses synthesis as piecing together a narrative “ordered chronologically on the basis of discrete themes, and interrogated. . .from a limited set of consistent questions based in personal observation of things as they are in the present” (p. 22).

With these steps in mind, I spent much of 2011 immersed in the student diaries and student blogs. In order to recognize the relationships within and without the examples, all entries were converted to an index format that served as a quick reference for the number of entries present, the date of entries, length of entries, and provided a general idea of each entry's content. Though this work was time consuming and took much of the year to complete, it dramatically improved my ability to interpret and draw connections between primary documents. Trends quickly became apparent in terms of the overall purpose for self-sponsored writing, including similarities and differences between the student diaries and student blogs. These indexes also facilitated the creation of the tables and graphs appearing in the next chapter.

As trends started to take shape, I began looking for ways to interpret and make sense
of these student writings in even more depth, particularly in regards to the emotions expressed by the students in their self-sponsored writing (Brand, 1990). This thought turned me towards automated content analysis, and, eventually, Linguistic Inquiry Word Count (LIWC). Rooted in linguistic analyses dating back to the 1950s and 1960s (such as Gottschalk & Gleser, 1969; Gottschalk, Gleser, Daniels, & Block, 1958) and the early computerized methods of the 1960s and 1970s (Rosenberg & Tucker, 1978; Stone, Dunphy, Smith, & Ogilvie, 1966), LIWC was developed in the early 1990s by James Pennebaker, Roger Booth, and Martha Francis as a result of research in the 1980s finding that writing positively impacted mental health (Pennebaker & Beall, 1986). As a textual analysis program, it matches all words within an analyzed passage with 80 different categories. The categories range from broad Linguistic Processes (such as word counts, words per sentence, verb tense, first-person, second-person, third-person, and pronouns), Psychological Processes (including cognitive, affective, perceptual, biological, and social), Personal Concerns (such as money, home, achievement, leisure, religion, and work), and Punctuation. When text is analyzed by the program, each word is matched with all categories that it fits (a word like “cried,” for instance falls into several categories, including past tense, affect, and sadness (Pennebaker, Chung, Ireland, Gonzales, & Booth, 2007). Generally, around 85% of all words in an analyzed text exist in the LIWC dictionary and can thus be placed into these categories. This was also generally true for the student diarists and student bloggers. For their introductory posts/entries, for instance, 85% of the student diarists' words and 87% of the student bloggers' appeared in the LIWC dictionary.
When a passage is analyzed with LIWC, it returns an output sheet with the percentage results for each category. The output might indicate, for example, that 3.35% of a text was adverbs or 5% of all words were in the “positive emotion” category. With such an approach, category definitions are critical. For this reason, LIWC went through an extensive judging process in the mid-1990s and subsequent revisions in 1997 and another in 2007 (Tausczik & Pennebaker, 2010, p. 28). Though the program's authors acknowledge that computerized textual analysis is still in its infancy and there are certainly drawbacks—such as interpreting the context of word usage—they identity numerous specific benefits of analyzing language through content analysis. For example, Tausczik and Pennebaker suggest that the content of someone's writing and usage of personal pronouns, in the broadest sense, can provide insight into their current focus:

> Those thinking about death, sex, money, or friends will refer to them in their writing or conversation. Function words, such as personal pronouns, also reflect attentional allocation. People who are experiencing physical or emotional pain tend to have their attention drawn to themselves and subsequently use more first-person singular pronouns. (p. 30)

They cite numerous other examples that connect language usage to an individual's mindset, including verb tense regarding disclosed and undisclosed events (Pasupathi, 2007); the usage of “we” to establish positive group identity (Simmons, Gordon, & Chambless, 2005); positive emotion to describe positive events and negative emotion to describe negative events (Kahn, Tobin, Massey, & Anderson, 2007); connections between traumatic events and
writing with emotional language (Holmes et al., 2007); first-person plural and first-person singular as an indication of status (Sexton & Helmreich, 2000; Kacewicz, Pennebaker, Davis, Jeon, & Graesser, 2009); connections between lying and using less first-person singular and third-person pronouns (Bond & Lee, 2005; Newman, Pennebaker, Berry, & Richards, 2003); second-person usage and hostility and less satisfaction in relationships (Simmons, Gordon, & Chambless, 2008; Slatcher, Vazire, & Pennebaker, 2008); connections between cognitive complexity and the usage of exclusion words (Newman et al., 2003); relationships between insight/cause and situation assessment (Boals & Klein, 2005; Pennebaker, Mayne, & Francis, 1997); and less tentative language when recounting an already disclosed event (Pasupathi, 2007). These are just some examples of the many rich applications of LIWC to evaluate language usage.

Moreover, in addition to the above-mentioned studies, LIWC has been utilized to study the two genres central to this project: diaries and blogs. David Lester (2010), for instance, used the software to study the writing of George Sodini, the perpetrator of a murder-suicide in 2009. He ultimately found such characteristics of his writing as few mentions of words relevant to “leisure” and “home” while having a tendency to refer to the self through personal pronouns (p. 342). Another example of LIWC analysis of blogs is Gill, French, Gergle, and Oberlander’s (2008) study of short blog entries to determine if “angry” posts tended to use more negative affective words compared to the usage of positive affective words in “joyful” entries. This hypothesis was ultimately determined to be correct. Numerous other studies of blogs with LIWC include Li and Chignell (2010), Kramer and Rodden

Some of the extensive studies of diaries include Lester's (2009) usage of LIWC to study the diary of Cesare Pavese, an Italian author who committed suicide in 1950. In addition to finding such descriptive characteristics in his writing as the decrease of words per sentence over time and a usage of shorter words, Lester also determined that Pavese utilized more positive emotions, future-tense, and optimism. These findings are surprising and interesting in the context of Pavese's eventual suicide. Another study of diaries is Montgomery, Panagopoulou, Peeters, and Schaufeli's (2009) discussion of interference between activities in the work and home domains of Irish employees.

Given the many studies that have successfully used LIWC with useful and interesting results and the intensive judging process that has existed since the program's development in the 1990s, its usage was a valuable asset to this study. LIWC was utilized to analyze all blog and diary introductions in Chapter 5, the entire blogs of Katie and Yolanda in Chapter 6, and the entire diary of James Lawrence Dusenbery in Chapter 7. The next chapter, however, is an overview of all data collected and does not use LIWC. It is intended to be a broad introduction to the student diarists, student bloggers, and their writings to setup the more fine-tuned analysis in the chapters to follow.

**Interpretation**

After analyzing the data with LIWC, it was still necessary to consider interpretation and formulation of the narrative that I would tell. I began to see my data as representing the
two types of evidence discussed by Groat and Wang (2002): Determinative and inferential. Determinative evidence is that which allows the historian to “situate the object of study in the time and space of the one historic world” (p. 154). This type of evidence often provides a direct connection between an artifact and history (such as a date). Inferential evidence, on the other hand, suggests certain relationships. With these ideas in mind, the LIWC results were situated within historical and technological contexts.

Another perspective on interpretation that was valuable for this project is that of Michael R. Hill (1993). He provides three strategies for making sense of data: spatiotemporal chronologies, networks and cohorts, and backstage perspectives and processes (p. 58). A spatiotemporal approach is one that attempts to understand how a “social phenomenon, organization, or movement unfolds over time and space” (p. 59). This type of approach, in other words, reconstructs a timeline for events in the individual's or organization's existence. Furthermore, an approach focused on networks and cohorts is one that seeks to piece together communities of individuals. Hill gives the example of a conference program providing a listing of all presenters, but, with the aid of letters, memos, and other information about the conference, one can begin to piece together the entire network of individuals present, from individuals who were present in the audience to the staff. An approach focused on backstage perspectives, however, goes a step further to determine the nature of the relationships between entities within networks: “Initial network studies document the existence of organizational and interpersonal ties, but further study of manuscript collections is required to gain insights to the emotional importance and practical meaning of particular network
linkages” (p. 62). This project began as primarily spatiotemporal; however, as I learned more about the students, the university, and the historical context, I began to take on more and more of a backstage perspective that unveiled the value of the university, its professors, and life in general to students. This approach was thus significant to unraveling the LIWC findings in the historical context of the Antebellum diarists and life at UNC-CH in the mid-nineteenth century.

**Concluding Thoughts on Methodology**

Over the two years during which the focus for my project began to take shape and all materials were collected and interpreted, I warred with my methodology. In this section, I hoped to recreate the progression of my project and the sense of “an August mushroom hunt” that I’ve discovered is central to doing archival work. Though I desired to be systematic from the onset, I found that an exploratory methodology results in adventurous research and the drawing of unexpected connections and interpretations. Moreover, Connors (2003) makes room for such work by pushing aside “received wisdom” and highlighting the value of multiple histories: “We should, of course, always strive to write the most reliable, valid, thorough, coherent, and fair-minded narratives we can, but no one narrative can ever, or should ever, shut down the narrative enterprise. There are too many interesting perspectives for that to be desirable” (p. 234). Therefore, if anything, I hope the description of my archival research process here and the discussion of the student diarists and bloggers to follow inspires other researchers to retrace my steps and to come to their own interpretations and conclusions.
Chapter 4

Overview of the Diarists and Bloggers

With 12 different student writers, 408 diary entries, and 109 blog posts collected at either end of a 170 year period, this section is intended to provide a descriptive, in-depth introduction to the student writers and their writings. To explore these documents, basic information such as the number of entries written, length of entries, and general topics covered are provided.

**Entry Quantity and Entry Length**

The total number of posts and entries for the Antebellum student diarists and student bloggers was gathered because it suggests the centrality or overall importance of the diary or blog to the student's life. In other words, if a self-sponsored writer only wrote in his/her diary/blog a few times during a semester, it could reasonably be concluded that their writing was not of particular importance. Moreover, the same could generally be said about entry length. Writing little to nothing in each post/entry suggests that the self-sponsored writing was not something that warranted a significant amount of time out of one's day.

Importantly, given the diverse content of some of the Antebellum materials, an “entry” was any content that was dated, personal writing and was not class notes or some other unrelated content (such as a transcription of a song or poem). Most of the time, actual diary entries are labeled with such headings as “College Journal,” “College Record,” or “Journal Commences,” so it is generally clear when an entry ends and class notes or scribblings begin. Also, since the diaries of Haigh and Summerell continue beyond
graduation, the number of entries counted halted at commencement as a representation of the official completion of the students' college career. None of the blog entries continue beyond commencement.

Entry Quantity

The Mullins diary has, by a significant margin, the most entries with 260. Mullins was a prolific writer, typically not missing a single day while maintaining the journal from October 23, 1840 to October 31, 1841. He did not keep a diary during the month of December, probably because of travels and winter vacation. The diaries of Haigh and Dusenbery, however, have approximately the same number of entries (46 and 45, respectively) and also cover generally the same time period of mid-1841 to June of 1842. The Summerell diary, on the other hand, has approximately 29 entries and was only kept during January of 1842 (or at least that is all that remains). Finally, the Covington diary contains 28 scattered entries from his birthday in September of 1841 to September of 1842, mostly concentrated in October of 1842.

The student bloggers generally wrote less than the diarists (in terms of the number of entries). Katie's blog has 38 entries and is something of an outlier, primarily because she kept her blog for longer (from April 3, 2006 to July 4, 2009) than any other of her fellow bloggers or the Antebellum diarists. Another blog kept over a long period of time (and the blog with the second most entries) is that of Berkley (23 entries). Her writing spanned from April 3, 2006 to November 19, 2008. Autumn's blog, kept from September 2008 to March 2010, has the third most entries with 19. She, in general, wrote on a monthly basis, not including
summer and winter vacation. Autumn is followed by Yolanda (15 entries) and Andrea (8 entries). The slimmest blogs in terms of entries with only 3 were Calvin's and Brandon's. Existing from September 2008 to September 2009, Brandon's first two entries came in the first month of his blog, and his last was not posted until a year later. Calvin's blog existed for the shortest amount of time at only a month and a half, from September 16, 2008 to November 20, 2008.

Entry Length

Diary entry length was calculated by using word counts and estimated word counts. Dusenbery, Covington, Summerell, and Mullins generally ranged between 200 and 600 words per entry (all, of course, have entries falling outside this range). Haigh's average entry length is particularly low (65 words) and somewhat of an anomaly because most of the entries from his college years appear to be shorthand recopies of writings from another journal (presumably lost or destroyed).

Comparable to the Antebellum diarists, the student bloggers all generally ranged from 200 words to 500 words per entry. The bloggers and diarists thus share a comparable length for a shorter entry (200 words) but differ in regards to longer entries. Where the diarists tended to hover around 600 words for lengthier entries, the bloggers were more likely to

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1 Exact word counts were used for all digitized examples (all blogs and the James Lawrence Dusenbery diary) and the shorter, non-digitized diary of William Hooper Haigh. Word counts for the diaries of Summerell, Mullins, and Covington were estimated due to their length. Estimations were calculated by counting the number of words on five full pages of text, averaging this number, and applying this figure to whole entries. Partial pages were calculated based upon this estimation. If, for instance, an entry was half of a page or a quarter of a page, the average word count per page was halved or quartered. The resulting figure was used as the estimated word count for each entry.
write around 500.

**Entry Content and Entries Over Time**

While these overviews were intended to give a general idea of the amount of writing contained within each diary and blog, the section to follow goes into more detail regarding the data for each student by discussing the number of lines per individual over time and common topics addressed. These facets are important to discuss because the length a diarist or blogger achieves over time makes clear the fluctuations of their writing, chronologically demarcating times when they wrote more and when they wrote less. This information is critical because an individual entering a community/virtual community might be prone to write more at the onset of their writing to establish their membership or identity; at the same time, an individual might write less at certain moments if they are withdrawing from the community or still adjusting to the community. Moreover, the common topics discussed are of interest because they provide a means for understanding the diary or blog as a tool for the individual within the community as well as within technological and historical contexts.

Coding of all diary entries resulted in the following common categories: Personal Narrative, Personal Reflection, Political Discussion, Literary Discussion, Individual Critique, and Military Discussion. Entries categorized as Personal Narrative were descriptions of a writer's daily activities; Personal Reflection, however, was assigned to entries that were less about daily activities and more expressions of deep thought regarding the author's state of mind. Political Discussion included entries discussing local, regional, state, national, or international politics. Individual Critique refers to entries that either praise or critique
individuals of importance in the author's life, such as professors, the university president, preachers, or fellow students. Finally, similar to the Political Discussion category, Military Discussion entries provide commentary on military figures and battles. When an entry appealed to multiple categories, it was categorized multiple times. In other words, an entry discussing a writer's daily activities with a concluding paragraph on the current presidential elections was filed as both Personal Narrative and Political Discussion.

Blog entry coding, however, revealed a fairly different set of categories: Personal Narrative, Personal Reflection, Advice, Informational, and Autobiographical. Personal Narrative and Personal Reflection were identified the same as described for the diarists. Entries in the Advice category included recommendation of what potential students should do both before and after becoming a college student, including discussions of the application process, programs of interest, and how to choose a major. Informational posts provided details regarding campus groups and campus locations. This category can be distinguished from Personal Narrative because the subject of the post was typically described generally rather than personally. Finally, the Autobiographical category included references to the students' personal information, such as their hometown, current residence, and major. These contexts, specifically, suggest that diarists may be less focused on the community and more on themselves as individuals and that bloggers use their writing to establish their identity and to pursue and build community.

William Sidney Mullins

It is a melancholy spectacle to look back upon the past, and see how I have
trifled with my dearest interests, whiling away the time, and stilling my aroused conscience, with resolutions of reform, forgotten as soon as formed. I have no energy and I am a victim of sloth, weakness and indecision. Even now I shall rise from these pages, forget my crimes, and sport with the foolish crowd that never thinks, neglecting what I know is most important to my happiness. The temptation to abandon myself to ruin works upon me strong and I am almost resolved to cease my efforts at self-improvement. Why carry on a contest in which I can never be successful? Why strive against a destiny that has for years defied my struggles?

William Sidney Mullins recorded these thoughts towards the end of his college journal on March 15, 1841. In a lot of ways, these reflections are a representation of the ongoing struggles he faced in college. Despite being a prolific writer, speaker, and law student, he constantly debated life, morality, happiness, and death. His struggles with religion, for instance, are well recorded (Ishkanian, 1993) and evidenced throughout his writing. Mullins' thoughts ranged from a light-hearted debating of chapel attendance to grander spiritual concerns. Nevertheless, even with the weight that these thoughts carried in his life, his recreational interests were little different from those of many of his classmates, including such activities as skating, walking, conversing, debating, hunting, singing, and playing cards.

A timeline of his entries with a trend line is provided below in Figure 4.1. As illustrated, it is clear that the length of Mullins's entries decreased from the beginning of his
college career to its end. Correlation of entry length with the passage of time supported this finding ($r = -.35, p < .05$). During the second half of his diary (from approximately June 1841 on), he generally wrote between 200 and 800 words; at the beginning of his diary, however, his entries varied widely in length from 200 to 600 words).

![Figure 4.1. Entry length over time for the William Sidney Mullins diary](image)

Figure 4.1 provides an idea of the general content of Mullins's entries. Most of his writing, unsurprising to find in a diary, was dedicated to providing a narrative of recent events in his life (192 occurrences). The notion that “Political Discourse” was one of the least discussed topics with 28 occurrences is interesting because he began his diary with a particular focus on political topics and ultimately forbade himself from writing about such topics any further. The third most common type with 82 occurrences was “Individual Critique.” As illustrated, Mullins devotes a significant amount of his diary to critiquing those
around him, commonly for their writing, speaking, and moral character. He, in fact, utilizes many entries towards the end of his college career as an ongoing record critiquing every student in his senior class. Finally, “Literary Discourse” was focused primarily on either continuing a discussion of a subject raised in class or praising the work of a literary figure (20 occurrences).

![Figure 4.2. Overview of content in the William Sidney Mullins diary](image)

**William Hooper Haigh**

This is a world of fact and theory—of romance & truth—We dream away existence—fancying ills—or pursuing imaginary pleasures. We are happy or miserable as our Passions dictate—We know no medicine—unhappily we always verge to extremes. How often has it been said that man is a mystery. He is made up of contradictory feelings—passions run at variance and purposes changeable.
As illustrated in Figure 4.3, the entries of Haigh's diary vary from moderate length (around 100 words) to two words (the writing of just “Easter Sunday”). The longest two entries of 202 and 270 words came in January of 1842 and intertwine political matters with the words of David Lowry Swain (the president of the university at the time).

![Figure 4.3. Entry length over time for the William Hooper Haigh diary](image)

As shown in Figure 4.4, the content of his entries is diverse. His writing is, however, fairly focused on various individuals (19 occurrences), particularly his inclusion of entries marking someone's death. Though the 10 coded examples of narrative-based writing were the second most frequent type of content, Haigh's diary contains more general thoughts and commentary than the writing of his colleagues.
Observed Occurrences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discourse</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Literary Discourse</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Discourse</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Narrative</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 4.4. Overview of content in the William Hooper Haigh diary*

**James Lawrence Dusenbery**

Yours is a very good head, in point of intellect respectable, moral faculties quite good, passions moderate, You have some taste for light reading, paintings, poetry &c &c, You are cautious, your temperament is nervous and active, You are not a great hoper, You are rather disposed to look on the dark side of things, or in other words not a sanguine calculator, Your mathematical talents are middling, You are fond of music but no musician, firm without being stubborn, You set just about a proper value on money sometimes lack self-confidence—You are a well disposed, reflecting, peaceable, benevolent orderly young man, with good intellectual powers—

Recorded on October 17, 1841, these were the results from Dusenbery's visit to a phrenologist (a scalp reader). They provide, if anything, a loose introduction to his general
character, for he only believed this report to be partially true. There is little doubt of his intellect, as he came to UNC-CH to study medicine and ultimately became a surgeon. There is also little doubt to his love of music; like many of his fellow classmates, much of his time was spent singing and dancing. His supposed orderliness and lack of self-confidence could be called into question. James, for instance, lived in West Building, which was thought to be one of the noisiest dormitories on campus, a notion that James delighted in. He and his friends spent their nights in such activities as pillowfighting, drinking, playing cards, and general roughhousing, and their days were devoted to fishing, conversing, skating, and hunting.

Though Figure 4.5 shows that Dusenbery's writing tended to stay around 1,000 words or below, his final entry was particularly long with almost 1,600 words. This entry was a discussion of his commencement day and a “farewell” to his diary, so to speak. In regards to the frequency of his writing, Dusenbery generally wrote in his journal once a week and covered multiple days with each entry.
As illustrated in Figure 4.6, the content of Dusenbery’s entries is particularly narrative-based (41 occurrences). He tends to purely outline his day-to-day activities and does not engage in the political discussions or critique/praise of his professors to the same degree as his classmates.
Edmund DeBerry Covington

“Can I look back upon my last year's pilgrimage and rejoice over the

treasures which I have hoarded?”

As demonstrated in Figure 4.7—similar to Mullins' diary—the quantity of

Covington's writing also has a slight decreasing trend over time (r = -.47, p < .05). Also of

note, his writing begins with his longest entry instead of ending with it like that of

Dusenbery. Covington's first entry is a commemoration of his birthday, a date that calls him
to write in his diary on at least one other occasion.

Figure 4.7. Entry length over time for the Edmund Deberry Covington diary

The content of his entries is another facet that diverges from that of Dusenbery. As

illustrated in Figure 4.8, Covington's writing is particularly reflective (7 occurrences). In fact,

almost all of his entries are written in at least a reflective style; for this reason, an entry was

only categorized as reflective if its content also discussed the mental state of the author.
Joseph John Summerell

“The students begin to arrive, - fine weather for the commencement of the session. Today I did nothing but read the proceedings of Congress. Much grumbling about nothing.”

Summerell's timeline appears in Figure 4.9. His entries generally ranged from 200 to 500 words in length. The longest entry in Summerell's diary comes on January 5, 1842. On this day, he discussed the beginning of a new school session, politics, and the impressive intellectual and social talents of one of his classmates. Interestingly, his lowest output came just two days later on January 7, 1842 on which he paid his bills and met up with a friend.
Entry length over time for the James Joseph Summerell diary

Figure 4.10 provides an overview of the content of his entries. Summerell's writing is overwhelmingly narrative-based (26 occurrences). He, for instance, begins the majority of his entries with a discussion of the morning, the weather, and then proceeds into his activities for the day. Summerell did become particularly fascinated with one individual in his diary—the visit of a young preacher, Charles Force Deems, who left quite an impression on Summerell and ultimately became a faculty member at UNC-CH.
Figure 4.10. Overview of content in the Joseph John Summerell diary

Yolanda

So many people are looking up to me and sending prayers my way and hoping that I succeed. Seeing them was such a heartfelt experience and I want you all to remember that regrouping is so necessary. Taking time to stop everything and put your attention on something you love for just a little while will not hurt anything. Yes, we all have deadlines, papers, projects, etc, I know this, I have been there and I am there. I found from that one trip, that took 1.5 hours to get there, to spend 3 hours with my family, really gave me the energy I needed to make it to the break. Or maybe it was my mom's cooking, I can't call it. Now that we are only weeks away from finishing out the semester, and I have made several more trips home, I find that life, no matter what stage we are in, is really much
more manageable than we think.

Yolanda wrote these words on October 20, 2010, and they are a representation of the sense of reflection that is more common in her writing than in that of her colleagues. Her timeline appears in Figure 4.11. The most she wrote was 473 words on February 8, 2011, an entry discussing her participation in a beauty pageant. The least she wrote was her final entry of just 117 words on April 30, 2011, a posting that is largely a collection of photographs from her time as a UNC-CH student.

Despite Yolanda being more reflective than her fellow bloggers, she generally was not as reflective as the Antebellum diarists. As shown in Figure 4.12, the majority of her entries were narratives of her college life (8 occurrences). She also shows more interest in historical discussions than the other bloggers (2 occurrences), including a post on Gimghoul Castle and

![Figure 4.11. Entry length over time for Yolanda's blog](image-url)
another entry on the history of the university.

![Graph showing content categories in Yolanda's blog]

*Figure 4.12. Overview of content in Yolanda's blog*

**Katie**

It's hard to describe what it felt like to step on UNC's campus for the first time, but I know it felt different from the other campuses I visited. I had a very stressful senior year, and it was only at UNC that I felt my high school anxiety lifted from my shoulders...I could breathe. I was happy. And I was hesitant - was it the weather, or was this feeling real? To find out, I visited the campus three more times (once in the rain, just to be sure!). After the fourth visit and with my college acceptance letters spread out on my dining room table, I decided Chapel Hill was truly as amazing as it initially felt.

Katie's blog existed on both the new blog site (NBS) and the old blog site (OBS). Her first entry on the NBS is highlighted in red on Figure 4.13. Katie's longest entries (782, 724,
and 691 words) come towards the beginning of her blog on the OBS.

Figure 4.13. Entry length over time for Katie's blog

Figure 4.14 shows that, like her colleagues, Katie's writing is generally more narrative-based than it is reflective (28 occurrences). Given the assumed audience for the blog, she also inserts information (4 occurrences) and advice for incoming students (2 occurrences).

Figure 4.14. Overview of content in Katie's blog
Hello to virtual land. I've been on the blog for a while now but just got around to making my first post. I'm taking 20 hours worth of classes (15 is average) so things have been pretty hectic around here. I have two big computer science projects due this week, both of which I had about 3 weeks to work on. You'd think by now that I'd realize it's not a good idea to start on those until the weekend before they're due.

Lasting only a month and a half and three entries, Calvin's blog was the shortest in the gathered data. As illustrated in Figure 4.15, his introductory entry and second entry were particularly brief (201 and 150 words, respectively) and were followed by a third post of 347 words.

Figure 4.15. Entry length over time for Calvin's blog
Figure 4.16 illustrates the content of Calvin's entries. Even with only a few blog posts, Calvin's content shows a leaning towards the narrative-based writing similar to his fellow bloggers.

![Bar chart showing content types in Calvin's blog]

**Figure 4.16.** Overview of content in Calvin's blog

**Berkley**

Confession: I got Facebook. I vowed not to do it until I was actually in college, or at least until this summer, but I caved and got an account. I consider it my reward for finishing AP exams. It’s addicting though; I check it all the time and probably get abnormally excited when I get a friend request or a wall comment.

Like Katie, Berkley's blog began on the OBS and carried over onto the NBS. Instead of writing only as a college student like her classmates, Berkley started posting to *Tarheel Blog* as a high school senior. The moment that Berkley moved to the new blog is highlighted
in red on Figure 4.17. She posted only three entries after the switch.

Figure 4.17. Entry length over time for Berkley's blog

Figure 4.18 illustrates that—comparable to her classmates—Berkley's blog was devoted primarily to personal narrative (17 occurrences). However, at the same time, her blog offered more advice (5 occurrences) and informational entries (6 occurrences) than the other bloggers.
Figure 4.18. Overview of content in Berkley's blog

Andrea

I didn't have anyone to talk to or seek advice from in regards to the college process. It was me who had to take the initiative and learn about the college process by seeking out my high school counselor and asking tons of questions. It was this life experience, and I'm still living it, that encourages me immensely to help out other high school students who may be going through the same thing.

Andrea's blog is striking as it shows the sharpest decline in content ($r = -.83, p < .05$). Figure 4.19 demonstrates how her first entry from October 1, 2008 contained her highest output and her final entry on April 19, 2010 was her second lowest.
As illustrated in Figure 4.20, the content of Andrea's writing, however, does not stray from the precedent set by her classmates. She is largely narrative-based (6 occurrences) and sparingly autobiographical (1 occurrence) or informational (1 occurrence).

Figure 4.19. Entry length over time for Andrea's blog

Figure 4.20. Overview of content in Andrea's blog
Autumn

“At the start of the year, I often try to imagine what my life will look like by the end of the year.”

As illustrated in Figure 4.21, Autumn's writing remained fairly constant across her blog, generally staying between 200 and 400 words. Her longest entry, however, is of significantly greater length, a 645 word entry from March 3, 2009 discussing various recent events in her life and at the university.

Figure 4.21. Entry length over time for Autumn's blog

Autumn's blog does not vary from that of her classmates in content. Figure 4.22 shows that much of her writing is narrative-based (15 occurrences) and is joined by only a few entries that could be classified as advice (2 occurrences) or informational (2 occurrences).
Brandon

SIGH...so it comes to this. The LAST YEAR of my college life. Where in the world did it all go? I still remember moving into Carmichael my freshman year with my mom and grandmother, wondering what life lay ahead of me. I have made some incredible memories my first three years at The Hill, but nothing will top my last year. The life of a SENIOR.

Though Brandon and Calvin wrote the least number of entries with only 3, Brandon's second entry is one of the longest of all collected student blogs (see Figure 4.23). In this entry, he provides some information and advice regarding college life, the university, and his choice of major.
As shown in Figure 4.24, the content of Brandon's blog varies across each entry. For his first entry, he provides primarily autobiographical information, and then advice to potential students for his second, and, finally, a narrative-based entry concludes his writing.
Thoughts on Collected Blogs and Diaries

Overall, this comparison suggests several important areas for further discussion and analysis. First, despite the 170 year gap of separation, the student bloggers and Antebellum students diarists share some similarities. Three writers—Mullins (r = -.35, p < .05), Covington (r = -.47, p < .05), and Andrea (r = -.83, p < .05)—showed a statistically significant decreasing trend in the quantity of their writing over time. Moreover, adjusting Dusenbery's writing for an outlier (his final post of 1500 words) also reveals a decreasing trend (r = -.54, p < .05). Across both genres, the tendency to write less over time raises some important questions regarding self-sponsored writing: Did the student writers lose interest in their writing over time? Did they become fatigued? Or, once one has introduced themselves to a virtual community and established their identity, do they feel less of a need to contribute? In regards to the diarists—after they have introduced themselves to the diary and responded to the “call to write,” so to speak—do they then feel less of a need to express
themselves through self-sponsored writing?

Furthermore, the introductory posts of Covington, Andrea, Berkley, and Katie were all one of their longest entries (if not the longest). Therefore, there is potentially a need for bloggers and diarists to write more at the beginning of their blog/diary to establish their identity or solidify their purpose for writing. Another similarity and trend that is supported by a significant amount of research is the notion that both the bloggers and diarists tended to utilize their self-sponsored writing to create personal narratives (Gurak & Antonijevic, 2008; Herring et al., 2005). They, in other words, use the chronological nature of the diary and “online diary” to unravel the goings on of their life on a regular basis.

To begin to unravel the tendency for bloggers/diarists to write more in their introductory entries but less over time, each introductory post will be analyzed in-depth to determine how bloggers present themselves to their virtual community and how diarists introduce themselves to their diaries. The goals and purposes they present there are likely to suggest much about the future of their self-sponsored writing. Moreover, as discussed by Alice Brand (1990), there is significant emotion tied up in the words we choose to write:

> Emotions guide language choice. A simple example. How we perceive and how we name a house: as a villa, shack, mansion, or bungalow and then how we perceive that name and anticipate that object are underwritten by sign (positive, negative, or neutral) and by degree of intensity of that sign.

> These are energies that cognition cannot furnish. (p. 290)

In addition, given the emphasis placed upon the establishment of one's identity as a
newcomer to a virtual community (Burke, Kraut & Joyce, 2010), the introductory post has potential to be an important moment in the life cycle of a piece of self-sponsored writing. Also, as discussed by Philip Lejeune (2009), “The beginning of a diary is almost always indicated: it is rare to begin one without saying so. In one way or another, you mark off this new territory of writing” (p. 187). Therefore, the way that the “territory is marked off” in these student blogs and student diaries will be closely analyzed with LIWC. Establishing how a writer begins will help to explain why these territorial lines of diaries and blogs have a tendency to slowly fade over time. Particular attention will thus be paid to the content of these introductions. Furthermore, given the significance of diction (Brand, 1990; Simmons, Chambless, & Gordon, 2005; Kahn, Tobin, Massey, & Anderson, 2007; Holmes et al., 2007; Kacewicz, Pennebaker, Davis, Jeon, & Graesser, 2009; and many others) and the centrality of how individuals negotiate the individual/community dichotomy to this project's argument, particular attention will also be paid to the emotional qualities of the writing, cognition, and the way that the writer or blogger situates himself/herself in the terms of their own identity and relationship to the community.
Chapter 5
Hello World!
Creating Community/Escaping Community

It is the beginning of a new semester in 1841. January rain showers pour down from Tuesday to Sunday, miring carriages in the thick Carolina mud, dramatically slowing the students' passage. As the student body slowly makes its way to campus over the flooded terrain, William Sidney Mullins awaits. Though he is one of the first to arrive, he is not at all eager to begin his studies. His ride to campus on Thursday from Fayetteville was a tumultuous one, including multiple flooded creek crossings, one of which required a “rescue” from a passing stranger as his carriage became swamped in the overflowing waters. With his journey behind him, he rests before the beginning of the session by drinking peach brandy, reading by the fire in his room, sleeping through prayers, and purchasing his books. Despite his reluctance and the dreary conditions, he rose at the first bell on Monday, January 11th and proceeded to prayers and then French class. Another spring session commences at UNC-CH.¹

*****

Like the start of a new semester, the beginning of a self-sponsored piece of writing is often overflowing with emotion (Brand, 1990; Brand & Powell, 1986) that can be the driving force behind why an individual would choose to begin to write in the first place (Johnson, 2001; Lejeune, 2009). Moreover, the introduction is also important within the historical context of the Antebellum period and the electronic context of the virtual community. The

¹ This is an adaptation of events discussed in William Sidney Mullins' diary on September 7, 1841 and September 8, 1841.
student diarists ultimately use their introductions to describe the value for keeping a diary in
their pursuit for individuality and adulthood. The student bloggers, on the other hand, use
their opening entry to establish their identity and to introduce themselves to the community.
After a review of literature relevant to the motivations for why an individual would begin a
blog or diary and how individuals are socialized into virtual communities, the 12 introductory
entries are analyzed with LIWC. All results are considered within the context of the
Antebellum era and the UNC-CH virtual community. Importantly, however, the data
presented in this chapter (and the chapters to follow) is intended to both describe who these
individuals were as self-sponsored writers and to support an argument. If conclusions are
drawn, significance levels are provided.

**Diary Beginnings**

To explore how and why journals begin, Philippe Lejeune (2009) outlines four
different purposes that one might take on through such self-sponsored writing: expression,
reflection, memory, and pleasure (pp. 194-196). He separates “expression” into the two more
specific functions of “release” and “communication.” As a means of release, the diary is a
place of freeing an individual of thoughts and emotions: “Putting something down on paper
means separating it from yourself, purifying and cleansing yourself . . . The function of
expression is dissociated from the function of memory—one can even say it is tied to a
function of forgetting” (p. 194). This type of expression, of course, is in opposition to what
one might expect of the diary as a record, per se. Memories, thoughts, and emotions are
removed through writing rather than preserved. Communication in the diary, on the other
hand, takes place because an individual, presumably, has no other available means of expression: “You empty your heart out onto paper because you are alone, unable to pour it out to a friendly ear” (p. 194). In this case, the diary is a willing listener, and the writer is the storyteller. Lejeune also divides the second function—reflection—into two: “analysis of the self” and “deliberation”: “The diary offers a space and time protected from the pressures of life. You take refuge in its calm to 'develop' the image of what you have just lived through to meditate upon it, and to examine the choices to be made” (p. 195). The third function—memory—is relatively straightforward and common to diary compositions. When an individual uses the diary as an aid to memory, they seek to gather and “freeze” their experiences (p. 195). Someone who uses the diary for this function is also expected to, at some point, go back and read their diary to “relive” the memories captured. An individual using the diary as an “expressive release,” however, may never read the text, and, in fact, may destroy the journal to complete the release, so to speak. The final function—pleasure—stems from the notion that writing itself is an enjoyable task that Lejeune describes in regards to how “It is good and pleasant to give shape to what you live, to make progress in writing, to create an object in which you recognize yourself” (p. 195). Similar to the descriptions provided by Lejeune, Alexandra Johnson (2001) discusses how the journal has evolved from primarily a means for record keeping in the seventeenth century to a way of achieving “self-examination,” “sharpening consciousness,” “ordering and reframing perspective,” and “consistent awareness” (pp. 32-33). She describes how the diary serves as a place to store one's thoughts while the writer continues to reflect upon them and make sense of them in the
present. This is similar to what Lejeune describes in regards to using the journal for reflection and to freeze memories in place for a later date.

Turning to the work of Antebellum students at UNC-CH, each of the five student diarists provide an entry at the beginning of their diary or a preface explaining why they have chosen to keep a college journal. The fact that they include such an indication is further evidence of the value of private writing—its beginning does not go unacknowledged. Of course, since these students come from unique backgrounds and exude diverse personalities in their journals, it comes as no surprise that their reasons for beginning to write vary in complexity. Where some individuals put forward a single incident or explanation, others provide a multitude of reasons.

**Blogging Beginnings**

Though the blog might be considered a digital alternative or antecedent of the diary, there are few similarities between why an individual might create a blog and why an individual might begin a diary. The primary similarity between the two, on the other hand, is critically significant as it draws upon one of the baseline characteristics of what makes a blog a blog and a diary a diary. This means of comparison is the temporal nature of the two genres. The significance of time and blogging is discussed by Laura J. Gurak and Smiljana Antonijevic (2008) in “The Psychology of Blogging : You, Me, and Everyone in Between.” They describe how the blog provides a place where one can write a chronological narrative of one's life, a type of writing that considers not only events in the present but potentially the past and future as well (p. 65). The similarities, however, generally stop there. Gurak and
Antonijevic provide two other important characteristics of blogging that are not always shared with the diary: Anonymity and community. Though there are certainly instances of individuals writing a diary as someone else or under a pseudonym, this practice is far more common—and is the subject of much discussion on such blogs as *Writing Under a Pseudonym* and *Petulant Skeptic*—in digital environments. Moreover, where writing in one's diary is typically considered a solitary task, the blog is much more conducive to community formation given the internet masses having access to digital environments that make both consumption and interaction common tasks.

Even though these characteristics are important to what makes blogging a unique genre, the primary usage of the blog returns it to a context comparable to the diary. This comparison is made clear given Susan C. Herring, Lois Ann Scheidt, Elijah Wright, and Sabrina Bonus's (2005) findings indicating that the vast majority of blogs are used as a personal journal (70% of their 203 blog sample). Furthermore, the framework provided by Sandeep Krishnamurthy (2002) utilizes four different criteria (topical, individual, community, and personal) to identify four different common blog types: Personal/individual, individual/topical, personal/community, and topical/community. There is thus an effort to discuss both the content of the blog and the nature of the authorship. In the context of Herring et al., the personal/individual type would be considered the most common and also the most comparable to the traditional diary. Other important distinctions identified include the overwhelming majority (90.8%) of bloggers are individuals and the majority consider their primary occupation as student (57.5%). Both points of central significance to a study of
Virtual Community Socialization

In both school-sponsored and self-sponsored contexts, blogging has the potential to create a virtual community amidst participants and thus is a subject of significance in the context of a student blogroll. Though there have been numerous studies of virtual communities (Ho & Kyung, 2010; Yusuf et al., 2011; Kujawski & Abell, 2011) since Harold Rheingold's (1993) *Virtual Community: Homesteading on the Electronic Frontier*, his work is a landmark. Moreover, despite the dramatic changes that have occurred since its original publication, his discussion of virtual communities is still relevant and a useful starting point.

To provide an introduction to the idea of a virtual community, Rheingold describes his relationship to a group that he was a part of (Whole Earth 'Lectronic Link (WELL)) that communicates through computer conferences and e-mails:

> The idea of a community accessible only via my computer screen sounded cold to me at first, but I learned quickly that people can feel passionately about e-mail and computer conferences. . .I'm not alone in this emotional attachment to an apparently bloodless technological ritual. Millions of people on every continent also participate in the computer-mediated social groups known as virtual communities, and this population is growing fast. (p. xv)

Another important distinction that Rheingold makes is the idea that the WELL is a virtual community that is grounded in reality:
The WELL felt like an authentic community to me from the start because it was grounded in my everyday physical world. By now, I've attended real-life WELL marriages, WELL births, and even a WELL funeral. I can't count the parties and outings where the invisible personae who first acted out their parts in the debates and melodramas on my computer screen later manifested in front of me in the physical world in the form of real people, with faces, bodies, and voices. I remember the first time I walked into a room full of people IRL who knew many intimate details of my history and whose own stories I knew very well. (p. xvi)

This context mirrors the experience of university bloggers because of their physical presence on the campus and electronic presence online.

Within one's introduction to a virtual community, the notion of identity is an important consideration. Renninger and Shumar (2002) provide a description of a site called The Math Forum that is an extensive resource allowing individuals to share knowledge and ask questions. They discuss the many ways that an individual could establish an identity on the site, one that “can be re-imagined at will and can be either condensed or diffused images of other identities” (p. 85). The roles that individuals assume on The Math Forum are extensions of their real life expertise. An individual who is a teacher, for example, would assume that identity on the site and could carry out such actions as supervising students, answering questions, contributing content, and sharing resources.

Community norms could also impact how one introduces himself/herself to a virtual
community. Carolyn Wei (2004) provides an example of how norms can be established outside of the imposition of directly stated rules or terms of use. Through a discussion of a community of knitting blogs, she observed commonalities in regards to the style, content, and presentation of bloggers within the community. Regarding style, Wei found that all of the blogs were to be written in English and to include a string of code that facilitated individuals' ability to move from one blog to the next. Another norm of importance was content. Bloggers were expected to post on a regular basis (generally either monthly or weekly), and their posts should be about knitting. The most common post topic in Wei's sample, for instance, was discussion of one's current knitting project. Various presentation-related norms were also observed, such as the usage of custom buttons and a weather application.

A blog's introduction is also critical because it socializes the newcomer into the virtual community. Moira Burke, Robert Kraut and Elisabeth Joyce (2010) explore the impact that the way an individual introduces himself/herself to the group has on socialization. They identify three common strategies that newcomers have for joining an online group, including group-based claims, identity-based membership claims, and information requests. Group-based claims are sometimes referred to as de-lurking posts because they are the result of spending a significant time within the online environment prior to posting, absorbing knowledge and learning about the community before the initial post. In this manner, the individual is able to make an initial post that makes them seem as part of the community already (though not visible as a lurker) and not in violation of any established rules or norms (pp. 9-10). The second type of introduction—identity-based membership claim—occurs
when an individual provides some personal information about themselves relevant to the group's purpose. A newcomer to a watercolor painting forum, for instance, might indicate that they have experience on some other watercolor painting forum, extensive experience painting, or utilize language in their posting that reveals a certain expertise. Essentially, they connect themselves to the community based upon the relevance of their past. The final means that an individual might use to introduce themselves is to request information. Burke, Kraut, and Joyce describe the significance of questions: “First, if answered, they fulfill the newcomers’ information needs. Second, whether or not the group answers these questions signals the community’s willingness to form a relationship with the new participant” (p. 12). Their study ultimately suggests that it is group-based membership claims and information requests, however, that are the most likely to be successful.

Research from Ahuja and Galvin (2003) on the behaviors of newcomers and established members of a virtual community describes two different behaviors: Information-seeking and information-providing. Information seeking is most common for newcomers and entails their gathering of information regarding the group's norms and rules; information providing, however, is generally practiced by the established members of the group and intended to result in greater understanding within the group (p. 166). Ahuja and Galvin also suggest three different contexts for understanding information-seeking and information-providing: normative, regulatory, and cognitive. The normative context is one steeped in the values and norms of the community; regulative is based upon set rules; and cognitive refers to “task-related activity focused on the construction of information meaning based on the
social reality of the group and its members” (p. 168). Ahuja and Galvin ultimately found that newcomers are most likely to seek out cognitive information.

The Antebellum Context at UNC-CH

Erika Lindemann's (2004) *True and Candid Compositions* is an online gathering of writings by students at UNC-CH between 1795 and 1868 and is thus useful for establishing the general historical, social, and curricular context of Antebellum UNC-CH. The collection consists of 121 primary documents culled from UNC-CH's Southern Historical and North Carolina collections and the University Archives, including letters, diary entries, poems, speeches, curricular documents, and compositions. Lindemann describes such nuances as the progression of the academic year, for instance, as starting in mid-August and concluding in mid-December, and then beginning again for the spring semester in mid-January and ending in June. She also details a typical day for Antebellum students: The school day began with the ringing of the bell as a wake-up call at 6:00 AM, prayers at 6:45 AM, recitations, meals, an additional prayer, and then the returning of students to their rooms by 8:00 PM. Moreover, when the students arrived at the start of a new fall semester, they were examined to determine what courses they needed to take or—for returning students—what subjects they needed to review. To provide an idea of the curriculum, Lindemann gives an overview of the faculty members on staff and their specialty:

The faculty of the 1840s included President Swain, who also taught law; Elisha Mitchell, professor of chemistry, geology, and mineralogy; James Phillips, professor of mathematics and natural philosophy; Manuel Fetter,
professor of Greek; John De Berniere Hooper, professor of Latin; William Mercer Green, professor of rhetoric and logic; Charles Force Deems, adjunct professor of rhetoric and logic; a professor of French; and two tutors, one for languages and one for mathematics.

Such details as those provided by Lindemann are critical to understanding the historical, social, and institutional context for the Antebellum diarists.

*****

Rushing to awake in time for prayers in January of 1842, James Lawrence Dusenbery hurried his way to the chapel, ultimately making it upon the “second calling” of his name. Upon his arrival, he was greeted not by the calming sensation of having made it on time and being in the company of friends, but, instead, by a horrible sight: three animals had been slaughtered and left in the church—A dog had been shot and placed in the chapel’s “bull-pen,” a central, semi-circular seating area (Henderson, 1949, p. 91), and two hogs were also killed, one left on either side of the parson's desk. Needless to say, Dusenbery skipped prayers that day.²

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Such tricks and hijinks were relatively frequent on the UNC-CH campus during the Antebellum period:

The 1840s did not begin auspiciously for faculty members, who once again were preoccupied with putting down student rebellions. Beginning

² This is an adaptation of events occurring James Lawrence Dusenbery's diary on January 30, 1842.
in 1838 students organized themselves into “combinations” to perpetrate mischief, calling themselves members of the Ugly Club and the Boring Club. Even though faculty members required students to sign pledges promising not to join such clubs and checked on students nightly in their dormitories, periodic “sprees” nevertheless took place. (Lindemann, 2004)

Within this campus context and the ongoing shift in the individual/community dichotomy (Rotundo, 1993), another important change that was happening during the Antebellum Period was a reconception of masculine behavior. Richard Stott (2009) describes how men during this period—who he refers to as “jolly fellows”—were often drinking, fighting, gambling, and pranking (sometimes all at the same time): “The jolly fellows' world was one in which drinking whiskey was considered necessary for good health, political arguments were settled with fists, hundreds of dollars hung on the result of a cockfight, and putting an emetic in someone's drink was a hilarious joke” (p. 7). Though these behaviors were generally centralized to taverns and similar gathering spots, the college campus was not seen as an escape or “land apart” from this lifestyle. If anything, it was just another locale for it, another dot on the debauch landscape. On the subject of the raucous nature of the college campus, Stott suggests that “Drinking, gambling, brawls, wild pranks, and even riots were more or less routine. Maintaining discipline became the primary objective of college officials, but, even so, success eluded them” (p. 28). He provides a specific example from UNC-CH, indicating that “At North Carolina only students' clashes with knives or guns attracted notice” (p. 28). With this thought in mind, Lindemann (2004) provides greater detail of the
extent of the mischief on the Antebellum UNC-CH campus:

In mid-August 1840, for a period of three weeks, student rebellions became especially persistent. Students doused faculty members with water when they attempted to enter Old West; stones, bricks, and furniture were thrown from dormitory windows; first-year students headed into the woods after dark for a “freshman treat” and returned “hallooing and shouting”; “the bell was rung indefinitely”; and students stole horses and rode them through the campus late night. .

Though the “jolly life” was on the decline due in part to the Second Great Awakening, these Antebellum students would have been faced with a period of significant change in both what it meant to be a man and what it meant to be a college student. Their diaries thus offer a window into an important period of transition for masculinity in the United States and the college campus, especially given the strong pull that the “jolly life” maintained upon them in contrast with the draw of the life of an adult and a professional.

Another point of discussion is the role that college had in the quest for achieving adulthood and becoming a professional. According to Rotundo (1993), college was seen as one means for moving the individual from youth to adulthood: “Academies, colleges, and apprenticeships in commerce and the professions served some of these purposes. Probably more effective were the ubiquitous debating clubs, literary societies, and young men's associations that spring up inside and the formal institutions of learning” (p. 21). In addition, a recent dissertation by Timothy J. Williams (2010) explores the notion of “intellectual
manhood” at UNC-CH, describing how the students were expected to represent the state's elite because of their backgrounds and the professional and social expectations heaped upon them (pp. 1-2). Therefore, students at an all-male university in the Antebellum period with an extremely active debate society (such as that at UNC-CH) would be expected to be concerned with their transition into adulthood and, in turn, for this transition to be chronicled in their diaries. That said, given the ongoing mischief and debauch behavior that regularly took place within the UNC-CH community during the period, the diary plays a central role in the interplay between an individual's thoughts and actions. In this context, the diary could be seen as a guide for one's move to adulthood, a means for keeping track of the milestones and documenting the failures.

**Quantitative Overview of Introductions**

Before exploring the introductions individually, a quantitative overview of the LIWC's analysis of linguistic and psychological processes is provided. Linguistic processes generally refer to raw descriptors of a passage (such as the number of words and the number of words per sentence) and word tense. Psychological processes involve the usage of words that suggest relationships between the writing and the writer's relationship to the surrounding world (such as social, cognitive, and emotional terminology). This overview is a starting point for exploring important characteristics to the opening entries and blog posts to these self-sponsored student writings.

**Linguistic Processes**

Tables 5.1 and 5.2 provide data describing the linguistic processes of the diarists and
bloggers. Within the context of the discussed research on virtual communities (Burke, Kraut, & Joyce, 2010; Ahuja & Galvin, 2003; Haythornthwaite, 2002; Renninger & Shumar 2002; Rheingold, 1993), the diarists' and bloggers' usage of first-person singular, first-person plural, second-person, and third-person is of note. First, there were no instances of second-person in the diarists' introductions; however, all of the bloggers except Katie used second-person at some point. Therefore, the finding that the bloggers (M = 1.1, SD = .89) wrote significantly more in the second-person than the diarists (M = 0.0, SD = 0.0) was unsurprising (t(10) = 2.7, p < .05). This suggests that the student bloggers may directly address an audience or others in the virtual community (with “you” or “your”). Moreover, though both the diarists and bloggers are expected to use first-person singular due to the personal, narrative-based expectations of their genres (Johnson, 2001; Lejuene, 2009; Herring et al., 2005; Gurak & Antonijevic 2008), additional emphasis is placed upon the bloggers because they must establish their identity to the virtual community (Ahuja & Galvin, 2003; Burke, Kraut, & Joyce, 2010). Both the student bloggers and student diarists used first-person singular in their introductions; there was, however, no significant difference between their usage.
The third-person singular results, on the other hand, suggest one of the main differences between the context for the bloggers and the context for the diarists. Where the bloggers are writing to introduce themselves to a virtual community that they assume exists and hope will read and even respond to their writing (Burke, Kraut, & Joyce, 2010; Miura & Yamashita, 2007), the diarists may use “he” to refer to themselves or to the typical Antebellum student living out the “jolly life” (Lindemann, 2004; Rotundo, 1993; Stott, 2009). Moreover, it was determined that the diarists (M = 2.9, SD = 3.1) made significantly greater usage of the third-person singular than the bloggers (M = .08, SD = .13, t(10) = -2.5, p < .05). Therefore, even within the base linguistic processes of first-person singular, second-person, third-person singular, and third-person plural in these introductions, we see suggestion of an attention to the virtual community of *Tarheel Blog* and an attention to individuality within the diaries.

Table 5.1

*Point of View of Diarists' Introductory Entries*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diarist Name</th>
<th>First-Person Singular</th>
<th>First-Person Plural</th>
<th>Second-Person</th>
<th>Third-Person Singular</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Edmund Deberry Covington</td>
<td>8.91</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Lawrence Dusenbery</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Hooper Haigh</td>
<td>6.92</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Sidney Mullins</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph John Summerell</td>
<td>8.95</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Values represent the percentage of words in the whole passage.*
Additional information regarding linguistic processes appears in Tables 5.3 and 5.4. For this data set, the introductions were analyzed for common verbs in past tense, present tense, and future tense. Of the five student diarists, three used the future tense (Mullins: 3.85%; Summerell: 4.67%; Dusenbery: 4.61%). The reason for the three diarists being future-oriented with their writing may involve their stated desired to use the diary to improve their moral character (a contract for the future, of sorts). All seven bloggers used the future tense but to a lesser degree than the diarists. Both the student bloggers and student diarists utilized the past tense. Haigh's writing received the highest value amongst all writers with 6.92%.

Table 5.2

*Point of View of Bloggers' Introductory Entries*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blogger Name</th>
<th>First-Person Singular</th>
<th>First-Person Plural</th>
<th>Second-Person</th>
<th>Third-Person Singular</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andrea</td>
<td>5.84</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autumn</td>
<td>8.55</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>0.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berkley</td>
<td>7.84</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brandon</td>
<td>8.62</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calvin</td>
<td>6.86</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katie</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yolanda</td>
<td>8.21</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Values represent the percentage of words in the whole passage.
All twelve writers also addressed the present to some degree. Overall, however, the student bloggers (M = 8.3, SD = 2.2) wrote significantly more in the present tense than the student diarists (M = 4.9, SD = .85, t(10) = 3.2, p < .05). The higher present tense values for the bloggers are likely tied into the need for newcomers to virtual communities to make group-based claims and identity-based membership claims to establish their present identity in pursuit of acceptance (Burke, Kraut, & Joyce, 2010).
Psychological Processes of Diarists and Bloggers

Tables 5.5 and 5.6 include data on the social, affective, and cognitive psychological processes. The two highest values for words in the social category\(^3\) occurred within the introductory blogs of Brandon (10.34%) and Andrea (9.65%). Though individuals entering a virtual community would be expected to utilize social language more than the solitary diarist (Burke, Kraut, & Joyce, 2010; Ahuja & Galvin, 2003; Haythornthwaite, 2002; Renninger & Shumar, 2002; Rheingold, 1993), statistical testing could not support this claim.

At the same time, the two highest scores in the affect category\(^4\) fell with the diarists: Dusenbery (7.99%) and Mullins (7.37%). Moreover, the highest value in the cognitive category\(^5\) also fell with the diarists (Dusenbery with 19.82%). Though these relationships were not significant enough to differ statistically, they make sense in the context of the

\(^3\) The social category included such words as relationship, roommate, hear, request, respond, ask, share, help, secret, sent, and guest.

\(^4\) The affect category included such words as happy, cried, delicate, agony, love, difficult, torture, thank, dislike and dissolution.

\(^5\) The cognitive category included such words as cause, know, needing, thinking, considering, contemplate, admit, statement, and hopefully)
Antebellum diarists because they are writing primarily for personal reasons and not for a community context (Johnson, 2001; Lejeune, 2009).

Table 5.6

*Psychological Processes of Bloggers' Introductory Entries*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blogger Name</th>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Affect</th>
<th>Cognitive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andrea</td>
<td>9.65</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>15.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autumn</td>
<td>4.84</td>
<td>6.84</td>
<td>13.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berkley</td>
<td>7.84</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>16.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brandon</td>
<td>10.34</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>13.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calvin</td>
<td>6.86</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katie</td>
<td>5.84</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>8.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yolanda</td>
<td>7.46</td>
<td>5.22</td>
<td>17.16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Values represent the percentage of words in the whole passage

Tables 5.7 and 5.8 contain results for the perceptual\(^6\), biological\(^7\), and relativity\(^8\) categories, the final three psychological categories measured by LIWC. Beginning with biology, the student diarists (M = 2.2, SD = 1.0) had a statistically greater appeal to this category that the student bloggers (M = .85 , SD = .41, t(10) = -3.2, p < .05). This difference is most likely caused by the individual/community context experienced by both the diarists and bloggers. The blogger is distanced from their body because they've assumed a virtual version of their identity—the diarists, on the other hand, write for and about themselves.

---

\(^6\) The perceptual category included such words as smell, fragrant, dry, ear, scan, delicious, sharp, edge, and shine.

\(^7\) The biological category included such words as feet, nasal, stomach, starving, binge, blood, food, exhaustion, eye, and face.

\(^8\) The relativity category included such words as begin, end, January, recur, platform, remove, repeat, attend, interval, and kilometer.
personally. This difference can be explored further by comparing the student diarists and
student bloggers for a sub-category of biological processes: health. Across the introductions,
the student diaries (M = 1.2, SD = .64) included significantly more words that fell in the
health category than the student bloggers (M = .31, SD = .30, t(10) = -3.1, p < .05). Much of
this variation can be explained by 1. The public vs. private nature of the blogs and diaries,
and 2. The focus of the diary on the individual. Where the solitary diarist is likely to discuss
and even begin their diary because of health reasons, the bloggers would not be expected to
make generally private information public.

Table 5.7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diarist Name</th>
<th>Perceptual</th>
<th>Biological</th>
<th>Relativity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Edmund Deberry Covington</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>18.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Lawrence Dusenbery</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>13.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Hooper Haigh</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>13.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Sidney Mullins</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>8.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph John Summerell</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>11.28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Values represent the percentage of words in the whole passage

Though one of the bloggers (Katie) received the highest value for relativity across all
writers (23.6%), the relationship between bloggers and diarists in regards to this category
was determined to be statistically insignificant. Both the diarists and bloggers received high
scores in this category (compared to the other categories), which is likely explained by the

9 The health category included such words as alive, itch, chill, chronic, pill, dosage, syndrome, pain, dentist,
cyst, and cough.
general content and style of an introduction to a blog and diary. Specifically, introductions on *Tarheel Blog* typically discuss such information important to the identity of a college student as recent travels, hometown, and campus dormitory. The student diarists also make an appeal to time and space, but they do so through discussions of recent events and forward-looking statements regarding the benefits they foresee for diary-keeping.

Table 5.8

*Psychological Processes of Bloggers' Introductory Entries*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blogger Name</th>
<th>Perceptual</th>
<th>Biological</th>
<th>Relativity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andrea</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>13.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autumn</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>18.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berkley</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>13.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brandon</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>14.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calvin</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>18.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katie</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>23.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yolanda</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>13.43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Values represent the percentage of words in the whole passage

The final two categories for discussion are related to personal matters discussed by the diarists. First, the wording of the student blogs (M = 7.1, SD = 2.9) was significantly higher in the work category10 than the student diarists (M = 2.2, SD = 1.0, t(10) = 3.7, p < .05). Another category of interest is leisure.11 The student blogs (M = 2.0, SD = 1.2) also received a significantly higher value in this category than the student diarists (M = .56, SD = .37, t(10) = 2.6, p < .05). This difference can be explained based upon the types of

10 The work category included such words as absent, applicant, professor, resource, fired, and hire.
11 The leisure category included such words as art, novel, play, birdie, movie, pub, runner, and shop.
information that the student bloggers provide as part of their identity in their introductory posts. They tend to discuss their year in school, major, and coursework (words falling in the work category) and recent happenings around campus or their travels (words falling in the leisure category). The diarists tend to make a more personal statement in the introduction to their diary regarding the benefits of keeping a journal to themselves as human beings.

In summation of this overview, the introductions of the student diarists reflected a statistically more frequent appeal to the following linguistic processes, psychological processes, and personal matters in their writing: Third-person singular, biology, and health. The bloggers' introductions, on the hand, had statically greater appeals to second-person, present tense, and work.

Due to the small sample size (n = 12), several other variables were identified for further study based upon their relevance to the community context and the LIWC results. First, the social category was deemed to be important due to the presence of a virtual community and the significance of the individual/community dichotomy in the Antebellum context. In addition, 5 of the 6 highest rated examples from the social category were written by student bloggers. Another category of interest is verb tense. Since the bloggers were statistically more likely to write in the present tense, the diarists' usage of the present and future tenses is worthy of closer analysis. Additionally, the three student diarists who did use future tense in their introduction (Dusenbery, Mullins, and Summerell) far exceeded the values of the student diarists. Past tense will also be analyzed due to its significance to the establishment of one's identity both in a diary and on a blog. Moreover, given research by
Brand (1990) and many others on the relationship between self-sponsored writing and emotion, affect is worth closer investigation. Also of note is the finding that the two highest valued student writings in regards to emotion were written by student diarists (Dusenbery and Mullins). Finally, the cognitive, perceptual, and relativity categories were chosen for discussion because of particularly high values achieved by student writers. Specifically, Dusenbery's 19.82% in the cognitive category; Covington's 2.97% in the perceptual category; and Katie's 23.6% in the relativity category.

To explore the blogs and diaries in greater detail, they will now be discussed individually in regards to additional LIWC results and the specific historical and technological contexts. In order to explore some of the important characteristics identified, the following thematic pairings were used: Present versus past/future, social versus cognitive/affective, and relativity versus perceptual.

**Future/Past Versus Present**

*Diary Writing for the Future*

Based upon the LIWC results, the student diarists were more likely to use the future tense in their introduction. Summerell's introductory post scored the highest across all bloggers and diarists with a value of 4.67%. Importantly, this introductory post is not the earliest entry in his diary. Several pages of his diary, in fact, are dated from as early as 1840, but they appear to be scattered entries from an earlier journal. He, however, began a new college diary on January 1st, 1842, so his writing from this date will be the focus of this analysis. The overall content of this entry describes the purpose for the journal from this
point forward and the changes he will make for the new year:

A new year has arrived, and as heretofore I am resolved to commence a new course of conduct – To amend my ways of mischief, to correct the follies I am concerned have marked my character. . .and with its beginning this new year that is 1842. I commence a journal that I may note my progress in all these reformations, and for my own perusal hereafter, I will try to record some of he most important actions and occurrences that shall take place in college for the next five months. It will be a source of no little pleasure many years after I leave this institution and my days with whom my connections have been a pleasant and agreeable to read these pages, which though very imperfect in many respects, will serve to call to mind things that would otherwise remain quite forgotten. They will serve as a means of arbitrary association by a bare mention of which the mind will be carried back to scenes, which from my connection with them, form an interesting part of my life. I shall try my hand to at delineating characters and recording to the extent of my abilities, my observations of human character, and human nature. With a view to my own improvement, I make this resolve, but like many other resolutions of the sort that I have formed I fear that it will be broken in the first month expired. However, the trial must be made or the test will never be performed.

In addition to obtaining a high value for future tense, Summerell's entry also scored the
highest (3.89%) in the achievement category. We can see his interest in achievement given the clear purpose he states at the beginning of his diary to improve his moral character. The following lines provide an indication of this pursuit: “to amend the way of mischief, to correct the follies,” “to correct the follies I am concerned have marked my character,” and “I am resolved to commence a new course of conduct.” In a similar fashion, we can identify his regular usage of the future tense. Though he begins with a sole focus on improving himself, he quickly moves to adding the pleasures of writing and reliving the events described there at a later date: “It will be a source of no little pleasure many years after I leave this institution” and “[It]will serve to call to mind things that would otherwise remain quite forgotten.” The diary is thus as much about his future self as it is about aiding him in making immediate changes. These characteristics of the introduction to Summerell's diary make clear the impact that the transitions critical to the Antebellum period had upon him as a college student and diarist.

Diary Writing about the Past

Where Summerell's writing is focused on the future and on achievement, Haigh's introduction is focused on the past. With a value of 6.92%, his writing received the highest value for using the past tense across all writers. Rather than providing a description of the changes he plans to make, he opens with a single incident that caused him to see the value in keeping a journal. In the first entry to his diary—dated September 17, 1841—he wrote the following:

---

12 The achievement category included such words as founding, reward, skill, solution, proficient, crown, confident, and responsible.
The Journal (for so it was styled) commenced after much moralising &
college bombast to give an account of a visit paid to the little town of
Hillsboro – my native place – September 17th 1841. It was a dull time for
me. Following Chapel Hill fashions I had borrowed a pair of shoes –
which proved too tight – the consequence was obvious. - My principal
object was defeated and I returned late at night melancholy & love sick,
having made an ass of myself. I did not get “my courage to the sticking
point” & of course did not see “the young lady” Here my feelings seem to
have overcome me, and there is a sort of sermon on matters & things – a
rhapsody upon the little village church and a military conclusion in
allusion to Cornwallis' having camped in Hillsboro!

In contrast to the high value for achievement attained by Summerell's entry, Haigh's scored
the highest (2.31%) across all writers in the sadness category. His appeal to both sadness
and the past tense is clear throughout as he uses his first diary entry as a way of cleansing
himself of an embarrassing incident. Haigh's discussion here falls in line with Lejeune's
(2009) description of the diary as a place for expression and release. He may have, in other
words, chronicled this embarrassing incident to remove it from his memory by putting it onto
the pages of his diary. Unlike Summerell, he does not suggest how he will use his self-
sponsored writing from this point forward.

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13 The sadness category included such words as reject, regret, grave, inferior, loser, melancholy, helpless,
grief, hopeless, and remorse.
Blogging in the Present

Where the student diarists had a greater tendency to write in the past and future tenses, the student bloggers were more likely to utilize present tense. Yolanda's introductory blog post scored the highest present tense value amongst all writers (10.45%). She wrote the following on September 27, 2009:

Hello all,
I am Yolanda Gardner and I represent Carolina's class of 2011. I am a psychology major.

::Enough about that::
You want to become familiar with the life of a Carolina student? The best way is to become one, but since that may be some months or years into the future, I will give you a little look at what my life is like as a Carolina student. A lot goes on a Carolina, my days consist of class, work, homework, extra reading, and trying to work in a nap here and there (which is rarely successful). So far my experience has been great, I have made great acquaintances, great progress, and most of all, I am getting to know me a lot better. (If you don't know what I mean now, just wait til you reach college)
I have seen myself climb a self built ladder, each stuff being obstacles that I have pretty much invented for myself. None the less, it has been a rewarding journey thus far to see my growth, academically and personally.
We can see that much of her appeal to the present tense has to do with claims she is making about her own identity and the identity of potential UNC-CH students. These aspects of her entry are evidenced by such statements as “I am Yolanda Gardner and I represent Carolina's class of 2011” and “You want to become familiar with the life of a Carolina student? The best way is to become one. . .” Such thoughts are clear examples of group-based claims as well as identity-based membership claims (Burke, Kraut, & Joyce, 2010). Yolanda seeks to both establish herself as a “representative” of her class and to establish a commonality with most visitors to the community: The desire to become a UNC-CH student. In addition, Yolanda seems to use her introductory blog post to share her knowledge. Sarah Pedersen's (2010) survey on motivations for blogging revealed that 53 of 100 bloggers indicated that they blogged to share their expertise. Given that Tarheel Blog is a community of bloggers compiled as a source of information for potential students, it is not surprising that students like Yolanda use their blog for this purpose.

Another blogger who scored highly for her usage of the present tense was Autumn (the second highest value at 8.26%). She wrote the following passage commemorating her return to campus from summer vacation to begin her blog on August 28, 2008:

Although I enjoyed my summer, it was so nice to be back in Carolina, surrounded by all the history, beauty, and friends I have come to love. Even though I have walked throughout the campus countless times by now, I still find myself admiring the surroundings. This year started wonderfully. My roommate and I spent most of the first
day arranging our room. It's always fun to make the room your own by adding pictures and decorations. My roommate, Kiersten, and I were friends last year and I am really looking forward to rooming with her this year. I have included a video of my room below.

Autumn's appeal to the present tense is clear through her description of the activities surrounding her return to campus. Moreover, with a value of 6.84%, her introductory entry also scored the highest amongst all bloggers for positive emotion.\textsuperscript{14} Her high scores in this category are likely attributable to the degree to which she seems to draw inspiration from her surroundings at the school. Evidence of this claim comes through such statements as “Although I enjoyed my summer, it was so nice to be back in Carolina, surrounded by all the history, beauty, and friends I have come to love” and “This year started wonderfully.”

**Cognitive/Affect Versus Social**

*The Cognitive Diary Writer*

Turning to psychological processes present in the writing of the student diarists and student bloggers, the diarists were more likely to use cognitive\textsuperscript{15} and affective language. Dusenbery's undated entry (perhaps from July 1841 based upon its location) at the beginning of his college diary received the highest value (19.82%) for cognitive language across all student writers:

> The advantages of keeping a journal, are many & important. Exclusive of

\textsuperscript{14} The positive emotion category included such words as strength, honest, caring, hope, strength, compassion, and supporting.

\textsuperscript{15} The cognitive category included such words as understanding, uncertain, knowing, reconsider, random, question, and puzzle.
the improvement, which one would necessarily make, both in his style of
composition & in the art of pen-manship; and setting aside likewise all the
benefits, which would probably result from such an use of his leisure time
—the gratification alone, that he would feel in after life, in perusing this
work of his youth & reflecting on the profitable manner in which he spent
the time—“When life itself was new, And the heart promised, what the
fancy drew”—would amply compensate him for all the labour of its
composition. And even should that most happy period of his life have been
spent in idleness & dissipation; still will not this memento of his follies &
crimes, have been written in vain. For when his eye shall rest upon the
page, that speaks to him of his disgrace, tears of sorrow & repentance will
course each other down his cheeks & he will resolve with all his might, to
free himself from those vices & habits, which degraded his youth.
For these & many other reasons, we have determined to keep a weekly
record of all the leading events of my life during our Senior year in
College, together with our thoughts & reflections at the time.

Dusenbery's high value in the cognitive category is not surprising. He, for instance, describes
in significant detail the impact that writing a diary will have upon him mentally: “the
gratification alone, that he would feel in after life, in perusing this work of his youth &
reflecting on the profitable manner in which he spent the time.” Moreover, his passage also
scored highly for its biological language, primarily because of his appeals to the physical
benefits and impacts that diary writing will have upon him: “when his eye shall rest upon the page, that speaks to him of his disgrace, tears of sorrow & repentance will course each other down his cheeks.” Due to the language and content of this passage, it is clear that Dusenbery had a particular focus on the significance of diary writing to the diarist as a thinker and as a human being.

*The Affected Diary Writer*

Where Dusenbery was particularly cognitive and biological with his language, Mullins is the most emotional of all writers, receiving a value of 7.99% in the affective category. Importantly, however, he was not negatively emotional with his entry (obtaining a value of only 0.3%); but, instead, his introductory entry is overflowing with positivity. Mullins' opening scored a 7.69% for positive emotion, the highest amongst all writers. He wrote the following at the beginning of his diary in October of 1840:

> Man should every joyfully embrace an opportunity of increasing his knowledge and strengthening his virtue: for the obstacles that oppose the due cultivation of the intellectual power, and the temptations that hinder him from constantly performing his duty, are numerous and powerful. And as experience is the most efficient instructor, he should carefully gather from his past history, wisdom for his future conduct. He must ultimately learn the great truth that his purest happiness is connected inseparably with the constant exercise of virtue, and the earlier this fact is learned and made

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16 The negative emotion category included such words as danger, revenge, unsuccessful, uncomfortable, rancid, unsavory, difficult, and disadvantage.
the basis of action, the less painful will be his life. Dependent on this principle are a thousand others of minor importance, yet essential to the fulfillment of his various duties. To become acquainted with the abundant proofs of these, which are afforded in my own life, is the object of the Journal. The prominent incidents of my life then are the chief subjects of these pages but to diversify them, and render them more useful by inspiring in myself a more lively interest in their contents, much of a different character is admitted. Circumstances of a singular, interesting, or uncommon nature will be asserted. Notices of public affairs, sketches of public men, and opinions of measures and men will find a place. Notices of the works I read, conversations in which I participate, and extracts from my correspondence will also be found here. The history of my intimacies is a legitimate part of the work, but with these shall be combined descriptions of the character of my friends. General reflections will frequently occur, and finally, all will be introduced, that may tend to impart increased interest to my Journal. Firmly convinced of the utility and convenience of such a record, I shall continue to keep it through life. Already it has become an important part of my daily avocations to prepare the notes, and in after years, I shall turn to this history, as a rich treasure of interest and delight.

Therefore, compared to Dusenbery's negatively emotional entry describing the “tears that
would flow down his cheeks” upon a future reading of his diary, Mullins is far more positive: “I shall turn to this history, as a rich treasure of interest and delight.” Another example is his opening to this introductory entry: “Man should ever joyfully embrace an opportunity of increasing his knowledge and strengthening his virtue.”

*Social Blogging: Building Community*

The student bloggers, as a whole, had a tendency to use social language in the introductory posts to their blogs. Andrea's introductory posting from October 1, 2008 received one of the higher social values:

Hey everyone my name is Andrea and I'm a second year student at the best university ever- UNC Chapel Hill! My current plan is to major in International Studies and Sociology and possibly minor in Spanish.

Though my family currently resides in Huntersville, NC, I was born and raised in New Rochelle, NY. Born to Peruvian parents, who immigrated to the United States a year prior to my birth, I was raised around the Latino culture and the Spanish language. Although my parents have always been there for support and motivation, I have always been very independent in leading my own way, specifically in my academic realm of life. My parents both attended and graduated from La Universidad De San Martin De Porres in Peru, but once they came to the US, they weren't able to help orient and guide me, as much as they would have wanted to. It was me, myself, and I when it came to deciding which courses to take in high
school, whether to take honors courses or get into the IB program, how to look for scholarships, what colleges to look at and how to apply, how to search for scholarships, and how to apply for financial aid. I was very blessed with having the persistence and desire to always strive for my best, though at times it became very challenging.

Andrea's post was also one of the higher valued entries in regards to inclusive language. In the context of Burke, Kraut, and Joyce's (2010) research on newcomers, Andrea's appeal to inclusion makes sense. Her discussions of family, such as her in-depth description of her relationship to her parents and her heritage, appeal to identity-based claims. In addition, she is inclusive in the way that she addresses her audience directly. Sarah Pedersen (2010) utilizes examples from LiveJournal to argue that, though bloggers are aware of a potential readership, they rarely address their audience directly and thus appear to write only for themselves. As demonstrated in the above, bloggers do occasionally break from this style and address their audience, particularly on a site like Tarheel Blog that is targeted towards a specific readership. Therefore, instead of simply jumping into the content of her blog or writing “Dear Diary” (or “Dear Blog”), she begins with a salutation: “Hey everyone...”

In this instance, Andrea's salutation was commented upon by one of her audience members: a hopeful student named “Risi,” who wrote the following in response to Andrea's first entry:

Wow you remind me just like myself! I have parents who immagrated to

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17 The inclusive language category included such words as add, along, and, around, both, came, close, each, and inside.
America from Nigeria, they did not know anything about colleges or how it works in America. I had to stand on my own two feet and teach myself. Choosing the highest courses at my school was something that I did as well. I am a mentor too at a Girl's club, I really like how you said “I became a mentor a never had” That just touches me for some reason. I am hoping to be a student at UNC fall of 2010! Good luck with everything this year!

Miura and Yamashita (2007), and Kawaura, Kawakami, and Yamashita (1998), all suggest that having visitors to a blog generally provides significant support for the blogger and makes it more likely that he/she continues to write. Pedersen (2010) describes this idea: “The presence of readers is an essential factor in most bloggers' motivations for blogging. Whether they are writing for family and friends or prefer to see their readers as total strangers, the majority of bloggers are aware that they are engaged in active communication with others” (p. 55). “Risi” provides a comment that goes beyond simply thanking Andrea for writing but also draws connections between their backgrounds and interests. With another post a few weeks later, Andrea did continue to post on her blog and ultimately continued posting until April 19, 2010.

While Brandon's blog received the highest score in the social category across all writers (10.34%), his blog as a whole generally runs contrary to that of Andrea. Despite his social nature and an outpouring of interest and feedback from the community, his blog concluded after only three posts. On September 15, 2008, Brandon wrote the following
introductory post:

Hello everyone! This is Brandon Carter here and I will be blogging with you all for the '08-'09 school year. A little background on me, I am from Green Level, NC (small, small SMALL town outside of Burlington), majoring in Journalism and Mass Communication with a concentration in public relations. I'm involved in many groups on campus (Minority Student Recruitment Committee, Jackson Ambassadors, etc.) and I also have a work-study job in the Admissions Office (which I absolutely love!). I guess that's pretty solid for an introduction, if you have any questions for me just comment under my blog and I'll be more than happy to reply! Thanks!

Based upon this entry, the social nature of his writing is clear. His passage, for instance, is filled with friendly exclamations, and, like Andrea, Brandon also provides an idea of his background and general interests. However, where Andrea received only 1 comment on her blog, Brandon received over 33. The discussed research from Miura and Yamashita (2007), Kawaura, Kawakami, and Yamashita (1998), Gregg (2009), and Pedersen (2010) would suggest that such an outpouring of interest would encourage Brandon to continue writing. Despite such an overflow of commentary and all of the relevant research suggesting otherwise, Brandon's next post on September 22, 2008 was his final one for an entire year before his last entry on September 29, 2009. The 33 comments on Brandon's blog ranged from questions about programs at the university:
I did want to major in journalism but now that I'm in the newspaper class at school, I strongly dislike writing. I think I might want to do something else. Any suggestions?

to the school's social life:

I have a few questions. What are the pros and cons of the social life at UNC? (school spirit, diversity, parties etc)

to where Brandon is from:

Thanks for the information. Interesting...my mom grew up and lived across the street (hwy 49) from Carters in Green level.

Though the sudden end of his blog with such a strong response from the community is surprising, it could also be argued that—since he received only 5 comments on his second posting on September 22, 2008—he only continued his blog beyond the first post because of the original outpouring of interest. Interestingly, his second post responds to the 33 comments and is the longest entry included across all bloggers in this study's sample.

**Perception Versus Relativity**

*Diary Writing Perceptually*

In their introductions, the student diarists were slightly more likely to appeal to perception than the student bloggers, particularly Edmund DeBerry Covington (2.97%). On September 15, 1841, he wrote the following entry:

My birthday! On this day I complete my eighteenth year – What reflections does this occasion inspire! The light and invisible wings of
“Time” have passed over my head and a thoughtless youth has trudged slowly along...In my youthful pilgrimage – I have now gained the eighteenth happy stone of my life, and stand to take a retrospective glance at the joys and sorrows of my short career – while Hope with “her gleaming song” illumines the dim and mighty wings of the future. . .

Like many diarists today and some of his fellow diarists, Covington is pushed to write because of an event of significance: His birthday. By recreating this moment, he appeals to perception. Moreover, the significance of chronology cannot be understated when studying the diary as a genre. Jeremy D. Popkin (2009) describes how it is through this regular chronologizing that “the diarist confronts the inevitability of change, and ultimately of death, and finds in the practice of writing a way to cope with this realization” (p. 6). In his opening, Covington does not provide any real indication, however, that the “behavior of an adult” is of particular significance to him—just the passing, remembering, and chronicling of time.

*Blogging Relativity*

Katie's introductory post scored on the NBS scored higher in the relativity category across all writers (23.6%). She posted the following on August 14, 2008:

I'm from Annandale, Virginia, and spent my first two years at UNC living on south campus and choosing between International Studies; Public Policy; Classics; Asian Studies; and Peace, War and Defense as majors. After studying abroad last summer for five weeks in China in a UNC-led city planning seminar, I decided on double-majoring in Asian Studies and
Public Policy with a minor in Comparative Literature. Last year I lived in Old East (pictured left), UNC's first dormitory and the oldest public university building in the United States. Since Old East is closed this year for renovations, I'll be back on south campus my senior year living in Ram Village, an on-campus apartment community.

Given Katie's discussion of her major, travels, and dormitory, her appeal to relativity is clear. Katie also strengthens the significance of time and space to her post through her inclusion of visuals of Old East and herself in China. Therefore, through both textual and visual elements, she makes group-based membership claims and identity-based claims (Burke, Kraut, & Joyce, 2010).

Calvin's introductory post also appealed strongly to the relativity category (18.63%). He posted the following on September 16, 2008:

Hello to virtual land. I've been on the blog for a while now but just got around to making my first post. I'm taking 20 hours worth of classes (15 is average) so things have been pretty hectic around here. I have two big computer science projects due this week, both of which I had about 3 weeks to work on. You'd think by now that I'd realize it's not a good idea to start on those until the weekend before they're due.

So how about a little info about me. Hmm. Well I went to the North Carolina School of Science and Math (NCSSM), and if you haven't heard of that school before, you'll hear it plenty at UNC. There are about a
million and a half of us here. But don't let the name fool you; we're not all nerds ;)

Like his fellow bloggers, he establishes some critical components of his identity. His writing's appeal to relativity is clear through his discussion of time regarding his coursework and to space in regards to his mention of where he went to school before UNC-CH. Of particular interest, however, is his mention of perusing the blog before actually posting. Newcomers to a virtual community will often “lurk” for a period of time to learn the norms and conventions of the community before making their first post (Burke, Kraut, & Joyce, 2010).

A final example of relativity is Berkley's first post on the NBS from August 5, 2008. Instead of having a high value for relativity, however, this post had one of the lowest totals for bloggers (13.73%):

I'M IN MY THIRD YEAR OF COLLEGE. So cliche, but the time really has flown by. I'm a junior Business Administration and Spanish major from Burlington, NC, and I've written for this blog since my senior year of high school. I've been involved in many activities during my time here -- Carolina offers so many student organizations, club sports, social activities, etc. that it's hard to choose only a couple. This year I'm looking to not overcommit myself. It sounds like an oxymoron, but I want to allow time for spontaneity.

Though this part of her entry does address the autobiographical elements that have been
shown to appeal to relativity, the rest of her introductory post does not; instead, it delves into her goals for the semester, such as reading more, taking dance lessons, and enjoying the arts.

**The Value of Diary Writing/The Value of Blogging**

Another January in Chapel Hill. After waking to a rainy day and already struggling with the decision of whether or not to leave his “warm couch” and attend prayers, Joseph John Summerell eventually rose. The day only became more difficult as he struggled through a lesson on the Judicial powers of Congress and several hours of studying afterward. Summerell's work complete, he sat in his room writing in his diary. His thoughts strayed, however, from religious and political matters to what was surely the highlight of his day: a trip to the oyster house. Overjoyed from dining on the fried delicacy, he found himself torn between an idyllic image of dining on coastal shores and the inevitably spoiled seafood that had made its way across the muddy Carolina terrain to his stomach. With these thoughts in his head, he closed his diary around midnight and ended another day at UNC-CH.¹⁸

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As illustrated through this discussion of three thematic pairings—present versus past/future, social versus cognitive/affected, and perceptual versus relativity—the introductions to these diaries and blogs demonstrate different approaches and strategies to beginning a piece of self-sponsored writing. In addition, the student diarists were shown to use third-person singular, biology, and health significantly more than the student bloggers, and the student bloggers were shown to use second-person, work, and leisure significantly

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¹⁸ This is an adaptation of events described in Joseph John Summerell's diary.
more than the student diarists. What do these differences suggest about these student writers?

The observed variations can be explained, in part, by the context in which the writing took place and thus the individual/community dichotomy. For instance, the bloggers have an audience and a virtual community of fellow bloggers and visitors to read and comment upon their posts. For this reason, their introductory entries tended to appeal to second-person. Where the bloggers directly address their audience, the diarists are aware of no audience but themselves. Moreover, the bloggers also utilized language appealing to the elements critical to their identities as college students, and, in turn, their identity within a virtual community representing a college campus. Through the construction of this identity, they reinforce and create a sense of community.

The student diarists, on the other hand, tended to write in the third-person singular and appealed to biological and health-based language. These characteristics make sense within the diary context as well as the Antebellum historical context. As individuals keeping diaries largely to help them to become adults or to improve their moral character, the diarists' writings are expected to be more characteristic of the individual writer than the community. Unlike the student bloggers, the diarists do not have to establish their identity; instead, they are focused on reforming their identity and escaping community. For this reason, the third-person singular was utilized as a way of discussing Antebellum men in general as the “He” who needs improvement. These improvements entailed making real change to better themselves as human beings, which led to appeals to the biological and health categories. For the student diarists, the diary was not a way to enter a community or provide expertise—it
was, instead, a record intended to make real improvements in their lives.

**Practical Value Versus Moral Value of Diary Writing**

One notion not directly addressed by LIWC that is true of all five diarists is the representation through their introductions of a general acknowledgment of the value that they placed upon diary writing. The ways that “value” manifests itself vary but can be, generally, described as either practical or moral. The practical value of keeping a diary is the notion that one might improve one's writing ability through the written record. Only one of the five students—James Lawrence Dusenbery—mentions that there could be some practical benefit. Specifically, in the opening to his diary, Dusenbery suggests that “The advantages of keeping a journal, are many & important. Exclusive of the improvement, which one would necessarily make, both in his style of composition & in the art of penmanship.” In some ways, this finding is surprising given the growing emphasis during the early nineteenth century on the importance of linguistic ability as described by Connors (2003) and Woods (1986). Such growing grammatical concerns would make the diary an ideal place to reflect upon, and to improve, one's composition style. At the same time, however, the genre of the diary and the type of writing it demands would make it somewhat unlikely for one to use it to improve one's penmanship. Anna Jackson (2010), for example, suggests that certain stylistic characteristics of journal writing align it more with haste than precision. The Antebellum student diarists, specifically, frequently use shorthand and dashes to suggest that they intended to move quickly from one thought to the next, leaving little time to ponder sentence structures or correct one's handwriting. Jackson describes how writing that is laden with
dashes “suggests a rapid pace of writing. . .It is a mark that is quick to make, just a dash of the pen across the page, and it permits a looser syntactic interpretation than is permitted by punctuation marks such as the colon, semi-colon, comma, or period” (p. 116).

Though they do not make the practical value of keeping a diary a focus—even at the beginning of their writing—all five of the Antebellum students foresee some moral value in keeping a diary. They also, of course, embrace this value to varying degrees and some with more willingness than others. Haigh, for example, seems to have struggled with the decision to keep a diary but ultimately moves forward with his writing on moral grounds. The resulting journal lasted longer than any of the others, extending beyond his time in college. Covington, on the other hand, presents the moral value of the journal in an indirect and metaphorical sense that juxtaposes the past with the present and, ideally, assists him in moving forward with, presumably, a moral future. Finally, Mullins, Dusenbery, and Summerell share a similar notion of the diary's value as a written record of mischief and other happenings that would help them to reflect upon moral improvement. Therefore, each of these diarists ultimately begin with some statement on the value of diary writing and present the entries to come as contributing to this value in some way. The pursuit of moral or practical value essentially maps onto the central argument of this project that these students had a desire to become adults and to achieve a sense of individuality.

**Communal Value of Blogging**

Where the Antebellum student diarists suggest that they keep a diary based upon the practical and moral value of it to themselves, the student bloggers maintain their blogs to
construct their own identity as college students and to develop the blog community. Gurak and Antonijevic (2008) describe how such identity formation takes place:

The character of blogs as simultaneously private and public enables the formation of both individual and group identities. Through extensive narratives and often highly personal descriptions of day-to-day activities, and through the use of images, a blogger reveals and creates—intentionally or not—his or her unique online identity. Through the use of blogroll, links, and comment features, and through development of communal norms (see Wei, 2004), the blogger reveals and creates his or her group identity. In the same manner, a specific blog community often emerges. (p. 64)

We can see many of these elements on the Tarheel Blog community, including the usage of an array of visuals—such as photographs to show off one's recent travels or one's dorm or even a video of a student's dorm room—and personal descriptions. There are also certain established community norms (Wei, 2004). The introductory posts, for instance, were generally all autobiographical and social in nature and were of comparable length. The social nature of a blog, however, did not automatically mean that the blogger was joining the virtual community outright. Brandon, for instance, received the highest scores in regards to the social characteristics of his writing and received an outpouring of support from readers, but his writing was the briefest of all student writers discussed. At the same time, students like Autumn who weren't particularly social with their writing and received few comments
continued posting. These findings regarding the social and communal nature of the bloggers will be explored in detail in the chapters to come.

Since this chapter considered only the introductory entries of these student bloggers and student diarists, it is important to see how their writings vary over time. It is possible that —after introducing one's self to a virtual community or establishing one's identity as a diary writer—an individual's approach to self-sponsored writing changes. Moreover, the findings raised in this chapter can be more deeply analyzed and, in turn, the individual/community dichotomy further explored: Do the bloggers, for instance, maintain their significantly greater appeal to second-person and the diarists their appeal to third-person singular? In addition, in regards to psychological processes, do the diarists continue to discuss biology and health with greater frequency than the bloggers? Finally, over the course of the semester, do work-related matters continue to dominate the bloggers' discussions? To explore these questions and possibilities, the next two chapters analyze examples of self-sponsored writing in their entirety.
Chapter 6

A Tale of Two Bloggers

As discussed by Lejeune (2009), diaries often do not come to a formal ending; instead, they tend to fade away or stop abruptly. Moreover, turning to Tarheel Blog—of the seven alumni bloggers—only two come to a clear ending: Katie and Yolanda. As predicted by Lejeune in the context of diaries, the others blogs halt over time, either gradually or abruptly dissolving into cyberspace. Why is it so common for self-sponsored writers to put their keyboard or pen aside, so to speak? To explore this issue, the blogs of Katie and Yolanda will be analyzed in their entirety. Given the completeness unique to their blogs, their writing will also be analyzed as exemplars of the changes that occur after a blogger's initial entry into a virtual community and, over time, the eventual exit from the community. Observation of this transition is important because it is critical to understanding the individual/community dichotomy central to this project's argument. To explore these points, Katie's and Yolanda's complete blogs were analyzed with LIWC. The results of this analysis will be considered in the context of literature on why diarists and bloggers may choose to quit their writing as well as the context of the virtual community. After a review of literature, significant changes in Katie's and Yolanda's writing over time in linguistic and psychological categories are discussed.

The End of the Diary/The End of the Blog

Where the beginning of a diary is typically marked or clearly indicated by the writer, the ending is rarely so easily identified. Philippe Lejeune (2009) struggles to grasp the “death
of writing,” the moment or combination of factors that lead a diarist to halt the written
account. To explore “the end,” Lejeune collected sixteen different journal endings and found
that there were three broad directions a diary could go regarding its conclusion: 1. the
absence of an ending; 2. a realization of one of the four purposes set out at the diary's
introduction (expression, reflection, memory, and pleasure); and 3. an ending in reality, such
as the death of the journal's author (p. 188). Through an examination of the notion that the
diary has no ending, Lejeune explains how each time a diarist writes an entry he/she assumes
that there will be at least one more entry. This expectation never goes away and thus the
writing could, potentially, continue on forever: “All journal writing assumes the intention to
write at least one more time, an entry that will call for yet another one, and so on without
end...You enter into a phantasmagoric space where writing runs into death. The infinite post-
script” (pp. 188-189). He does, however, suggest that there are types of diaries that do have
an implied ending, such as those that are taken on for a certain period of time (e.g., a travel
diary). These diaries are governed by the constraints set upon them (the beginning and ending
of a journey, for instance).

Lejeune describes some of the ways that a diary's closure is reached. Sometimes, for
example, the diarist might arrive at some “end of a period,” a chronological closure, or he/she
might run into a physical stopping point, such as running out of pages (pp. 189-190). The
notion that the diary is written with the potential of continuing on forever is referred to as
“the shuttle” by Lejeune. He defines this term as follows: “an oscillation between the past
and the future. . .this structuring and protective operation that I undertake today with respect
to yesterday seems to be the model of the operation that I will perform tomorrow on what I have written today” (p. 190). The diary, in other words, is a record that has a profound impact upon the future that cannot be known. For this reason, its ending is never certain.

Seeking to understand what caused a diary's end is made even more difficult given its often fragmented nature. Though entries are typically presented in a chronological order, they could skip whole weeks, months, or even years at a time. Moreover, a diary writer could begin their journal with one goal for the diary in mind but return with a wholly different approach to the work. Lejeune describes how there are two different types of diarists:

those who write each day out of discipline or habit, who suffer when they skip a day and 'catch up' when they're behind, filling in omissions. And there are those who write, more or less regularly, when they need to. (p. 193)

When the end is approaching, a diarist might execute their “finale” in two different ways: Perseverance and resignation. Lejeune describes how perseverance occurs if an individual might “know that the end is near. You were already keeping a diary, and all of a sudden you fall ill or you weaken gradually: the diary is transformed into a battlefield against death” (p. 197). Therefore, some change occurs in the life of the diarist, and the diary becomes a part of the gradually approaching end rather than remaining the open-ended text that it once was. Moreover, resignation is described as when “You hang your head, you put down your pen. You don't have enough strength for the daily routine. . .A diary that has been kept regularly stops, just like that, without warning” (p. 197). Where the persevering diarist
uses the journal as part of the closing, the resigned diarist loses interest in the diary, dissolves it away, or halts it completely.

Turning to the “online diary,” a blogger's reasons for concluding are complex and the subject of little study. Miura and Yamashita (2007) study the reasons why a blogger would continue a blog over time, finding that “positive feedback from readers for example sympathy, support, or encouragement. . .motivated a person to continue to be an author” (p. 1467). Though one might assume that the opposite—negative feedback such as insults or complaints—would cause a writer to stop keeping a blog, the relationship was not as simple as that. Specifically, Miura and Yamashita found that negative feedback “did not have significant effects on satisfaction with information provision and acquisition, although it did have significant negative effects on satisfaction with self-understanding and acceptance from others. . .Consequently, negative feedback had an insignificant effect on their satisfaction” (p. 1467). Moreover, recipients of negative feedback often applied it to where they got the information for their blog posting and not taking it as a personal slight. Regardless, negative feedback still cannot be dismissed as a reason to quit blogging.

One blogger, Katey, the author of Outsourcing Queen, describes that she quit not due to any negative feedback but just the opposite. She quit, strangely enough, because of positive feedback: “[she] was overwhelmed with the compliments and encouragement. My need to people please and top my last post, to get more positive feedback – was just too much.” There is a general fascination on the internet with what causes an individual to stop blogging. For this reason, there are numerous articles and blogs exploring the issue. The New
York Times article, “Blogs Falling in an Empty Forest,” is one of many that provide a general overview of reasons a blogger might call it quits, including a lack of readership, becoming too busy, wanting more privacy, running out of content, or, interestingly, moving his/her writing to a different format (Quenqua, 2009).

Most of these reasons, however, involve the blogger or feedback from the blog community in some fashion. Some bloggers quit because of influences from “the outside”—networks that bloggers might be a part of outside of their blog. Such networks might include, for one, political forces. For example, “Sandmonkey,” a blogger described by Yasmine Rifaat (2008), halted his blog because of “government surveillance and intimidation” (p. 63). Other bloggers quit not because of political influences but because of influences from their employers. Mark Zen, for instance, was fired in 2005 for posting blogs criticizing his employer at the time, Google. Moreover, in 2004, Ellen Simonetti was fired from her job at Delta Airlines because of photographs she had posted on her blog of her crewmates in their uniforms. The number of reasons an individual might halt their blog are thus somewhat beyond count.

Leaving the Virtual Community

Like the ending to a blog, there has been relatively little research on what occurs when an individual leaves behind a virtual community. To explore this issue, Kazmer (2007) gathered interview data from 30 students about to graduate from an education distance learning program known as LEEP. Other than an initial face-to-face meeting at the start of the semester and another set of meetings at mid-term, the majority of instruction was online
through both synchronous and asynchronous means. Kazmer provides 12 different steps that students experience as part of the disengaging process, beginning the minute they enter the graduate program. Student, for instance, experience intrinsic transience: “Students are aware from the beginning that their LEEP social world will come to an end, and that awareness affects how they develop relationships with other students” (p. 122). The second part of disengaging is to create bonds with those in the individual's in-group (the particular graduate cohort to which the individual is a member, in this case).

After these initial steps, the remaining 10 all take place in the time just prior to leaving the virtual group: graduation. These steps entail shifts in the student's life. They, for instance, begin to set new goals for after graduation, find new groups to be a part of, and start focusing on their life after the program. In other words, students must prepare for life in the absence of the group and in the absence of the program. When going through the disengagement process, students see themselves more as individuals than they do as part of a community. Towards the end of disengagement comes graduation: “a ritual, in which students may participate online or on-campus, to mark the end of participation in the program” (p. 126).

An example on a larger scale is Keith Hampton's (2003) research on a neighborhood in Toronto (Netville) that was created with a free-of-charge wired infrastructure by Magenta. The citizens were, in other words, connected to one another and to the network. Through the usage of such communications technologies as an email list called NET-L, the individuals living in the neighborhood quickly came together as a community, mobilizing themselves
through electronic means. Hampton found that individuals who were on the network had more ties with their neighbors and thus felt a stronger sense of overall community. Therefore, when the technology provider decided to end the experiment years earlier than originally stated, there was outrage from the community. Feeling as if they had been cheated of something they were promised, residents quickly turned to the e-mail list:

NET-L became the front line in the conflict between local residents and Magenta. In that month nearly 100 messages were sent to NET-L, compared to 260 in the previous 16 months. Following 4 weeks of intensive online participation, residents grew tired of conversations dominating NET-L that were related to the end of the trial. Some even sent messages expressing how they had begun to dread checking their e-mail. The result was a rapid decline in the number of postings sent to the neighborhood list. (p. 423)

Though not an example of how any one individual dealt with leaving behind the virtual community, Netville provides one instance of how closely connected individuals can be to a virtual community and the seeming devastation that could follow the removal of an important component.

**LIWC Results: Katie and Yolanda**

Beginning with Katie's and Yolanda's linguistic processes, it was expected that they would write regularly in first-person singular. This claim is supported by the tendency for blogs to take the form of a personal narrative (Gurak & Antonijevic, 2008; Herring et al.,
and the need for newcomers to a virtual community to make identity-based and group-based membership claims (Burke, Kraut, & Joyce, 2010). Their writing generally falls in line with this research, but there were no statistically significant differences in their usage of first-person singular. The results for Katie's and Yolanda's usage appear in Figures 6.1 and 6.2, respectively. Importantly, a red circle appears in Figure 6.1 indicating Katie's switch from the OBS to the NBS. Though Katie's usage of first-person singular decreased to its lowest value after the switch (1.51%), it climbed to 8.92%—the second highest value across all of her writing—in her second to last entry. Her highest usage of first-person came on the OBS on October 3, 2007, an entry discussing her decision to come to UNC-CH instead of the University of Virginia. The lowest value for first-person recorded (1.51%) occurred in an entry discussing the University Day festivities posted on October 15, 2008.

![Figure 6.1. First-person singular usage over time per entry of Katie's blog](image-url)
Yolanda's highest usage of first-person (10.46%) came at the beginning of her blog and decreased steadily until her final entry, which was one of the lowest in value (1.51%) (see Figure 6.2). Yolanda's highest two values (8.21% and 10.46%, respectively) were posted two days apart on September 27, 2009 and September 29, 2009. As discussed in Chapter 5, the first of these entries generally introduces Yolanda to the virtual community; the second, however, is a reflection on a campus run-in with an old friend:

As I was walking back to my room, crying a river and (thinking of what I would say to my mom when I told her about my two exams), I saw a friend of mine, who is a first year here at Carolina, from high school sitting on the wall, playing his guitar. Now Carolina is a huge campus so the odds of actually seeing someone you know, randomly, is very slim. . .

At such an early point in her stay within the virtual community, her sharing of such personal stories and information is surprising—this information, however, could be part of her way of establishing herself as a newcomer in the virtual community (Burke, Kraut, & Joyce, 2010). Her lowest usage of first-person came soon after with her fourth post. This entry was posted on April 15, 2010 and is a discussion of the atmosphere on campus towards the end of the semester. Part of Yolanda's usage of first-person singular may be tied to the fact that she also utilized words in the insight category\(^1\) to a higher degree (M = 2.7, SD = 1.4) than Katie (M = 1.2, SD = 1.2, t(50) = -3.8, p < .05). Therefore, it is possible that the content of Yolanda's

\(^{1}\) The insight category included such words as inform, knowing, logic, answer, lesson, known, assume, and accept.
blog tended to provide more personal knowledge-based claims than Katie's.

![Figure 6.2. First-person singular usage per entry of Yolanda's blog](image)

Within the context of a virtual community, second-person is worthy of study because it would commonly be used if one is to address his/her audience directly. This is particularly true in a community like Tarheel Blog because the bloggers know that most of their audience is likely to be potential students. Therefore, it seems that they may frequently “break the screen” between the blogger and the audience and provide advice or information. As illustrated in Figure 6.3, Katie (M = .30, SD = .44) didn't make heavy usage of second-person. Her usage, in fact, was significantly less than that of Yolanda (M = 2.2, SD = 1.3, t(50) = -8.0, p < .05). Though most of her entries stay below a value of 2%, there are four sharp spikes in her graph occurring on the OBS. In these entries, she provides advice to potential students regarding the early action policies at UNC-CH.
As shown in Figure 6.4, Yolanda made a much heavier usage of second-person (M = 2.2, SD = 1.3, t(50) = -8.0, p < .05) than Katie. Eight of her entries were over 2%. Of the eight, Yolanda's highest appeal to second-person came on April 10, 2010 in the following entry regarding why she chose to come to UNC-CH:

What other campus can you go to that will be filled with Carolina blue skies that you can touch?! The student body is diverse and the campus is big enough to have your personal space but small enough for you to make plenty of networks.

Her lowest value for second-person came on November 15, 2010 in an entry discussing homecoming and her plans for life after graduation. Since this entry falls towards the end of
her blog, it could be argued that Yolanda is beginning to transition to life after the intrinsic transience of a virtual community like *Tarheel Blog* (Kazmer, 2007).

![Second-person usage over time per entry of Yolanda's blog](image)

*Figure 6.4. Second-person usage over time per entry of Yolanda's blog*

Figure 6.5 provides an overview of Katie's usage of the past, present, and future tenses. Similar to previous graphs, the added red dot is a visual indicator of when the OBS ended and the NBS began. Katie's writing tended to hover between 2% and 7% for the past and present tenses and typically stayed below 2% for the future tense. Due to similarities present in the data, no statistical significance exists between Katie's and Yolanda's past tense usage. Katie (M = 4.0, SD = 1.6) did, however, use the present tense significantly less than Yolanda (M = 9.9, SD = 2.3, t (50) = -10.4, p < .05). But, at the same time, Katie's usage of present tense was positively correlated with time (r = .33, p < .05). In other words, as she approached graduation, her writing become more and more present-oriented.
Regarding her usage of past tense, of particular interest is the “book-ending” of high values at the beginning and end of her blog. These entries are her third entry—posted on April 21, 2006—in which Katie describes her trip to a UNC-CH baseball game, and her second to last entry—posted on April 27, 2009—that provides advice for future students: “Four years ago, I remember waiting until this last week to make my big decision. I applied to and was accepted by four schools, I had good scholarship/honors offers at each.”

Interestingly, there was a significant negative correlation between her usage of present tense and past tense ($r = -.50$, $p < .05$). This relationship is illustrated in Figure 6.6 and suggests that as Katie's usage of present tense increased over the course of her blog, her usage of past tense decreased. This could be attributed to her focusing more on her present identity and looking towards the future as she neared the end of her college career (Kazmer, 2007).
Moreover, this idea is supported by a significantly positive correlation between Katie's usage of the present and future tenses over the course of her blog ($r = .44$, $p < .05$) and the already mentioned correlation between present tense and time ($r = .33$, $p < .05$).

Figure 6.6. Comparison of Katie's present tense and past tense usage over time

Other than a spike above 2% just after moving to the NBS for an entry, Katie's usage of future tense was minimal. In the following passage that received the highest value for the future tense (2.25%), she discusses her plans for her senior year:

It's hard to believe that I'm already a senior - some days it feels more overwhelming than freshman year, mostly because my life after May 2009 is a complete mystery. Until then, I've got three big, “senior” things going on - my honors thesis, Senior Marshals, and my job search. I'll briefly describe each to give you a snapshot of my life as a senior Tar Heel.
This notion of using the future tense to discuss work is supported by a positive correlation between future tense and the work category\(^2\) \((r = .35, p < .05)\).

As demonstrated in Figure 6.7, Yolanda's writing in the present tense tended to stay between 4% and 12%, and her writing in the past tense generally stayed between 0% and 6%.

![Figure 6.7. Past, present, and future tenses over time in Yolanda's blog](image)

Where Katie tended to utilize past and present tense to a similar degree from beginning to end (with no significant statistical difference between the two), Yolanda wrote in the present tense significantly more \((M = 9.9, SD = 2.3)\) than both the past \((M = 3.1, SD = 2.4)\) and future tenses \((M = 1.5, SD = .68)\) (all comparisons were significant at the \(p < .05\) level).

Though it wasn't used heavily, the future tense is of particular interest on Yolanda's blog \((M = 1.5, SD = .68)\). Her writing was, for one, significantly higher in this category than Katie's \((M = .32, SD = .49, t(50) = -6.8, p < .05)\). Yolanda's highest usage of future tense came

\(^2\) The work category included such words as professor, job, graduate, class, teacher, exam, paper, and test.
in the second half of her blog in posts made on January 26, 2011 and April 13, 2011, respectively. The first discusses her plans for the blog over the semester:

you will probably get a taste of what I am experiencing this semester as this is my last and I want to share my experience with you all just so you have an idea about how life might happen for you over the next few years!

The second entry discusses her plans for after she graduates. These findings suggest that she does—at least to a slight degree—use her blog to look to the future.

As shown in Figure 6.8, Katie's values for the social category\(^3\) tended to hover between 4% and 10%. She did, however, pass 10% on a few occasions on the OBS. Her highest entry on the NBS was 9.43% in a posting discussing a recent trip to a professor's house. Katie's most social entry overall received a value of 14.02% and was posted on the OBS on November 4, 2007. In this entry, she describes a recent breakfast she had with the coaches of the school's basketball teams.

Though the NBS has features more fitting to a virtual community (such as the ability to add comments and a threading of all community bloggers on one page), the social nature of her blog does not appear to increase or decrease after the transition.

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\(^3\) The social category included such words as telephone, talk, converse, discuss, email, coworker, cousin, meets, members, and marriage.
Part of the explanation for this observation could be Katie's blog receiving significantly higher values (M = 7.4, SD = 3.2) in the work category than Yolanda (M = 5.2, SD = 1.7, t(50) = 2.5, p < .05). Higher scores for “work” suggest that Katie was more focused on the academic-side of being a student than the social side. At the same time, however, her writing also received higher values (M = 2.6, SD = 1.9) than Yolanda (M = 1.5, SD = 1.1) in the leisure category\(^4\) (t(50) = 2.1, p < .05). High values in this category, again, could be tied to Katie's discussions of the academic side of being a student because she describes such events as going skiing for part of a skiing course, having dinner at professors' houses, and studying abroad—all of which are work-related activities but could be categorized as leisure.

Additional evidence of this indication that Katie is focused on the ins and outs of being a

\(^4\) The leisure category included such words as basketball, nap, act, fun, garage, garden, golf, guitar, motel, art, ballet, bands, and playful.
college student include her receiving significantly higher scores ($M = 17.6$, $SD = 3.0$) in the relativity category than Yolanda ($M = 14.8$, $SD = 3.3$, $t(50) = 2.9$, $p < .05$). Words in this category provide an idea of how often the writer addresses the time and space surrounding their writing and their life. A major focus of Katie's blog is thus reconstructing the daily life of an academically-focused college student, regardless of the blog environment.

Yolanda's writing, on the other hand, tended to receive higher values in the social category than Katie's, generally staying within the 6% to 10% range compared to Katie's entries ranging between 4% and 10% (see Figure 6.9).

![Figure 6.9. Social words over time in Yolanda's blog](image)

Yolanda's higher scored entries for the social category generally came towards the end of her blog. Her highest value (11.11%) occurred with her final entry, a description of some photographs showing the bonds she made while at UNC-CH:

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5 The relativity category included such words as walking, November, inside, going, heading, opening, wall, busy, and finish.
The people in the pictures range from Freshman year suite mates to fellow seniors I have met over the last four years! This is just a sneak peek at how the bonds you form at Carolina (or whatever college you attend) will definitely last over time.

Turning to the affect category⁶, Figure 6.10 shows that Katie's usage (M = 4.5, SD = 1.5) generally falls between 2% and 8%, and her writing appealed to emotions significantly less than Yolanda (M = 5.9, SD = 2.1, t(50) = -2.5, p < .05).

![Figure 6.10. Affect words over time in Katie's blog](image)

Of particular note is that two of her higher valued entries came at the beginning and end of her blog (6.24% and 6.83%, respectively). Moreover, her two absolute highest rated entries came towards the middle of her blog, both with a value close to 8%. In content, these posts

⁶ The affect category included such words as fabulous, calm, care, nervous, neglect, vile, and sob.
describe some of Katie's trips away from UNC-CH, one to Raleigh for a theater festival and the second to a local state park. The entries at the beginning and end of her blog are of note because these are the critical moments in the virtual community where she is a newcomer gaining acceptance (Burke, Kraut, & Joyce, 2010) and—upon exit—an “alumni” of the community (Kazmer, 2007). In her second to last post, she reflects on why she came to UNC-CH and seems to be considering the next phase of her life: “And now I'm here, four years later, on my last day of classes.” This entry sets up her final post, a description of the end of her time on Tarheel Blog and one of the more emotional entries across all Tarheel Bloggers:

I've been procrastinating on this post for a while. I've been writing with Tar Heel Blog since it started in spring 2006, so writing my last post is making me a bit emotional. I guess it's just another part of graduating and moving on...And so, I turned my tassel and magically transformed into...
(drumroll...) a CAROLINA ALUMNA...I am so happy to have had the opportunity to share some of my Carolina experiences with you all, and I hope that each of you have time to visit (and ideally attend) this basketball-loving, sweet tea-drinking, curiosity-driven, public service-minded, Carolina blue-obsessed place.

In this passage, Katie makes clear the significance that her self-sponsored writing on Tarheel Blog had upon her as a student. With such an entry, it is somewhat surprising that Yolanda's blog (M = 5.9, SD = 2.1) was discovered to contain statistically more emotional language
than Katie's (M = 4.5, SD = 1.5, t(50) = -2.5, p < .05).

Compared to Katie, Yolanda's affected language, however, tends to stay between 4% and 10% (see Figure 6.11).

Moreover, in addition to her posts scoring higher in the affect category overall, Yolanda's (M = 5.0, SD = 1.7) entries also received a higher score than Katie's (M = 4.0, SD = 1.5) in regards to positive emotion\(^7\) (t(50) = -2.1, p < .05). Where Katie's higher valued emotional entries came towards the middle of her blog, Yolanda's highest valued posts appear at the end of hers. The highest valued entry (10.28%) from March 2, 2011 discusses the beauty of her campus surroundings:

Though there are a lot of people around, they won't bite I promise, but they will give you an idea of how to enjoy a lazy or extremely busy day. You

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\(^7\) The positive emotion category included such words as paradise, fiesta, flatter, flawless, virtue, welcome, and merry.
will constantly see students laying in the grass on days like this to study or just relax. Another great thing is, our professors like to take class outside of the classroom when it gets warm.

The second highest valued emotional entry was posted on February 8, 2011 and is titled “Cowardly Lion Gets Some Courage.” In this post, she describes her own experience of “breaking out of her shell” by participating in a pageant. Part of the explanation for Yolanda's stronger sense of emotional language is evidenced by the personal and generally reflective stance that she takes to the issues she faces as a college student. This is evidenced by her writing receiving significantly higher values (M = 2.5, SD = 1.4) than Katie (M = 1.4, SD = .72) in the tentative category\(^8\) (t(50) = -3.6, p < .05). Also of interest is Yolanda's usage of negative emotion. First, surprisingly, there was a negative relationship between her negative emotions\(^9\) and work (r = -.61, p < .05). In other words, as her discussion of work increased, her usage of negative emotion decreased. Such a finding would be generally atypical of most college students.

As illustrated in Figure 6.12, Katie's cognitive language\(^10\) tended to stay between 8% and 16%. Her usage (M = 11.5 , SD = 2.6) was also significantly less than that of Yolanda's (M = 15.9 , SD = 2.6, t(50) = -5.6, p < .05) Once again, her blog is “book-ended” with some of her highest values towards the beginning and end of her writing. Katie's highest value

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8 The tentative category included such words as hopeful, luck, guess, might, sometimes, somehow, suppose, and shaky.
9 The negative emotion category included such words as abandoned, liar, distress, maddening, and steal.
10 The cognitive language category included such words as think, ponder, feeling, certain, seems, secret, and confident.
overall (17.83%) came just after switching to the NBS. Posted on October 8, 2008, this entry
describes one of her study sessions in the campus library. Her lowest ranked cognitive entry
also came after the switch to the NBS, a discussion of having dinner at a professor's house on

![Cognitive words over time in Katie's blog](image)

*Figure 6.12. Cognitive words over time in Katie's blog*

As demonstrated in Figure 6.13, Yolanda's cognitive language tended to range from
10% to 20% compared to 8% to 16% for Katie. Rather than the book-ending present in
Katie's graph, Yolanda begins with one of her highest cognitive entries (17.16%) and
concludes with her lowest (11.97%). Her absolute highest value (20.68%) occurred on
February 8, 2011 in her blog describing the aforementioned beauty pageant. The appeal to
cognitive language is clear as she reflects upon the experience:

> Successes and failures require you to ponder on how you got where you
> are, where you want to go, and what changes need to be made to achieve
greatness. Don't be afraid of your feelings. Once you acknowledge a higher power that can conquer ALL, you can get there.

![Cognitive words over time in Yolanda's blog](chart.png)

*Figure 6.13. Cognitive words over time in Yolanda's blog*

Yolanda's generally stronger appeal to reflective writing is also evidenced by her entries receiving significantly higher scores (M = 1.6, SD = .66) in the cause category\(^{11}\) than Katie (M = .67, SD = .47, t(50) = -5.7, p < .05). This shows that—even though she also writes in the narrative style common to most blogs—Yolanda devotes portions of her blog to personal thought and inquiry. Additional evidence is provided by a positive correlation between cognitive language and her usage of first-person singular \(r = .73, p < .05\) and a negative correlation between cognitive language and her usage of first-person plural \(r = -.65, p < .05\).

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11 The cause category included such words as change, compel, trigger generate, infer, originate, solve, how, and why.
Figures 6.14 shows the results for inclusive\textsuperscript{12} and exclusive language.\textsuperscript{13} Over the course of her blog, Katie (M = 5.6, SD = 1.4) used significantly more inclusive language than Yolanda (M = 4.2, SD = .94, t(50) = 3.2, p < .05).

Katie's graph is book-ended by two of her higher valued inclusive language entries. Her most usage of inclusive language (9.36\%) came on October 28, 2007 in a description of her participation in a team scavenger hunt. Her lowest value (1.81\%) for inclusive language occurred when she posted about her attendance of some on-campus concerts. She also used significantly less exclusive language (M = .77, SD = .68) than she did inclusive language (M

\textsuperscript{12} The inclusive language category included such words as add, with, plus, along, each, inside, into, around, both, and we.

\textsuperscript{13} The exclusive language category included such words as either, except, just, not, or, and without.
Like Katie, Yolanda also utilizes significantly more inclusive language (M = 4.3, SD = 2.6) than exclusive (M = 2.6, SD = 1.1, t(26) = -4.4). Her usage of inclusive language, however, was negatively correlated with time (r = -.57, p < .05). So, in other words, as her blog continued, her usage of inclusive language tended to decrease (see Figure 6.15).

At the same time, Yolanda uses significantly more exclusive language (M = 2.6, SD = 1.1) than Katie (M = .77, SD = .68, t(50) = -7.0, p < .50). Towards the end of Yolanda's
In the last 30 days before graduation, I have participated in some awesome senior events. Even though we are leaving, we are still reminded about the greatness of our school. Enjoy the pictures from the Senior Ball, Art Show, and Bell Tower Climb. The people in the pictures range from Freshman year suite mates to fellow seniors I have met over the last four years! This is just a sneak peek at how the bonds you form at Carolina (or whatever college you attend) will definitely last over time. (Sorry the pictures are all over the place, I don't know how to format them :( Not a technology person at all!)

Two Bloggers: One Community

As illustrated through this analysis of the self-sponsored writing of Katie and Yolanda, their approaches to the Tarheel Blog community were markedly different. Where Yolanda used significantly more words in the first-person singular, second-person, insight, exclusive language, affect, and cause categories, Katie used significantly more words in the categories pertaining to present tense, work, leisure, and inclusive language. Katie's focus on present tense, work, and leisure suggests that her blog is intended to recreate the daily life of
a college student. The appeals in Yolanda's writing, on the other hand, to second-person and insight suggest that her writing is more focused on providing advice to potential students than Katie's. Moreover, her high scores in the first-person, affect, and cause categories suggest that she uses blogging for reflection on her college life.

One factor that could have contributed to this difference is Katie's writing on both the OBS and the NBS while all of Yolanda's was on the NBS. In order to explore her writing before and after the transition, Katie's entries from the NBS and the OBS were analyzed in LIWC. Ultimately, on the NBS, her writing increased in two different areas: Present tense and work. First, the increase in present tense writing between the NBS (M = 5.0, SD = 1.6) and the OBS (M = 3.6, SD = 1.5, t(36) = 2.6, p < .05) is of interest because it suggests that she wrote more about her daily activities as they were actually happening. For instance, on October 8, 2008 on the NBS, she posted the following:

   Exciting news - I'm writing from the UL (R. B. House Undergraduate Library)! I'm alternating between a Comparative Literature essay I have due later this week and continuing my research on my honors thesis.

Two examples from another entry on the NBS from March 4, 2009 provide commentary on a photo posted by another community member and the current environment at UNC-CH:

   I'm the person on the right closest to the camera in the brown coat looking tired, cold and cranky. Standing on a tiny paint can for 5+ hours is no fun.

   Oh, the things Carolina students do for basketball tickets. . .it is also
midterm week! Although there isn't an official week of midterms at Carolina, in the spring most professors try to squeeze them in the last few days before Spring Break.

Therefore, part of Katie's increased usage of the present tense could certainly be argued as community-related—no other post on the OBS, for instance, provides commentary on materials posted by other users. These entries also suggest that Katie's writing on the NBS may have a tendency to capture the present as it is occurring in real-time and thus create a sense of immediacy, such as her posts while in the library, during mid-terms week, and other similar entries (Fadda-Conrey, 2010; Nardi, Schiano, Gumbrecht, & Swartz, 2004; Wheeler & Lambert-Heggs, 2009).

The increase in her work-related content likely has less to do with the blog site and more to do with her status as a senior hoping to finish off all graduation requirements. One example describes her last final exam week:

Tar Heels are in the midst of final exams right now, the wonderful time of year when over a one and a half-week span most courses of the semester conclude with three-hour in-class exams. Everything ends Friday, but I've still got two exams to conquer before I leave campus.

Another example came on September 8, 2008 when she describes the process of writing an honors thesis:

A senior honors thesis is a year-long research project relating to your major. Writing a thesis is the only way to graduate with Honors or Highest
Honors. . .I can't remember when I decided to write my thesis - I think I heard about it from my tour guide when I came to visit my junior year of high school and knew it would be worthwhile. These results suggest that there is a close relationship between the virtual identities of bloggers like Katie as they are portrayed on Tarheel Blog and their actual identities as university students.

This point is further supported by the “book-ending” observed on Katie's blog in three different categories: Past tense, affect language, and cognitive language. In these areas, her writing spiked to two of her highest values at the beginning and ending of her blog. Like an individual entering and exiting a virtual community, Katie entered and exited various stages of her college career while on the blog, including her graduation. Book-ending spikes in the past tense, affective, and cognitive language categories ultimately suggest a sense of reflection in her writing. Yolanda's graphs also showed some book-ending in two categories (exclusive language and social language) but not to the degree of Katie's. Since both of their blogs had both a beginning and ending, these findings suggest that Katie and Yolanda react markedly different to both entering and exiting the virtual community. Where Katie is emotional and reflective, Yolanda is more social. Ultimately, however, these changes to their blogs over time support this project's argument that Yolanda and Katie used their blogs to create community.

These nuances raise questions regarding the impact of the presence of a virtual community on self-sponsored writing. Would the solitary diarist react similarly to the
beginning and end of his/her diary? Or does his/her reaction to the passage of time and carrying out of the act of self-sponsored writing fundamentally differ from that of the student bloggers? These questions will be explored in the next chapter analyzing a student diary in its entirety.
Chapter 7

The Diary of James Lawrence Dusenbery

Skating is at once his pride & his pleasure - when he is engaged in it, all pursuits are swallowed up in the delightful employment. Could you but see him, as with chest advanced & head aloft, he glides in graceful parabolas upon the bosom of the deep, you would be struck with his gallant appearance & the air of internal pride & self-admiration that plays upon his features.

James Lawrence Dusenbery, November 19th, 1840

The scraping of skate on ice, the swooshing of winter clothing as the skater whizzes past, the peacefulness of a frozen pond, and the outright joy of a student divorced from his coursework are all remarkably clear from Dusenbery's passage. Written as part of an essay on how he would spend his winter vacation, he demonstrates a knack for imagery and metaphor while providing a single fragment of a fading and often overlooked past. Spanning from July of 1841 to June of 1842, his college journal is a rare jewel. This chapter explores this valuable resource in its entirety through LIWC analysis within the context of this project's argument that the Antebellum diarists used their writing to escape community while the bloggers used their writing to create community. Importantly, unlike the diaries of Haigh, Summerell, and Covington, Dusenbery's work is complete with a marked beginning and ending. Though the Mullins diary also has a clear beginning and end, its number of entries (n
= 260) far exceeds that of the student bloggers and thus is not as useful for comparison as the writing of Dusenbery. His diary (n = 45) and Katie's (n = 38), however, are of similar length (in terms of the number of entries), so they will be compared whenever possible.

**James Lawrence Dusenbery Diary: Linguistic Processes**

First, as demonstrated in Figure 7.1, Dusenbery primarily used first-person singular and third-person singular in his diary. Overall, his usage of first-person singular (M = 3.9, SD = 1.8) was significantly greater than both third-person singular (M = 2.0, SD = 1.5, t (84) = 5.20, p < .05) and second-person (M = .03, SD = .09, t (84) = 14.14, p < .05). Due to the personal narrative approach common to most diaries (Gurak and Antonijevic, 2008; Herring et al., 2005) and the results of Chapter 4, this finding was not surprising.

*Figure 7.1. First-person singular, second-person, and third-person singular over time in James Lawrence Dusenbery's diary*

His highest value for first-person singular was achieved towards the middle of his diary on
January 8, 1842. In this entry, he discusses some particularly realistic resolutions for the new year:

    Last Saturday was the first day of the new year. Perhaps I should here, say something of the unprofitable manner in which I spent the year that has just closed; but I have not the inclination,—or dilate upon the rapid flight of time and the vanity of earthly enjoyments. Had I any faith in making good resolutions, I would here resolve and re-resolve to make more rapid improvements in knowledge, morality, and every virtue, but I have so often failed to comply with former resolves that I fear to make any more.

    My intentions are for good and time must determine my actions.

Moreover, his highest usage of third-person singular comes in his opening entry on July 17, 1841. As discussed in Chapter 5, Dusenbery's introductory entry could be considered a third-person singular contract for himself to improve his moral character. His next three highest rated entries of third-person singular also come towards the beginning of his diary. On September 19, 1841 (5.51%), for example, Dusenbery opens with a description that personifies the passage of time: “Another week of my existence has passed away, fraught with all the vices and extravagances of youth. Time, in his rapid and ceaseless course, has hurried it with him, to the vast ocean of Eternity and nought can e'er recall it.” One more instance comes just a week later on September 26, 1841 (5.48%) when he describes a dispute that involved him and James Williamson Campbell during a Dialectic Society meeting:

    J— C made a speech in the hall on last Friday night, declaring himself a
DVV & saying that he had been accused of showing partiality in the hall to the members of his club, while president of the Society. These accusations, he said, had been made behind his back & he had heard of them by accident. I had made such remarks, but it was with the expectation, & almost with the certainty that he would hear of them. I saw him after the session of society & told him that his conduct justified me in saying what I did.

This passage is a more typical usage of the third-person singular to discuss the actions of those around him.

In comparison to Katie (M = .56, SD = .76), Dusenbery (M = 2.03, SD = 1.51) wrote significantly more in the third-person singular (t(79) = 5.4, p < .05) and significantly less than Katie (M = .30, SD = .44) in the second-person (M = .03, SD = .09, t(79) = -4.0, p < .05). In the historical and technological contexts of the diarists and bloggers, these results suggest that Katie is more likely to offer advice to the blog community (with “you” and “your”), and Dusenbery is more likely to discuss individuals in his life, to refer to himself in the third-person, and to use third-person figuratively as he did with “time” in the above.

Dusenbery's results for the past tense, present tense, and future tense are provided in Figure 7.2. He was statistically more likely to write in the past tense (M = 5.6, SD = 1.6) than either the present tense (SD = 2.7, M = 1.3, t(84) = 9.3, p < .05) or future tense (M = .70, SD = .85, t(84) = 17.3, p < .05).
At the same time, however, his usage of the past tense was negatively correlated with positive emotion ($r = -0.38$, $p < .05$), and his usage of the future tense was positively correlated with positive emotion ($r = 0.55$, $p < .05$). These findings suggest that—as Dusenbery decreasingly looks towards the future over the course of his diary—his positive emotion decreases. At the same time, as he increasingly looks upon the past over time, his positive emotion also tends to wane. His highest value for the past tense came on April 3, 1842 (9.73%) in an entry discussing a raucous trip to the circus with his friends:

A great many of the boys went to the Borough to see the Circus on yesterday. Yance, Irwin, Long and myself chartered Lewis's family carriage, driver and all, and travelled in superior splendor. We put up at the tavern, drank Madeira and splurged about town until supper. At dark the Show began and we went in but Irwin was so tight kept so much noise that I scarcely saw or heard a thing. I was rather tight also and kept
considerable noise. I expected every moment that we would get into a row.

The clown said some right bad things, and the Circus passed off as such performances usually do.

Interestingly, in the first half of his diary, there are three instances where he writes more in the present tense than the past (including his first undated entry, most likely in July of 1841). Present tense, however, only overtakes past tense once in his diary's second half. In one of these entries from October 24, 1841, he describes the impact that procrastination has had upon him in recent days as well as a love interest:

My passions are unused to restraint & she is so warm—so passionate & withal so yielding in her disposition that I see no way of escape, without committing the unpardonable sin against love & gallantry. It is not in my nature to thwart the inclinations of melting maids.

As illustrated in Figure 7.3, in comparison to Katie (M = 3.6, SD = 1.5), Dusenbery (M = 5.6, SD = 1.6) was significantly more likely to write in the past tense (t (79) = 5.7, p < .05).
This result likely ties into Dusenbery's usage of the diary to catalog a personal narrative while Katie often addressed the virtual community with information in the present and future tenses. This point is supported through the fact that Dusenbery (M = 2.7, SD = 1.3) was significantly less likely to write in the present tense than Katie (M = 4.0, SD = 1.5, t(79) = -4.2, p < .05). Though the difference was small, Dusenbery (M=.70, SD=.85) was also significantly more likely than Katie (M=.32, SD=.49) to write in the future tense (t (79) = 2.5, p < .05). Instances of future tense within the diaries often came when the students looked towards adulthood, identifying, for instance, changes to be made.
Psychological Processes

Dusenbery's highest value in the social category\(^1\) (see Figure 7.4) came towards the beginning of his diary on September 26, 1841 (13.85%).

![Figure 7.4. Social words over time in James Lawrence Dusenbery's diary](image)

The content of this post—a description of the events surrounding his altercation with the DVV—was previously discussed. Other events described in the entry, however, include a dinner with friends:

we all took our corn and repaired to No. 23 of the west—the abode of Dusenberry and McBee, where there was a kettle which those gentlemen keep for just such purposes, as to boil corn “et cetera.” We always have plenty of salt on hand for any emergency and the boiled corn was great.

\(^1\) The social category included such words as relationship, roommate, hear, request, respond, and help,
We also had chickens and an opossum supper. The old Nash again began to circulate pretty freely and every thing went on merrily.

His least social entry, on the other hand, came with the third entry of his diary on July 24, 1841 (2.35%). In this passage, he primarily discusses his recent coursework and the paying of his bills. Here is how he spent his seventy-five dollars:

I brought from home seventy five dollars, with which I paid my debts to the amount of fifteen dollars; paid also ten dollars in advance for board, five to Society, five for Kents Commentaries, and deposited thirty five with the Bursar, for which I took a receipt. Of the remaining five, I paid fifty cents to a boy for bringing my baggage from the tavern to my room, deposited one dollar in the P. Office and bought a box of cigars with the remainder.

As shown in Figure 7.5, in comparison to Katie (M = 7.0, SD = 2.3), Dusenbery's (M = 8.2, SD = 2.4) writing is, surprisingly, statistically more reliant on words in the social category (t (79) = 2.3, p < .05).
This difference was not expected because of the presence of the bloggers within a virtual community in comparison to the solitary journal writing of Dusenbery. It is possible that—within the Antebellum historical context—individuals like Dusenbery maintained tight social in-groups and out-groups, the description of which were likely to make it into the pages of his diary (such as his description of the DVV). Moreover, approximately 2/3 of Katie's entries took place on the OBS that—at least in the features that it provides—does not create as strong of a virtual community as the NBS.

Figure 7.6 explores the presence of positive emotion\(^2\) and negative emotion\(^3\) in Dusenbery's diary. He was significantly more likely to write with positive emotion ($M = 2.1$, $SD = 1.2$) than negative emotion ($M = 1.3$, $SD = .77$, $t(79) = 3.4$, $p < .05$).

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\(^2\) The positive emotion category included such words as beauty, beloved, benefit, glamour, pride, readiness, relief, grand, attract, reward, and respect.

\(^3\) The negative emotion category included such words as stubborn, stunk, suffered, fume, assault, fight, moody, murder, neglect, and tears.
In regards to positive emotion, there are three “spikes” on his graph, each of approximately the same value (5.07%, 5%, and 5.07%, respectively). All three of these entries have been discussed at earlier points in this study: One is the introductory entry analyzed in Chapter 5, another is his writing about procrastination and a dinner with friends, and, finally, the third contains his resolutions for the new year. Importantly, positive emotion was negatively correlated with time ($r = -.38, p < .05$), so, with the passage of time, his positive emotion tended to fade. Why the decline? Part of this observation could be attributed to significant correlations between positive emotion and words in the achievement\(^4\) ($r = .44, p < .05$) and certain\(^5\) ($r = .40, p < .05$) categories. In this instance, as positive emotion went down, so did these categories.

\(^4\) The achievement category included such words as praise, celebrate, potential, power, practice, pride, conquer, confident, and conclude.

\(^5\) The certain category included such words as definitely, essential, fundamental, frankly, and evident.
There are two spikes on his graph regarding negative emotion, each of similar value (3.15% and 3.12%, respectively). The first is an intense description of Dusenbery's battle with a toothache on September 5, 1841, a situation that, undoubtedly, is much deserving of negative emotion:

a tooth that had been very sensitive for a long time, began to ache and continued to do so throughout the night. I could neither sleep or read and to remain in my room and do nothing was intolerable. I could not reconcile myself to the loss of the tooth and still hoped that the aching would eventually cease. How vain were all such hopes! The pain at length became so intense that I could no longer withhold my assent to the extraction of the tooth. I went to the Doctor's, but no voice replied to my loud and oft-repeated knocking and I was compelled to drag out the remainder of that horrid night in wandering about the streets

The second highest entry came on March 13, 1842 through a discussion of an altercation between one of his friends and a freshman:

Last Monday McBee was called a damned fool by a freshman named Allison and he knocked him over, with a stick, for his trouble. The affair was settled by Allison begging McBee's pardon for calling him a fool and then Pink asked forgiveness for striking him and a very cowardly proceeding on the part of Allison, but it was his safest course because the man had but few friends and even they were worthless.
There was also a positive correlation between his expression of negative emotion and third-person singular \((r = .32, p < .05)\). As Dusenbery reduced his usage of third-person singular across his diary, his negative emotion also decreased. This can be explained in part by the approach common to the Antebellum diarists in which “He” is used to refer to an abstract figure indulging in the jolly life.

A comparison of Dusenbery’s usage of positive emotion and negative emotion to Katie reveals that Katie \((M = 4.0, SD = 1.5)\) was significantly more frequent in her usage of positive emotion words than Dusenbery \((M = 2.1, SD = 1.2)\) was in his diary \((t(79) = .6.4, p < .05)\). This finding is further evidenced by Dusenbery's \((M = 1.3, SD = .77)\) usage of negative emotion significantly more than Katie \((M = .55, SD = .57, t (79) = 5.0, p < .05)\). These results can be explained by the historical and technological contexts of their writing.

As part of a student blog community, Katie often projected positivity about the university, its students, its programs, and her life as a student. With an active audience of potential students, it was generally rare to see outright expressions of negativity from the student bloggers. Meanwhile, Dusenbery lived within a community that he was not out to praise, but, instead, to critique and to, in some ways, escape.

As illustrated in Figure 7.7, Dusenbery's cognitive writing remained fairly consistent throughout his diary, generally ranging in value between 10% to 20%. However, interestingly, his writing is book-ended in that his first and second to last entries were rated the highest in terms of cognitive language\(^6\) \((19.82\% and 20.06\%, \text{respectively})\).

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\(^6\) The cognitive language category included such words as define, decide, suppose, perceive, ponder, depend, apparently, and therefore.
The highest rating occurred on May 27, 1842 and includes an intriguing description of the village graveyard and the actions that the grounds inspired in Dusenbery:

It was in the dim twilight and their superstitious fears did not permit them to wander long among the mouldering tombs of the silent dead. I felt strongly disposed to steal away and crouch down in the dark shadow of one of those cedars, to see how they would act, when they found themselves alone and at such an hour, on haunted ground.

The lowest value for cognitive language (6.73%) was recorded for an entry on December 31, 1841 discussing some parties that Dusenbery attended over Christmas:

I should have mentioned in last week's record that on Christmas day he & I went round & called on most of the young ladies of our town & thus he
became acquainted with them. On Monday night Mrs Foster gave a party. After supper several of us slipped out & took a glass of Penry's Madeira & on our return were prepared to go all lengths. I talked soft to almost every girl in the house.

In comparison to Katie (M = 11.5, SD = 2.6), Dusenbery's (M = 13.6, SD = 2.8) writing utilized cognitive language more frequently (t (79) = 3.4, p < .05). This result is to be expected given the close relationship with thinking that is often attached to the diary. The difference in cognitive language, however, was fairly slight, so—despite the blog often being more associated with social and conversational discourse—it still can appeal to cognitive language.

Figure 7.8 suggests that Dusenbery's usage of inclusive language7 (M= 6.6, SD =1.9) was significantly greater than his usage of exclusive language8 (M = 1.5, SD = .92).

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7 The inclusive language category included such words as along, and, around, both, came, close, come, and each.
8 The exclusive language category included such words as either, except, exclude, if, just, not, without, or, and rather.
Dusenbery's highest (10.64%) usage of inclusive language came towards the end of his diary on May 22, 1842, and his lowest (.38%) usage came towards the beginning. The entry receiving the highest value included a description of a fishing trip:

On Tuesday I went with Dr. Johnson up to H. People's, on the river, to have a fishing spree with him. I rode Mr Adam's horse and on the way, he stumbled and threw me entirely over his head, without at-all injuring me. After dinner we began to fish with a splendid new seine and with the expectation of glorious success, but there soon came up a tremendous storm and compelled us to desist. We were wet all over and as a considerable time elapsed before we could change our clothes I caught a very severe cold in consequence.
Though his exclusive language hovered around 2% for most of his entries, he reached a peak of 3.94% on April 17, 1842 in which he wrote about poor weather and addressed his journal writing directly:

I know not how it is, but my journal has been very much neglected all this session. Nothing but naked facts are recorded, without a word of comment.

I must really take more interest in it for the future.

In comparison to Katie (M=5.6, SD=1.4), Dusenbery (M = 6.6, SD = 1.9) was significantly more likely to utilize inclusive language (t (79) = 2.5 p < .05). At the same time, however, he (M = 1.5, SD = .92) was also more likely to utilize exclusive language (Katie M = .77, SD = .68, t(79) =.42, p < .05). This finding is possibly explained by the style and content of the typical diary entry in comparison to the typical community blog entry. Where the blog has a tendency to recount events in great detail with particular attention to including certain individuals and excluding others, the blogs are often a direct address to the audience. So, instead of using inclusive language, it is often replaced, for instance, with the second-person, which Katie used significantly more frequently than Dusenbery.

**Dusenbery's Diary and Katie's Blog: Positive Emotion and Social Language**

Though some of the findings thus far in this chapter were to be expected given the historical and technological distances between the diary and blog and conventions of the genres (such as Dusenbery's diary being heavier in cognitive language and usage of the past tense), this chapter also revealed some interesting and surprising differences. These differences reveal two categories of particular interest: positive emotion and social.
Beginning with positive emotion, Katie's writing more frequently used positive emotion (see Figure 7.9) while Dusenbery's diary more frequently used negative emotion (see Figure 7.10).

*Figure 7.9.* Comparison of positive emotion words in James Lawrence Dusenbery's diary over time versus positive emotion words in Katie's diary over time.
Within the Antebellum context, this suggests that Dusenbery was using his diary in a way similar to what Lejeune (2009) describes as a “release.” The diary was not always a recording of happy thoughts; it was a location for noting disputes, pains, mistakes, errors, hardships, illness, and death. This is certainly not the case for Katie's blog. Instead, her writing celebrates the university, its events, its athletics, its faculty, and her life as a student. Within these expressions of positive emotion and negative emotion, one can also consider Katie's and Dusenbery's differing usage of second-person and third-person singular. Where Katie used second-person more frequently than Dusenbery to provide advice to potential students, Dusenbery used the third-person singular to critique his classmates and to construct a “He” for discussing the impact of the jolly life. This difference in emotion and perspective is thus grounded in the reasons that Dusenbery and his fellow student diarists named for
keeping a diary and in the communal norms (Wei, 2004) established for Tarheel Bloggers. Returning to the argument central to this project, the student diarists, in other words, used their writing to escape community while the student bloggers used their writing to create community.

Another point of interest that will be discussed in-depth in the next part of this chapter is the finding that Dusenbery's diary appealed more to the social category than Katie's blog. In the context of a virtual community like Tarheel Blog, this finding is surprising. At the same time, once again, this result can be connected to the varying purposes of the diary and the community blog. Katie's blog was intended to provide details regarding the life of a UNC-CH student and occasional advice to incoming students. For this reason, it isn't a given that simple presence in a community environment ensures that Katie will always use social words in her writing. At times, her writing was purely written as information or first-person accounts of her studies. Moreover, many of the details that she could provide were supported by other cues to which she has access: visuals, information from other bloggers, the UNC-CH website, etc. She is not the sole provider of information about the university and thus she does not have to reconstruct the campus and all of its students.

Dusenbery, on the other hand, does not have such references, and, instead, he must reconstruct the world around him as it unfolds. Almost every entry discusses his interactions, including the words, the behaviors, the actions of his fellow students, his professors, visitors to the campus, and his adventures. Through the pages of his diary, Dusenbery makes an effort to reconstruct his life. With this emphasis, we can begin to understand why the writing of an
Antebellum student diarist might make such a strong appeal to the social category.

**Unraveling the Social Context**

Unable to sleep on June 30th of 1841, William Sidney Mullins rose around 9 PM. By happy chance, he found James Banks also milling about, so the two decided to take a walk about town. Wearing his night gown and a straw hat, Mullins walked with Banks under a bright evening moon. As they strolled, they smoked cigars and pushed their way through the thick, humid Carolina summer air. Eventually, they stopped and sat together by the courthouse door and reflected for hours. They talked about college life—its ups and downs, its challenges, its debates. They delved into their personal lives—the joys, the shortcomings, and the sorrows. Midnight soon struck, and their meeting came to an end. Thinking back upon his meeting with Banks, Mullins described it later in his diary as “Such unreserved communications as these I find the chief pleasure of my life.”

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To explore the stronger appeal to the social category of Dusenbery's diary in comparison to Katie's blog, this section will investigate the notion of the diary as a social tool within the Antebellum context. In order to do so, I will turn to the work of Walter J. Ong (1982) and Lindemann (2004) to unravel some of the defining characteristics of the Antebellum period and these Antebellum diaries as narratives of college student life at UNC-CH.

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9 This passage is an adaptation of events discussed in William Sidney Mullins's diary on June 30, 1841.
Ong and Orality at UNC-CH

Beginning with the diaries, it is important to consider their content in the pedagogical, social, and institutional context of UNC-CH during the Antebellum period. In addition to the importance of one's desire to escape the jolly life and to grasp individuality, informal conversation, formal oratory, and, for that matter, nearly all oral communication were of vital significance at UNC-CH in the 1840s. These components are critical to understanding the social context. To commence this discussion, Lindemann (2004) describes the importance of oratory on the Antebellum campus in *True and Candid Compositions*:

Antebellum students lived in an academic culture steeped in public address—and the writing that made effective oratory possible. They listened to Sunday sermons, faculty lectures, and addresses by visiting political figures and commencement orators, which helped define the rhetorical strategies appropriate for different occasions. Students also read carefully the speeches printed under the auspices of the debating societies or published in newspapers. They checked out books from the society libraries—fiction and poetry to be sure, but also histories, biographies, and political and philosophical works. By listening and reading, students came to understand what subjects were worth considering; what requirements of length, arrangement, evidence, and style applied to effective speeches and essays; and what practices ensured a commanding delivery. They learned
by imitation and practice, eventually becoming successful writers and public speakers.

Therefore, it is likely that evening walks like that shared by Mullins and Banks in the passage introducing this section were valued alongside societal debates. Given this oral context, it is not as surprising that Dusenbery's diary is so steeped in social discourse.

Moreover, in *Orality and Literacy*, Walter J. Ong (1982) describes some characteristics of societies like UNC-CH that were heavily reliant upon orality. He indicates how, for example, they had a tendency to value heroic figures, primarily because of the likelihood that the words and actions of such individuals would survive over time: “Oral memory works effectively with heavy characters, persons whose deeds are monumental, memorable, and commonly public. . . Colorless personalities cannot survive oral mnemonics” (p. 70). In the UNC-CH campus context, these were individuals that the students looked up to as speakers, scholars, and human beings. These were the figures who were easily remembered. Ong also describes how individuals in oral societies tend to form tight communities: “the spoken word forms human beings into close-knit groups. When a speaker is addressing an audience, the members of the audience normally become a unity, with themselves and with the speaker” (p. 74). As earlier discussed, the UNC-CH campus (and other college campuses at the time) was clearly divided based upon the grouping and sub-grouping of societal grounds. A final characteristic of significance discussed by Ong is the notion of just how important verbal communication is to “verbomotor” cultures in which
“courses of action and attitudes toward issues depend significantly more on effective use of words, and thus on human interaction” (p. 68). He goes on to suggest that such cultures might seem guilty of “overvaluing and overpracticing rhetoric” (p. 68). In such a society, rhetoric and oral communication are valued to the point of critique. On a college campus filled with aspiring intellectuals engaged in debate societies and recitation-focused coursework, one might expect such a rhetorically critical stance. We can now turn to a discussion of these three characteristics—the valuing of heroic characters, the presence of tight-knit communities, and rhetorical critique of others—to explore the degree to which they are manifested within the diaries of the Antebellum students.

The Role of Heroic Figures at UNC-CH

The idea of the hero has been around for thousands of years. What makes someone a hero, however, varies dramatically from culture to culture. In the Middle Ages, for instance, a hero was typically someone who was a great leader or warrior, acting as part of a divine plan (Huppe, 1975); in Ancient Indian culture, similarly, the hero was both a warrior and a lover, capable of fighting as well as appreciating the arts (Byrski, 2007); and, turning to the “superheroes” of the present era, we tend to uplift characters who are selfless and powerful (Coogan, 2006, p. 30). It, therefore, comes as little surprise that the Antebellum South had its own heroes. Michael Kreyling (1984) describes the Antebellum hero of Southern narratives as an individual who has such physical characteristics as being slender with a commanding persona, having a group of followers, and an ability to prevail over his anti-type (pp. 6-12).
Though there are similarities between the heroes of UNC-CH's campus in the 1840s and those of Antebellum Southern narratives, the students at UNC-CH tended to identify their heroes primarily based upon their abilities as intellectuals and rhetors. At the same time, their writings also record the actions of individuals who fell short of the mark, anti-heroes, so to speak—those who were expected to be heroic but, on some occasions, did not make the cut.

The Quintessential Antebellum Campus Hero: David Lowry Swain

On commencement day of 1877, Zebulon Vance—the governor of North Carolina at the time and a Confederate hero himself—gave a “memorial oration” for David Lowry Swain in UNC-CH's Gerard Hall. Nearly ten years after his death in 1868, Vance spoke about Swain's early life in Buncombe County of the North Carolina mountains, his education, and his career as a lawyer, politician, and leader of UNC-CH. Though it was a personal reflection, Vance intermingled facts of Swain's life with his own conclusions regarding the significance of his life to North Carolina. Reflecting on how Swain was viewed at the university, Vance described how it was generally accepted at UNC-CH that “If you wanted to know what anything was, you went to Dr. Mitchell. If you wanted to know who anybody was, you went to Gov. Swain.” Vance's tone also turned critical of the university as he questioned why such a figure as Swain has not been memorialized through a “monument” or “simple tablet.” He remarked, however, that such means of remembrance may not be necessary as the university itself was his memorial: “It emerged from swaddling clothes under President Caldwell; it passed through a vigorous youth into a splendid manhood under
President Swain.” Through these examples and others, Vance's speech provides a portrait of Swain as a heroic figure.

Vance's description of Swain was not unique. During Swain's tenure as university president and law professor, the student diarists of the 1840s devoted pages of their diaries to chronicling his deeds, particularly in regards to his abilities as an orator and rhetor. Though other heroic figures were presented in the diaries, Swain was certainly—in the terms of Ong—the “heaviest” character on campus. The student diary entries devoted to him are important because they suggest what it took for an individual to be considered a “hero” to the students and what was valued on campus. James Lawrence Dusenbery, for example, wrote the following about Swain's intellect:

In the evening my class recited to the Gov. for a bible lesson, the first three chapters of Genesis. We found him well versed in scripture lore—indeed there are very few studies, into which he has not examined. A man of more extensive & varied acquirements than Gov. Swain, is seldom met with.

Yet another example of a heroic presentation comes from William Hooper Haigh on January 18th, 1842. Here, in addition to Swain's vast knowledge, Haigh praises his delivery as a speaker:

Ex Gov. Swain- now Pres. University is remarkable for his ungainly appearance – no less than for his sound judgment & towering intellect. He is happy in his illustrations of subjects – has a fund of Anecdote – and a
peculiar intonation of voice which arrests attention.

This passage is interesting to consider in the context of Kreyling's (1984) privileging of a slender appearance and a commanding presence for the Antebellum hero. Though Haigh's description of Swain's voice as “arresting attention” certainly matches with heroic expectations, his appearance as “ungainly” does not. Given the amount of praise heaped upon him by the students, however, it seems that his “towering intellect” and voice trump whatever downfall his appearance might have been.

A final illustration of Swain's campus heroism is provided by William Sidney Mullins on January 15, 1841. After recounting a meeting he had with Swain regarding the study of law, Mullins wrote the following:

I shall make it a general rule to register here the substance of the Gov.'s conversations and expect to obtain in this way a very valuable fund of information. He is generally the most popular individual of the faculty and I like him much better than I do any other member of that body.

This passage follows closely with Kreyling's portrayal of the Antebellum Southern hero (1984), suggesting the impressive nature of Swain's knowledge and makes clear the support (a group of followers) that Swain had from the student body.

A Hero/Anti-Hero Emerges: Charles Force Deems

Though it was often that Antebellum UNC-CH professors were the ones who were
viewed as heroes, this was not always the case. There were other individuals who came to campus who (at least on arrival) were not professors but viewed as heroes just the same. For instance, a series of entries from Joseph John Summerell beginning on January 15, 1842 build an incredible sense of anticipation for a visit by a young preacher (Charles Force Deems) based on his abilities as a speaker and writer.

A young preacher by the names of Deems has just arrived on the hill, bringing with him great fame as a pulpit orator. But his renown has already spread itself in these parts by means of a little book of poems. . . The curiosity and expectation of every one is on tiptoe to hear this youthful preacher tomorrow. Whether the expectations will be realized or not tomorrow will decide. He is quite a fine looking man—though he is rather below the common size. . .

Summerell's introduction of this heroic character is interesting because it generally applies the same heroic standard of rhetorical ability as was applied to Swain. However, as suggested by Kreyling, appearance is also a factor, a point that Summerell does not ignore, remarking that Deems is “below the common size.” But, once again, Deems' ability as an orator has the potential to trump any shortcomings in appearance.

As part of his entry for the following day, Summerell described in detail the speaking of this much anticipated young preacher:

All listened with silent attention, and no expectations fell short of being
met so far as I know. Fluency dwells upon his tongue, and eloquence flows like honey from his lips. His manner is purposing and unaffected, graceful and elegant.

Once again, certain qualities regarding his rhetorical ability are highlighted. And, importantly, his appearance is ignored. Therefore, at least in the pages of Summerell's diary, Deems seems to attain a “Swain-like” sense of heroism on campus.

Though Summerell believed that “no expectations fell short of being met” and thus everyone viewed Deems' heroism similarly to he, his assumption was incorrect. In addition to using their diaries to discuss campus heroes, the Antebellum students also occasionally filled the pages with criticism of anti-heroes: Individuals who fell far short of expectations as rhetors. One such anti-hero happens to be the same preacher who had so deeply impressed Summerell. On January 23, 1842—remarking on the same visit and speeches as Summerell—Haigh wrote the following about Deems's oratory:

Deems of the Methodist Church has been preaching in the Bible Society – He tells some pretty tales – with a soft & easy voice – and is smart beyond his years, -yet I fancy he has but little depth. He mistook the public sense when he published his scraps of rhymes & called them poetry. He had far better assumed the humble title of our Country school master who styles his effusions “Attempts at Rhyming.” His Sermon on Sunday closed strangely. . .
Even though Haigh is complimentary of Deems' delivery with a “soft & easy voice,” he is extremely critical of his knowledge and his abilities as a writer. Therefore, using the same criteria of rhetorical ability and intellect, there is little question that Haigh is in strict opposition to Summerell. But, most importantly, it is the discussion and criticism of such heroes and anti-heroes as Swain and Deems that fill the Antebellum student diaries with social language.

**In-Groups and Out-Groups**

With the excitement of the Martin Van Buren versus William Henry Harrison presidential election in the air in early November of 1840, William Sidney Mullins delighted as early returns suggested that Harrison and his Whigs had stormed into the lead. Early celebrations across the state began. With these thoughts in his head, he took off with friends and fellow classmates on a stroll through the countryside. Walking and chatting, they stopped at Professor Green's plantation to gather grapes and turnips. They then took off towards the woods and enjoyed the solace of an old mill. There, they chatted, reflected, and took in the natural beauty of the place. A perfect day at UNC-CH.\(^{10}\)

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Clearly the source of much happiness and relaxation as in the above example, in-groups and out-groups played a major role in campus life at UNC-CH and, as such, were a significant contributor to the social context. The role of diary writing is primarily that of

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\(^{10}\) This passage is an adaptation of events discussed in William Sidney Mullins' diary.
reinforcement—students highlight who is and who is not part of their group. Individuals identified as being in the out-group are harshly criticized, and their actions are meticulously recorded. As discussed earlier, part of this context was driven by the fact that every student was a part of a debate society: the Philanthropic (phis) and the Dialectic (dis). Even from the onset, these societies established students into two broad groups and, of course, there were additional sub-groups within each. Students used their private writing as one way to solidify the boundaries between these societal and sub-societal groups. This maneuvering between one's in-group and one's out-group matches with what Ong (1982) indicates is typical of cultures that value oral discourse. Though diary writers regularly identify in passing the individuals in their in-group by suggesting who is involved in their drinking, card-playing, speaking, walking, and many other activities, it is campus altercations that bring the most direct discourse on who is and is not part of one's group. Three incidents in particular provide rich evidence of how in-groups and out-groups were discussed in student diaries: Campbell versus Dusenbery, Mullins versus Spencer, Jones, and others, and Bunch versus Rice.

My discussion of these incidents and the writing they inspired progresses based upon severity. We begin, in other words, with the “tamest” of the three: A common argument. The first incident—described in a passage previously discussed in this chapter—took place in September of 1841 and is worth revisiting within the social context of Antebellum UNC-CH. Here is Dusenbery's discussion of his disagreement with James Williamson Campbell during a Dialectic Society meeting:
J—C made a speech in the hall on last Friday night, declaring himself a 
DVV & saying that he had been accused of showing partiality in the hall to 
the members of his club, while president of the Society. These accusations, 
he said, had been made behind his back & he had heard of them by 
accident. I had mad[e] such remarks, but it was with the expectation, & 
almost with the certainty that he would hear of them. I saw him after the 
session of society & told him that his conduct justified me in saying what I 
did.

In this passage, Dusenbery connects Campbell with a sub-group and its members while, at 
the same time, drawing a line between himself and the DVV. Though he does not provide any 
commentary suggesting any ill will beyond what happened during the society meeting, 
Dusenbery certainly identifies himself as not part of the group.

Another example comes from Mullins on November 21st, 1840. Here, he identifies 
certain individuals—Ruffin, Tomlinson, and Bridgers—as his confidants and pushes 
unnamed others away:

New facts have occurred to day in relation to the alleged attempts to injure 
my character, and I have forever lost all respect for some, whom I once 
highly esteemed. I have conversed with Thos. Ruffin, Tomlinson and R.R. 
Bridgers on the subject and various views are held by them in relation to 
the truth of the charges. Be they true, or false, however, my course of
conduct is settled: I am forever distant with the clan, but I leave events to take their own course nor shall I meddle in the affair. My object is to leave my character above even the suspicions and slanders of malice: at all events I will give my friends no cause to blush for me.

The incident described by Mullins is well known and documented as the “sham duel,” a hoax that involved Mullins and his friends deciding it would be humorous to trick the campus into thinking they were planning a duel. When his fellow students learned of their hoax (such as Spenser, Jones, and others), they teased Mullins endlessly, calling him the “hero of the sham duel.” This angered him to the point that—if he was provoked—he was prepared to engage them in a real duel. The above entry thus serves as a contract of sorts between Mullins and those who continued to trouble him over the incident and those taking on a more supporting role. Mullins says it best himself: “[He is] forever distant with the clan.” Where Dusenbery identifies the out-group and goes no further, Mullins uses his diary as a way to ensure that the boundaries between his in-group and “the clan”—the out-group—are permanent.

The final example is not a simple disagreement or the heated aftermath of a hoax gone wrong; instead, it is an account of a real, gun-toting, stick-wielding duel. This altercation between Dorsey Rice and Bunch took place on September 4, 1841, and Dusenbery wrote the following regarding this incident:

a pistol went off & I soon became aware that a fight was in progress. The parties were Bunch & the younger Rice, both members of the Phi
Bunch was almost universally despised & the few friends that he did possess, deserted him, to a man, in his time of need. Jno Jack, his cousin alone stood by him & cheered him, in his hopeless conflict with a man, much his superior in size... Bunch's friends wished to take him away, but the other party would not permit them. They even denied him a stick, while Rice was armed with a tremendous one, & his friends were so few that they dared not give him one.

Before delving into the incident, we get a clear indication of the importance of in-groups and out-groups to life on UNC-CH's campus through Dusenbery's direct association of both participants with the Philanthropic Society. He then pinpoints some of the in-group dynamics, such as Bunch being abandoned by his friends mid-altercation, leaving only his cousin. As audience members of Dusenbery's diary, we, in essence, get to witness the redrawing of the boundaries between Bunch's in-group and out-group. Dusenbery's passage also suggests the depth of in-group and out-group divisions. Even in a dangerous situation where an individual is armed with a “tremendous” stick, no one would give Bunch anything to fight with (he had already fired the pistol he brought to the fight, hitting Rice's brother, Jimmison, with the shot). Moreover, by Dusenbery's description later in this entry, Bunch was “beaten to a mummy” as a result of being unarmed during this point in the altercation.

Another perspective providing insight into the incidents before the fight are provided by Mullins on September 4. He describes the role of his own group of friends in opposing the
efforts of Bunch's friends:

Dorsey was to arm himself with a pistol and a good stick, and call at our boarding-house immediately after breakfast, where Hunt, May, Pickens, Pool, Tomlinson and myself were to be stationed, pledged and in a situation that enabled us, to ensure a fair fight. We were wall to take no part except to meet the efforts of Bunch's friends. . .soon after Dorsey appeared, and in a few second after, Bunch, attended by Jack, Bell, Spaight, and Martin, came out.

Mullins' writing here provides a clear identification of who stood as allies and who were the enemy. These passages and their presentation of this incident on campus make clear the significance of one's society membership as well as the depth of one's in-group and out-group. Such distinctions contribute to the social context of the diaries due to the boundary reinforcement that takes place within the students' writing.

**Critiquing the Rhetoric of Others**

The third and final thread to unravel regarding the social context of UNC-CH during the Antebellum context and within the student diaries is an emphasis on rhetorical critique. Students, in other words, commonly engaged in criticism of their fellow classmates' abilities as writers and speakers. Compared to Mullins and Dusenbery, Haigh is the least critical, but he still does maintain a focus upon critiquing the rhetoric of other individuals. For example, he wrote the following on July 4, 1842:
J.D. Cameron – Orator of the day. Had a finely written, but poorly delivered speech – Mullins delivered a Temperance address in the afternoon – said to have been good.

In this passage, Haigh not only discusses the oratory of fellow students but also makes clear its importance to the campus; in his journal, he locks these evaluations into place.

Mullins devotes a significant number of entries to evaluating the college seniors based upon their rhetoric, intellect, and moral character. On September 14, 1841, he wrote the following regarding the abilities of John Willis Ellis:

with him I had not much acquaintance. He was one of the Representatives of the Dialectic Society in his Junior Year, and his speech on that occasion was very good. He spoke once in his Senior Year, and though the address was of a very wild and fanciful character, it gave evidence of considerable ability.

Another example is Summerell's praise of classmate Spaight on January 4, 1842:

Spaight is the most talented man in college decidedly, and is a man of great research for his years – fond of poetry and the ladies and the best turn imaginable for entertaining them – fond of light chat to women but has a taste for metaphysics and the most abstruse reasoning. In a word he is a very talented young man. . .
Like Mullins, Covington also wrote some notes on the character of many of his classmates, sketching some of the following quick thoughts at the beginning of his diary:

“Joseph McLaurin – passable in all respects,” “Allen Polk – true feelings but somewhat deceitful,” “M.R. Smith – good fellow but dull,” “Walter Steele will make a highly respectable and useful citizen if forever once aided by strong – sound sense, fine memory and honest integrity of heart amid any thing,” and “Thomas H. Garner – Rowdy.” With numerous other examples in his writing, it is clear that—like his fellow student diarists—Covington made it a point to discuss his classmates. Given this regular recording and critique, it is clear that the character and abilities of classmates was a focus in the writing of the Antebellum student diarists. Along with their discussions of the campus' heroes and in-groups and out-groups, this characteristic solidifies the social context observed. Moreover, the presence of this social context does not detract from this project's overall argument regarding the individual/community dichotomy. As it has been discussed throughout this chapter, the social characteristics of Dusenbery's writing can be mapped to his recording of individuals, occurrences, and ideas that, ultimately, help him to become a stronger individual, a more able professional, and a better student. His writing, in other words, serves the central purpose of setting him apart as an individual rather than as part of a community.
Chapter 8

Conclusions, Implications, and Further Research

Commencement Day in June of 1841. The campus of UNC-CH is buzzing with activity. Carriages roll in from nearby towns. Formal decorations, speeches, music, ceremony, and merry-making await the new graduates. Awaking to greet the occasion, William Sidney Mullins rises late and rushes to breakfast. Hurrying to eat his food, he is soon joined by Joseph Huske, a fellow student. Since they are delivering commencement speeches, they bolt to Gerrard Hall, lock the doors, and begin to practice. Not long after, however, one of their fellow students, Joseph John Summerell, interrupts their recitations by propping a ladder against a hall window and calling for them to join him in entertaining some of the female visitors, which they do with much delight. After a walk, Mullins's excitement goes from brimming to overflowing as he marches with the procession into the chapel, listens to the music being played by the band, and all the memories of his work from the semester come rushing over him. Mullins' marveling continued as the ceremony began with an oration by William A. Haywood Jr. on the “History of the University of North Carolina, and the Duties, Imposed by a View of that History, on the Young Men of the State.” These speeches signaled the beginning of the end. Mullins's school year had come to a triumphant, resounding finish.¹

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As it is described by Jennifer Sinor (2002) and Laurie Langbauer (1995), the diary is

¹ This passage is an adaptation based on events occurring in William Sidney Mullins' diary in June 1841.
an example of “ordinary writing.” It is “ordinary” in the sense that it “is typically unseen or ignored [and] is primarily defined by its status as discardable. . .Ordinary writing is everywhere, though largely unseen and unreadable” (Sinor, p. 5). As I hope this analysis has demonstrated, the content, tone, and style of these Antebellum student writings are, on the other hand, often anything but ordinary. Extraordinary examples abound, from Dusenbery's intense descriptions of his toothache and a colorful trip to the circus, to Mullins' classic discussion of the Bunch versus Rice fight, to Summerell's eager anticipation of Charles Force Deems's visit to campus. The student blogs are also extraordinary. There is, for instance, Katie's visual and textual description of the atmosphere on the UNC-CH campus the day after the Virginia Tech massacre and her emotional farewell to the blog community. Moreover, with her constant sense of reflection and concern for the future, Yolanda's writing, too, is extraordinary.

The goal of this project was to explore the relationship between two generations of student writers and their navigation of the individual/community dichotomy through writing. Given the discussed research on virtual communities, it was argued that the student bloggers used their blogs to create a sense of community. Ultimately, this analysis determined some ways that this was true and some ways that it was not. Furthermore, it was also argued that—within the context of changes taking place during the Antebellum period—the student diaries would serve as a means to, essentially, escape the surrounding community. Like the blogs, there were certain ways that this conclusion could be accepted and other ways that leave questions unanswered.
Evaluating the Virtual Community

First, there were some unexpected findings that questioned the sense of community on Tarheel Blog. Of the seven bloggers discussed, for example, only two (Katie and Yolanda) had a formal exit from the virtual community. The others either faded away or abruptly stopped posting. Brandon and Calvin, in fact, only made three total posts, and, most surprisingly, despite an overwhelming amount of support from the community and research suggesting otherwise (Miura & Yamashita, 2007), Brandon's time in the community was brief. Moreover, Katie's example also provided mixed support for the bloggers' community building. Since she was active on both the OBS and the NBS, her results tell us about how her writing changed after moving from a personal blog format to a more communal blog environment. The only significant results found regarding changes she made between the OBS and the NBS included her usage of words in the work category\(^2\), present tense, and first-person plural. Where her usage of the work category and first-person plural can be at least partially explained by her approaching graduation and the end of her college career on the NBS, Katie's increased frequency of present tense did, on occasion, create a sense of immediacy in her writing, an oft-discussed benefit of blogging (Fadda-Conrey, 2010; Nardi, Schiano, Gumbrecht, & Swartz, 2004; Wheeler & Lambert-Heggs, 2009). Regardless, there was still very little on-site communication (e.g. ongoing discussions with one another in each others' posts or in blog comments) between Tarheel Bloggers that would be expected in a vibrant virtual community (Renninger & Shumar, 2002; Rheingold, 1993; Wei, 2004). One of

\(^2\) The work category included such words as test, exam, professor, program, project, headhunter, apprentice, business, and homework.
the few examples was Katie's identification of herself in a photograph posted by another user. Most observable communication on Tarheel Blog, however, occurs through blog comments—the majority of which are either anonymous or posted by high school students interested in applying to UNC-CH.

At the same time, other results certainly point to community building behaviors. The LIWC scores for linguistic processes, for instance, suggest that student bloggers like Katie and Yolanda write in the present tense and the second-person significantly more than the diarists, indicating that they directly address a community of readers. Analysis of the blog introductions also shows a tendency for the student bloggers to introduce themselves as newcomers through heavy usage of the first-person and autobiographical details. In addition, most blogs posted by all students feature both textual and visual elements. There is thus an effort at establishing one's identity as a community member (Ahuja & Galvin, 2003; Burke, Kraut & Joyce, 2010). Furthermore, given the significant presence of such components as work and leisure3 in the student blogs that are so critical to the life of a college student and a virtual community grounded in the campus context, there is an appeal to the creation of a community.

It is critical, of course, to acknowledge that Tarheel Blog is different from most online communities. Where online environments such as discussion boards and virtual worlds support the creation of new identities diverging from one's actual identity, Tarheel Blog is less an escape from one's real identity as it is an extension of it. Instead of using a

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3 The leisure category included such words as pub, restaurant, actress, aerobic, apartment, play, pitcher, party, and novel.
pseudonym, bloggers go by their real names and email address; instead of using a fictional avatar, they use their actual photograph. There is no reason to believe that any identity on Tarheel Blog is anything but a genuine attempt at creating as realistic as possible an online persona. This grounding in reality may be said, in actuality, to restrict the growth of the virtual community rather than encourage it. For this reason, Tarheel Blog can be thought of as a blog that has community members, but they communicate their identities in order to record and reconstruct reality rather than construct a fantasy. Moreover, in the context of the definition of community put forth in the introductory chapter, the implications of this study suggest that a community can be built around information exchange between members and visitors rather than ongoing interaction. In other words, though Tarheel Blog is an online environment with place-based and interest-based community members, a set of established norms, and a design conducive to discussion, the ties created are weak. There is no assumption on the site, for instance, that any relationship will carry on beyond a single exchange or that any exchange of information supplements ties in offline environments. Even with the clear effort that community members make to accurately represent their offline identities, they do so primarily to provide, and create, an informational resource for those who visit the community. For this reason, it could be argued that Tarheel Blog is more perceived as a community by its visitors and presented as such by its members and the university. Any further implications of such a community's existence could be explored through comparisons to other similar communities and discussions with community members.
Evaluating the Diaries and Adulthood

Within the Antebellum context, it has been argued throughout this study that the student diarists used their diaries to spur on moral improvement and to move closer to adulthood. The diary was, in essence, a tool for escaping the raucous, mischievous behavior rampant on campus. Given that this finding is directly in line with Lejeune's (2009) discussion of the diary as a place for “analysis of the self” and “deliberation,” the implications of this finding lie primarily in the contribution of these Antebellum diarists’ work to our understanding of self-sponsored student diary writing from the period and in general.

Though only two of the diarists (Dusenbery and Mullins) come to a clear conclusion, there is another form of evidence to evaluate the significance of the student diary to these Antebellum students: Their lives. Despite the sometimes ordinary nature of their writing, all of these diarists (except Covington who died from pneumonia on Christmas Day one year after he graduated from UNC-CH in 1844) went on to become extraordinary individuals. Mullins, for example, became a legislator in South Carolina and president of the Wilmington and Manchester Railroad; Dusenbery attended medical school and served as a surgeon in the Civil War; Summerell became a doctor and ultimately the President of the North Carolina Medical Society; and, finally, Haigh worked as a lawyer but is best known for being held as a prisoner during the Civil War.

But what impact did keeping a student diary have upon these eventual professionals? This question is difficult to answer, but the diaries do provide clues. In the case of
Dusenbery, there was, of course, the entrenched social component to the writing as discussed in Chapter 7. The diary was a recording of his feelings regarding those around him, from his professors to his fellow students. Moreover, there were also interesting relationships involving positive and negative emotion. The diary, essentially, provided a place for Dusenbery to express his thoughts on the world around him, but, importantly these thoughts were not always positive. His LIWC results indicate that as his usage of past tense went up, his positive emotion went down. At the same time, on the other hand, the diary also gave him a place to think about the future, a source of positive emotion for Dusenbery. The most important (and slippery) observation of all may be that his expression of positive emotion decreased over the course of his diary ($r = -.38$, $p < .05$). At first blush, this finding suggests that perhaps the diary was losing some of its luster to Dusenbery, that he was no longer using it to express himself. In the terms of Lejeune's (2009) discussion of the diary as a means of release, however, this facet does not necessarily mean that his writing didn't serve its purpose. To the contrary, it could have been a place for him to record the negative occurrences in his life to become a more positive human being. The absence of positive emotion, in other words, does not automatically imply that the diary is not impacting him.

An important component of the impact of the diary upon Dusenbery that is yet to be discussed is, of course, how it is exactly that he concluded. Given the marked beginning to his diary describing some specific goals for his writing, one might expect a resounding finish to the diary declaring it a success or failure in regards to the stated goals. This was, essentially, not the case. Here is what Dusenbery wrote at the end of his final college diary:
entry on June 7, 1842:

Here ends the record of my senior year. In the morning I start with Bellanfant for Lincolnton, where I shall meet Slade, McBee & McNairy & from that place of rendezvous our tour will commence. Concluded here in my father's house, in the north room on the east side of the passage at 11.O.C. precisely, at night, on this, the 7nth of June eighteen hundred & forty two.

Fauks is asleep & breathing heavily—my own eyelids are getting heavy & I too will shortly be on my way to join him in the glorious land of Nod.

Therefore, other than commemorating the end of his diary in a meticulous fashion, Dusenbery does not provide a clear sense of the diary's impact.

The only other example of a conclusion comes in Mullins's diary. On October 31, 1841, he wrote the following:

Thou hast gone, and with thee have fled some happy hours. Treasured in my memory shall be some boons that thou didst kindly grant and the sweet moments of pensive musing that thou didst inspire are graven deep upon my heart. And I shall remember too thy hours of sadness. Thou hast brought to me some bitter sighs, some deep repentance, and some burning tears: they too have gone with thee, but their scars remain and they will again soon be my visitors. Farewell, thou last October of mine, on which shall be thrown the light of College Life! When thou dost return I shall be
beneath the cold sod, or in the icy embrace of the heartless world. Till then farewell. I am summoned to greet thy successor.

Unlike Dusenbery's final entry which was written just after commencement, Mullins actually did not graduate until 1842. So, this entry is more a metaphorical farewell to the month of October and his college life up to that point than it is the “grand conclusion” of his college career. Regardless, Mullins's passage has quite a bit of negative emotions present, and he bids farewell to many things, from his college life, to his youth, to another month, and to the physical medium of his diary. These diaries suggest that, at the very least, the students expressed specific reasons for keeping a diary, and, over time, their self-sponsored writing maintained an important part of their day and had some impact on their language and emotion.

**Implications and Further Research**

In the introductory chapter, it was suggested that this project's importance lies in its exploration and contribution to our understanding of the self-sponsored writing of students, the usage of antecedent genres, and composition history. The implications for each of these areas will be discussed below.

Prior research of student self-sponsored writing such as that of Guzzetti and Gamboa (2005) and Yi and Hirvela (2010) covers both the digital and non-digital contexts. The present study contributes to this growing scholarship in the most general sense by providing another set of student self-sponsored writings to explore and, more specifically, an analysis of both print-based and digital self-sponsored writing. In particular, studies like that of
Chiseri-Strater (1991) and Weidner (1994) establish that print-based self-sponsored writing is often personal and intimate; moreover, studies of digital examples like that of Lee (2007) and Leslie and Murphy (2008) suggest that online self-sponsored writing tends to favor efficiency of expression and community formation. Though this study was generally in agreement with such works, it also demonstrates and highlights the close connection established between the self-sponsored writing and the writer. This sense of ownership was clear in both the diaries and blogs. Katie, for example, became particularly emotional upon the writing of her final blog entry, citing it as the ending to an important part of her college career. Another example is the discussed regular establishment and construction of one's real identity on the blog through both visual and textual elements. Moreover, the diarists also expressed a significant connection to their diary, from their contractual, grand beginning to a pointed, specific conclusion like that of Dusenbery and sorrowful finish like that of Mullins.

The present study also contributes important findings to the study of emotion and self-sponsored writing. Brand and Powell (1986) and Brand (1990) found that more skilled writers (students making an A or B in the course) experienced positive emotion while self-sponsored writing, and all writers experienced an increase in negative emotions. Within the context of this work, the language of one of the diarists, James Lawrence Dusenbery, showed a sense of decreasing positive emotion over the course of his self-sponsored writing. This finding is interesting and could be interpreted multiple ways. For one, the diary could serve as a sponge for the negativity in his life, or it could be simply that he just doesn't enjoy writing as much as he once did and is, simply, not as positive. Another point of importance in
this context is that the bloggers were found to demonstrate positive emotion, but their positivity did not significantly change over time and they, generally, faded away from blogging. These findings are of note because they suggest a potential difference between the emotion a piece of writing expresses as being present (such as through a questionnaire) and what actually comes out in his/her writing.

An area of additional study and of importance that has not been a matter of much research is the tendency for the self-sponsored writers to write less over time. This facet is complex and--within the context of the present investigation--its answer is only a matter of speculation. On a blog site like Tarheel Blog that is so reliant on the individual expertise of each blogger, do participants “phase” themselves out over time to give other bloggers a chance to share their expertise? Or do students just become consumed with their coursework and lose interest in blogging? Answers to these questions would likely require interviews with bloggers and are thus the subject of further study. The diarists also had a tendency to write less over time. This observation only raises more questions. Do the diarists become fatigued or too busy with their work during the semester? Do they devote more time to writing at the beginning of their diary and become more efficient with practice? Other than an in-depth investigation of all existent primary documents of these students in an effort to triangulate their writing quantity and frequency with other factors, these questions would be difficult—if not impossible—to answer. This finding, however, in and of itself suggests an area of significant additional study and is thus an area of importance.

Another area of research to which this project contributes is the study of blogs and
diaries as antecedent genres. Though it is clear that blogs tend to be far more public than a
diary, recent research such as that of Guzzetti and Gamboa (2005) continues to reveal new
differences in how these genres are used. Their research, for example, found that the print
diary might serve as a place for an individual to draft ideas that would later be transferred to
his/her blog. Although this study found that the blog and diary were different in areas that
one would expect (such as the diaries being more personal and the blogs being more
community-driven), the uncovering of a more social function in the diaries than the blogs
was surprising. A consideration of the Antebellum campus as entrenched in orality does
provide a potential explanation, but one would expect a lively blog community to be at least
comparably social. The potentially social character of a diary compared to a blog is thus an
important finding and worthy of additional study.

Finally, this study's contribution to composition history is one that extends our
knowledge of student writing during the Antebellum period. In addition to discussing the
language students used, it also explores when and why a student would engage in self-
sponsored writing. Within this context, the perceptions that students had of school-sponsored
writing are demonstrated, and writing processes strikingly comparable to those in the present
are unveiled. The diaries also provide insight into the role that historical context has upon
self-sponsored private writing--the ongoing push in America to be individuals rather than just
another cog in their community or family-line. This project thus makes clear the importance
of continued study of the Antebellum period and the relationship between historical context
and self-sponsored writing.
A Return to Where We Began

This study began years ago as I stared into the blue haze of an empty computer lab. In the time since, the blue haze has become the norm in my life as a composition instructor and, in some ways, it is a comforting thing. However, today, as I stand at the front of the classroom waiting for class to begin, I see that the source of the blue haze has changed. The standby screen has been replaced by the gleam of social media sites like Facebook and Twitter. This familiar visual is also now accompanied by the regular tapping, clicking, and downward stare of texting. All of these details are reminders to me of the totality of writing that our students are doing, and I am, once again, returned to the ideas fueling the creation of the humble classroom blogscape that began this journey.
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