NOTES

1. For a fuller discussion of feminism and the teaching of writing, see the wonderful collection *Feminism and Composition: A Critical Sourcebook*, edited by Gesa E. Kirsch, et al. (2003), which anthologizes “classic,” early feminist approaches to composition as well as more recent trends in thinking about gender in the writing classroom.

2. Given this distinction, we will nonetheless see gender as an important—and indeed necessary—consideration when thinking about sex and sexuality. If anything, and as we will see in chapter 4, sexuality studies in the 1990s and at the beginning of the twenty-first century is beginning to offer us fairly nuanced and sophisticated ways of thinking about the complex relationship between sex, sexuality, and gender.

3. For a more thorough introduction to Foucault, see Annamarie Jagose’s *Queer Theory: An Introduction*.

4. Of course, some scholars resist the discursive turn in sexuality studies, claiming that the theorists I have been discussing pay insufficient attention to corporeal or bodily issues. Tim Dean, in “Bodies That Mutter: Rhetoric and Sexuality,” takes up the argument that sexuality is rhetorically and discursively constructed, an argument put forward famously by Foucault and extended by Judith Butler and other queer theorists. As he puts it, “[m]y aim is to outline a theory of rhetoric, sexuality, and embodiment that is both immoderately antifoundationalist and antirhetorical” (2000, 84). More pointedly, Dean asks, “Are bodies purely discursive? Or, to put the question in Edelman’s terms, is sexuality purely rhetorical?” (83). While his point is well taken, I cannot help but wonder if his argument is based on a “straw man” fallacy; highlighting the discursive nature of sex and sexuality is not to deny the body, but it is rather to underscore aspects of sexuality that have been overlooked or misunderstood in the rush to naturalize sexuality as purely of the body.

5. Admittedly, I am glossing over a lot of useful feminist theory, and there are good books that consider the development of queer theory and sexuality studies out of feminist thinking, as well as current debates and points of contestation between sexuality/queer studies and feminist theories. See in particular *Feminism Meets Queer Theory*, edited by Elizabeth Weed and Naomi Schor.


7. As other scholars pick up on this notion of the “reflexive sexual citizen,” they attempt to envision how such a conception of citizenship might actually alter our relationship to sex, sexuality, each other, and our own bodies. Marvin M. Ellison, writing in *Erotic Justice: A Liberating Ethic of Sexuality*, for instance, is deeply invested in promoting “[a] liberating social ethic of sexuality [that] places great value on the humanly powerful desire for intimacy and community” (1996, 14). Ellison sees at least three key characteristics of such a “liberating social ethic”:

    First, advocating erotic justice in the face of sex-negativity requires honoring the goodness of sexuality as human embodiment
Second, advocating erotic justice in the face of heterocentrism and compulsory heterosexuality involves genuine gratitude for difference and diversity.

Third, advocating erotic justice in the face of sexual violence and coercion requires empowering the moral agency of the sexually abused and violated and also requires the eroticizing of equality between persons and among groups (28–29).

Of course, the pressing question for such an agenda is, how? How do people understand the complex intersections between sexuality and citizenry, much less advocate for “erotic justice”? Arguing for “erotic justice” may be a bit beyond the scope of this book, but it is an intriguing concept, worthy of further exploration.

8. For some additional interesting work on queer language use, see the collection _Queer Words, Queer Images: Communication and the Construction of Homosexuality_, edited by Jeffrey Ringer (1994), which contains a section on gay and lesbian rhetorics, including a rhetorical analysis of Harvey Milk’s speeches and the rhetoric of “tolerance.”

9. For a review of such work, as well as examples of methodologies in collecting and analyzing information about such literacies, see my _Digital Youth: Emerging Literacies on the World Wide Web_ (2005).

10. Early in the quarter, I receive written permission from students to quote from their work and to discuss assignments and teaching methods and situations. I offer them the option of being acknowledged, either directly or pseudonymously. In this case, since some students elected to have their real names used and others did not, I refer only to students anonymously and by perceived gender.

11. As I have discussed this exercise with fellow teachers and other composition scholars, I am inevitably asked if I eventually let the students know that Straightboyz4Nsync is a hoax site—and, moreover, a hoax site authored by their instructor. I did, and their reactions were surprising in a number of ways, though I can only summarize because I did not think at the time (alas!) of collecting written commentary about their responses to being “hoaxed.” But to summarize from discussions with them, it seemed that many were unsurprised—itself surprising. What can account for such lack of reaction? Perhaps the following. I had used the Mutant Watch hoax site in an earlier class exercise, and many students had already encountered numerous hoax sites on their own, so I think that the idea of being “hoaxed” was neither estranging nor alarming for these students. In some ways, we as literacy teachers can take comfort from that: these students are not accepting everything they read on the Web at face value, and we can use the Web to foster a sense of critical literacy and information evaluation.

More specifically, I think students weren’t surprised because they understand—either intuitively or as part of their experience of Web surfing—that homepages are themselves performances, and that not all performers tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Cheung may figure homepages as “emancipatory,” but many seasoned Web surfers suspect, I think, that personal homepages can be as much carefully constructed projections of idealized or even fabricated selfhoods as they are revelatory of deep-seated truths. Cheung himself notes that homepage authors engage in “self-censorship” and that the Web is home to an “unavoidable existence of a certain degree of deception and overstatement” (2000, 49, 51). As such, I think, increasingly, many Web surfers view personal homepages with a grain of salt. You can even see such skepticism lurking in some of my students’ responses to Straightboyz4Nsync: just who is this guy?!

Despite my students’ seemingly relaxed or unruffled response to being hoaxed, using such material raises some interesting ethical questions about “tricking” stu-
dents. To what extent can I “closet” myself as the author of a site in order to talk about the “closet”—and still maintain my ethos as a teacher, or scholar, for that matter. Put another way, to what extent can any of us use trickery and deceit to talk about the various tricks and small deceits we all commit to protect aspects of our lives from close scrutiny, bigoted attack, and rhetorical, if not actual, violence? Many pedagogues and scholars have talked about the usefulness of “outing” oneself—as gay, lesbian, queer, even straight—in the hopes of alerting students to the presence of both queers in the social sphere and the circulation and construction of sexual and gender identity throughout our culture. In particular, Didi Khayatt has argued well, recently, both pro and con for “coming out,” and she maintains that “the decision whether to come out in class and how to come out must remain with the jurisdiction of the individual teacher” (1998, 46). She argues for careful consideration of this so that no instructor is reduced simply to a “sexual category.” The emphasis here, rather, is on disclosure, on bringing the hidden and marginalized into the open—and doing so in pedagogically productive ways.

12. For a fuller discussion of why it is “tricky” but nonetheless useful to consider such terms as trans, transgender, and even transsexuality more broadly, see my introduction to Bisexuality and Transgenderism: InterSEXions of the Others (Alexander and Yescavage 2004).

13. For a good discussion of the more “contentious” aspects of the debate between Butler and some feminist thinkers, see Butler’s essay “Against Proper Objects” (1997a) and an interview with Butler, “Feminism by Any Other Name” (Braidotti 1997), both included in the collection Feminism Meets Queer Theory.

14. Kate Bornstein’s My Gender Workbook has a section entitled “Back into the Classroom: Three Gender Performance Workshops” (1998, 225–42) that may be just as useful as Califia-Rice’s questions for inspiring classroom activities to explore the performance and construction of gender narrations.

15. In “Bi, Butch, and Bar Dyke: Pedagogical Performances of Class, Gender, and Sexuality” Michelle Gibson, Martha Marinara, and Deborah Meem suggest that instructors themselves need to be critically aware of the identities—and the concomitant stories that compose such identities—that they bring into the classroom with them if they are to be sensitive to the many different stories that students bring into the classroom: “Compositionists committed to creating classrooms in which traditional academic power structures are problematized and critiqued must also commit themselves to interrogating their own positions in those classrooms. We must think seriously about the identities we bring with us into the classroom, remain conscious of the way those identities interact with the identities our students bring, and insert ourselves fully into the shifting relationships between ourselves and our students at the same time that we resist the impulse to control those relationships” (2003, 486).

16. I have chosen six stories to discuss. Of the ten stories produced, all of which are intriguing and insightful, these six stories generated the most in-class discussion. Students have given me permission to quote from and discuss their work.

17. Butler herself self-corrects in her book following Gender Trouble, Bodies That Matter, maintaining that her formulation of performativity in Gender Trouble does not mean that gender can be taken on and off like a suit of clothes. More recently, in Kate More’s interview with Butler, “Never Mind the Bollocks: Judith Butler on Transsexuality,” Butler offers a new articulation: “There’s a kind of forward moving effort to reconceive and redefine what counts as real. So for me the performative theory of gender was not about putting on a masquerade that hides a reality, or that is derived from a higher reality, but it’s actually about a certain way of inhabiting norms that alters the norms and alters our sense of what is real and what is live-
able. . . . I think I’m interested in disrupting the symbolic in order to rearticulate it in more expansive ways” (1999, 297). If there is one thing that the persistent and nearly pervasive use of stereotypes in the student narratives suggests, though, it is that such “rearticulation” is hard to come by. Certainly, I would like to think that the paired-fiction exercise was an invitation for students to inhabit some gender norms in such a way as to imagine how they might be changed.

18. All students whose work is used here gave permission to me in writing to quote from their work. None elected anonymity.