3-20-2008

4.0: Self-Doubt, the Fear of Failure, and the Power of Symbols

Nicole Jones
University of Massachusetts Boston, nicole.jones001@umb.edu

Recommended Citation

Jones, Nicole (2008) "4.0: Self-Doubt, the Fear of Failure, and the Power of Symbols," *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge*: Vol. 6: Iss. 2, Article 14.
Available at: http://scholarworks.umb.edu/humanarchitecture/vol6/iss2/14

4.0: Self-Doubt, the Fear of Failure, and the Power of Symbols

Nicole Jones

University of Massachusetts Boston

––––––––––––––––––––––––––––––––––––––

nicole.jones001@umb.edu

Abstract: I am hoping that by writing this research paper and applying various sociological theories, perspectives and concepts to my personal trouble, I will be able to step back and gain a deeper understanding of an issue that has left me constantly trying to prove to myself and others that I can be better, do better and accomplish more. My continuing struggle with the belief that I am completely incapable of success, despite being a graduating student with a 4.0 grade point average, has resulted in an enormous amount of self-doubt that leaves me questioning my abilities each time I have an assignment to complete. As a result of this exploration, I find that while I do not feel as though I am chasing the wrong things, I do feel as though I am not putting as much effort into those things that mean the most to me. I have realized that I can be successful with both my grades and in my relationships; it is possible to balance the two. Even more, being successful and being perfect are two different things. In the past I have viewed the two as being interchangeable, which is not the case. My definition of being successful has differed as I have realized that it takes more than having perfect grades, but rather living up to my full potential, growing, becoming a better person, maintaining strong relationships, making time for the little pleasures in life, and truly being happy, not only with my accomplishments in school, but outside of it as well.

My name is Nicole and I am not perfect. I eat way too much junk food, I never return telephone calls and I say all the wrong things at all the wrong times. I am okay with that; I can deal with the fact that I am carrying around some extra chunk or that my friends think that I am flaky, but what I cannot deal with is failure.

Although failure is considered to be unacceptable and of great disappointment in our society, my definition of failure, and even that of success, differs greatly from those who surround me. This, according to Herbert Blumer and his symbolic interac-tionist perspective, is the result of **interpretation**, the idea that "human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them" (Wallace and Wolf, 217). The term "failure" can be seen as being highly ambiguous and each individual possesses a different meaning for the word, which will ultimately have an impact on the way he or she views a situation involving failure.

For example, in the article, "Exiting the Self-Destructive Highway: A Sociological Path Back to a Future Career," UMass Boston student Paul Conner states that he

Nicole Jones graduated from UMass Boston in Spring 2008, double-majoring in Sociology and Criminal Justice. She wrote this paper while enrolled in the course Soc. 341-2: "Elements of Sociological Theory," instructed by Mohammad H. Tamdgidi (Assistant Professor of Sociology at UMass Boston) during the Spring 2008 semester.

"would deliberately do things to derail any progress in his life" (Conner, 137), showing that to him, failure was an inability to get ahead. However, for me, the meaning of failure is much more complex and has become a major issue in my life, one that has become extremely overwhelming, causing immense anxiety and, in turn, is almost unbearable to handle.

The movie *Twelve Angry Men* also provides us with an understanding of how people can view situations differently based on their preconceptions, backgrounds and interpretations. This film tells the story of twelve jurors who make sense of everyday life each from their own standpoint and eventually attempt to put themselves in the shoes of an eighteen year old boy who is accused of committing the murder of his father. It is not until the jurors take the steps of putting themselves in each other's shoes and really understanding one another that the votes begin to change and the jury is able to make a verdict regarding the boy's guilt.

I am hoping that by writing this research paper, I will be able to step back and gain a deeper understanding of an issue that has left me constantly trying to prove to myself and others that I can be better, do better and accomplish more. My continuing struggle with the belief that I am completely incapable of success has resulted in an enormous amount of self-doubt that leaves me questioning my abilities each time I have an assignment to complete.

For a moment, or even as I write this research paper, I would like to take on a **phenomenological** approach and set aside the thoughts and ideas that I have constructed regarding failure, and instead question the very things I have taken for granted. Following this perspective, I will "assume the role of a stranger, like a visitor from a foreign country" (Wallace and Wolf, 262). In doing so, I will attempt to disregard the patterns and routines that I have become accustomed to in order to understand why

it is that I have such an extreme fear of failure, where it came from and how I can find a resolution. In doing this research, I plan to use concepts associated with various sociological perspectives seeking to explore the relationship between my individual experiences (**personal troubles**) and the larger society (**public issues**). The sociologist C. Wright Mills called the ability to recognize such a link between micro and macro social processes, the **sociological imagination**.

I think it would be appropriate to rewind about eight years and re-visit the end of my senior year in high school and into my time spent in community college in order to make sense of my life before my fear of failure erupted.

I left high school and entered community college with the purpose of proving that I was different—different than the rest of my family. I was the daughter of low-income, undereducated parents who continued to live their lives through poor decisions. The support, direction and guidance that parents are expected to provide were non-existent and my grades reflected that. In her article, "Confessions of a Maineiac: The Family, Academia, and Modernity," Macalester College student Jessica Sawyer expresses that the family is "intended as a place to enrich children, so they are then able to leave and reach their full potentials" (Sawyer, 195). However, my family unit differed greatly from this. Instead, the neglect on my parents' behalf left me with no one to look up to, no inspiration and no path toward a future goal. A study done by an assistant professor at Brooklyn College found that students who come from destructive homes, especially girls, "do not have the strength to survive in an academic world" (Watson, 103). The way I saw it was that I was headed nowhere, destined to fail from the very beginning.

I decided to attend a local community college, something I saw as a **functional alternative**, a notion developed by Merton. While expressing that "societies must have

certain characteristics in order to survive" (Wallace and Wolf, 53), Merton stresses that at the same time "particular institutions are not the only ones able to fulfill these functions" (Wallace and Wolf, 53); functional alternatives may serve as substitutes. I knew I was not capable of attending a university, for I felt I did not have the skills or knowledge needed to survive in that atmosphere; however, I knew the importance of higher education and saw community college as a way of making progress and working toward becoming something.

I never really struggled, only because I never really tried. I knew I was not capable of understanding the material, applying myself or maintaining decent grades. The lack of support that I had experienced growing up had formed severe insecurities in my personality, ones that continue to feed my self-doubt. I was two years into community college when I realized that somehow I needed to get my act together. I needed to get over the fact that I had a troubled childhood, move forward and stop making excuses for myself. My GPA then was a 2.6 and I had no idea what I wanted for myself. I had always lacked confidence, competence and motivation and did not know where to begin. However, I wasted no time. I knew that I wanted to lead a different life than that of my parents and the only way to do so was to take advantage of the opportunities that were in front of me.

For the first time in my life I struggled. It was not because I was being challenged, but rather because I was challenging myself. For the first time, I took my education seriously and went into it with the idea that I was capable of accomplishing whatever it was I put my mind to. I had made a decision to put aside the insecurities that I had developed as a child and move forward in hope of bettering myself. Similarly, on a more extreme level, in the HBO documentary *Multiple Personalities* individuals who suffered from traumatic experiences as children were prevented from living their

lives in a way in which they could grow and become contributing members to society. It was not until they were able to face the issues that haunted them throughout their childhood that they could begin to heal and move onward.

For example, Gretchen, a woman who was molested as a child, continued to go to therapy to help her through the process of fusion. As she worked through her traumatic experience, she was able to continue her studies in art and eventually graduated at the top of her class. In each situation, both mine and that of Gretchen, overcoming setbacks caused by childhood experiences were necessary in order to become the people that we wanted to be. Allowing previous incidents in our lives to control our actions would only continue to hold us back.

After two more years in community college, I transferred to UMass Boston with a 3.5 GPA, the biggest accomplishment of my entire life. My acceptance was a complete shock. Although I had been applying myself to the best of my ability, I still did not believe in myself. I did not believe that I had what it took to go away to college. After the initial shock set in, I was flooded with excitement and then a familiar feeling rushed through my body—the feeling of self-doubt set in and I knew I was setting myself up for failure.

Since my move to Boston almost two years ago, I have struggled with not being good enough, trying to be better and ultimately letting myself down each time. The truth is that I realize it is absolutely absurd for a student with a 4.0 GPA to be writing a paper about failing, but it truly is my biggest fear in life and it is something that affects the decisions that I choose to make each day.

According to the **rational choice theory**, individuals tend to do things that benefit them more than they "cost" them. That is, "individuals are rational and base their actions on what they perceive to be the most effective means to their goals" (Wal-

lace and Wolf, 303). In my case, I am constantly weighing the pros and cons of every decision that I make based on the idea of whether or not my actions will result in even the slightest degree of failure. My habit of basing my decisions on whether they will bring me rewards (grades) or punishments (failure) has affected my life in many ways. I have neglected relationships with friends and family as I have decided that my education is the most important thing in my life, leaving little to no time for others. This is something that is common among honors students who "tend to be compulsive, driven people, with few or no satisfactory interpersonal relationships" (Watson, 104). I think one of the major things that I have given up in the past two years is the chance to experience college and a city that is entirely new to me. I spend my afternoons, evenings and weekends focusing on my studies and have not made it a priority to make friends, explore my new home or even relax and enjoy how far I have come in the past few years. There is so much work to be done and no time to focus on anything else.

In realizing that I am ruining important relationships and have been missing out on what should be the best years of my life, I have tried to manage my time and give precedence to other aspects of my life, but I cannot. George Homan's concept of **value proposition** explains my behavior by stating that "the more valuable to a person is the result of his action, the more likely he is to perform that action" (Wallace and Wolf, 315), meaning that the importance of my grades is so valuable to me that I will do anything in order to maintain them, even if that means giving up things that most people could not live without.

These very decisions that I am faced with each day are made through the process known as **self-interaction**, "the internal conversations one has with oneself" with the purpose of "taking things into account and organizing themselves for ac-

tion" (Wallace and Wolf, 208). When the pressure of my school work sets in and I feel as though I cannot deal with the failure that is bound to come, I unconsciously begin a conversation with myself in order to not only come to a rational choice but also to calm myself down so that making a rational choice is possible. Often, these internal conversations are not calming or soothing but rather they consist of telling myself that I am not cut out for this, that I should not be here and that I am fooling myself and everyone else around me. These conversations, whether talking myself up or down, have become a normal pattern in my everyday life of dealing with failure.

It seems as though each day I am attempting to rationally evaluate situations that could destroy all that I have accomplished. I find myself facing the same dilemma each time things get tough and having to make a choice—a choice that is fogged by my anxieties, self-doubt and fear of failing. Each time I struggle with a decision because I am scared, in fact, I am terrified of making the wrong one, the one that will lead to failure—anything less than a 4.0. To me, my 4.0 is somewhat of a **symbol**, something Mead suggests as having "the same meaning for all individual members of a given society or social group" (Wallace and Wolf, 211). In our society there is a huge emphasis on achievement and success; how much someone has accomplished in a sense establishes their social status or worth. Those who have been educated and have found well paying jobs are considered successful, while hard working Americans receive less recognition. The importance of being the best and getting ahead is apparent in our culture and many individuals will go to great lengths to do so.

According to Robert Merton, this leads to **deviance,** because those who do not have access to monetary success will find other means of achieving their goals (Wallace and Wolf, 56). The concept of deviance is a major reason I made it a priority to con-

tinue with my education even if it had to begin with community college. Growing up, my parents fell under the category Merton referred to as **retreatism**, that is they "reject both monetary success (approved goals) and the means to it (approved means)" (Wallace and Wolf, 56). I, on the other hand felt it was important to **conform** to societies goals of achieving success through accepted means such as going to college, working hard and saving my money. It is interesting that in Merton's classification (Ibid.) conformity itself may be regarded as a form of "deviance," since from an alternative point of view, conformity may impede a "normal" need society has (or should have) for change.

Our society is so materialistic that the need to be successful and have an income that will support this way of life has become extremely attractive. The film, *Affluenza*, demonstrates the idea that Americans care too much about what they have and how much of it they have rather than about things that they should view as more important, namely family and friends. "Shopping fever" has become problematic as individuals spend an average of six hours per week shopping and only forty minutes during the week with their children. In order to fuel their shopping habits, Americans have begun saving less and working more, leaving less time for their children. Many spend great amounts of money on items that are stored in the back of their closets and are never actually used. However, they continue to spend money believing that the increase in consumption is the key to happiness.

What most people do not realize is that through such behavior they increase their **emotional work**, work performed for use value rather than for exchange value (which is differently called **emotional labor**). With constant consumption individuals are overwhelmed with an overload of stress and debt that require much emotional work on their part to deal with the

situation. This idea can be related to what Arlie Hochschild refers to as the first, second and third shifts. According to Hochschild working women not only work to earn a living (**first shift**) and at home to raise a family (**second shift**), they also have to emotionally deal (as a **third shift** of emotional work) with the stresses arising from the conflicts between the first and second shifts. Using Hochschild's distinctions, one can see how affluenza causes additional strains requiring more emotional work in the third shift, not only in terms of an overload of debt and stress from trying to work more in order to obtain more, but also in terms of the effects of having a fractured family.

Society's pressures to succeed and the idea that an individual's worth is based on her or his achievements is most certainly a factor that contributes to my emotional work and constant worries of being anything less than perfect when it comes to my studies. According to one study, individuals who hold these views are considered to be subjective overachievers, "those who want to succeed, with social approval being their primary concern" and who are "especially interested in attaining success that will serve as a quick indication of their worth" (Arkin et al., 496). It can be assumed then that if an individual's worth or value is determined by her or his success then failing to perform well could cause the subjective overachiever great anxiety.

My GPA is a symbol of my worth, indicating that I am in fact intelligent and in some way successful. Growing up in such a dysfunctional family affected my self-esteem and in a sense depleted any sense of worth I had. With numerous step-fathers and continuous transformations within the household, I never really felt like I had a place. I never felt noticed. With such an abnormal and unstable family situation, I was forced to withdraw from friendships as well, as most of my friends, or so it seemed, had close knit families. As a child and even

through my teenage years, I kept to myself and although I had many friends, I never felt like I fit in, and never truly felt accepted.

As I began to put forth effort, others began to notice and I instantly fed off their acknowledgements. For once in my life I was noticed and even praised for my abilities, abilities no one knew I had. Much like the subjective overachiever, I began to push myself, spending extra time trying to prove that I was worth something. As others accepted me, I slowly began to accept myself. This can be seen by applying Cooley's concept, **the looking-glass self**: "the imagination of our appearance to the other person; the imagination of his judgment of that appearance; and some sort of self-feeling, such as pride or mortification" (Wallace and Wolf, 203). In my case, I felt as though once I began to apply myself, people viewed me as successful and in turn assigned me as valuable or worthy. As those whom I interacted with began seeing me as someone, rather than something, I felt as though I was accepted and began feeling as though I really was worth something.

As pressure set in, the feeling of pride and accomplishment began to fade away as I began to feel as though I had somehow created a false image of myself. The person I had been pretending to be was not me, and is not me. I do not deserve to be here; clearly my success is due to some sort of error. I have people believing I am someone I am not. I feel as though I am putting on a fake front for everyone, in what Goffman terms as the front region. Goffman studied "the ways individuals in their everyday lives present themselves and their activities to others," (Wallace and Wolf, 238) and believed that **dramaturgy**, "the art of dramatic composition and theatrical representation" (Wallace and Wolf, 238), explains social interaction. Goffman uses dramaturgy as a metaphor for seeing social interaction as a theater where interactions are considered to be a play and individuals are actors performing the play.

The **front region**, he describes, is "that part of the individuals' performance which regularly functions in a general and fixed fashion to define the situation for those who observe the situation" (Wallace and Wolf, 238) and includes the part of me that comes across to my peers as studious, talented and successful. It is the part of me that I believe is an act—the side of me that is not "real." Conversely, actors also perform in a **back region**, "a place closed to and hidden from the audience" (Wallace and Wolf, 239). The concept of back region relates to the way I feel about this "scam" that I have somehow managed to pull off. It is my back region where my anxiety sets in, where I feel it is safe to break down and cry. It is my back region where I am allowed to struggle and question my abilities without anyone noticing. It is here that I have to mentally prepare myself to take on the next task, to somehow figure out a way to impress my professors, peers and family while continuing to make people believe I am someone I am not.

The idea of my front region where I feel as though I am fooling my friends, family and peers into thinking I am something I am not can be related to the imposter phenomenon, the "feeling of intellectual and professional phoniness in high-achieving individuals" (Gee et al., 2008). Those who experience these feelings do not feel successful no matter what grades they have earned, degrees they have obtained or any other recognition they have received. Imposters almost always believe that at some point or another, their true identity will be discovered and their peers will realize that they have been pretending to be someone they are not. In addition, imposters evaluate their performance constantly and as a result tend to be very harsh on themselves (Gee et al., 2008).

It is interesting to see that as I wrote this paper, my reasons as to why I am afraid to fail and where exactly it stemmed from

are more complex than the simple answer I usually give people. For as long as I can remember, I have always told everyone that I am afraid to fail because, "I have a 4.0. I have never had a 4.0, and I am not ready to lose it now." Through writing this paper, I have come to realize that it is not quite that simple. The truth is that my 4.0 is who I am. It validates me; it gives me a sense of worth and is truly my identity. Without it, I feel as though I am nothing and I have failed to find a solution to this.

In her article, "Longing to be Thin: Why I Wait until Tomorrow to Change my Habits," UMass Boston student Caitlyn Boyle states that "failure is productive" and allowed herself to look back at her life and see where she failed and why. She goes on to explain that until you fail, you cannot look back at the decisions you made and learn from them (Boyle, 114). This is something I have struggled with many times as I have hoped for failure only for the purpose of being able to look back and realize that it is not the end of the world if I make a mistake. Unfortunately, I live each day under the impression that mistakes are not acceptable; the chance to look back and learn from them serve no purpose. Putting in my best effort, knowing I did everything I could and giving it all I have is simply not enough for me and I have yet to find a way to control it.

As I continue searching for answers as to what cultivates my fear of failure and ways in which to overcome something that has completely taken over my life, I have realized that I validate myself through my grades as a result of the way in which I was raised. According to Talcott Parsons, **socialization** which occurs when "societal values are internalized by society's members; that is, they make society's values their own" (Wallace and Wolf, 26), however; this is where my childhood differed greatly from most others. While most parents teach their children the value of hard work, higher education and reaching their full potential,

mine did not. Instead, my early years lacked any sort of guidance or direction, something that stems from "normlessness, or a situation where rules or norms are absent" (Wallace and Wolf, 22), a term Durkheim coined as **anomie**. Growing up, my parents did not did stress the importance of education and my grades reflected that. Never once do I remember my parents making sure my homework was done before I went out and played and often I would complete my homework over breakfast the morning before it was due. When report cards came, my friends worried over the chance of getting grounded and sometimes tried to intercept the mail. I, on the other hand, had nothing to worry about and I took advantage of that.

I think that the lack of support, supervision and regulation on the behalf of my parents was largely caused by their working class position, they were what Karl Marx would label as the **proletariat**, "those who neither control capital nor direct labor" (Wallace and Wolf, 90). My parents were part of an **oppressed class** and began to see themselves through the eyes of the dominant group and internalized the messages that they received from society. To them, there were few opportunities available and the chances of advancement were little to none, and they had accepted that. Having accepted this, I feel they felt it was unnecessary to push me to my full potential. Instead, they figured I would continue in their footsteps and lead the life they had for so many years.

As I got older, I began to realize that my family was highly **dysfunctional** and was not a "cohesive unit working together for the goodness of the whole" (Wallace and Wolf, 51). My parents were unreliable, unsupportive, and lacked the responsibility they needed in order to properly raise children. As a result of my upbringing, I began to feel disconnected and **alienated**, from not only my family but also my peers. I did not feel as though I fit in with my family,

who did not work to better themselves and turn their lives around, nor did I fit in with my friends who came from middle class families who instilled values in their children that mine had not. I wanted more in life and I felt as though my parents deprived me of those opportunities.

According to Pierre Bourdieu, parents provide their children with **cultural capital**, that is "the tastes, and perceptions of what is beautiful or valuable" (Wallace and Wolf, 113), which differs greatly between classes. The knowledge and experience one gains through the course of their life that allows them to succeed more so than someone from a less experienced background can be seen as cultural capital, something my parents failed to provide me with. This has contributed to my inability to participate actively in class discussions and has completely crippled my confidence when it comes to public speaking. While I am not an underachiever, I do possess the traits of one, who generally withdraws, avoids sharing in class and finds safety in hiding in such circumstances (Watson, 103). Bourdieu states that children who come from advantaged homes gain the skills and behaviors needed to comfortably handle these situations.

As I joined community college and began to straighten out my life, I became close with two very influential people in my life. Over the following few years, these individuals became my life support and brought on an **equilibrium** that stabilized my fractured family life by giving me the encouragement and guidance that my own parents could not provide. I came to view both of these individuals as my parents and have developed a relationship with them that continues to grow today. In fact, they will be coming from California to attend my graduation, whereas my own parents will not. It was their constant support that allowed for me to believe in myself and believe that there was more for me outside of the small town in which I grew up.

I think one of my biggest fears and the thing that held me to believe that I was not capable of accomplishing greater things was the idea of **class reproduction**, a concept that Pierre Bourdieu describes as "how one generation of an (economic) class ensures that it reproduces itself and passes on its privileges to the next generation" (Wallace and Wolf, 114). In my case, it was the lack of privileges that concerned me. Although my mother had come from parents who had established good careers, lived comfortably and had made good lives for themselves, my mother had somehow managed to take a wrong turn somewhere. I feared more than anything, and often still do, that I will inherit the same life and will make nothing more of myself than they have. I fear failing, I fear living paycheck to paycheck and I fear not being able to make a life for my family and myself.

As an attempt to avoid class reproduction, I participated in what Merton refers to as **role exit**, "the disengagement from a role that is central to one's self-identity and the reestablishment of an identity in a new role" (Wallace and Wolf, 50). As I made the decision to make something of myself, I left behind everything that I knew, everything that was familiar and comfortable to me and moved across the country in hopes of starting over, establishing a new life, becoming a better person, and putting everything that attempted to hold me back behind me. These included things such as the small town that held few opportunities, a stepfather who continued to reveal my flaws, and my mother who failed to provide support, and also the good things such as my friends who gave me hope, my siblings who gave me a reason to go on, and those two very important individuals who made me believe anything was possible. While giving up both the good and the bad, I was in a sense exiting the role I had played for so long in order to take on a new role and a new identity. I was leaving the person I was with the hopes of becoming the per-

son I wanted to be.

Although I could not be happier with the success and accomplishments that have accompanied this new role, it is one that needs amending, as it has gained control of my life and has caused to me to forget many things that were once an important part of my life. In the film, *Tuesdays With Morrie*, Mitch, a sports commentator, was too busy focusing on his career and made little time to do the things that most humans value—his friends and family. This is something that I have also struggled with as I have neglected those who have always been close to me. Not only have I neglected them when I have had an overload of reading or when a test nears, I have completely withdrawn from keeping contact. I have made myself believe that if the work is not done, I should not be enjoying myself, even if I do not plan to work on the assignment. Much like Mitch, my friends have reached the point where they find it pointless to put effort into a relationship where both sides are not trying to make it work.

This was a perfect film to end the semester with, as Morrie's discussions with Mitch has made me realize that a meaningful life consists of more than getting good grades and being successful. As Morrie said in the film, "So many people walk around with a meaningless life. They seem half asleep, even when they are busy doing things they think are important. This is because they're chasing the wrong things. The way you get meaning into your life is to devote yourself to loving others, devote yourself to your community around you, and devote yourself to creating something that gives you purpose and meaning."

While I do not feel as though I am chasing the wrong things, I do feel as though I am not putting as much effort into those things that mean the most to me. I have realized that I can be successful with both my grades and in my relationships; it is possible to balance the two. Even more, being successful and being perfect are two differ-

ent things. In the past I have viewed the two as being interchangeable, which is not the case. My definition of being successful has differed as I have realized that it takes more than having perfect grades, but rather living up to my full potential, growing, becoming a better person, maintaining strong relationships, making time for the little pleasures in life, and truly being happy, not only with my accomplishments in school, but outside of it as well.

Works Cited

Arkin, R., Lynch, M., Oleson, K., Poehlmann, K., & Yost, J. (2000). "Subjective Overachievement: Individual Differences in Self-Doubt and Concern With Performance." *Journal of Personality*, 68 (3).

Boyle, Caitlyn. (2007). "Longing to be Thin: Why I Wait until Tomorrow to Change My Habits." *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge*, 5 (2).

Conner, Paul. (2007). "Exiting the Self-Destructive Highway: A Sociological Oath Back to a Future Career." *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge*, 5 (2).

Gee, D., McGregor, L., Posey, E. (2008). "I feel like a fraud and it depresses me: The relation between the imposter phenomenon and depression." *Journal of Social Behavior and Personality*, 36 (1).

Sawyer, Jessica. (2004/2005). "Confessions of a Maineiac: The Family, Academia, and Modernity." *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge,* 3 (1&2).

Wallace, Ruth and Alison Wolf. 2006. Contemporary Sociological Theory: Expanding the Classical Tradition. 6th Edition. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Watson, G. (1960). "Emotional problems of gifted students." *Journal of Personnel and Guidance*, 68 (3).

Films:

Affluenza. (1997). Bullfrog Films.

Multiple Personalities. (1992). HBO Home Box Office.

Tuesdays With Morrie. (1999) American Broadcasting Company.

Twelve Angry Men. (1957). MGM.