"The Wrong Side of Privilege"

Advocacy, Community, and Politics: The Collected Essays of Stephen J. Parks, 2000-2020

Stephen J. Parks

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By Stephen J. Parks

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Dedication

To Lori,
Intellectual, Activist, Gardener
And My Most Beloved

Contents

Acknowledgments

I have taken many professional risks during my career.

Perhaps too many risks.

I have certainly had to face the anger and concerns of individuals, communities, and universities over the past thirty years. And at these moments, I have been blessed with the love, security, and confidence that can only emerge from close friends and dedicated colleagues. I hope as they hold this book in their hands, each sees the wisdom shared with me during such moments infused on every page.

I would have no career without the intellectual and moral vision of Lori Shorr. I doubt Lori will ever write a book. She is too busy engaging in the hard work of change. If she were to take on such a task, however, the pages would demonstrate the type of moral courage, intellectual insights, and strategic vision required to reform education in Pennsylvania and Philadelphia. It would document her victories and her refusal to accept failures. It would document what commitment to change means. And the book would also demonstrate how each of Lori's projects have served as incubators for those on the wrong side of privilege to challenge racist, sexist, and classist structures and to achieve economic security, happiness. It would be a powerful book. Yet it will probably never be written. But in every sense of the word, Lori has been a true co-author of the book you now hold in your hands. It is full of her vision and insights, but I know it pales in comparison to her own efforts. Lori has been (and always will be) my model for what ethical community-based political advocacy can achieve. To me and many others, she is simply remarkable.

In the early stages of my career, I was blessed to work with individuals such as Eli Goldblatt, Sue Wells, Dennis Lebofsky, Nicole Meyenberg, August Tarrier, Yolanda Wisher, Linda Hill, and Vanessa Allen. While my work with Eli is probably more well known, I speak for both of us in stating: The collective moral and political vision of these individuals were the steel beams upon which the aspirations of the Institute for Literacy, Literacy, and Culture, as well as New City Community Press were built. Yet, it was at Syracuse University, within that remarkable community of scholar-activists, I came to fully recognize the meaning and import of working for change. I will be forever grateful for the insights shared by my close colleagues: Patrick Berry, Collin Brooke, Kevin Browne, Rebecca Howard, Kristi Johnson, Krista Krause, Krista Kennedy, Carol Lipson, Margaret Himley, Brice Nordquist, Louise Wetherbee Phelps, Faith Plvan, Gwen Pough, George Rhinehart, Tony Scott, and Lois Agnew.

Within that vibrant political culture, I need to express my deepest gratitude and admiration for Eileen Schell and John Burdick. To my mind, Eileen Schell represents the best of what our field can offer in terms of scholarship and advocacy. During our time together, we would debate ideas, post political flyers in

CCCC hotel bathrooms, and battle for our students. At moments when the administration pushed to shut down my work, Eileen was an unwavering ally. And for those who have had Eileen as an ally, you also know that means you are going to win the battle. Her support is a true comfort in the midst of any struggle. I remain in awe of her intellect and her achievements. I was also incredibly fortunate to work with John Burdick, whose partnership led to many of the insights and essays in this collection. It is a bitter blow that John is no longer with us. But it is a comfort to realize his legacy of fighting for justice continues on in his students and community allies. John, I miss your friendship every day.

Syracuse also provided me with the opportunity to witness the next generation of scholars learning their craft. I was fortunate to work with several of them. Romeo Garcia modeled an ethics and commitment to his community from the moment of his arrival at Syracuse. I am not surprised by his success and growing influence in our field. Jessica Pauszek entered Syracuse as a graduate student but has become a true intellectual partner in publishing and community projects. Her impact on the Working and Writing for Change Series has helped the project realize its full potential. And her deep commitment to working-class communities has often served as a reminder of what is important in the midst of academic dramas. Jessica's commitment to the working class is shared with another of my important Syracuse allies, Brian Bailie, who was a key figure in creating the Best of Rhetoric and Composition series as well as our work editing *Reflections*. Finally, I have been fortunate to learn from Jason Luther and Justin Lewis about many important and vital ways to understand the possibilities inherent in the technologies of writing and publishing. I hope all of them see their influence in the work detailed in this pages that follow.

Today, I am located at the University of Virginia (UVA), blessed with colleagues such as Tamika Carey, Steph Ceraso, Kenny Fountain, Kate Kostelnik, Sethunya Mokoko, Kate Stephenson, Kevin Smith, and Jim Seitz. I met Jim at almost the exact moment I met Lori Shorr, which is to say before my "career" could even have hoped to have begun. Through the decades that followed, through protests and controversies, personal highs and lows, Jim has been the steadying and reasoned voice that has always provided a pathway forward. I remain grateful for his friendship and support. It is also the case that since initially reading his book, Motives for Metaphors, Jim has also remained one of my favorite writers in the field. I often use his writing, marked by generosity, commitment, and insight, as a benchmark for my own. And I hope that as folks read the writing in this volume, they will recognize all the other scholars, advocates, community members whose wisdom has influenced my work. I would only highlight several people out of this important community for their sustained and important influence: Linda Adler-Kassner, Jonathan Alexander, Cristinia Kirklighter, Ellen Cushman, Keith Gilyard, Mark Lyons, Paula Mathieu, Terese Monberg, Jackie Rhodes, Elaine Richardson, Ira Shorr, Sylvia Simms, and Kate Vieira. They have provided a community marked by commitment, ethics, and grace. I am blessed to have had them

in my life. This collection would not have been possible without the support of Mike Palmquist and the WAC Clearinghouse as well as the expert copyediting of Annie Halseth. I am grateful for their consistent support.

And I am honored to have had the opportunity to work with global advocates for democracy while at UVA. Myo Yan Naung Thein and Cho Cho Aung literally changed the direction of my career when they arrived at the University of Virginia. Through their friendship, I have come to learn what profound commitments to democracy require, the cost of such work, and the importance of continuing the struggle. And as importantly, I have learned that kindness and compassion do not have to be sacrificed on the altar of advocacy. Meeting Srdja Popović transformed my understanding of what advocacy can accomplish as well as introduced me to amazing advocates, such as Jhanisse Vaca Daza and Evan Mawarire, among others. The value of such a staunch ally as Srdja in building a home for advocacy at the University of Virginia cannot be overstated. It has been a gift to work with him and I hope we work together for years to come. Srdja and I understand that our work on the Democratic Futures Project would not be possible without the labors and strong support of individuals as Steve Mull, Derek Brown, Tessa Farmer, Camilo Sanchez, Brian Owensby, Stephen Betts, Dave Edmunds, Roberto Armengol, Stacey Trader, and Sarah Arrington. Once again, I have been fortunate to have found such strong allies.

My most enduring ally has been my mother. Since birth, she instilled in my being a belief in the value of every individual. Travelling the globe as a military spouse, my mother taught me to value other cultures and traditions. And in the midst of military bases and soldiers, she taught me the value of peace and non-violence. She has been all a child could ask of a parent.

This collection is necessarily a reflection of past efforts. I have been blessed, however, to see the future emerge through the lives of my amazing children and their partners: Eliot and Kristin; Sadie and Aaron; Jude and Emma. At the end of the day, I do not know if all my work has produced real change. I do not know if I have lived up to my own aspirations. I do know that nothing has filled me with pride as these wonderful people.

And finally, to Essie, my granddaughter. By the time you are old enough to read these essays, the world will be different. New battles and new issues will have taken over. I hope, however, that in these pages you will recognize all the work committed individuals undertook to provide you the future you deserve. It will be the joy of my life to watch you grow into that world, take your place within it, and amaze everyone with the wonder that is you.

(And don't forget, take risks.)

Preface

Kate Vieira
University of Wisconsin, Madison

One way to read the collected essays of Stephen Parks is as a necessary record of political, institutional, and disciplinary impediments to systemic change. Despotic regimes torture and kill activists, institutions conserve and withhold power, academics use our voices for safety rather than speaking hard truths, money is funneled away from the public and into the private. These essays document, too, a collective and individual failure to listen across political, national, race, and class divides, resulting in missed opportunities to cultivate what Parks and fellow activists call the "middle," the large swath of people who together can bring about change. Read this way, *On the Wrong Side of Privilege* is a sobering account.

But reading these essays for only their analysis of power would miss the relentless optimism and love that pulse through even Parks' most upsetting accounts of injustice. Each essay is a new foray into possibilities for peace.

In the context of punishing local and/or global conditions, Parks and his collaborators document dynamic, and often fraught, processes of coalition building. Parks works these coalitional accounts into theory—and from there, theorizes new coalitional possibilities, all with a palpable impatience with the isolationist tendencies of the academy. From the first to the last essay, Parks asks readers to consider what scholarship in any discipline is for, if not as a means to bring about real change in people's lives.

"How do we understand our responsibility as academics to develop ways of speaking that, in conjunction with activism, can blunt barbarity and produce an expansion of fundamental human rights?" Parks and his collaborators ask. It is a hopeful question. An empowering question. A question both theoretical and practical. If there were a thesis statement to the essays represented here, it might be this: *It is our responsibility as academics to speak and work, with others, to blunt barbarity.*

From New City Press to Syrians for Truth and Justice, the collaborative projects described here link grassroots community writing and publishing to nothing less than "local and global attempts to foster democratic dialogue and democratic rights" (Chapter 8). Consider for example the STJ website, produced and maintained with international intellectuals and activists from the region, that documents the torture of Syrians under Assad (Chapter 9). Also consider the Democratic Futures Project, through which Parks invites international activists into his writing classroom, activists who don't understand the concept of giving up, because they cannot.

It is in service to this larger calling that the essays collected here negotiate the terms of the field of writing and rhetoric, touching on WAC, cultural studies, community-engaged literacy, writing about writing. While Parks has said he has been labeled more an activist than a writing and rhetoric scholar (as if the two roles had nothing to do with each other), each essay in this collection pushes on the terms in which our field sees itself, testing out their usefulness in the larger project of justice and peace.

If in one way, then, this collection of essays represents the work of a scholar-activist, Stephen Parks, whose collaborative work has shaped a field, in another way, the point these essays make again and again is that there isn't a static "field"—and that there is certainly no static Stephen Parks.

To this point, one of the beautiful things about this book is the descriptions of failure—of failure to give credit where credit was due, of failure to acknowledge privilege, of failure to foresee a problem that caused a project to go awry. As of this writing in 2024, we are facing multiple crises, global and local. I find Parks' worldview here—that there is no political purity, that there is only keeping our sights set on the bigger goals necessary to community thriving, especially when we fail—profoundly encouraging. This book made me sit up a little straighter. It made me consider anew, as I imagine it will many readers, what it is I might do with both my words and the power to which I have access.

These essays tell us stories of powerful factions, of big ideas, of what we can accomplish when we work together. But as in any worthwhile human endeavor, there are plot twists. My favorite sentence in this book might be, "And then it got complicated."

And it does! It gets complicated!

But we can do complicated. We must.

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Chapter 1. Introduction: Re-Inventing the University – Politics as an Actual Practice

Stephen J. Parks

University of Virginia

It is written in huge four-foot-high letters. It can be seen clearly streets away.

It is a white paint daubing on a high brick wall which shouts BAN FACISM.

It has been there ever since I can remember and that's almost twenty years.

Its paint is now beginning to fade. I remember seeing it when I had no conception of the word's meaning, and I remember not asking my parents in case it was something rude.

It is unfortunate that I ever did grow up to know what it meant, that it should be a word still relevant in the modern world.

Maybe it was scrawled up there by two young Jews with a brush and a bucket of paint at the time of the Mosely Street riots. I can almost see them in the dark slapping on the paint carefully but quickly and all the time keeping a watchful eye on the empty streets.

Having finished their night's labour, I imagine them running off into the dark not daring to look at the slogan until the following morning when along with a hundred others they could tut and gasp at the cheek of the graffiti artist's work. "Who could have done such a thing," they would say mockingly and sharing a grin. There's a funny thing about that sign. If you stand very close to the wall it's just lines and circles. It tells you nothing. Yet just by standing back a few yards its message is very clear.

Sometimes one must be free of oppression to understand that he has been oppressed.

But what of them now? What of the brave hotheads who felt they could not live that night through without advertising their emotions. Are they still as heated and eager to alight the world or have the drops of time extinguished the flame. Maybe they are tired and apathetic, maybe they are dead. No matter if they are either. For a little while at least they have left a tribute to the people they were and the politics of compulsion.

The work of those graffiti artists is as deep and honorable as anything hanging in the National Gallery. Maybe more so. It doesn't belong in

a museum though but where it is, in the street. Its audience is you and me. It is a plea and a warning.

May the fading white paint need never be renewed.

– Roger Mills, Basement Writers, Writing *(1978)*
Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishers

By the late 1980s, progressive liberal politics were over. There was no grand pronouncement. It simply receded in a series of increasingly isolated fits, gasps, and, ultimately, shrugs. My family and community had been beneficiaries of many of these policies. When I entered the field of composition and rhetoric during this period, I did so by operating within the nostalgic haze being created by the then popular 1960s documentaries broadcast seemingly everywhere; documentaries that recreated spaces where visionary ambitions had not yet been dampened by internal divisions and conservative counterattacks. It was a world in which progressive politics was still winning. One way to understand the original ambitions that inhabit the essays which comprise this collection is as a personal (and ultimately collective) attempt to re-animate a set of public commitments, earned by collective advocacy, that historically enabled those on the wrong side of privilege at least the possibility of economic stability and cultural integrity.

I would come to recognize the limitations of such nostalgia, not only in public debates but also in ensuing disciplinary battles over public engagement. These lessons would be learned slowly, awkwardly, and with difficulty, as I constantly shuttled between alternating realities—the emerging disciplinarity of community partnership scholarship and the practical world of collective political advocacy. In what follows, I try to honor the lessons acquired within each domain and, by doing so, capture the contours of our professional terrain at the cusp of its re-invention in the 1970s. In doing so, I also try to trace our field's return to collective public advocacy through a rejection of the less-demanding neoliberal frameworks that in the 1990s was attempting to promote volunteerism over systemic change. To invoke and revise a famous axiom of Karl Marx, my efforts have always been to reanimate the public role of the academic advocate, but to not descend into pathways which would make such work a farce. Or to put it another way, I have learned to be cautious of the doors that open too easily, since they are often narrow, restrictive, and ultimately unwelcoming.

Nostalgia, I now realize, is a sucker's game.

Part 1: My Life is a Hesitation Before Birth (Kafka)

The Tidy House of Basic Writing

To be a graduate student at the University of Pittsburgh's English Department in the 1980s was to move between multiple realities. In its post-WW II incarnation, Pitt had been an avenue for working-class students to gain access an

undergraduate education. When I enrolled in the 1980s, though, the city's working class were under attack by a conservative ascendency. Pittsburgh was experiencing the collapse of its steel industry as a result of Reaganomics. Former steelworkers who had previously provided a comfortable life for their families could now be seen bagging groceries in local grocery stores. A legacy of economic stability was being fractured. Families were pushed into long-term precarity. But these same families, these same communities, actively resisted such a fate. Workers protested. Religious communities demonstrated, pitching blood into the lobby of banks actively foreclosing on multiple homes in their neighborhoods. And parents fought for their children's education. It was a resistance and resilience that, ultimately, allowed many from my generation to find a foothold in the newly emerging economy.

I was the inheritor of this legacy. My grandfather worked in the mills for over thirty years. After retiring from the military, my father serviced radars and radios used by the tugboats as they carried coal to these same mills. My mother worked in department stores and banks to make Pitt affordable for me. And after receiving a bachelor's degree, I applied to the graduate program in Pitt's English Department. When I didn't receive funding, my mother's labor ensured my education could continue. Once admitted, I would also benefit from a bit of luck. From what I was told at the time, I was accepted in a year where less than twenty students applied. The following year, Gayatri Spivak arrived. Given her recent translation of Derrida's *Of Grammatology* as well as her work on post-coloniality, no one seemed surprised when applications were said to have increased by multiples of hundreds. And these numbers no doubt continued to soar as Jonathan Arac, Americanist and editor of *Postmodernism and Politics,* and Colin McCabe, British cultural studies and popular media scholar, joined the department. Suddenly, after barely eking through, I was a student in one of the *star* departments.

Their entry into the program, however, interrupted the then current reality of Pitt's English Department. At this point in its history, the English Department still retained many professors who came of age during World War II. They were literary critics, schooled in bibliographic research and close reading. Emerging in their shadow were newer scholars, who brought in psychoanalysis, feminism, and cultural concerns of the 1960s into their work. Eventually, these scholars would become department leaders and bring in faculty such as Spivak, Arac, and McCabe. The Composition Program would also have its senior scholars, such as William Coles, and ultimately would be led by a new generation of scholars, such as Dave Bartholomae, Mariolini Salvatori, James Seitz, and Paul Kameen, with Education school allies such as Anthony Petrosky. Entering Pitt in the mid-1980s, however, the dominant model within the program was still marked by a commitment to working-class students. And prior to the arrival of the Spivak/Arac faculty cohort, collectively, these scholars built the foundation of a composition program designed to support the university's working-class students.

These labors on behalf of the working-class student at Pitt was best encap-sulated in the Basic Reading and Writing (BRW) course, the subject of the now classic *Facts, Artifacts, and Counterfacts* (FAC) as well as individual essays, such as David Bartholomae's "The Study of Error" or "Inventing the University," which focused on the intellectual depth of (working-class) student writing. Indeed, at that point, BRW was understood as a powerful intervention in the success of Pitt to support this student population. And for working class students as myself, the focus on positioning the students in the role of historians and literary critics, creating classrooms where extended intellectual projects were undertaken, repre-sented an argument that such academic fields were open to anyone. I recognize, of course, later critiques of this stance as a conservative gesture that did not fully incorporate a student's community insights; that it also proscribed a very narrow vision of the academy. At that time period, however, the commitment and belief in economic mobility, personally, carried more weight for me in a world actively destroying working-class communities. Certainly, BRW seemed to be much more willing to legitimate my working-class aspirations than William Cole's *The Plural I,* whose pedagogy I directly experienced during my time as a student in his class during my undergraduate days at Pitt.

As waves of applicants interested in the work of critical theory and postmod-ernism entered the program, however, the culture changed. These new graduate students brought with them sensibilities marked not only by an alternative sense of political commitments, but also cultural attitudes marked by a higher-class status than traditional students in the program. For instance, the first time I met Colin McCabe is when I sold him a toilet plunger while working at a hardware store. As one of the few student-parents in our program, I studied Foucault's pan-optican, while also earning extra wages from midnight to 8am working for the Pittsburgh's "in-house" arrest monitoring program. The new influx of graduate students, however, often did not need to find extra work. Or as expressed to me, they might be "spending the summer working at the World Bank." Coupled with the influx of new intellectual frameworks, to me, the historical context in which composition and rhetoric operated at Pitt had shifted dramatically.[1]

The advent of cultural studies as the emerging dominant paradigm enacted a double shift within the department culture. One the one hand, there was a peda-gogical move to assigning cultural studies criticism which investigated the contours of public space, with assignments where students were often asked to produce a nuanced reading of the politics of a particular cultural moment. (The arrival of Joe Harris at Pitt strengthened this emphasis.) To some extent, such a move was in line with the work of FAC and BRW in that students were just being asked to inhabit a more up-to-date vision of being a *professor* or *scholar*. The second shift, however,

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1.   David Bartholomae and Annette Vee are in the process of producing a brief histo-ry of Pitt's English Department. See https://wayback.archive-it.org/9461/20210406131846/http:/english-old.pitt.edu/history

marked a more significant alteration. For what was indirectly being built into the new model was the sense that taking a stance on cultural artifacts represented the public work of the academic. Within this model, the public work stopped at the page's edge. There was no consequent action seemingly required by the academic. Nor was there any additional training required to be able to effectively advocate for the essay's cultural insights to be actualized. To me, this seemed an alibi for inaction. This is not to say that the BRW model promised any enhanced ability to alter the material reality facing working-class students and their home communities. At its most ambitious, BRW only offered enhanced success in the university. It was, however, a promise fulfilled. Over time, witnessing the transformation of Pittsburgh's communities, I came to believe this new "cultural critique" model was working to de-skill a generation of working-class students who inhabited an obligation to use their education on behalf of their communities.

This new model of composition studies, to me, was best encapsulated in Bartholomae and Petrosky's *Ways of Reading* (WoR) 1st edition published in 1990, drafts of which were "test-marketed" in my graduate teaching practicum. (I was finally awarded a teaching fellowship due to the advocacy of Spivak, who argued the program had an obligation to support student-parents.) To some extent, I have always understood *WoR* as an attempt to provide composition a *legitimate* theoretical grounding through integrating pedagogical frameworks built to address non-traditional writers into a cultural studies research emphasizing the historically marginalized 2/3 world's resistance to colonialist frameworks. To me, there was embedded into the DNA of *WoR* a category slippage that moved the U.S.-centered working-class student writer into the position of a 2/3rd world post-colonial and/or cultural studies scholar. In some ways, this is most evident in assignment sequences which ask the student to invoke the work of Paulo Freire to discuss their own classroom experiences. There are clearly resonances between Freire's "Banking Concept of Education," the actions of local Pittsburgh banks, and the experiences of undergraduate students at the University of Pittsburgh. But it is hardly a one-to-one correspondence. There are also clearly questions of global privilege at play here. But what was most concerning to me what the erasure of the entire apparatus required to build those Freirean pedagogical moments of insight within the context of *actual* people in *actual* communities—such as the organizing work of Freire and his team creating such educational spaces for rural farmers in Chile. It was acquiring these additional skills that I came to believe were necessary if I were my classrooms were to enable students to turn their education back to the needs of working-class communities.

What the Pitt Model did importantly accomplish, however, was an effective response to the then ongoing conservative attacks on entry-level courses, such as BRW, which were represented as diluting the intellectual rigor of the university. Clearly *WoR* was not a course marked by such "rudimentary" exercises as sentence structure or building paragraphs. Just as importantly, *WoR* was also not a course which abandoned the progressive rhetoric still lingering in the field

post-1960s, rhetorics which had argued for the potential political importance of first-year writing (think Macrorie, Smitherman, or, perhaps, the Black Caucus and CCCC Progressive Caucus). In fact, *WoR* offered a framework which allowed composition instructors to imagine their work with student writing to be charged with the same seeming political urgency of Stuart Hall's Birmingham School or decolonial freedom fighters. Of course, it did so with no actual requirement to join any ongoing movement for political change. And here it should be noted that for many cultural studies figures, such as Edward Said and Gayatri Spivak, their scholarship *was* supplemented by political advocacy or community-based educational efforts. For instance, Said is well known for advocacy for Palestine; Spivak, though less well known, has dedicated decades to supporting the literacy skills of rural women in India.[2] But these *extra-curricular activities* did not seem to be a basis for teaching a more expansive understanding of "literacy skills" as the field entered the 1990s.

In the immediate moment, though, I loved teaching *WoR*. I had gravitated to the political frameworks the work of Spivak, Arac, and McCabe seemed to offer. (Arac actually directed my dissertation.) I was enthralled by the feeling my classroom was "political." And I continued to love teaching *WoR* even as I was working multiple extra jobs to afford graduate school as parent of two children. I loved teaching it even as my partner, Lori Shorr, had to lead a university-wide campaign for equitable childcare access for graduate students. I loved *WoR* even as Reagan gained a second term. Even as the Liberal Welfare state continued to be dismantled. Even as my mounting student loans became exempt from bankruptcy declarations. In fact, I loved teaching *WoR* right up to the point where I encountered alternative traditions of academic advocacy while undertaking research for my dissertation, research which was ultimately published as *Class Politics: A Movement for a Students' Right to Their Own Language.*

The Study of Error

The first positive comments I ever received during graduate school came from Dave Bartholomae in response to my seminar essay on the 1974 CCCC Students' Right to Their Own Language Resolution (SRTOL). The essay made the somewhat obvious move to link the SRTOL to the political environment of the time, in this case LBJ's great society and shifting public attitudes towards Black English. Throughout my time at Pitt, Bartholomae would remain supportive of my research on the SRTOL. He was a strong advocate for my family. He was not, though, particularly interested when my attention turned outward from SRTOL

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2.   I am aware of the recent actions of Spivak in support of a faculty member charged with abusing graduate students. While Spivak's relationship is not the topic of this essay, Spivak was a kind and supportive advocate for my success. This book would not exist without her support during pivotal moments of my graduate career.

to how university faculty self-organized to reform the university and its class-rooms. My focus on national efforts, such as Movement for a Democratic Society or New University Conference (NUC), or disciplinary efforts such as the Black Caucus or the Progressive Caucus, were seen as a distraction. I think the hesitation was that these collective efforts expanded his vision of an "academic researcher," whose pedagogy necessarily connected the needs of the working class, marginalized ethnic communities, and systemically oppressed Black neighborhoods, towards public actions and advocacy. As such, this framework necessarily demanded learning the organizing skills required to produce material political change in partnership with these communities—whether that change be a stop sign, enhanced educational opportunities, or economic/racial justice.

Bartholomae's and others in composition and rhetoric's hesitation about my research agendas was a real concern. At that moment, I needed my disciplinary justification of the value of such organizations to my research to last just long enough to learn how to do this organizing work. The tenuous status of my graduate school career was reaching a crisis point. I was being driven out of the program by economic pressures—the cost of raising small children, a lack of savings, and a limited financial support network. I was studying these organizations, then, not only because each offered a different model of academic advocacy. I was also studying them in the hopes that by mining these efforts to learn organizational skills, such as creating mission statements or organizing action plans, these insights might be useful in what was most certainly my future non-academic career. Which is to say my actually earning a Ph.D. seemed unlikely. New career models were required. So, I gravitated to figures in these faculty organizations who appeared to have left the academy, but who also seemed to have found alternative venues in which to use their education. For this reason, Neal Resnikoff became (and remains) a central organizing figure in my professional career given his work organizing the NUC as well as, indirectly, being involved in the SR-TOL. After NUC, he appears to have devoted his life to labor organizing. My *Resnikoff Strategy* was to continue to do academic research while picking up the tools, skills, and strategies of actual collective political advocacy. It was a strategy designed to enable future economic stability. In fact, it was only my partner, Lori Shorr, receiving a grant from the *Women in Film Foundation* to support childcare costs that allowed both of us to finish; that and her successful campaign to get reduced fees for graduate student-parents at Pitt's Childcare center.[3]

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3. Of course, when you are focusing your work on a figure such as Resnikoff, trying to navigate contentious relationships between "cultural studies" and "composition," working extra jobs, and walking around the department with small children, you are not necessarily taken that seriously. Everyone was kind, but they were not exactly wagering on my success. I was f ortunate, however, that James Seitz was hired at Pitt at this critical moment for me personally. His capacious sense of the field, willingness to invite me onto committees focused on basic writing pedagogy, was a validation that cannot be overstated.

I should add that I have never actually met Neal Resnikoff. It was through this research, however, that I was able to meet individuals who were active during the 1960s and 1970s in creating a framework which enabled an academic career invested in public advocacy, figures such as Paul Lauter, Louis Kampf, and Richard Ohmann. I was also able to attend events sponsored by 1960s and '70s advocacy efforts that had survived into the 1990s, such the *Radical Teacher Conference* held at Princeton University. This network introduced me to individuals active in forming the *Progressive Caucus of CCCC*, which had emerged in the 1980s. Through conversations with members, such as Karen Hollis, I saw how many of the political commitments from that earlier period had been integrated into curricular and research projects within field of composition and rhetoric. Echoing divisions from the 1960s, I recognized this network was overwhelming "White." And through reading Marianna Davis' *History of the NCTE Black Caucus* and published work by/about founding Black Caucus scholars, I became aware how scholars of color had consistently advocated successfully to have professional organizations respect their research and pedagogical commitments. (Here I want to acknowledge the critiques by the Black Caucus as well as scholars such as Carmen Kynard that my first book *Class Politics* failed to adequately cite the contributions of the Black Caucus or Black scholars. I have benefitted tremendously from their insights.[4])

I also learned a fundamental lesson about academic organizing efforts: Except for the *Black Caucus*, almost every other progressive academic organization that was

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4.   It is also important to note that the Black Caucus leadership wrote a letter to NCTE objecting to the publication of a project which failed to account for the contributions of their caucus. There was also a panel at CCCC focused, in part, on the failure of *Class Politics* on this account. As an untenured professor, I was understandably scared about the impact of these protests. At one-point, senior White scholars in the field suggested I write a public apology and voluntarily withdraw the book from circulation. That evening, though, I received a voice message from Ira Shor, who offered support and trust that I would find a way forward to address these concerns. I was also reminded by Jim Seitz that it is the nature of academic life that work is critiqued. The real question, he told me, is the response. He reminded me that the Black Caucus was not wrong in their concern that its contributions had been erased by the field. He argued that an apology was both an easy way out and a failure to actually respond to their concerns. He asked what I could learn from this moment; how this moment should inform the work to come. For many years after, this "moment" was discussed in articles and conferences as a "protest by the Black Caucus." I was always being asked, in whispered tones, about "my feelings" on being called out." Yes, it was certainly a protest. Yes, it is not easy at those moments to be publicly critiqued. But, as Jim Seitz informed me, it's not about "hurt feelings." It was about recognizing that each of these moments was also an opportunity to learn, to consider questions of scholarly responsibility, to accept the limitations of the sanctioned ignorance that marked my career to that point. I will never claim to have fully addressed the Black Caucus' concerns, but I believe that what I learned from these important critiques has informed and strengthened almost every part of my career. And, I should add, the lessons and education continue to this day.

part of my graduate student research seemed to have collapsed. After an initial rush of membership and production of a newsletter as well as the formation of specific research groups, these national organizations failed to sustain a consistent membership. And while each organization left behind a significant body of essays, studies, and pamphlets, few (if any) could point towards actions which had a demonstrable effect on the material reality of a community, let alone a student or faculty demographic. In fact, this is even true of efforts occurring during the time period in which I was conducting my research, the early 1990s. For example, in response to conservative attacks on universities for failing to provide a traditional humanities education, Gerald Graff led the effort to create *Teachers for a Democratic Culture* (TDC). As with New University Conference, TDC also generated a lot of initial enthusiasm and produced public statements, newsletters, and research that countered conservative attacks. And like NUC, TDC eventually lost its membership, faltered, and collapsed. So, while I could admire the drive that created such groups, I did not want to romanticize their efforts as models to bring into the current moment.

In fact, when TDC faltered, I applied and was appointed to take over the organization. By then, I was Assistant Professor in the English Department at Temple University. And, I think, it speaks to how far TDC had fallen that I was provided this opportunity when senior scholars would clearly have been more appropriate. Working with other TDC founders, we developed a plan to support individual TDC-aligned caucuses within disciplines, echoing organizational models created by the CCCC *Black Caucus* or MLA *Radical Caucus*. These efforts were only partially successful as the rhetorical stance taken by TDC, which might be framed as a moderate progressivism, was unable to integrate itself into the emerging dominance of cultural studies, an umbrella term for post-colonial, Marxist, Feminist research informed by counter histories of the 2/3rd worlds. In fact, fair or not, TDC was seen as standing in opposition to such work, being understood with arguments that such scholarship was corrupting traditional humanities standards. Or to put it another way, when it came to threading the needle of the current political moment, TDC was no *WoR*. But neither TDC nor WoR seemed to offer a successful model for building efforts to support material changes in communities on the wrong side of privilege.

Inventing the University

Surprise was the common response by faculty and friends when learning I had been hired by Temple University. I had been a middling student with an odd project. Not the typical pathway to career success. I did, however, have powerful sponsors as a result of my interaction with *radical elders.* These individuals put my application "in play." And when the first candidate declined an offer from Temple, apparently worried about raising children in Philadelphia, I was offered the tenure track position and readily accepted.[5] It was, though, an odd feeling to have achieved my goal—a

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5.   I should add that my children turned out great.

faculty position—with a research project that projected a non-academic career in advocacy. I had also witnessed and benefitted from the resilience of a working-class city in the face of its collapse; families that collectively pushed the next generation forward into a university. And I accepted a faculty position fully aware of how universities too often failed to educate students to address the needs of working-class communities, let alone take an active role in such solutions themselves. Based on research and personal experience, then, I entered the profession with a belief that an academic scholar must necessarily cast their lot with those on the wrong side of privilege. That university resources should be bent towards the needs of surrounding communities. And while I might have borne witness to the failures of academics who had previously built professional organizations for such goals, I had also witnessed powerful examples of individual scholars whose work and advocacy blended into projects which appeared to have been successful, whether focused on intentionally marginalized students, structurally oppressed communities, or international disregard for their homeland.

What I did not have was a ready intellectual or pedagogical framework in composition and rhetoric through which to channel my research, commitments, and community values. The Pitt model was still in ascendence, which was probably one of the reasons I was hired at Temple University. But I had never seen that model form the type of connections that produce material change in local neighborhoods. Public advocacy by academics was still present in the public ether, but models, such as TDC, were couched in defense of traditions from which my community had never been included. Such models also seemed to situate the primary work of the academic as within the university proper, stepping out in the public only to defend its own traditional privileged position. When you are on the outside of such traditions, emerging from communities outside the concerns of *cutting edge* scholarship, you do not feel quite the same desire to defend such privileges.

Instead, you end up being in a constant rhetorical battle to prove both you and your concerns belong in that privileged environment. Your time is devoted to playing a rhetorical game of prying academic language open long enough to provide you the stability, the space, which will allow alternative meanings and actions to occur. This was not the regularized process of finding new research avenues, which is often just micro-slicing an already micro debate. This was the struggle to remain economically supported by an institution long enough to be able to push for that very institution to support altering public structures of power. I had succeeded at this game long enough to earn a degree at Pitt. I was now looking for a disciplinary landing spot that was still fungible, whose content was still being determined. A framework that could be pushed in directions which enabled political work to be enacted at Temple University, which at that time was an essentially open-admissions working-class oriented institution.

In my opening months in the department, there were some false starts and embarrassing moments.

Then, I found service-learning.

Part 2: The nonexistent is whatever we have not sufficiently desired (Kafka)

Writing Beyond the Curriculum

Gaining employment is not the same as gaining stability. During my first year at Temple University, I thought I might mask this fact by wearing the same outfit every day—white button-down shirt, jeans, and black thick soled work shoes. The joke was I was replicating "Einstein," who I had heard would wear the same clothes every day so as not to be distracted from his work. Later, Steve Jobs would adopt a similar strategy. In my case, my close colleagues eventually let on their awareness that this *Steve* had a different rationale—lack of funds. And perhaps for that same reason, my colleagues recommended me to serve on (and receive a summer stipend from) the college's *Fund to Improve Postsecondary Education* (FIPSE) committee, which was studying whether "service-learning projects" could be considered research. Led by Dan Tompkins, who supported this concept, I discovered that the remaining faculty would quickly coalesce on an answer: "No. Service-learning cannot be considered scholarship. At best, such work might be registered under service. But research, no. No way." Given my experience at Pitt and with *WoR*, I was not overly surprised by this answer. In some ways, their collective answer was irrelevant to me. What interested me was the split between faculty, who were generally against this idea, and college administration, who generally supported this move. I was also interested that the larger faculty committee was navigating a divide, wanting to support the advocacy of their colleagues without also supporting the larger conservative agenda around "public service" that seemed to be pushing this debate within higher education.

Indeed, conservative advocates and scholars had been engaged in an extended critique of the university since at least the 1950s, often focusing on stopping the public work of academics, who were often portrayed as radical Marxists. Simultaneous with this critique, however, was also a seemingly contradictory argument: the university had become an ivory tower, diluting its public role of inculcating good citizenship sensibilities within students. When combined in the late 1990s and early 2000s, these conservative arguments were attempting to alter the political advocacy of professors focused on systemic injustices around race or class into the work of creating classroom which supported a volunteerist (read *service*) ethic. The central goal of the conservative argument was to frame the solution to social issues away from government intervention and towards community-based solutions. This was the next stage of neoliberal remaking of society originating with Reaganism in the 1980s. In this sense, the propagation of the civically engaged volunteer framework became the social mission of the university—welcome to the engaged neoliberal Ivory Tower. This framework is nicely captured in the *Wingspread Declaration: Renewing the Civic Mission of the American Research University*, which was influential in higher education administration circles at this time. Its focus on service through

community engagement projects nicely answered the critique of conservative crit-
ics, while still providing a small portal through which the university might enact
a limited public role. It was this narrow open door that I was being asked to step
through if I wanted to realize my professional and public aspirations.

Indeed, the FIPSE grant was only one node within a larger effort to support
service learning in higher education. During this same period, the American As-
sociation of Higher Education (AAHE) was sponsoring a book series that explored
how service-learning might be integrated across the university curriculum. The
composition and rhetoric publication was titled *Writing for the Community: Mod-
els for Service Learning in Composition* and edited by Linda Adler-Kassner, Robert
Crooks, and Ann Waters. As might be expected, the collected essays offer a contin-
ual exploration of what type of work might be productive for composition students
to undertake, with tutoring soon becoming a bedrock service activity that also sup-
ported a student's development as a writer. Service-learning was also positioned
as creating more engaged students, which indirectly improved retention. Similar
arguments had been previously articulated in "Community Service and Critical
Teaching," where Bruce Herzberg also highlights that by engaging in service-learn-
ing activities his business students found such volunteer work personally powerful,
regardless of whether the experience informed their education. The importance
of these experiences could, instead, be found in students learning how to critique
political narratives of individualism. Instead of accepting neoliberal arguments that
denied structural inequalities, students came to see poverty or homeless as the re-
sult of systemic inequalities. But again, such insights did not necessarily have to
impact their research goals or their public actions to be found "important."

Which is to note that both the AAHE publications as well as early scholarly es-
says on service-learning, such as by those by Herzberg, rarely turn their attention to
what fixes these systemic injustices. Even when there is an indication that systemic
issues are at the root of need for volunteers, there was little to no discussion of how
service-learning might engage students in developing solutions. Nor did there seem
to be emerging an argument that communities possess the resources to organize
successfully in their own interests— that communities themselves understand that
volunteering is a band-aid inadequately masking deeper and sustained wounds.
During this period, the question was rarely raised about how student research proj-
ects might support communities taking on such work, the "community" was seen
as a place offering issues to be studied. It was a space where issues could be partially
addressed through volunteerism. And while there is obviously profound respect
expressed for community partners, the emerging research was not framing the
community as a space rich with intellectuals and traditions from which students
could learn. *Community* was not, at this point, typically represented as a space that
might enable students and faculty to gain insight into how power is enacted on the
less privileged and what a true response might encompass.

And yet, I was learning that terms such as *community*, *service*, *learning*, and
partnership could contain the seeds of such ideas. Indeed, when talking to Johnny

Irizarry, then director of Philadelphia's *Taller Puertorriqueno*, the failure by the university to interpret these key terms as offering moments of cross-communal collaboration and investigation was argued as the principal fault of the service-learning model. It was through our discussions that I came to understand that the "politics" that best served the actual systemic needs of a community emerged from recognizing that the academic had as much to learn as the student; that *community* was best understood as the umbrella term for a network of heritages, legacies, and communal struggles; that any true partnership required this deeper understanding to move past *service,* towards solutions. And perhaps, most importantly, the end goal was systemic change, not window dressing projects. It was service to *a cause,* not "service to *a project*. Today, such claims might seem to be commonplace in the field—think Goldblatt, Banks, Kynard, Mathieu, and Cushman, who have been pivotal figures in my work. This was less the case at this point as community and service entered composition and rhetoric.

At Temple University, I recognized that strategically, at that time, service was a fungible term. It represented both desires and fears, but, as of yet, had not been actualized into a structure. In that sense, my work became how to pry open a space within the college which would provide an opportunity to define service through community-generated goals. ("Prying open terms" being a skill I had learned during my time in graduate school.) I also understood that one of the reasons NUT, NUC, and TDC's political vision faltered was their inability to find an institutional home with resources; a failure to solve the problem of "public work" in ways that relieved outside political pressure within a university setting in a fashion that secured internal funding. I began to realize that by crafting a definition of service that brought together faculty concerns on public issues, disciplinary concerns over scholarly standards, and administrative concerns about public work," an institutional entity could be created that placed academic and community intellectuals on an equal footing—intentionally representing both as conducting research. Such an entity could create moments of intersection which would enable the academic research to meet community needs and community research to inform academic needs. There could also be vehicles to publish their research within circulation networks which would reach their intended audiences. But the first step was to create the alliances which would produce the infrastructure.

"Writing Beyond the Curriculum" (WBC), written with Eli Goldblatt,[6] was the announcement of that entity, the *Institute for the Study of Literacy, Literacy, and Culture* (ISLLC). Internally the ISLLC provided that initial platform which enabled academic and community-based intellectuals to conduct research pointed towards Philadelphia. Our argument was the ISLLC would create models of

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6.   Throughout the remainder of the discussion of the ISLCC, the reader should assume that Eli Goldblatt and I were working collaboratively at all moments. The contributions of Nicole Meyenberg, a graduate student at the time, must also be recognized since her insights informed all our work.

research which demonstrated how such service was scholarship and how they could mutually support each other. In this way, in response to the previously discussed FIPSE committee, the ISLLC was intentionally framed to provide a humanities-based rationale for its existence. Yet it was also this very language which pried open research to include the work of community members, resituating them as equals on the playing field. In particular, the ISLLC worked with community members who were involved in collective efforts at structural change. (It is no accident that a Poor People's Summit by the Kensington Welfare Rights Union was highlighted.) And it is an intentional redirection of service-learning scholarship that Raymond Williams "Culture is Ordinary" would be invoked in later essays to embed the "disciplinary axis" of service within a recognition of community/organic based intellectuals. In effect, the ISLLC was a twist on the conservative strategy of funding university-based conservative think tanks with outside experts. ISLLC was a think tank that defined community members as the outside experts for the purposes of re-integrating connections with academics who imagined their work as confronting the systems that left too many on the wrong side of privilege. Funding soon followed.

Consistently, publishing on such work, despite WBC, remained difficult. During this period, service-learning/community partnership essays were seen as difficult to publish in *CCC* or *College English*. At least among scholar-teachers advocating for the intellectual importance of such work, there was a sense that traditional journals were not taking such work seriously. (Which is not uncommon for new movements in the field.) Or to be more accurate, the intellectual frameworks used to support such work had not solidified to the point of implied significance within the entire field for any essay focused on community, with the evaluation then being the relative merit of this specific example within that body of work. Too often, detailed reports of projects were understood as little more than *business reports* by peer reviewers rather than intellectual interventions in the meaning of writing, literacy, and community. It is for this reason that in 2000, the same year as "Writing Beyond the Curriculum," that *Reflections on Community-Based Writing Instruction* was published, a newsletter that eventually became the *Reflections* journal.[7] And it is not surprising that in the first issue there is an attempt to do definitional work.

In "Welcome to *Reflections*," Nora Bacon and Barbara Sherr Roswell define community-based teaching in the context of "our profession's historical commitments—to a vision of teaching and learning which addresses cognitive, affective, and social development, to a vision of writing which recognizes its power to effect

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7.   In 2007, *Reflections* was incorporated into the ISLLC's New City Community Press to ensure its long-term sustainability. I became editor from 2008 to 2011, benefitting from the insights of associate editor Brian Bailie. At this current moment, *Reflections* remains under the umbrella of New City Community Press and is edited by Laura Gonzales, University of Florida.

personal, practical, and political change—[thus] it is not surprising that inter-
est in service-learning has been particularly strong among writing instructors."
Thomas Dean's rubric for service-learning as involving writing as "for, about, and
with" a community is then highlighted, a rubric emerging from his just published
Writing Partnerships: Service-Learning in Composition. In a concluding essay to
the first newsletter, "Service Learning at a Glance," Linda Adler-Kassner reiterates
a central theme of the collected essay:

> Look before you leap into service-learning. It's important to be
> clear . . . about why you want to incorporate it into your course.
> Ask yourself: "What do I want students to get out of my course?
> What activities will help them get it? Where does service-learn-
> ing fit in? Wanting to help students become good citizens is a
> great start—but what's the connection between that and becom-
> ing a good writer (however you define that)?" The type of ser-
> vice-experience you want in the course should be closely tied to
> what you want students to get out of it.

Adler-Kassner's summative statement is buttressed by a bibliography of rec-
ommended sources. It is interesting to note that many of the authors cited ulti-
mately became foundational to the work of community partnership work, schol-
ars such as Bruce Herzberg, Linda Flower, Nora Bacon, Thomas Deans, and Ellen
Cushman.

But this emergent canon also begins to indicate the troublesome history that
would follow. Out of all the scholars cited in the issue, only two (Cushman and
Freire) would identify as scholars of color or as an international scholar of col-
or. And within the entirety of the published article's bibliographies, a collective
statement of scholarly influences, there are no listings that appear to represent
the work of engaged community members. Which is to say that *Reflections* can
also be understood as a particular moment in the professionalization and so-
lidification of this work as an academic enterprise. And within this solidifying
moment, there is confusion or lack of certainty about how to frame the intellec-
tual contributions of community partners. Indeed, with the important exception
of the citation of Cushman's "Rhetorician as Social Agent," few to none of the
referenced academic articles represent the insights of community intellectuals
as a centralizing framework to the work of service learning or community-based
writing instruction. By default, then, these voices are contained as subjects within
the article, but not included as intellectual foundation for the scholarly work in
the bibliography.

The motivations for adopting such a traditional understanding of research-
er and subject participant had already been made clear to me through my in-
volvement with Temple University's FIPSE committee. One of the reasons that
the FIPSE Committee—and even the most "radical" of scholars—could dismiss
community partnership research and pedagogies is that there was no vehicle to

provide intellectual status to this work, a journal or journals to validate its scholarly worth. *Reflections* represented one attempt to fill this need. A corollary to that objection was the belief that no intellectual tradition which could justify the work. As neither *just research* nor *just teaching*, service-learning fell through the cracks within most disciplinary scholarship. At this point, the justifications for such work had emerged out of national policy organizations, such as *Community Compact*, who would also partially fund the *Wingspread Declaration*. But policy organizations are not *scholarly* organizations. They do not carry the same significance in the university. It is notable, then, in the first issue of *Reflections* that an author invokes Bartholomae's *WoR* to provide both a cultural studies context to the discussed project. It is the repeated strategy of linking a composition studies initiative to one of the dominant models within English, cultural studies. It is certainly one element of the strategy for the "Writing Beyond the Curriculum" article. In this way, at this particular moment in time, the need to find *academic* grounding for this work seemed a necessary, but unfortunate, priority.

It is out of this context that the "Writing Beyond the Curriculum" article initiated the series of additional articles featured in this collection which attempted to argue that community-engagement would not fulfill its potential within the traditional intellectual categories being used to justify its academic credibility. And to be very clear, every scholar involved in such partnership work understood and recognized that community members were intellectuals; that they were, in a sense, community-based professors whose research frameworks and goals provided insights traditional research might fail to produce. This was the subtext of many articles arguing for *equalizing the power dynamic* within such partnerships. There were just not many partnerships that had the resources and the platform that provided institutional justification for such projects as research. In many universities, service learning/community partnership work was consolidated in an outreach office which organized all such efforts. While this no doubt relieved faculty of much of the labor of organizing projects, the non-academic location of the office damaged arguments about how such work intersected with the research core of a discipline. Nor did that location open up opportunities for faculty to apply for scholarly grants which, when awarded, provided visible proof that such work was *scholarly*.

This is where, despite its limitations, the ISLLC proved a useful tool. For having initially established itself, producing several examples of community-based research and publication projects, we were understood as a scholarly and pedagogical project focused on producing rigorous research concerning Philadelphia communities, often in partnership with those communities. This profile enabled us to secure graduate student assistantships, as well as sponsor specific classes, where future "scholars" learned how to undertake such research. We became fundable to a network of foundations, ultimately securing over $750,000 to support our work. With this funding, the initial prying open of terms to secure a space to exist expanded into an operative space, featuring administrative support,

funded faculty, and extensive support of our community publishing efforts. Utilizing a different conception of public work of academics, like *WoR* but pointed toward practice, we had threaded the cultural needle, producing a pivot point to turn out support towards public advocacy across academic and community domains. It is at this point that the second push, or opening, occurred. This time the goal was to leverage community writers into the world of academic publishing as part of a collective effort to change who counted as scholars in our field. Which is to say that with *Reflections* validating the voice of the academic scholar; ISLLC could turn its work to validating the community scholar.

It should be noted that prior to community-partnerships developing in the early 2000s, there had been a movement to publish the work of students of students in academic journals. There were also existing and emerging efforts to publish the writing of community members produced by university-partnership. Many of these community projects, though, were one-off publications, often paid for by community fundraisers, circulating within the small audience of the project or outwards to a slightly larger neighborhood community. Existing outside of any recognized circulation network or institutional sponsor, such publications could be easily dismissed by conservative or traditional academics as *not peer reviewed*, the *equivalent of vanity publications*. These arguments only held if traditional academic institutions maintained the monopoly on *the means of production*. At this time, however, my colleague, Linda Hill, shared her work on community publishing in the United Kingdom. In particular, she highlighted the work of the *Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishers* (FWWCP). Initiated in the late 1970s, the FWWCP was a network of working-class writing groups that were formed as one means to record their community's history in the face of de-industrialization occurring in England. Using new technology that lowered printing costs, FWWCP members published and distributed their work. At first, the FWWCP had about eight member groups located in industrial cities. Over the course of their existence, however, the FWWCP produced over one million books and expanded to hundreds of member groups located across the globe. With ISLLC funding, I was able to fund a research trip to England where I met Timothy Diggles, then FWWCP Director, and Nick Pollard, writer and unofficial archivist. (His collection of thousands of FWWCP publications eventually became the basis for an FWWCP archive in the Trade Union Congress Collection in London developed by Jessica Pauszek, Nick Pollard and myself with funding initially by the ISLLC and later Syracuse University.)

What I learned is that the FWWCP model offered a solution to the criticism that community-partnership writing in the United States faced about the scholarly merit of the work being published. First, the FWWCP had developed an articulated framework (political and aesthetic) through which to value the work of worker writers, which we might understand as community writers in the United States. In publications such as *The Republic of Letters* (Morley, Worpole), the FWWCP positioned the value of community publications against dominant literary

models, stressing both the cultural legacy expressed in such writing as well as the power of its vernacular language. Effectively, they had transplanted notions of writerly expertise with language onto publications which had previously been declared *without literary merit* by the British Arts Council. And, as proof of this argument, the FWWCP had seen its writers featured at universities, anthologized in literary collections, and creating prestigious television dramas (such as *Cracker* by Jimmy McGovern). They had provided a strategic vision of how to turn *community writers* into *intellectually important writers* within established institutions.[8]

As a result of this research trip, the ISLLC brought over members of the FWWCP during the period where we were creating New City Community Press (NCCP).[9] The purpose of their visit was to instantiate, to demonstrate, the power of community writing as a vehicle for personal expression and legitimation of community values. It was also to show how such community writing had gained scholarly credibility. Within this framework in place, we announced NCCP was joining the FWWCP, essentially providing a bibliography to stand at the back of our forthcoming publications. Then in our early publications, such as a city-wide magazine called *Open City*, we featured the work of the FWWCP writers as a legitimating source for the value of our own community writers, who were inclusive of children, school age students, adults, and senior citizens, and who were African American, Latine, Asian/Asian American, LBGTQI, as well as other identities. Echoing FWWCP publications, we also made sure that *Open City* was beautifully designed and had other attributes, such as an ISBN number, to mark it as a "real publication." All these elements enabled New City Community Press to be seen as revolving within a larger network than just Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, or, even, the United States. This provided a sense of "global peer review" status to our projects, both in terms of those being published as well as to those purchasing the publications. Over time, this status led to recognized writers, such as Lorene Carey and Beth Kephart, submitting work for publication. And eventually, the status of NCCP laid the foundation for the *Working and Writing for Change* series, an academic series created to record the important work of CCCC caucuses and special interest groups, as well as community advocates nationally and internationally.

It is worth pausing a moment over the contributions of CCCC caucuses and special interest groups to community literacy/partnership work (See Blackmon, Kirklighter, Parks). The history being represented here, through the limitations of my personal biography, focuses on university and community-based scholars,

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8.   It should be added that the FWWCP was never a financially secure organization. The organization collapsed soon after the 2008 financial crisis. (In partnership with ISLLC and Syracuse University, the FWWCP re-emerged as *The Fed* in 2009.)

9.   The opening success of New City Press depended upon the labor and insights of August Tarrier and Yolanda Wisher, as well as faculty partners as Linda Hill and Susan Hyatt.

policy organizations and community-based literacy organizations, and federal initiatives. The goal is to provide a broad overview of how *service* and *community* established itself in composition and rhetoric studies to frame the essays that follow. It should be noted, however, that scholars of color as well as CCCC caucuses had been undertaking these practices for decades prior to the general field taking on such work. Like the FWWCP, about a decade prior, scholars such as Carlotta Cardenas de Dwyer travelled within Latine neighborhoods collecting the work of community writers, often given to her as handwritten text on paper. She then published this work and argued for its intellectual, artistic, and cultural significance. Dwyer also consistently argued for increased support for research by Chicanx/Hispanic/Latine scholars, particularly scholarship focused on providing a culturally informed pedagogical and literacy framework for composition classrooms. Similarly, Geneva Smitherman both in her research and in her writing has consistently argued for the significance of African American language patterns. As discussed in a special issue of *Reflections*, "Historically Black Colleges and Universities," edited by Riva Sias and Beverly J. Moss, African American faculty have a legacy of creating community-engaged classrooms focused on local needs and aspirations; an issue that built upon David Green's edited edition of *Reflections*, "African American Contributions to Community Literacy," And, *Reflections,* again, published an issue focused on "Latin@s in Public Rhetoric, Civic Writing, and Service-Learning," edited by Isabel Baca and Cristina Kirklighter, Asian/Asian American scholars also possess a similarly rich history, as detailed in *Finding Home: Building a Community*. These individual efforts and publications also highlight the importance of scholars of color as editors of the research and history which informs our field.

The value of the New City Community Press framework, backed by local and international organizations, embedded in academic models of authorizing alternative research models, was that it served as a counterbalance to the traditional valuing of academic discourses and scholarly publications. We did not need to argue for the scholarly value of our work in the university because we existed in a network that included community, university, and international publishers who were validating these efforts. We did not need to prove our literary merit because established writers were being published by NCCP. In effect, "Writing Beyond the Curriculum" (and the essays which followed its publication) were almost a *how-to guide* to maximize leverage points within the university to enable the terms community partnership and community-based teaching to gain enough power to shift resources to support systemic movements for political change—movements designed specifically for such ends. As quoted in our WBC article, we were trying to demonstrate that "with dreams comes responsibility." Meaning that the actualization of terms such as *service*, *community*, *learning* and *writing* within composition and rhetoric required creating a structure which would allow it to fully operate, that there was an obligation to create partnerships which exceeded service-learning's initial goals of neoliberal volunteer programs. It required

partnerships that would support communities developing a specific set of tactics that might ultimately redraw the boundaries of privilege and exclusion.

Thankfully, we were not alone in such aspirations; and we did not need to invent these strategies on our own. By the early 2000s, the scholarship on service-learning, now often replaced or equated to community partnership, was expanding in scope and significance. And while these terms might have been percolated to the surface initially within neoliberal models of volunteerism, the scholarship of this time was being articulated within analytical frames which understood the structural underpinnings of poverty, racial inequality, and gender discrimination. It was during this time that the *Community Literacy Journal* was founded, conceptualized within an understanding of the value of community-based intellectuals. In announcing its mission, *CLJ* stated that, when addressing structural issues, such as institutional racism, "People from privileged situations, like the universities, may have something to offer to address this situation, but is more likely that the communities themselves may have the most to offer." And it was also during this period that, to me, one of the most important publications in community-partnership work emerged, Paula Mathieu's *Tactics of Hope: The Public Turn in Composition*. Through a series of case studies, Mathieu builds the argument that our field's aspirational goals of addressing injustice, our hopes, need to be more than just a sensibility. Hope, she demonstrates requires a tactical sensibility, both within our institutions and within our communities. At different moments, I have perhaps questioned Mathieu's argument that partnership work remains at the tactical level, meaning small, short-term incursions that do not rely on consistent strategic operational space. I have come to understand, however, that such a framework ensures that *committed* professors, like myself, do not over promise results to community members. And her model also provides a framework that allows students to understand how to plan and implement an action designed to highlight systemic injustices *in partnership* with organizations that have taken on the long-term responsibility of addressing larger structural issues. If *WoR* offered a solution to the field of composition and rhetoric in the late 1990s, my sense is that Mathieu has answered the question of how the vast majority of university-based teachers can effectively work with local communities on significant projects. Indeed, it was this model of creating a series of "tactics" in service of a larger community-defined goal that framed the next stage of my own work.

Sinners Welcome

At a certain moment NCCP began to operate in its own orbit. While institutionally tethered to Temple University, NCCP was slowly mutating into an entity through which working-class, Latine, and African American communities could amplify their political concerns, often using publications to frame the goals of their self-created campaigns for equity and inclusion. These publications were

occurring while Temple University had made the economic decision that middle-class students were a safer tuition bet than working-class students. As a result, the student population began to hail more from the suburban ring than the central communities of Philadelphia. Temple, it was said, was to become the *Harvard on the Schuylkill*, the central river coursing through Philadelphia. The focus on community partnerships was rapidly diminishing.

By then, however, I had learned from the FWWCP leadership, as well as my study of organizations like NUC that, to be sustainable, NCCP needed to operate at the lowest possible budget total. If developed correctly, the initial level of funding—which would establish a publishing framework, create sustainable partnerships, and build allies—should become increasingly less necessary. At one point, that is, the project should operate through organic commitments, fed by shared values and goals. NCCP had reached this goal. In that sense, the ISLLC had served its purpose of being a launch pad for community/university-based projects focused on systemic injustices. It was at that point, I decided the best path forward for NCCP was to remove it from Temple University, placing it in a non-profit incubator program. And since approximately 2003, NCCP has been independent, operating with an annual budget of less than $15,000, funds raised through book sales and targeted micro-grants enabling it to continue.

With NCCP now located outside of Temple University, I also left for Syracuse University's Department of Writing Studies, Rhetoric, and Composition, specifically hired for my work in what was now generally termed as "community engagement" scholarship. A hire focused on community-engagement at this point, though, was hardly unusual. By this time, the vast majority of advertised jobs (tenure and non-tenure stream) were listing *community engagement* as a desired sub-field next to more traditional categories, such as *writing program administration* and *technical writing*. Community engagement had also become an expected thread in most academic conferences; it possessed a constellation of *figures* whose work would attract large audiences; and it now benefitted from university-based and nationwide funding sources. Increasingly, engagement work found itself the focus of prestigious endowed chair positions. By the standards of most academic sub-fields, community engagement had achieved disciplinary recognition. This recognition seems a little less glamorous, however, when placed in the context of extensive exploitation of adjunct laborers who undertake such partnerships out of a sense of ethical obligation, but rarely get the necessary compensation or support required. And it is a telling fact about such disciplinary recognition that few institutions can point to even a modicum of consistent economic support for the local community members who expertise is the foundation of any ethically driven partnership project. In this way, community-engagement's values had little impact on how the university operates as economic institutions.

Moreover, with recognition came increased scrutiny. In 2019, the *National Association of Scholars* released a report entitled, *Social Justice Education in America*.

The scholarly basis of the report is questionable. For instance, there is a claim that "the total number of social justice advocates employed in higher education must be well over 100,000." The footnote to justify this number states, "This is an informal estimate. No detailed study exists; one is sorely needed" (24). But as we have recently learned, the value of fact-based arguments is diminishing. Indeed, the power of this report is the emotional rhetoric that decries "social justice warriors" (SJW) for distorting and diminishing a humanities-based education that inculcates traditional "American" values. For the author of the report, the central pedagogical tool enabling the success of these SJWs is, unsurprisingly, community-engagement. Or more accurately, the entire network of terms that encompass public-facing pedagogical projects:

> Social justice departments denominate their vocational training in activism as experiential learning—or related terms such as civic engagement, community engagement, fieldwork, internships, practica, service-learning. Service-learning usually refers to relatively unpoliticized experiential learning which habituates students to the basic forms and techniques of activism. The term experiential learning disguises what is essentially vocational training in progressive activism by pretending that it is no different from an internship with an engineering firm. Many supposedly academic social justice courses also focus on readying students for experiential learning courses—and for a further career in social justice activism. Experiential learning courses are what particularly distinguishes social justice education from its progressive forebears. Experiential learning courses, dedicated outright to progressive activism, drop all pretense that teachers and students are engaged in the search for knowledge. Experiential learning is both a camouflaging euphemism and a marker of social justice education. (22)

The report continues by highlighting how SJW have made such courses required for completing a major or fulfilling a university core requirement—essentially mandating indoctrination in progressive politics as part of every student's education. To show the breadth of SJWs influence, the report concludes by analyzing a range of universities and colleges in terms of how they have been *taken over* by social justice warriors through the proliferation of common core course requirements, which are actually *social justice* courses, and progressive frameworks, such as diversity, equity, and inclusion requirements, which serve the same purpose. Importantly, *Social Justice Education in America* was sent to sympathetic state legislators and deployed to justify defunding public universities, as well as implementing restrictive policies on what topics could be taught. The continued power of such arguments in 2023 is evident today where state legislators in Florida and Texas have banned funding for diversity, equity, and

inclusion efforts in state universities. High schools have also been banned from requiring (or supporting) community-engaged projects within their curriculum. And as I write, Texas is mandating a distorted *anti-woke* standard on how Black History can be taught.

It is not surprising, then, that many faculty are finding their engagement work being placed under a microscope, with its rhetorical and material practices actively monitored. It is not just the conservative or far right, though, who are paying attention. Universities, themselves, are also developing policies on how faculty or departments can engage in community partnership work. Some of these efforts are well intended efforts to stop the practice of faculty strip-mining communities for their research goals, often framed under "community-based research." But as part of such policies, and often underlying rationale for such policies, there is an effort to restrict the type of allowable projects—projects which the university will defend if attacked. And as noted earlier, universities are creating Community Partnership Centers, often located in a *quaint neighborhood house*, which serve the purpose of restricting (in the name of providing support) the political efforts of many projects. During my time at Syracuse University, my colleague John Burdick and I created a community fellows research program that eventually morphed into a community-driven campaign against a university-supported gentrification project. (See *Sinner's Welcome*). As the campaign gained momentum, our students began to be followed by university-paid community members. Concerns were raised about the ideological nature of our aligned courses, overriding student and faculty evaluations which praised the disciplinary rigor of the syllabus and readings. University funding sources were then withdrawn as a result of untenured program officers fearing for their jobs. And organizations which had previously worked with our project withdrew from participation out of concern that their funds would be withdrawn as well.

John Burdick and I were in the privileged position of being tenured faculty members. I was doubly fortunate that my colleague Eileen Schell was department chair and provided consistent vocal support of the project's value to students as well as our department. I will discuss the importance of developing such support, particularly at this current moment, below. Here I just want to mark that the triumphalism of much community-engaged scholarship needs to be placed within this spreading resistance to some of its founding values. As a graduate student, I studied similarly celebratory moments by progressive scholars, such as resolutions, organizations, government policies designed to open up higher education. As I have written about in *Class Politics,* the NUC had an entire program to transform education called "Open Up The Schools" (OUTS). Of course, NUC is gone. And today, states are shutting down many of the programs that *opened* curriculum and opportunity to those on the wrong side of privilege. If academics do not respond more effectively to these threats, one day another marginalized graduate student will read our work and wonder why it all fell apart—why we, like so many academics before us, just let it all slip away.

Of Rights Without Guarantees

Universities are large institutions, often siloed, and also often unaware of what is happening in other parts of campus. This might explain why at the same time my community engagement projects were under pressure for being *political* from the Syracuse University administration, I was invited to take part in a project in Syracuse University's Maxwell School with Arab Spring advocates focused on building democratic societies. Specifically, the hope was that NCCP might work with the advocates to produce a publication focused on their experiences. (See "After the Fall.") When this publication was complete, published as *Revolution by Love*, I found myself working with Bassam Alahmad, a Syrian human rights documentation worker living in exile in Turkey. Together, we created *Syrians for Truth and Justice* (https://stj-sy.org/en/), which documents human rights abuses of all parties engaged in the Syrian civil war. (See Parks, Alahmad, Kumari.) As part of this work, I found myself engaged in learning weapons systems and chemical weapon technology as I edited the English translations of our in-country documentary teams reports for posting on our website.

I also spent many hours reviewing, captioning, and detailing photographs of the victims of these weapons. Too often, the images were of small children, foaming at the mouth or burned after chemical attacks by Assad's brutal regime. It was clearly work for which I had no real preparation. The theories of community engagement or pedagogies of service-learning seemed disconnected, almost irrelevant, at such moments. And I would even argue that much of cultural studies and composition and rhetoric scholarship which had opened up a political space through which to do politically engaged community partnerships work fell short. This was not only because such work typically did not provide models for how its theories could be made actionable with such contexts. It was also in the nature of such work that essentialist categories, such as human rights, were more critiqued than deployed. As a result, these new community engagement projects required a different ethical epistemological framework than any of the previous projects. Or perhaps, this work highlighted how there had been a consistent, yet unacknowledged, essentialist belief in fundamental human rights throughout all my projects.

There was a second reason, though, why much of the ethical framework would turn out to be of little use—the assumption of rights was based within a Westphalian conception of nation states. Essentially, I would argue community-engagement premised much of its work on an implicit framework that political rights were granted or enforced by the nation-state (and recognized local or city governments). The basis of the advocacy was to pressure the state to recognize a right to housing, an affordable education, or healthcare. However, many of the STJ community members were stateless. Actually, since many were Kurdish, they were doubly stateless; Syria did not recognize them as full citizens with political rights; once refugees, the international and nation-state network (think

U.N.) did not fully recognize displaced individuals as having political rights, such as the ability to enter certain countries or to expect aid to address their suffering. In fact, the fact that my friend Bassam was Kurdish, living in Turkey, added another level of displacement as Turkey's President Erdogan was actively creating policies to discriminate against this community and any organizations led by this community. (We eventually had to legally move STJ to Paris, France to protect its independence.)

Of course, composition and rhetoric, as a field, had been building an international presence prior to the emergence of community-engagement work. These efforts, however, had been principally the export of the concept of first year writing courses and writing program administration. As a result, there was necessarily discussion and research on how U.S.-based models need to be revised to support the cultural and institutional histories of universities in Eastern Europe or the Middle East and North Africa. When it came to integrating service-learning or community-engagement practices into the curriculum, however, deeper issues emerged. For instance, the teaching of academic literacy in an authoritarian country, such as Russia, might be broadly accepted as long as critical thinking is finessed in ways that hide its significance. Asking Russian students to leave the classroom and organize a campaign for educational rights, however, represents an entirely different set of concerns, including physical danger. In such a context, even the slightest public effort poses an unacceptable risk. For example, I have found my students often push aside as unimportant the work of my Algerian colleague to form a book club focused on debate in his university. They are then very surprised to hear about the harsh blowback and repression which followed the creation of space for "critical dialogues" about concepts of democracy. (See *Rights Without Guarantees*; *Dreams of Twiza*.) It seems the most accurate and fair assessment of international community-engaged work that a nuanced political and ethical framework is still being developed.

But one lesson has become clear to me: It is easier to work with democratic advocates in Syria, Myanmar, Bolivia, and the Philippines, than it is to work with U.S.-based democratic advocates. For the past four years, I have been developing the Democratic Futures Project (democraticfuturesproject.com), an effort that brings together international democratic advocates, politically engaged faculty, and policy analysts. The goal is to develop an ethical and scholarly framework which enables effective partnership between the university and grassroots advocates working against authoritarian regimes. Part of this work involves creating research projects, often also embedded in composition classrooms, that enable teams of academics and advocates to explore how to bend scholarship to grassroot needs. The jury is still out on how successful this project will be. It is already clear, however, that when community engagement work defends democracy abroad, the labels of "social justice warrior" seem to fall away. Across the political spectrum, there is support for work that is understood as "steeped in American values," despite actual international actions which contradict such values.

And it has also become clear, to me at least, that for these democratic advocates there is a value, a meaning, in "the United States." Which is to say, that many of these advocates surprise my students when they speak of the need to defend the United States. This stance is partially premised on the fact, as #ThisFlag founder and Zimbabwean Pastor Evan Mawarire noted, "If I were to step outside and criticize President Mugabe, I would have been arrested and imprisoned. If I go outside of this classroom and criticize President Biden, it will hardly be noticed" (Mawarire). Which is to say, advocates experience the full force of what we consider to be "accepted freedoms." There is another element to their defense, however. As a rhetorical tool within their local and national context, the United States represents a powerful historical symbol of democracy and human rights. From my position on the left-progressive side of the field, I have been taught to dismiss such attitudes, step back from such patriotism. My father's experience in Vietnam has embedded a personal reason to distrust such rhetoric. And yet, advocates risking imprisonment, torture, and death say otherwise.

At this moment in the development of community-engagement as an international practice, I wonder, then, "How would our work change if we believed the advocates?" If we simply believed advocates like Pastor Evan Mawarire. How might such a belief begin to build a response to far-right conservative critics who want to reduce the meaning of the United States, both in terms and policies, to a modern form of White supremacy? How might working within such a belief enable community-partnership to pry open alternative meanings and histories of the United States, the meanings that global advocates find so valuable, and become part of the larger project of recreating an inclusive public sphere? And how might such work strengthen democracy here and provide additional tools to democratic advocates globally? To be honest, I don't know the answers. I only know that collectively, as a field, these are questions we must address.

Conclusion

When I look back at who I was in graduate school, I am not sure I recognize myself. The person who used his dissertation to develop an exit strategy from the academy would be filled with gratitude over the skills and opportunities provided by that piece of writing. Shocked, really. I also believe, though, that my graduate-student self would understand that latent sense of anxiety which still courses through these pages: an understanding of the fragility of the successes in this current moment. In graduate school, I was witness to the collapse of the steel industry in Pittsburgh, the distancing of a university from working-class residents, and the emergence of a disciplinary models which engaged theoretically in politics without engaging materially in political action. As a new professor, I again experienced a university distancing itself from its working-class neighbors, again saw the personal and material impact of regions where industry has left (and college-level jobs have arrived), and experienced attempts to turn disciplinary

models into neoliberal political goals. It is a storyline seemingly on a continuous loop. And so, the anxiety remains.

To be clear, the anxiety does not come out of a sense of failure. What I have tried to show in the above pages is that academics in partnerships with advocates and communities, located down street and across the globe, have done yeoman's work. In an environment marked by a conservative politics which expands corporate and White supremacist power while simultaneously shrinking class opportunity and racial, gender, and ethnic community rights, these partnerships have pried open the possibility of disciplinary language to effect actual change in the world. Through this collective effort, terms such as *community*, *service*, *learning* and *partnership* have driven university resources outwards in alliance with those struggling to change the boundaries of privilege. In this regard, the National Association of Scholars was not wrong in highlighting how university structures have been altered by the forceful and collective will that is demanding commitments to access, equity, and inclusion move from buzz words to institutionalized practices. And what I hope becomes clear in the essays that follow is a profound belief in this new generation of faculty, students, and community members will continue the fight.

Instead, the anxiety emerges from a sense of history, first explored as a graduate student hoping to find models for effective advocacy but finding only failed organizations. Today, I wonder whether the structures put in place by the work of community engagement—structures currently shifting power within significant number of classrooms, programs, college and universities—will hold. Will the faculty lines, the journals, the conference threads, and the monograph series that provide the "scholarly" justification for this work continue? This is not an idle question. Nor is it a dramatic question. It is a recognition that, historically, moments of success by progressive scholars, scholars of color, LBGTQI scholars, and working-class scholars are followed by retrenchment that attempts to push these values back out of our classrooms, our professions, our institutions. We are living in such a moment right now. Again, consider what is happening in Texas, in Florida, in West Virginia, in Mississippi, and within hundreds of school districts and local governments. We need to ask the question: Will the structures built to support the values and practices of community engagement hold? Are we winning the political struggles? I worry we are just claiming victories in the pages of academic journals while losing ground politically.

Over the past several years, I have had the good fortune to become friends with Srdja Popović , who as a college-aged student helped to create OTPOR! and drive the authoritarian leader Slobodan Milosevic out of power in Serbia. Over the decades that followed, Popović helped to create the Center for Applied Nonviolent Actions and Strategies (canvasopedia.org) which has worked in over fifty countries providing advocacy training programs in support of democracy and human rights. There are many elements to these trainings, but for the purposes of this essay, I want to focus on "capturing the middle" and "pillars of power." The importance

of "capturing the middle" in a non-violent campaign is that, obviously, it is where the majority of people are located. If you build your movement with language and concerns which alienate the majority, you will never get the numbers required to succeed. In many ways, NUC (and similar organizations) failed because there was no consistent engagement with those outside of their immediate community. Or more accurately, there was no attempt to find areas of shared values with communities who, at first glance, appear to be opponents. Doing this work, of course, means some terms will expand, some demands will moderate, and others will be added. In the process, however, you begin to build the numbers that provide you leverage to shift public debate and policies your way (see Popović ; CANVAS).

As you do the work of capturing the middle, you also want to look at the pillars of power which organize society. These are the institutions that ensure certain policies (or authoritarian leaders) remain in control. Pillars of Power are entities like the government, the judiciary, the police, the educational system, and the media. Within each pillar are smaller networks of programs, initiatives, and so on. The pillars only work because the individuals within them do the daily labor required to keep operations moving. A successful political movement needs to pull a certain number of pillars to their cause since doing so will collapse support for the policy or political leader. A reason for working to "capture the middle" is because some of your eventual supporters might work within a particular pillar. Or their parents and neighbors might work within that pillar. And through one-on-one dialogues, public events that work to attract members, that pillar will fall (either by individuals within the pillar resisting to carry out policies or publicly changing their position on the issue). Returning again to the NUC. There is very little evidence that the NUC developed a strategy designed to draw any Pillar of Power to their side, such as the Education Pillar (schools, school boards, universities, etc.) And even if such a strategy existed, the NUC did not have the numbers to demonstrate broad support of their vision. In reality, it is not surprising they collapsed.

Now let's consider the structures supporting community partnership work, structures designed to turn its values into material practices. And to make the exercise concrete, let's imagine a community partnership project located within a university, within a moderate sized city, in a politically moderate state. Founders of that program might conduct the following analysis:

> Who in my program, department, college, or university supports materially or conceptually this partnership work? Do these offices have the ability to protect the partnership? Who do I need to bring to my side to have an effective defense? Who do I need to make an ally?

> What non-university local, regional, or state educational leaders support the partnership? Do they have the ability to protect the partnership? Who do I need to bring to my side to have an effective defense?

This analysis would ask similar questions in terms of political, business, and religious pillars until it became clear where the support for the program was strong or weak. It will be tempting to ask these questions in terms of a broad term like "community." To some extent that might make sense. You might then track who among your members belongs to those institutions. But this analysis is not about individuals per say or romantic conceptions of "community," it is about understanding what institutions are blocking change, which can create change. The aim would be to focus on what institutions within that community, that are understood within a pillar (such as education), can be said to support your partnership. Do you have sufficient support among the "pillars" you're your efforts are protected against attack.

Conducting such an analysis also enables you to step back and consider how your goals, your rhetoric, and your strategies create pathways into those institutions or shut them off to you. A rhetoric, for instance, that states all university administration is corrupt, damages your ability to get some members of that administration to align with your efforts. If all your strategies involve daytime mass marches, you might eliminate those with daytime jobs, children, or mobility issues. And if your primary goal only impacts a small community (faculty who teach partnership courses), there will be no way to build mass support, to pull those operating Pillars of Power to your side. And as I have learned the hard way, your ability to protect your partnership work, to continue to support the efforts of those on the wrong side of privilege, rests on the ability to get significant numbers of individuals supporting your campaign.

Of course, there are many more steps involved, but the above represent some of the beginning moves and actions. I understand that this type of analysis is not a typical element of most academic careers. I also understand that it might be hard to conceptualize a particular partnership as gaining significant numbers of support within a university, let alone within the larger community, city, or state. I want to argue, however, that this lack of understanding is the result of a disciplinary framework that, historically, does not prepare faculty as to undertake such actions. It is a disciplinary framework that argues strategizing for support, building frameworks that draw together hundreds or thousands of people, somehow dilutes the purity or the rigor of our work. In fact, while the work discussed in the essays that follow might be seen as important by some, I have also been "kidded" about my ability to *market* or *strike deals*. I have been critiqued as unscholarly for my work at building alliances across different pillars. And to be honest, such comments do push my working-class imposter buttons. But to be blunt, how valuable is our work if it is supported by only a narrow slice of already narrow slice of humanities scholarship? How much do we actually care about our work if we will not do the strategic work to ensure its survival? And in the case of community partnership work, labor explicitly committed to those on the wrong side of privilege, what type of privilege is enacted by removing ourselves from the *undignified* work of organizing the support which will allow the work to continue?

To be blunt: A journal article is only as valuable as its ability to sustain or expand the power of a coalition. A conference talk is only as useful as it pries open opportunities for allies. A community-engaged course is only as important as the organizing work it allows to occur on behalf of the community. And yes, of course, the theories which inform that work and the pedagogical models deployed are vital to further entrench community partnership work within our discipline. I am only pointing out the self-evident truth that if we do not constantly embed our work in a strategic vision that expands our institutional allies and public support, *all* that will have been accomplished is a theoretical intervention. And that legacy would represent an abandonment of the community members, neighborhoods, and local organizations who believed *partnership* meant more than scholarship, conference talks, and lecture tours. That it meant that change was necessary; that change was possible; and that change could be achieved.

Collectively, over the past thirty years, academics, advocates, and their alliances have created a remarkable opening within the university that has enabled formerly hoarded resources to be directed in support of those historically on the wrong side of privilege. It is more than I could have imagined as a graduate student. But it is an opening that many at this current moment would like to see closed. A moment when seemingly discarded attitudes about race, gender, ethnicity, and class are once again finding oxygen. A moment that many hope to ensure the few continue to benefit from the labor of the many. It is now time for us to join the organizing work being done by those on the wrong side of privilege. With those who share our values. For in a very literal sense, the battle has been joined. It is time to ask yourself: Which side are you on? And what will you do to ensure victory?

Otherwise, we will become the nostalgia that produces good feelings, but never produces significant change.

We will be the dusty articles which record one more moment of lost opportunity. We will be a warning instead of foundation to build upon.

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Part 1. Foundations

"In dreams begins responsibility."

– W. B. Yeats

In beginning any new occupation, I believe there is almost an instinctive moment when the future is imagined. It is not surprising, then, that my first "significant" publication spoke in terms of "fostering new collaborations in literacy." Nor did I realize at the time that this essay, as with many others that followed, would itself be a collaborative effort—taken on with my dear friend and colleague, Eli Gold-blatt. I set this essay apart from the others that follow to mark its utopian nature. Its willingness (arrogance?) to imagine a future for a field which, to be honest, had barely noticed my existence. In that sense, "Writing Beyond the Curriculum" is clearly written from the position of an outsider.

"Writing Beyond the Curriculum," then, might be considered an attempt to create a disciplinary apparatus that would be able to recognize how composition and rhetoric, striving for disciplinary legitimacy, had been produced through a commitment to the "non-traditional" student, but not to with a consequent valu-ing of the "non-traditional" community. To put it another way, in this article, I began a public argument (first articulated in my dissertation) that with a different constellation of "scholarly influences," the field might come to understand how systemically marginalized intellectual traditions, critical sensibilities, and collec-tive advocacy practices might reshape its future. How such a vision might then lead to different programmatic structures, partnerships, and publications linked to the insights and needs of surrounding neighborhoods.

But for that to occur, strategically, key concepts in the field had to be expand-ed. Enter "Writing Across the Curriculum." The term had to pried open to create the space which could enact programs that recognized not only that everyone was an intellectual, ala Gramsci, but that everyone should have their position as intellectuals supported by actual resources. A recasting of WAC that would invite a full representation of intellectuals to discuss what is the literacy and ad-vocacy work that needed to be locally. It was for that reason that cultural studies scholars, such as Raymond Williams, are invoked in later essays to recognize how communities too often pushed to the wrong side of privilege actualy contain the very insights required to actualize rhetorics of social justice, equity, and equality.

There was also a more immediate goal. At my university and, perhaps, with-in the academy, there was a sense that scholarship and community engagement were separate entities. In a university striving to demonstrate its Research 1 "chops," there was a strategic need to demonstrate how the emerging commu-nity engagement work at the *Institute for Literature, Literacy, and Culture* was producing "scholarship." That the new relationships being built in the immediate

community surrounding the university and beyond were supporting the knowledge and pedagogical aims of the institution. This is why the goals of community partners are somewhat proceeded (and most certainly embedded) within significant scholarly voices; a pattern we tried "to flip" as the work developed. In this way, the essay operated on both a local and disciplinary level.

In that sense, "Writing Beyond the Curriculum" initiated a long-term strategy which would be enacted throughout the work discussed later in this collection. And as the work continued in Philadelphia and, later, Syracuse, "Writing Beyond the Curriculum" became an ethical compass that help to navigate the complex relationship between composition, rhetoric, disciplinarity, community, advocacy, scholars, and intellectuals. As will be evident in the essays that follow, I did not always traverse these terrains successfully. I made many mistakes. Hopefully, though, the essays demonstrate a consistent commitment to learning from both university and community-based intellectuals. Hopefully, the work that followed "Writing Beyond the Curriculum" demonstrated that the new collaborations in literacy being created were responsive and responsible to the dreams of my partners and partnering communities.

Featured Essay

"Writing Beyond the Curriculum: Fostering New Collaborations in Literacy," with Eli Goldblatt, *College English*, vol. 62, no. 5, May, 2000, pp. 584-606.

Chapter 2. Writing Beyond the Curriculum: Fostering New Collaborations in Literacy

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"In dreams begins responsibility"

– W. B. Yeats

As Susan McLeod noted more than ten years ago, the movement for writing across the curriculum at its best has been about "change in the entire educational process at the university level" ("Defining" 23).[1] From its inception in small liberal arts colleges to its broad application in land grant universities and Ivy League schools, WAC has challenged teachers in every discipline to think more about the context and nature of student learning than they might within the traditional content-driven model of college teaching. WAC's attention to students' learning precedes the recent drive in higher education circles to shift universities "from teaching to learning" (Barr and Tagg; M. Miller; Schneider and Shoenberg).

Indeed, WAC practitioners have become institutional leaders in faculty development and activist program design. Writing program administrators (WPAs) are often asked to participate in service-learning task forces, teaching excellence advisories, technology roundtables, and core revision committees. Writing programs are now involved in service-learning projects that connect the classroom to the community (Adler-Kassner, Crooks, and Watters; Cushman "Public"; Herzberg; Schutz and Gere) and in new instructional initiatives that draw on information technology and the internet (Anson; Faigley; Hawisher, et al.; Walvoord; or see online journals such as *Kairos*).

Our colleagues in the National Writing Project have for many years been working with teachers on writing pedagogy in elementary and secondary school (Silberman). The growing involvement of college writing teachers in various community, technology, and school initiatives signals a shift in writing program emphasis that

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invites us to reconsider the original social compact out of which WAC was formed. David Russell has suggested that WAC combines elements of competing camps in early twentieth-century education: progressive educators' concern for "child-centered teaching" and the modern consolidation of disciplinary knowledge. In Russell's view, WAC strikes a balance between those two, reflecting John Dewey's vision that "students' use of language must lead systematically from the experience of the individual to the collective experience of the culture as represented by organized disciplines" (26). However, his history of WAC also emphasizes the extent to which "writing" thus became tied to the university's structure of specialized departments. The movement won battles to shift instruction away from mechanical "skills" and toward the discourse of textbased disciplinary communities (25), but it gained its success because it "linked writing not only to learning and student development but also to the intellectual interest of specialists" (39).

At the end of the century, universities are changing again, and the deal WAC struck with departments and disciplines—to train students in the major and forward the move to specialized education—may not generate and sustain the sort of literacy instruction necessary for students in universities of the next century. Even from the point of view of faculty, maintaining an uncritical alliance with disciplines does not serve the interests of many colleagues. Faculty who collect folklore or oral histories, sponsor community writing projects, or facilitate school-based publications often have no forum within the university's disciplinary structure to share the results of their research with colleagues of like mind but different discipline. Indeed, absent a central site to explain and develop a broader conception of writing and reading, traditional models of literacy and faculty collaboration dominate. If compositionists reframe WAC to reach beyond university boundaries, we can foster cross-pollination and interdisciplinary discussion of how knowledge is shaped and conveyed in culture. In short, WAC could integrate a multiplicity of writing and reading modes with a conception of literacy instruction not limited to serving the needs of established disciplines.

This article begins by reviewing calls for an expanded conception of WAC and looks at the tension between the standard structure of college writing programs and the increasing external demands on these programs. We then describe an example of a program that carries writing instruction and literacy research beyond university boundaries. Finally, we suggest problems and benefits that may accompany this change of orientation for writing programs. The argument is not that WAC needs to abandon its traditional support for writing in the disciplines, but that we should imagine our project as one that combines discipline-based instruction with a range of other literacy experiences that will help students and faculty see writing and reading in a wider social and intellectual context than the college curriculum. Such a reconceptualization of WAC requires increased collaborations among university, school, and community partners as well as a greater sense of commitment by writing program administrators to literacy in the regions where our institutions are located.

Institutional Demands and New Challenges for Students

An expanded conception of WAC responds both to current institutional demands and to new challenges in literacy faced by undergraduate students. In a sense, both involve recalibrating the "balance" David Russell describes in WAC "between the individual students' experience and the collective experience that a discipline and its teachers represent" (41). Institutionally, universities are under enormous pressure to provide a wider range of study to a more diverse population through an extended spectrum of instructional modes, while the financial resources for the universities—especially public universities—contracts. As Anne Herrington and Charles Moran have warned, WAC grew as funding for the universities expanded after World War II, and if "such expansion was a factor in the origin and development of writing in the disciplines, then the present contraction may be a factor in its demise" (236). WAC will need to suit itself to the changing conditions of university funding, and in many ways an expanded conception of WAC is quite suited to the new environment in which recruitment and retention of students gains importance and undergraduate student learning is valued over research and graduate education.

At the same time, students are facing new challenges in terms of what they must know in work and civic life. They often think they are looking for vocational training, but they must be prepared for much more complicated demands than job preparation. They must learn abilities that will sustain them through multiple career changes, new roles in marriage and community life, and forbidding political crises in the environment, economy, and social justice. If compositionists and rhetoricians are to act upon the current research and theory in our own journals, writing programs can no longer be limited to introducing students to the rhetoric of academic fields and majors. Our attention to public discourse (e.g., Cushman "Public"; Mortensen; Wells), critical literacy in schools and community settings (e.g., Cushman "Critical"; DeStigter), cultural studies (e.g., Berlin and Vivion), and the weaving of personal stories into academic argument (e.g., Brodkey; Goldblatt; R. Miller) suggest that writing and rhetoric teachers have much to offer students beyond either traditional belletristic notions of the essay or discipline-specific understandings of effective prose.

First, consider the institutional demands on writing programs. In her 1996 meditation on "The Future of WAC," Barbara Walvoord issued this challenge: "WAC programs, which have traditionally focused on micro issues, must now devote significant attention to macro issues. The first macro challenge is the need to work with other organizations" (68). She pictures WAC as a social movement and recommends that WPAs should work more directly with national organizations such as the American Association for Higher Education, university-based institutes for higher education research and leadership such as those at Syracuse and elsewhere, foundations such as Pew Charitable Trusts, and governing bodies such as accrediting agencies, boards, and legislatures. She recognizes that WAC has lost some of its early vigor but calls on us "to act now as a mature reform organization" and take a role in "what history may call the era of teaching" (74).

An alliance among university instructors and teachers both in K–12 and adult basic education is particularly crucial, even if it appears today to be quixotic. Too often university faculty do not frame even our teaching mission in such a way as to class ourselves with schoolteachers or community educators. The differences in privilege and autonomy make such alliances seem impossible. There is also little in the tenure or promotion reward structure to encourage long-term engagement by faculty with public school or community organizations (see "Making Faculty Work Visible"). In addition, the decisions made by both public schools and universities (for example, curricular initiatives or building projects) often alienate neighborhood residents and take no account of community literacy projects.

And yet "teaching literacy" is a term under which a considerable range of educational efforts—from graduate school to adult job training to daycare—could be united. This term authorizes educators to work on vexing community problems by joining hands and minds across institutional boundaries. To take a particularly striking example, in one Philadelphia public high school that serves a predominantly Latino population, the average entering 9th grade cohort is approximately 1,200 students. On average, only 200 students receive diplomas (North Philadelphia Community Compact Data Report). Of those, few were capable of entering a four-year college program without tremendous transitional support.

Numbers like these—tantamount to genocide in poor neighborhoods throughout the United States—have significant impact on college enrollments as well as welfare and crime statistics, but in human terms educators simply must develop a principled and effective response to such a social catastrophe. Mike Rose has written eloquently about the good to be found in American public schools in the most stressed neighborhoods, and he has called for a different kind of critique, one that does not minimize the inadequacies of curriculum and instruction, the rigidity of school structure, or the "savage inequalities" of funding, but that simultaneously opens discursive space for inspired teaching, for courage, for achievement against odds, for successful struggle, for the insight and connection that occur continually in public school classrooms around the country (4).

A network of people concerned with literacy in a region could develop a supportive and constructive critique of public education that would make solutions possible across traditional educational and community boundaries. Nor should the banding together of teachers at all levels be seen as inimical to research. One might argue that today, when productivity is the main measure of work, teaching in the humanities looks more defensible than unfunded research in all but the most elite institutions. But the making of knowledge should not be split off from the conveying of it. Our hope lies in the opposite direction: just as we foster better teaching at all levels, we should also support more educators and students in the project of inquiry. By asserting the place of writing not only within the curriculum but within the local social context, academics will be in a better position to explain to a skeptical public just why research and publication really do matter to the society at large.

Urging us from a more practical direction is Susan McLeod in a recent article on the nature of WAC. Even more directly than Walvoord, she focuses us on what it takes to create programs that survive: "Wise WAC directors will also look for outside funding for their programs . . . and will integrate their programs with important campus initiatives—assessment, technology, general education reform, so as to braid WAC into ongoing issues rather than having it as a free-standing (and more vulnerable) entity" ("WAC at Century's End" 72). Her metaphor of "braiding" seems particularly appropriate for describing the way WAC can become involved with a variety of projects not immediately associated with writing. As her 1997 work with Eric Miraglia makes clear, enduring WAC programs need strong administrative funding, grassroots support, and consistent leadership that remains active and vibrant over time (Miraglia and McLeod 48). Of course, there is great danger in paying for a writing program through grant money, but McLeod makes an important point when she urges that writing programs must seek funding for projects to make new contacts and to achieve the proper integration into the fabric of a particular university and a specific region.

The grant-writing process has the added advantage that, by articulating new goals and re-creating established programs, it can help reinvigorate a program staff or oversight board, consolidate faculty support, capture administrative attention, and broaden the role of community and public school participants. Grant writing leads the writing program beyond the curriculum, for funders are often looking for novel approaches to link programmatic efforts that have heretofore operated in isolation. This is not to say we should work beyond disciplines in order to chase money, but the funding possibilities can be a good incentive to contact the people we have long regarded as allies but we were always too busy to meet.

Another voice calling for compositionists to reach beyond campuses and traditional roles is Kurt Spellmeyer's. He echoes Walvoord's call in a very different key:

> We will need to become ethnographers of experience: I do not mean armchair readers of the "social text," but scholar/teachers who find out how people actually feel. And far from bringing English studies to a dismal close, the search for basic grammars of emotional life may give us the future that we have never had, a future beyond the university. (911)

> Spellmeyer is addressing compositionists as members of an English faculty engaged in a large-scale cultural undertaking. He seems to be advocating that writing teachers become peacemakers with colleagues in literary studies, that we search for common ground—to use the title metaphor of his 1993 book—on which to revive the teaching and production of written language.

As Spellmeyer suggests, reasons for reaching beyond the curriculum are not purely programmatic or institutional. Increasingly, theorists in composition have

described writing and writing classes in terms of identity formation and trans-formation in ways that supersede the old debate between expressivist and social models of writing pedagogy. Richard E. Miller suggests that writing is "a place where the personal and the academic, the private and the public, the individual and the institutional, are always inextricably interwoven" (267). Through a meditation that is both intensely personal and markedly academic, he calls for writing and writing instruction that allow students and authors to test out various discourses against one another and thereby use language that demonstrates "an ability to imagine a transformed reality" in lived experience (284).

Both Spellmeyer and Miller might be dismissed as simply repackaging the belletristic tradition, but despite traces of Emersonian yearning for transcendence, both develop a view of literacy more capacious and tolerant than is usual in our limited academic horizon. They willingly step beyond skepticism and the narrow politics of theory debates, and this opens writing instruction up to a world beyond academic discourse while not denying the importance of knowledge as it is practiced and elaborated inside universities. Conceiving of writing beyond the curriculum does not deny the value of disciplinary knowledge, but it allows us to think through and across and outside disciplines so that, as Miller hopes, "the personal and the academic are set loose and allowed to interrogate one another with no predetermined outcome" (284).

An expanded WAC draws on Ernest Boyer's vision of a renewed higher education in this country. When the late president of the Carnegie Foundation described a model of postsecondary school that stands apart from the two traditional American models of excellence in higher education-the small, high-priced liberal arts college and the large, research-intensive land grant university—his words seem now to apply to our own endeavor:

> What I'm describing might be called the "New American College," an institution that celebrates teaching and selectively supports research, while also taking special pride in its capacity to connect thought to action, theory to practice. This New American College would organize cross-disciplinary institutes around pressing social issues. Undergraduates at the college would participate in field projects, relating ideas to real life. Classrooms and laboratories would be extended to include health clinics, youth centers, schools and government offices. Faculty members would build partnerships with practitioners who would, in turn, come to campus as lecturers and student advisers. The New American College, as a connected institution, would be committed to improving, in a very intentional way, the human condition. (A48)

> Boyer calls for an engaged institution, one in which research informs community service as well as teaching and disciplinary

knowledge production, one for which the campus is just one of many learning sites possible for student and teacher alike. As our epigraph and title suggest, our dream leads us to new responsibilities but also to new cooperative partnerships. In the succeeding section, we describe institutional structures designed expressly for the purpose of bringing university students and faculty into collaboration with community groups and schoolteachers and their pupils in order to foster new cultural practices and more active types of learning. Building that ambition into the WAC program is what will take writing beyond the curriculum.[2]

Structure Versus Function: Models for a Dream

The basic outline of writing programs has settled into a pattern over the last years since Susan McLeod outlined the components of WAC in 1987 ("Defining"). Figure 2.1 presents a four-component writing program. Sometimes schools may be missing upper-division courses, and sometimes writing centers are underdeveloped or absent.

Even the first-year writing course—the mainstay of writing programs—has occasionally been excised in favor of a broader WAC effort. Some schools have initiated WAC programs tied to public speaking and communication, a move not reflected in our diagram. But we think the diagram indicates a basic structure for writing programs. Figure 2.2 indicates a constellation of functions possible for most writing programs.
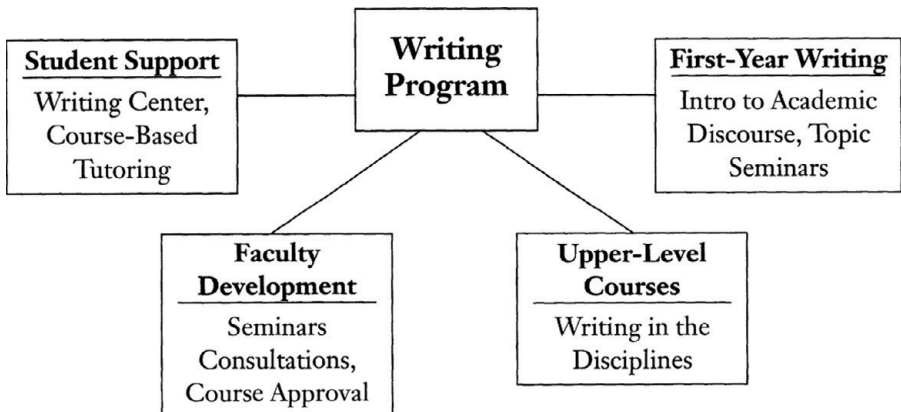

Figure 2.1. A common configuration for WAC/WID programs.

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2. Paul Heilker seems to be the first to use the expression "writing beyond the curriculum" in print, though he did not specifically apply the expression to WAC programs.
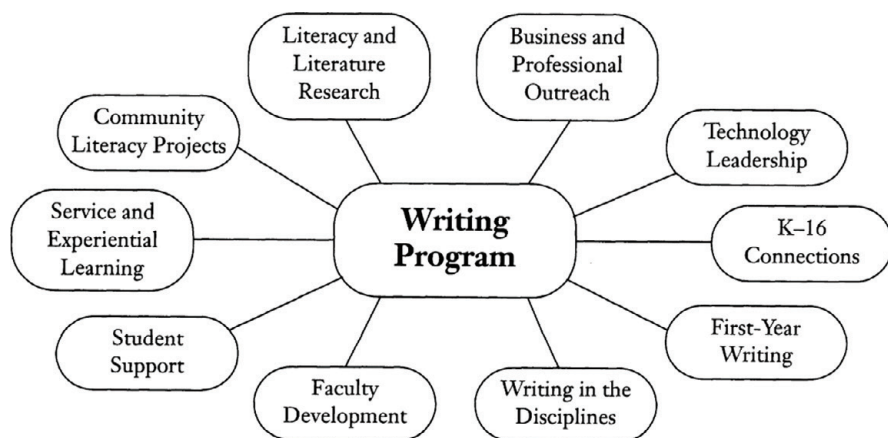
Figure 2.2. Functions for writing beyond the curriculum

This is hardly an exhaustive list, and yet any WPA will feel exhausted just contemplating such an array of demands. Not all writing programs serve all of these purposes, but most are under pressure to serve many purposes, and—at least in an informal way—most programs do more than the basic structure in Figure 2.1 would suggest. WPAs and their assistants or allies regularly field community phone calls, give local talks, write grant proposals, serve on boards and committees, organize symposia, or consult with schools for purposes not reflected in our basic structural diagram. For this reason, the basic structure may no longer be meeting the demands of contemporary writing programs.

At Temple University, we are rethinking the purposes for the writing center, recognizing its growing importance as an information technology leader and faculty teaching resource. We are developing service and experiential learning within advanced writing and rhetoric courses and establishing the Institute for the Study of Literature, Literacy, and Culture to support these courses as well as research and outreach in the regions and the schools (Sullivan et al.). One outcome of our new orientation is a set of questions we have begun to ask about the relationship between English education teacher training programs and WAC. Typically, these two have little to do with one another because one is based in a university's education school and the other in its college of arts and sciences. But why shouldn't future teachers work as tutors in the writing center or as fellows for writing-intensive courses in the disciplines? And why shouldn't compositionists and education researchers be close colleagues? Why shouldn't National Writing Project teachers converse with first-year writing TAs? Why shouldn't WPAs know about high school writing curricula in their regions?

Several painful conflicts emerge when we talk to professors and administrators on both sides of the institutional divide at other universities. One is that too often compositionists and literature faculty in English either don't know or don't respect their colleagues in English education, and this sets up a corresponding

resentment among education faculty against anyone in English. Another is that education majors are not highly respected as students and thus are not recruited to be writing tutors. A third source of mutual hostility is that education colleges tend to be jealous of their relationships with the schools where their students practice teaching, and they fear that "content-area" departments such as English and history want to cut in on the action.

At the same time, both education and liberal arts colleges are in serious crisis at the moment. Education programs are under intense pressure nationally from legislatures and the public to produce more knowledgeable and effective beginning teachers (witness the recent outcry in Massachusetts over teachers' performance on standardized certification tests). Meanwhile, in a recent national survey of public attitudes toward liberal arts education, researchers found that only about "one-third of parents and a quarter of high school students and university graduates view the liberal arts positively" (Hersh 19). In composition, English-trained and education-trained writing specialists read much the same literature but do not recognize each other as colleagues often enough. Literature faculty and education professors who teach the teaching of literature rarely, if ever, even meet one another, let alone talk about their fields together. Certainly we all face very real problems, but we simply cannot solve them without each other.

Recently, Peter Rabinowitz from literary studies and Michael Smith from English education collaborated on Authorizing Readers, a fascinating consideration of how current literary theories can be productively and ethically applied in secondary school classrooms. This kind of cooperative project is all too rare in the fields of literary and literacy studies. There should be more alliances of this sort—in research, teacher training, and program design—within and without the college campus. One means by which the writing program at our university has reached out and across boundaries is the founding of the Institute for the Study of Literature, Literacy, and Culture. The institute is by no means the only instance of our writing beyond the curriculum effort, but we think it is perhaps the most innovative and indicates the possibilities that open once we reconceptualize WAC. We turn to a description of the institute now.

The Institute for the Study of Literature, Literacy, and Culture

The Institute for the Study of Literature, Literacy, and Culture is an alliance of university, public school, and community educators. Housed in the Departments of English, the institute sponsors courses, seminars, workshops, and lectures designed to bring together the educational community surrounding Temple University around a common set of principles:

- Every student should have the support necessary to achieve at high standards and gain an understanding of the social context of literacy instruction.

- A collaborative relationship should exist among knowledge-producing institutions and disciplines.
- Communities should have the means to produce and distribute written and artistic materials that can present and shape group identity as well as forward civic debate.
- These goals are based upon the belief that an integrated and productive educational environment requires an active dialogue between educators, neighborhood members, and students about the future of their region.

The institute is governed by an advisory board, fellows, and a director. The advisory board is structured to ensure representation from all aspects of the educational community surrounding Temple University. At present, the board has representatives from the city school district, a network of community-based teachers, the arts community, Temple's School of Education, and faculty from the humanities and social sciences. Their role is to consider how a particular project from one site can be "braided" into other existing projects or goals. For instance, we recently strengthened a proposal to create a service-based cultural studies program at Temple through discussions with board members about work being done in the public schools and the community. What might have remained a "strictly academic" enterprise was reformulated as a tool to create common educational objectives across institutions.

Institute fellows are responsible for the actual work of producing interdisciplinary and interinstitutional programs. They create and oversee projects that bring different elements of the community into contact with each other. For instance, one fellow organized a national conference on Alain Locke, the African American philosopher of the Harlem Renaissance. Another developed a lecture series titled "Converging Cultures in Urban Environments," while a third conducted seminars on Shakespeare and performance in public schools. A fourth fellow, who holds a position in the provost's office, helps us link our activities with the city school district.

This year, fellows will expand the institute's connections to cultural and literacy centers in the greater Philadelphia region and create service-learning courses around issues such as homelessness and urban housing. The work of the fellows is supplemented by the work of the institute-affiliated faculty and teachers, whose research, disciplinary knowledge, and classroom practice serve as the basis for much of the institute's programmatic development.[3] The director is responsible for maintaining alliances with community and school organizations, providing support for fellows, exploring new connections, and discovering funding sources. Although the institute's overall goal is to integrate different educational communities, its projects might be broken into four distinct areas of work: schools, communities, university, and research and publication.

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3. Faculty interest in the institute has been quite strong. An initial call for participation resulted in over forty faculty from a variety of departments, all affiliating with the institute in the space of three weeks.

Schools

One guiding principle of the institute is that every student should have the support necessary to achieve at high standards. The institute has made a conscious decision to frame its work with teachers around the demands of their classrooms, and it has also made an effort to work with school districts that have revised their curriculum along the lines of the national standards movement. One of the outcomes of this decision is that university faculty who partner with teachers must focus on the application of even the most sophisticated analysis or theory to secondary and undergraduate classrooms. One example of this effort linked the standards' language of "interdisciplinarity" and "cross-competencies" in a workshop focusing on Shakespeare and performance.[4] The seminar was led by a university faculty member and two public school teachers. Its participants included high school teachers, principals, graduate students, and undergraduate education majors. Participants read different historical accounts of Shakespeare's time, decided how this information might alter the reading of a text, and then performed that interpretation using limited props. Participants then blended this technique of performance with historical study to generate standards-based lesson plans. These plans were taken into the classroom, tested, and evaluated by participants. Here it was particularly important that the workshop included high school teachers who could evaluate whether the standards were addressed by the assignment and who could explain the value of this technique to university faculty and students. In the next stage of this project, a few participating teachers will have their students perform a Shakespeare play for their local community.

   This focus on hands-on learning, links between the university and schools, and standards-based applications appears in our teachers' writing groups as well. Composed of public-school teachers and led by a graduate of the English Department's creative writing master's degree program, the seminar encourages teachers to explore their own writing lives and then bring their writing experience into the classroom. Participants read fiction, write their own stories and poems, and discuss their work with each other. Some bring in half-written manuscripts, and others come with ideas for writing projects they have long harbored. As with the Shakespeare and performance seminar, participants eventually develop lesson plans which can carry the excitement and intensity of a creative writing workshop into their classroom (and perhaps into the community, too, with readings and publications). The process is similar to approaches developed in National Writing Projects across the country. The innovation here is that the institute opens a

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   4. Cross-competencies is the term used by the school district to denote lesson plans which ask students to perform to several standards across subject and skill areas. For instance, students working on a science project which will be presented to a city council representative will be expected to meet science, writing, applied learning, and public-speaking standards.

doorway between teacher development and the creative writing program, where earlier there had been no connection.

Community

The institute's primary objective in working with community groups is to ensure that collaborative relationships develop among knowledge-producing institutions. Our current programs include the Norris Homes Girls' Group and the revitalizing of Teachers for a Democratic Culture. The girls' group consists of ten preadolescent and adolescent girls and is held in a local health center near Temple University. Originally, this was a support group for girls where they could discuss health and sexuality issues, but it soon became apparent to the leaders that "health" and "sex" were wrapped up in complex social and emotional issues not easily explored in a weekly discussion. At the request of the health center's director, the institute arranged to have a graduate assistant—as it happens, a student from the Department of African American Studies who had previously tutored in a Chicago housing project—meet weekly with the group and encourage them to write about their lives. Here the goal was not only to generate a sense of group identity, but to publish that identity as a way to spark community awareness.

Within a year, the students had published their first collection, *United Sisters*. It contains personal observations, poems, and essays about growing up in their community. During the course of this project, the girls' group also participated in university programs and events. The girls were offered use of Temple University's writing center and math resource center for academic help. Students from the African American Studies program attended girls' group meetings to share their insights about growing up in an urban environment. Academic events, such as a tribute to the poet Sonia Sanchez, allowed the girls to meet established African American writers.

Central to the institute's work is the belief that the coordinated efforts of educators, students, and community members across institutions help to promote social justice. For this reason, the institute also agreed to take on the task of revitalizing Teachers for a Democratic Culture (TDC). Growing out of the culture wars of the early 1990s, TDC quickly became an organization in which over 1,600 faculty and graduate students organized their responses to attacks on multiculturalism, feminism, and progressive scholarship. As with most progressive faculty organizations, however, TDC soon suffered from its own success. The burdens of maintaining such a membership and struggling against well-funded right-wing organizations such as the National Scholars Association or Lynne Cheney's Alumni Association soon led to its faltering. In addition, an inability to focus the organization's activities on transforming actual educational practices both within classrooms and in local communities led to a lack of purpose once the initial burst of activism had ceased.

Now housed in the institute but separate from it, TDC is a nonprofit organization linked with other progressive faculty groups. It has also expanded its vision to include teachers from a wide range of educational institutions. More to the point, TDC now uses its membership dues to initiate local and regional alliances and joint projects among literacy institutions. For instance, working from the premise that literacy education should also occur within the struggle for basic community rights, TDC cosponsored the Poor People's Summit in Philadelphia. This two-day conference was designed to highlight the effects of welfare reform in one local neighborhood and to educate community members about how to organize politically.

Speakers and activists from all over the country came to share information, teach organizing techniques, and create alliances. TDC has also created a Progressive Information Network to supply progressive editorials for use by members in local newspapers as well as Labor Matters, a weekly e-paper on labor activism. Finally, it is developing a Faculty Activist Directory as a resource for teachers nationwide. Positioning itself as an alternative professional organization, TDC works to foster and link local moments of struggle to national efforts to expand citizen rights. We hope it will carry the mission of the institute into a national arena.

University

The institute has worked to develop both undergraduate and graduate courses that focus on service-learning projects linked to acknowledged community needs. For instance, the Shakespeare and performance seminar was also linked to an undergraduate literature class for future teachers. In addition to the seminar, some undergraduate students led a Shakespeare drama club at a city public school. In other classes, oral history projects at nearby public schools were linked to an undergraduate English class developing an anthology of "City Voices," and a communication studies course enabled students to formulate "guerrilla" media projects around community needs. In a project planned for next year, student ethnographers will investigate public housing and social justice issues for an anthropology course. Others will work with a welfare rights organization to produce newsletters and information packets.

Each of these courses provides valuable learning and research possibilities for those involved. We believe, however, that the ability of future faculty to teach such courses depends upon graduate education taking on an interdisciplinary and service-learning focus. For this reason, the institute has developed a certificate open to graduate students in any discipline. Students will take courses in cultural theory, community politics, and the politics of literacy institutions. They also must serve an extended internship at a local literacy or cultural center, applying their course knowledge to the dynamics of actual community politics. In addition, many of the courses offered are designed to allow students to link their study with literacy institutions. Blending academic knowledge with community

involvement, students will leave the program with the skills necessary to support such work, whether inside or outside academic careers.

Research and Publication

We believe that cultural work should be shared across communities. A community should be able to produce written and artistic materials which can develop and enrich its own identity and at the same time spark productive political debate in the larger social arena. In order to circulate a variety of materials to local and national audiences, the institute established a publishing house called New City Community Press and TDC aligned itself with the academic journal *Annals of Scholarship*.

New City Community Press was designed to publish community-based histories and narratives as alternatives to the ones fostered by the mainstream media. The press was patterned in part on the *Journal of Ordinary Thought* (JOT), a grassroots publication associated loosely with University of Illinois-Chicago. Each issue of JOT focuses on a different neighborhood writing group. For example, in one issue, "Mixed Feeling" (No. 3, Oct. 1995), people who had lived in or around a housing-project building slated for demolition wrote about their memories and frustrations associated with its closing. We also admired the activist publishing done at the Community Literacy Center in Pittsburgh (Peck, Flower, and Higgins). Another source of inspiration was the Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishers (FWWCP). This organization links, advertises, and distributes the work of community presses in the United Kingdom. Rather than sponsor any particular publication, the FWWCP provides expertise to community groups who wish to start writing groups and publishing ventures. They work with presses that enable local communities to recount and preserve their history. For instance, an affiliated press in Brighton, Queenspark Books, regularly publishes histories of its port community and its residents. Queenspark is currently developing a "countermap" for tourists who wish to understand Brighton as more than a beachtown.[5]

New City supports a variety of community projects. For instance, one of its first publications was a coaches' handbook for a city neighborhood baseball league. The handbook, written and compiled by volunteers in that community, offers tips to new coaches on practice organization and skill building, and it not

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5.   We must also mention here another remarkable journal. *Rising East: The Journal of East London Studies* is a research journal overseen by an advisory board of faculty, teachers, government representatives, and community members from the East London area. Its aim is to bring the collective insights of literacy and community experts to bear on discussions of East London's future. Each issue carries political, economic, and cultural analysis of the area. Although the journal demands a high level of literacy in its readers, it is written free of specialty terminology. It represents the collective voice of a community speaking out about its future-a voice to which local politicians and business leaders often feel the need to respond.

only serves to instruct coaches and parents in the league, but models teaching and organizing skills for neighborhoods that want to start their own leagues. A future project will feature oral histories of a local neighborhood completed by public school students. Working with Asian Americans United, the press will also publish a folktale-based story written about the need to keep a local library open. In these and other projects, New City Community Press provides publishing expertise to local organizations and the legitimacy of publication to nontraditional histories and small-scale but vital civic projects.

New City also supports the institute's general effort to link educators from a variety of communities. A prime example of this is Urban Rhythms (UR). This publication was the idea of students in a service-learning literacy course sponsored by the institute.[6] Originating as a class project, UR has become a collaborative project linking faculty, students, and community members from the schools, colleges, and neighborhood organizations surrounding Temple University. Similar to the *Foxfire* magazine of the early '70s (see Wigginton), UR's goal is to document and disperse the insights, folk traditions, and community visions of city neighborhoods. Although the journal is less than one year old, it has already become a means by which teachers from a variety of institutions can share the work of students. One middle school class uses the journal as a weekly exercise in creative writing. Another school incorporates the journal into the mentally gifted curriculum. Several university classes have allowed students to focus their work around guest editing special editions. Finally, graduate students and visiting faculty have come to see the journal as a way to expand their links with the schools and communities.

This push to link the production of knowledge to community activism also marks TDC's alignment with *Annals of Scholarship* (*AOS*). While *AOS* has a long history of publishing academic articles on multiculturalism, global studies, and critical theory, the journal will now feature an additional section each issue which links such scholarship with local and national activism. We hope that what UR does at the local level with college students and city schools, *AOS* will do on a national level with faculty, universities, and the regions they serve.

Crossing Categories

The activities described in the preceding sections would be of little value if they remained isolated in their distinct categories (schools, community, university, publication and research). While we have tried to suggest that every project challenges the categories, it is important to realize that each project allows other links to occur within the institute. In Figure 2.3 we list many of the projects discussed earlier.

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6. This project would not have been possible without the outstanding work of students such as Mike Carter, Ribu John, Alima Saffell, Brian Sammons, and Robyn Wilcox or without the cooperation of teachers such as Sharmaine Ball and Joel Moore.

Community	Public Schools	University	Publication/Research
Norris Homes Girls' Group	Oral Histories	Literacy Courses Service Learning	New City: Individual Histories
People and Stories	Multicultural Curriculum	Multicultural Lit/Service Learning	New City: Community Histories
Public Theater Performance	Shakespeare	Lit/Ed Courses	*Urban Rhythms*
Activists' Network	Neighborhood Histories	Project SHINE	New City: Guidebooks
Poor People's Summit	Alain Locke Conference	Teachers for a Democratic Culture	NCP/*AOS*: Academic Texts

*Figure 2.3. Current projects of the Institute for the
Study of Literature, Literacy, and Culture*

One way to read the figure is left to right. The emphasis on local stories runs through the Norris Home Girls' Group, student oral histories, literacy classes, and New City Press. Similarly, a focus on community activism runs through the Poor People's Summit, the Alain Locke Conference, TDC, and NCPIURIAOS publications. It is also possible, however, to move from the Poor People's Summit to neighborhood histories, literature/education courses (taking education to mean community goals), and NCP publications. That is, the goal of the institute's activities is to allow alliances and partnerships beyond traditional town-gown or disciplinary boundaries. Fellows, students, community members, and affiliated faculty are able to use the institute as a place to weave together community, university, school, and publication projects. Possibilities for collaboration are created where individuals who may not have thought of each other as allies can find a space to work together. Essays formerly available only to academics can now be read and discussed by teachers and health care workers; communities can assemble histories which academic and civic leaders might need to read. Through this work, we hope to achieve the "braiding" McLeod describes as the next step for WAC programs.

The figure also highlights the potential political conflicts that emerge when forming alliances with community, regional, and (in the case of TDC) national partners. By co-sponsoring the Poor People's Summit or the standards-based lesson plans, the institute clearly positions itself within the local and academic community. By helping to organize the poor, for instance, the institute is sending a signal about current welfare legislation and local homeless laws. By supporting efforts to bring standards-based education into the Philadelphia school system, the institute may alienate teachers and community members who perceive standards as bad pedagogy and potentially racist. Even choosing a Shakespeare workshop over one on Toni Cade Bambara could potentially send troubling signals to certain constituencies.

As the scope of these projects indicates, however, it is difficult to reduce the institute to any one ideological flavor. Standards might seem to contradict progressive editorials; a poor people's summit might seem an odd pairing with Shakespeare. This is as it should be. Communities are politically complex. There is no single ideological navel from which all institute programs derive. They emerge from the combined insights of the institute's community, university, and public school members. This process is not always pretty. Participants argue, worry, storm out, compromise, then drink coffee together. There is dialogue and there is debate. Hard feelings emerge and, sometimes, are smoothed over. People come to a place where they disagree with a particular program but continue to participate. The idea of a broad, integrated educational community has slowly transcended any one person's objections to a program. The political test has become whether the imagined community that brought us around the table is becoming a reality.

Conclusion

A vision of university writing programs that stretch beyond the curriculum and campus presents exciting possibilities to program designers and administrators. As this vision becomes reality, it is important to be explicit about the potential problems as well. While the hope still remains that this direction will lead to a richer environment for literacy instruction, the shortcomings and inherent limitations in the venture can sometimes appear painfully obvious. In this conclusion, we share some of our questions about writing beyond the curriculum, speculating on the reward structure and the approach to graduate education necessary to sustain the sort of program we have set out to construct.

For the sake of brevity, we limit ourselves here to three problematic areas for our writing program and the institute: maintaining focus, gathering support, and building alliances. In some sense they are all a function of the same virtue, arising from the explosiveness and multi-directionality of a new, unfolding idea. It is easy to get lost in the array of paths that could be taken once you step off the sidewalk. It is even easier to overreach resources in the rush to try too many projects at once. And it is perhaps easiest of all to affront potential allies in your eagerness to make a new program succeed.

One of us gave a talk about our program at a major southwestern university last year. Afterward, one sympathetic faculty member asked this simple question: "If you follow up on all these new directions for WAC, how do you prevent yourself from getting distracted from the business of writing instruction and assure your home constituency that first-year students are still learning to write for their college courses?" We find ourselves returning again and again to this question, and not only because it stands as a warning for us when we contemplate yet another cross-institutional project. It also makes explicit certain terms underlying writing pedagogy that we must interrogate in order to move into a new phase. What, for instance, is our "home constituency" and what "business of writing

instruction" are we in? Does an orientation toward "academic discourse" in our first-year course sequence preclude or require a counterbalancing emphasis on writing outside the walls of the academy? Is it possible to explore many new institutional connections and still maintain a focus in a reconfigured writing program? And what if we feel we have maintained our focus, but our colleagues—inside and outside the English department—perceive us as impossibly scattered and quixotic?

We cannot answer all these interrelated questions here. Our best provisional response to the whole complex is that we must be committed to assessment and reflection—always interrogating ourselves, our colleagues, our project partners, and our students about what learning is taking place inside and outside the classrooms. Does the imagined program actually help anybody, or does it just rack up more lines on the program track record? Does a proposed project support agreed-upon or implicit community goals? Does it support the integrative vision of diverse groups within a region? Is something older but more valuable lost in the rush to shape something new? Enthusiasm for the large-scale goal should not blind us to crucial little failures along the way.

At the same time, it would be unwise to be bound by the expectations of a higher education system that no longer exists. As Richard Hersh has noted, fewer than five percent of college students attend small liberal arts colleges, still the "gold standard for undergraduate education" for most liberal arts administrators (16). In a study that Hersh's Hobart and William Smith Colleges commissioned, a large majority of high school students and their parents indicated that "college is important because it 'prepares students to get a better job and/or increases their earning potential'" (20). Students are more and more conscious of their college education as an investment in a future they cannot fully predict but are wary about nonetheless (see Carnevale; Menand). If they ever did, certainly today universities no longer function primarily as that Shakespearean green world to which young swains and damsels repair for a night of revelry, in preparation for their dawn weddings and coronations. At our own university, more than 80 percent of students work twenty hours a week or more; they have precious little time for midsummer night dalliance.

Meanwhile, graduate education cannot simply churn out young adults who have served five to eight years of indentured servitude in exchange for their degrees, only to have them undertake more servitude in the adjunct mills. The MLA says that "fewer than half of the seven or eight thousand graduate students likely to earn PhDs in English and foreign languages between 1996 and 2000 can expect to obtain full-time tenure-track positions within a year of receiving their degrees" (Gilbert 4). To the extent that the job crisis is caused by the deliberate downsizing of all human services in US society today, graduate students and faculty must engage actively in debates and protests over public priorities if we wish to rectify this situation. However, are even those who find employment being prepared for the kind of employment they will find in the next century? As Chris Anson has

pointed out, "technology will soon change not only how we work within our institutions but also how 'attached' we may be to an institution, particularly if we can work for several institutions at some physical (but not electronic) remove from each other" (274).

If preparing for the struggles and the opportunities in the days to come means a little distraction, it must be risked. In a publication of the Association of American Colleges and Universities, Carol Schneider and Robert Shoenberg put the situation this way:

> The shift from a teaching to a learning paradigm of instruction, the incorporation of information technology and all it makes possible into the fabric of the institution, the increasing engagement with the local and global community, the new awareness of an assertive and rapidly expanding for-profit higher education sector and the reconsideration of such issues as tenure collectively exemplify the quite profound transformations now in process. We are indeed in the midst of a time of great change. (3)

While such futurist rhetoric in higher education circles might itself be cause for concern—sometimes the prophetic tones mask corporate attitudes and expectations among some deans and provosts—there can be no doubt that major changes are occurring. Writing programs are often the first places in a school to feel the tremors. What may look like distraction in WPAs now may eventually seem a principled (if feverish) response to challenges others have not yet recognized or are trying desperately to ignore.

Consider the work of gathering support and building alliances. Both the liberal arts college and the central administration at Temple University have been supportive of the writing beyond the curriculum efforts because they perceive such work as attractive to new students, friendly to service-learning initiatives, helpful for faculty development, and timely as a connection between and among colleges that need to find ways to work together.[7] At the same time, we have been concerned from the start that any particular move might be perceived by factions within English and in other areas of the college and university as empire building. In such a context, it has been important to negotiate with every center, institute, department, or program that has a common interest in projects we propose, always stressing mutual benefits over turf battles. We have approached a

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7.   For instance, from the College of Liberal Arts, the institute has received course reductions to support fellow positions as well as a small annual budget. The graduate school has funded a graduate student assistant. In addition, the institute has received grant support from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, the Fund to Improve Postsecondary Education, the Philadelphia Higher Education Network for Neighborhood Development, Philadelphia Education Fund, and the Community Outreach Partnership Center, among others.

number of local and national foundations, first informally to let them know our new direction and then through proposals for one or another project. Where we have worked with school districts or community organizations, we have stressed partnership over paternalism and slow building of trust over quick deal-making.[8]

Working with the College of Education has been particularly gratifying. The Writing Program and Education had only a very scant history of cooperation until recently, but today planning has begun on a number of joint projects. We have key allies in the education faculty, and we work closely with the Professional Development Schools, the committee that oversees relations with schools where students practice teaching. The First-Year Program cooperates with the Teaching English as a Second Language program in Education to provide ESL versions of our writing courses. The Writing Program and Education collaborated on a conference this year for high school teachers and college WPAs on expectations for student writers in college and secondary school; next year another conference is planned that addresses assessment issues. The more work done side by side, the easier it will be for graduate students and undergraduates to understand the intimate connections between literacy and literature on the one hand and pedagogical theory and practice on the other.

Finally, we must add a word about the reward structure and graduate training that underpins faculty life. People tend to do what they are most rewarded for and what they are trained to expect rewards for. In any academic field the rewards traditionally go to those who do research or creative work; grants for such work are the highest form of legitimization, and—in fields where grants are scarce and small—publication, exhibition, or performance records stand for achievement in one's field. Teaching has come to be more valued in many schools in recent years, but publishing still determines tenure and promotion in research universities and many teaching colleges. Our institute arose in part from discussions supported by a grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) on the reward structures for faculty (see Gips and Stoel). Members of the Temple FIPSE group quickly came to the conclusion that, rather than working against the commitment to research in our Research I institution, we should work with that commitment but support new directions in which faculty and graduate students could grow. Thus arose the fellowships and graduate certificate program described earlier.

Our next step is to think more expansively about graduate training and teacher preparation. Jerry Gaff and Leo Lambert have pointed out how important it is to train students not only to be "better students" and "better teaching assistants" but to prepare them to be "better assistant professors" (44). It seems necessary to

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8.   We have been particularly aided in this process by Lori Shorr, Director of School/Community Partnerships. She has been energetic and creative in making durable connections with teachers and administrators, enabling us to develop exciting projects in a very short period of time.

go beyond this goal, admirable as it may be, because the job placement statistics suggest that at least some of our graduates will choose to seek employment outside the college classroom. We are developing connections so that graduate students in literature and creative writing, as well as in composition/rhetoric, could explore work in communities and schools, in unions and businesses, in government agencies and hospitals. This is not an attempt to short-circuit the traditional training they receive, but to build upon it, to widen the context in which students learn to interpret and generate written texts.

Peter Mortensen has recently suggested that "teacher/researchers should search for ways to accommodate their writing about college composition to broader, non-academic audiences" (198). He wants us to enter debates, such as the current controversy over remediation in the City University of New York system, because we can offer a perspective on students and literacy often missing in the popular press. He warns, though, that "for such writing to be ethical, it may indeed be anchored in national concerns, but it must attend to the local because it is there that political and social issues of great consequence can be deliberated and acted upon" (198). In a sense, the Institute for the Study of Literature, Literacy, and Culture and the idea of writing beyond the curriculum is our version of that ethical commitment. We are building on the insights of social theory in composition research by engaging in the world our students come from and go to, and we intend to add our voices especially in the local scene because that is where we teach, raise our kids, and pay taxes. In this sense, writing and literacy instruction go beyond the "beyond." This is simply where we live.

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Part 2. Local

> "[T]he crucial question for exploitation concerns the justice of the distribution of the means of production."
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> – *G. A. Cohen,* History, Labour, and Freedom: Themes from Marx *(1988)*

Disciplines are the universities' designated "means of production." Disciplines represent distinct areas of investigation dedicated to a set of primary questions, the answers to which are meant to have not only scholarly but public import as well. It is in this sense that disciplines are also frequently understood as "fields," designated areas which demarcate what questions belong and what questions can be set aside. For most of my professional career, composition and rhetoric has been attempting to establish itself as a field, attempting to settle on a primary set of questions that could convince the university to provide "the means of production" required to find answers. Think faculty lines, research support, majors, doctoral programs. (Don't forget to think exploited adjunct labor as well.)

The most recent attempt at such disciplinary land grabs was probably "writing about writing," one of the more aggressive attempts to establish "private property" rights to what is inherently a cross-disciplinary enterprise, which the university is at best a restrictive force on the proliferation of literacies. Indeed, I have come to understand that the value produced by community-literacy and community-engagement work is its opening up the means of production to those communities too often intentionally denied the means to claim the public space required to have their needs and aspirations addressed. In this way, I have always understood the work of community literacy and engagement to be an attempt to throw a "wrench into the works."

Here the goal is not so much to dismiss the knowledge produced within composition and rhetoric as a discipline. Instead, I imagine the "wrench" of community literacy/engagement to be a consistent reminder to the field (and myself) that its conveyor belt of scholarly journals and "writing classrooms" does not necessarily represent the needs of those making the machines work, whether those individuals are adjunct laborers, custodial workers, bus drivers, or restaurant workers. It does not represent the needs of refugees, displaced families, and intentionally as well as marginalized communities. And in the spirit of much engagement work, the "wrench" is often also a call to listen to such communities outside the normative and narrowing framings associated with the "academic researcher."

Indeed, the essays that follow begin with my own failures to recognize the need to expand ownership of a community project, a failure that also speaks to issues of race and class. In the essay, "Strategic Speculations," I enact many of

the attitudes critiqued above, resulting in a community feeling betrayed by the process. It is attempting to repair this relationship that I came to a deeper understanding of what such work involved. Building out from this framework, the essay "Emergent Strategies" focused on the Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishers (FWWCP) To argue that there are existing models for community-control of the means of literacy production from which we can model more ethical partnership practices. This argument of community control is then utilized to reframe the scholarly work of building an archive, again with the focus on the FWWCP.

At a certain point, however, the question shifts from building equitable partnership to the actual goals of that partnership. It is at this point that the essay "Sinners Welcome" becomes a space to argue that community partnerships must also engage in supporting residents as they organize for economic and cultural rights. That is, community engaged work needs to do more than apply band-aids to long festering wounds; engagement must entail walking with the community as they address root causes of their exclusion and marginalization. And, finally, the associate ease and comfort of the word "community" itself is called into question through "Dreams and Nightmares," a publication focused the personal narrative of a 14-year-old Guatemalan girl who travelled alone from her rural village to the United States. The language used to describe her identity, such as "alien," becomes a way to trouble the ease with which our sense of community has often failed to assume citizenship, equal rights, and national "belonging." It asks us to consider the field upon which composition and rhetoric enacts its work as necessarily implicated in the international context.

As such, "Dreams and Nightmares" also serves as the tipping point that moves this collection of essays into the global considerations.

Featured Essays

"Strategic Speculations on the Question of Value," *College English,* vol. 71, no. 5, May 2009, pp. 506-27.

"Emergent Strategies for an Established Field: Worker Writer Collectives," with Nick Pollard, *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 61, no.3, 2010, pp. 476-509.

"Sinners Welcome: The Limits of Rhetorical Agency," *College English*, vol. 76, no. 6, Jul. 2014, pp. 506-24.

"Dreams and Nightmares. The Legal Legacy that Authorized Civil Detention Centers in the US," with Aaron Moss and Lori Shorr, *Tortura e migrazioni/ Torture and Migration*, Edizioni Ca' Foscari - Digital Publishing, 2019.

"Alliances, Assemblages, and Affects: Three Moments of Building Collective Working-Class Literacies," with Jessica Pauszek, Nicholas Pollard, and Jennifer Harding. *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 70, no. 1, Sep. 2018, pp. 6-29.

Chapter 3. Strategic Speculations on the Question of Value: The Role of Community Publishing in English Studies

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Value is a slippery term that permeates our work in English studies.[1] Within literary studies, value has a long history of being associated with canon formation and curriculum reform. One way to mark changes in literary studies is to examine the revaluing of formally subjugated writers and their inclusion in the daily practices of the academy, such as the classroom, the scholarly journal, and the academic conference. The focus on subjugated or marginalized voices is not unique to literature, however. Over the past decade, there has also been a focus in composition studies on connecting its practices to underrepresented populations through such vehicles as service learning or community publishing projects. This work has emphasized including and revaluing formerly excluded or ignored voices. The value of this work is not only in the "discovery" of new voices but also in the actual services offered to these communities.

Portraying these two trends within English studies as simultaneous, however, raises the issue of whether or not these efforts are actually part of a similar project. Does the "value" of service learning and community publications intersect with the "value" associated with canon and curriculum reform? If not, what might it mean to bring this work together and to push it to the next level of articulation? How could such work be transformed, to invoke Michel de Certeau, from a local tactical response to a strategic intervention into how English studies operates? That is, where can the concept of "value" actually take us?

To explore these questions, I examine one of the early community publishing projects between an institute at Temple University and a local urban neighborhood, which I call Glassville.[2] The goal of the project was to publish an oral history of the neighborhood by bringing together a service-learning course, the community's neighborhood association, the first-year writing program, and faculty from multiple departments. Instead, the project resulted in a community-led

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2. As is common practice, I have altered the actual name of the neighborhood, subsequent publications, and participants involved in this project.

protest, in which issues of race, class, and power had to be recognized and negotiated. It is in the working through of such a moment, I argue, that a revised conception of "value," one embedded in the process of community publishing, can draw together the work of English studies and composition studies.

Partnership

The project began when a professor contacted New City Writing (formerly IS-LLC), an interdisciplinary institute, housed in our University Writing Program and English Department, that Eli Goldblatt and I had founded several years prior. The professor had initiated an ethnographic field project and encountered Glassville, a 15-block neighborhood that, for fifty years, had maintained an integrated neighborhood with no apparent racial strife or hate crimes. This was notable because an adjacent neighborhood was known for its history of racial conflict.[3] Glassville had experienced many of the economic downturns and job losses that have confronted the rest of the city. The fact that Glassville had remained an integrated community in the face of such changes stood in stark contrast to other areas.[4]

As a result of the ethnographic project, the neighborhood association expressed an interest in having its history published. The professor contacted our institute because I had recently formed New City Community Press (www.newcitypress.org), a community press dedicated to formalizing much of the writing produced in our literacy and service-learning work with Philadelphia neighborhoods. After discussions among institute staff, the neighborhood association, and involved faculty, a project was soon formed that bundled these interests together to produce a book of resident interviews, tentatively titled *Glassville Memories*.

Each partner went into the project, however, with a variety of interests. For those in the Glassville neighborhood association, the book would do more than just record their voices. Part of their struggle was for the association to be recognized as a unique entity within the network of city neighborhoods. In that regard, the book would act as a symbol of the community's distinct identity and, as a consequence, validate its arguments for increased political and economic support. One of the association's goals for the book was thus political—to document and legitimate the community's needs within the city's urban renewal plans.

From my perspective, the book would enable the institute to move further toward an expanded vision of "Writing Beyond the Curriculum," a concept designed to link student, faculty, and community writing to concepts of social justice (see Parks and Goldblatt.) Over the previous two years, the institute had attempted to integrate the different literacy/community voices of the surrounding neighborhoods into the writing curriculum, through expanded readings and

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3. See Bissinger 89–95.
4. See Adams et al.

service-learning opportunities. Much of this work had occurred at the upper end of the English Department curriculum. *Glassville Memories*, however, would be used in our introductory writing courses. The hope was that such a text would disrupt an introductory writing curriculum that, by focusing heavily on the values of academic discourse, had not paid enough attention to the exclusions that shaped literacy in our city.[5]

Produced in conjunction with a community organization, the proposed book would make evident how issues of literacy and power were present in a student's "backyard." In this regard, the Press and the community members would be coming together to form a new community-based textbook for our first-year writing course. To advertise the existence of the community and to expand the reach of the book, the Glassville neighborhood association and the Press also agreed to introduce this book into the "network of exchange." In one sense, this was happening already, because the book would be assigned across forty sections of courses in the university's basic writing program, meaning that approximately one thousand students would purchase it. It was also decided, however, that the book would be advertised to other writing programs and disciplines, as well as to local and national booksellers. Ultimately, it was hoped that the book would reach a wide audience of those generally interested in urban life. To ensure that the neighborhood residents were not exploited, a portion of the profits from all of these different venues would be shared with the Glassville neighborhood association, returning to the residents some of the economic value of their stories.

The project was to be directed by two professors, each of whom brought unique talents to the project. One professor was a trained ethnographer, who brought extensive experience in community-based projects. She also had the trust of the Glassville neighborhood association. The other had extensive experience working with community writers and had taken a leadership role in our emergent community press. Together they brought a range of expertise and insight to the project.

Difficulties occurred almost immediately, however. As part of the project, the two professors were to co-teach a specifically marked undergraduate course that was cross-listed between their two departments. New budgeting procedure made it impossible to have the course co-taught or cross-listed, however. Instead, the professor with community press experience was assigned as the sole instructor. Moreover, neither was given release time to work on the project. Although one was at least "assigned" to the class, the other faculty member had to volunteer extensive time to working with the students. Despite these complications, the two professors brought the students to the community, arranged for interviews, and discussed interview protocols in class. This project depended, however, on their providing sufficient time and support to conjoin their expertise for the benefit of the student "ethnographers" and community members. Systemically, this did not

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5.   See Sullivan et al.

happen, and gaps in communication began to occur, which soon influenced the future direction of the project.

Also, the neighborhood association had never before been involved in such an extensive project. Even though some of the residents had had the experience of being interviewed for other community history projects, a focus on their particular community was new. In addition, as discussed after the book's publication, many of the residents had been unaware of how their voices actually phrased or articulated ideas in everyday speech and, thus, would appear in print. Many of the residents interviewed were also senior citizens, with a different sense of what it meant to interact with college students in terms of respect and building a relationship. For these residents, the model of students dropping in to interview them and then returning to their class seemed alienating and, to some extent, rude. (This sentiment was expressed to me personally at the community meeting after the book's publication.)

Finally, there were the particular issues around editorial control of the book. New City Community Press had made a commitment to producing books that focused on community voices that were not often represented, as well as showcasing those voices with high production values. The belief was that each community should be able to frame and develop its own communal/historical identity, as well as to have its aesthetic identity fully represented. Previous publications, such as *No Restraints*, a book on our city's disability community, had used handwriting, artwork, and graffiti to represent a community's sense of its voice. In each case, our editorial staff had produced books that were well received by the intended audiences and that garnered awards from city leaders. Given my goals for this project, however, the audience for this project was more nebulous than for any previous publications. For instance, the potential readers included students in writing programs, the community residents, and academics, as well as an unformalized "general audience." In addition, unlike any other book produced by the Press, this book, in my view, also had to represent itself as the result of an undergraduate course—the specific context from which the book would emerge and, for the university, to which it would return.

Consequently, numerous populations and individuals now felt they should have a say in the book's formulation, so that it became an open question as to what conglomeration of interests represented the book's "community." In order to have the book ready for the following academic year, however, we also had to define this "community" very quickly. Despite these radical departures from the Press' earlier projects, we did not create any new process for the Press to negotiate this terrain or the competing sense of ownership and authority. To some extent, we did not realize the ways that producing a text for "classroom use" and "community use" would infiltrate and mutate the project and the workings of the Press.

As might have been expected by the more experienced, the project slowly began to unravel. The original "bundling" of interests had failed to create a firm sense of how these competing needs would be negotiated. Communication

among the partners, already hindered by a lack of systemic university support, was further damaged by school calendars, faculty leaves, lack of transportation, the health problems of elderly residents, the need for students to work extra jobs to stay in school, and other difficulties. Under these conditions, the course slowly became cut off from continued dialogue with the community. Imperceptibly, the overarching goal of the project became more about representing the work of the students than about the voices of the community.[6]

This shift altered both the editorial process and the status of the student interviews. As a product of a service-learning class, the interviews came to reflect the uneven commitments of the students to the project. Some interviewers were able to grasp the history of the neighborhood and asked the residents to discuss the loss of businesses, the attempts to rebuild the job base, and changing demographics within the community. One such student/resident exchange went as follows:

> [Student]: And what were some of the issues that were of concern to the community?
>
> [Glassville resident]: We have things such as the quality of life issues such as too much trash. People come down here and unload big dump trucks in our neighborhood, thinking it is just a dumping ground. We have a lot of light industrial business down there. We have no recreation for our youth whatsoever. We have some homes that are in desperate need of repair. There is a high unemployment rate amongst our teens. There are many things that we just ignored, but we are on the ball now.

In these interviews, the development of the Glassville neighborhood association was represented as an important act of community politics. However, the book also included moments of confusion between the students and the neighborhood residents about important community institutions. Here is an example:

> [Student]: St Mary's what?
>
> [Glassville resident]: St. Mary's of Szczecin.
>
> [Student]: How do you spell that?
>
> [Glassville resident #1]: S-Z
>
> [Glassville resident #2]: C-Z
>
> [Glassville resident #1]: E . . . you got me. [Smiling]

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6. By saying this, I am not diminishing any power that the neighborhood association might have used to alter the development of the book. Instead, these moments highlight the difficulty of one small community organization having an impact on the bureaucracy of a major university.

> [Glassville resident]: [Laughs] Write it down.
>
> [Student]: [Handing a resident a notebook.] Here, do you want to write it on this?
>
> [Glassville resident]: S-Z-C-Z-E-C-I-N
>
> [Glassville resident]: [Handing his wife the notebook] Here you write it. I'm the Pollack and she has to write it.
>
> [Student]: What does that mean, Szczecin?
>
> [Laughs]

In one sense, this was a friendly interchange. It also demonstrates, however, that the student did not seem to have the necessary community or historical details to conduct the interview effectively. Other interview questions also remained at a personal level, such as "When was your first kiss?" Here community members had to struggle to create a context for a broader community or worldview to emerge. Even though they were weak in terms of research strategies, such moments were seen as appropriate for inclusion because the book was coming to be seen primarily as serving a pedagogical purpose: in terms of the goals of the Writing Program, these weaknesses would teach students how to do better ethnographic work.

Pedagogical goals, however, were not the goals of the community. Upon publication, the book immediately became a target of disappointment and anger for Glassville. Many residents were unhappy with the unequal lengths of the interviews, believing that certain residents were featured more prominently than deserved. Others felt that important aspects of their own lives or of the community's history should have been included in the book—either through additional interviews or supplementary materials. The book also contained several historical mistakes about the community. Concern was also raised that the student-created interview transcriptions had been used in the book instead of organizing the community voices around themes or categories. Because of this decision, many were shocked at seeing how they "sounded" on the page. (One resident, noting that the interviews were exact transcriptions, complained that she sounded like the "village idiot.") Some comments, casually said in conversation, now appeared to them as racist or anti-religious. (It is one thing to refer to yourself jokingly as a "Pollack" in the privacy of your living room, but it is another to have that comment read in a university classroom by a thousand students.)

The cover also became the object of anger because it infuriated elements of the community. The self-image of the Glassville neighborhood association would have been best represented by a cover showing an integrated neighborhood scene. During the term, however, the students had not worked with the community to select a cover in class, so, once the term was over, many students were no longer available. In the absence of such input, a cover was designed to reflect

the students' perception of the book as a historical study of individuals. Instead of a cover featuring an integrated neighborhood in the present, the front cover featured a handwritten title, a picture of a White resident on her way to the prom, circa 1940, laid over the scene of a city map, which bled over to the back cover showing photographs of an African American family, circa 1940. This attempt to create a continuity of images was not endorsed by many residents, however. Instead, as one resident stated: "White on the front, Black on the back, of course." In response, the Glassville neighborhood association wrote letters of protest and demanded retractions/revisions throughout the text.

Almost immediately after the book was given to the community, I received a call from the president of the neighborhood association, who presented the residents' concerns in no uncertain terms. Promising to make it "right," I offered to meet with any and all residents to discuss what had gone wrong and what needed to be done to fix the project. A community meeting was called: the sole topic of discussion was to be the publication. Neighbors spoke of being betrayed and ignored. Complaints were lodged against the student ethnographers who had "suddenly" stopped coming to talk with residents. The commitment of university to be a true "partner" was questioned.

Prior to the meeting, I had decided not only to apologize for the mistakes in the book but also to stress the positive value of the publication—how it showed the remarkable nature of Glassville and how students could learn from the residents' voices. No one wanted to be told that his or her participation was meaningless. In this sense, I stood my ground on the importance of the residents' voices being heard, even if the process and publication had failed them. I also publicly promised that New City Community Press would fix the book to their satisfaction. As might be expected, folks questioned whether it could ever be "fixed." Here, there really was no response except to ask for another chance to make it right—whatever that might take.

These dramatic moments, however, do not capture the full response: it was not as simple as the rejection of the book by the entire community. Even during the height of the controversy, the book began to integrate itself productively into the community's networks of exchange. Some community members were happy with their interviews and sold the book as a fundraiser for their church. Some also felt that, seen as a continuous image, the cover was "quite striking." Many residents bought extra copies to give to family members. At the same meeting in which anger ran so high, some argued that the community simply did not want to admit to some of the features that were represented in the book. One neighborhood resident offered a prayer of thanks for the book's publication. Community anger also lessened when an involved professor used hard-earned community respect to endorse the possibility of finding a solution. As a result, the attempt to have a retraction or apology put on the cover was rejected. Finally, as discussed later, the association ultimately endorsed the use to which the book was put in our basic writing classrooms—where, in ways not intended,

it served to highlight the difficult and exacting nature of university/community publication partnerships.

Still, in light of its own goals, the Glassville project had failed on many counts. The neighborhood association would not use the book to advertise the community or to recruit members. Without the association's support, plans to market the book to other writing programs and to bookstores had to be shelved. Tensions— between participants who defined the goal of the book as a community publication and others who defined the book as a student research publication—reached a point at which future collaboration no longer seemed possible. In an attempt to cross the divisions between the university, the community, and the curriculum, a divisive and flawed product had been produced.

Rethinking Value

In retrospect, it seems clear that the Glassville project embedded itself within a particular version of value, one that initially might be explained by Karl Marx's theory of value and its incorporation into the academy. The shorthand version of Marx's theory goes as follows: individual workers, dispossessed of the means of production, are forced to sell the only value that they possess, their "use-value" as laborers. For this labor, the capitalist provides them with enough wages to sustain their daily existence; this is the labor's exchange value. The capitalist trick is to force the workers to labor beyond the point of their mere reproduction—i.e., workers provide more "use-value" than they receive in "exchange-value." Marx concludes that the worker fails to see this exploitation because of the "fetishism" of commodities—the workers believe that it is the inherent quality of an object, and not their labor, that creates value (125–244).

Marx's view that capitalism produced a culture that masks worker exploitation has been translated into an argument that the canon has worked to exclude the full range of writing being produced within a culture, as well as the economic/historical context from which that writing arose. The canon has fetishized certain texts and claimed them as "art" by removing them from the context of their production. Under the guise of objectivity, the canon has become a vehicle for representing the desires of the bourgeoisie/middle class. In response, Marxist literary critics have argued that previously marginalized texts, such as those written by the working class, should be placed within the "literary" canon. Marginalized writing is often held to possess the progressive values that critics claim the canon has traditionally denied. This version of canon reform has led to a situation in which professors of English studies are asked to choose between two opposing sets of texts (canonical and noncanonical), each seen as possessing opposing moral values (Guillory 25).

A similar narrative could be made about the integration of nonstandard texts into composition classrooms. As James Berlin argues in *Rhetoric and Reality*, the "canonized" text for composition classrooms is the expository essay that is

embedded within the current traditionalist paradigm. Since the late 1960s, however, nonstandard writing and nonhegemonic voices have become part of the picture. A look at mainstream readers, such as *Negotiating Differences*, or standard texts, such as Mike Rose's *Lives on the Boundary*, reveals how "marginalized" identities have been incorporated into a "composition canon." As was the case with the literary canon, these alternative voices are often brought in as a way to represent alternative moral values for students to study. Their inclusion poses the question of which set of essentialized voices composition should endorse.

In both composition and literature classes, the "value" of introducing these texts has been seen principally as creating a more representative set of literary/cultural voices. Guillory argues that, in a time of conservative politics, this push for canonical representation stands in for actual political representation. As Guillory notes, including Latino literary voices in a literature course is a poor substitute for ensuring that Latinos can enter the classroom or government.[7] In this regard, it is not clear how such curricular inclusion has significantly changed the actual political relationship of a university to its local or national partners.[8] Increased representation in the classroom via assigned texts has not necessarily resulted in increased resource sharing with underrepresented populations at the local level.

Nor has the introduction of these texts necessarily challenged the political relationship of how "writing" might be produced, published, and distributed in partnership with the "marginalized" communities being studied. Students tend to read finished pieces that are nicely framed within anthologies. In such situations, the community's sense of how it wishes to be represented is greatly mitigated or even negated. (For an extended discussion of this issue, see Diana George). It might be argued that Marx's theory of value has been adopted only in the most limited sense; it has been used to acknowledge exclusion, to detail the history of that exclusion, and to allow the "literal" voice of that excluded population into our curriculum. In the process, however, fundamental questions on the nature of language, community, and property have been finessed.

Certainly, the Glassville project demonstrated the failings of such a limited vision. The voices of the community were included in the curriculum; they were not, however, developed in a context affording equal control of the book's content or developing its visual qualities. It was the students, not the community members, who collected and edited (or failed to edit) the oral histories. It was the Press who framed the community voices through images, font, and cover design. It was

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7. In *Cultural Capital*, Guillory states, "What is excluded from the syllabus is not excluded in the same way that an individual is excluded or marginalized as the member of a social minority, socially disenfranchised" (33).

8. In this regard, a general conservative restructuring of the liberal welfare state, which produced a need for greater partnerships among public institutions such as universities and schools, had a greater impact on forming such partnerships than "radical" theory. The question becomes how cultural studies can work within these new (and unfortunate) possibilities.

the University Writing Program that seemed to have the power to decide how the book would be used in its composition classrooms.

Within a community-publishing context, the fundamental issue becomes more than just exchanging one text for another—canonical for noncanonical. In such projects, we need to recognize the right of a local community to have input into the publication, as well as into subsequent curricular materials. For this reason, I argue that such moments of curriculum reform must be seen as part of a larger effort to form university/community partnerships. That is, we need to explore how our inclusion of nontraditional voices might call for a general reworking of the current sponsorship networks existing within a university.[9] For these issues of control to become central, however, we must shift our attention away from the "exchange-value" of teaching one politically oriented text over another and toward the "use-value" of texts in general.

Notably, some Marxist scholars have already argued for an increased focus on use-value. In "Scattered Speculations on the Question of Value," Gayatri Spivak reminds us that "use-value" is both inside and outside the network of exchange (162). For this reason, use-value can speak to both the labor relations from which the object emerges and the cultural/aesthetic value of that object.[10] Working from her insights, a teacher could design a classroom practice for *Glassville Memories* that highlights how the book developed within certain networks of economic exchange, networks that allowed New City to control the image of the community as well as determine the way in which community voices would be discussed and analyzed within the college course. This conversation might also lead to a larger discussion of how *Glassville Memories* is an example of a generalized pattern for university/community partnerships in which the community is the object on which the university, as subject, acts.

However, although such a definition allows us to enunciate the responsibilities of the teacher within a classroom, it does not enunciate the rights of the community to help define that classroom. A student's becoming aware of how a text is used (and framed) does not change the actual working practices or the relationship of the institution to the communities being studied.[11] For this reason, we also need

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9. Here, I am referring to Deborah Brandt's development of "sponsorship" in *Literacy in American Lives.*

10. As stated earlier, the Glassville project did attempt to negotiate the question of value. In recognition of the fact that profit might be made from the book, a portion of the profit was to be returned to the community organization as payment for its residents' contributions. In that sense, we did work within a model that imagined the labor power of the community being invested in the book, and, in a quasi-Marxist gesture, we attempted to refund the community for its residents' labor.

11. As the work of Bruce Horner indicates, such a focus on the local commodifies "the community" and "the classroom" into static objects and fails to demonstrate to students how their interaction and work necessarily alters the community and the university space (31–72).

to imagine how a focus on use-value might interrupt our current practices in connecting with community and neighborhood organizations. Here the work of G. A. Cohen becomes important. Whereas Spivak ultimately accepts Marx's conception of "surplus labor" as a conceptual tool to explain exploitation ("Subaltern"), for Cohen, exploitation occurs through how the "value of a product is appropriated" and to what uses and ends it is put.[12] He believes that, by creating the object, the worker earns the right to determine how the product is used: "[T]he crucial question for exploitation concerns the justice of the distribution of the means of production" (234).

Earlier, I argued that nontraditional texts were being introduced into classrooms to make the canon more "representative." Cohen's argument demonstrates the inadequacy of such a move, because the inclusion of marginal voices within traditional networks of production—curricula, required courses, textbooks, and publishers—simply reproduces the current networks of sponsorship and power. (Certainly, this is one of the lessons of the Glassville project; the neighborhood was represented, but without representation.) What is needed is a new model of aesthetic and cultural production that not only provides alternative cultural products for use inside and outside our classrooms, but also alternative systems of production for our students and community partners.

For all of these reasons, I have come to believe that cultural and educational institutions should understand part of their work as "socializing" the means of cultural and aesthetic production.[13] Or, as Guillory argues, aesthetic and cultural

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12. In *History, Labour, and Freedom*, G. A. Cohen has pointed out that Marx's value theory is structured around the shuttling of two different versions of "labor": the simple version—actual labor-time, spent producing an object—and the strict version, socially necessary time, required to produce an object. Cohen argues that the simple version is unable to explain why labor-intensive objects from the past are valued by the time that is required to produce them today. An example of this might be a shovel produced by a blacksmith versus one produced with current industrial technology. The logic of Marx's argument seems to imply that, because the production of the blacksmith's shovel was more labor-intensive, that shovel should be worth more than the factory-produced shovel. Yet this is often not the case. Marx deflects this argument by stating that what gives an object value is actually the socially necessary labor-time that society typically allots to its production. At this point, however, the actual labor of the worker is no longer expressed in the commodity; instead, the expression of an object's value becomes its relationship to a preexisting standard of labor-time. Here, Marx's theory is contradicted, because now the worker's actual labor does not provide any value to the commodity. Furthermore, if past labor-time is the best indicator of the socially necessary labor-time used to produce a commodity but past labor cannot be used as a category if the simple concept of the labor theory of value is true, then actual past labor cannot be used as a ground for the concept of "required time." According to Cohen, Marx does not succeed in proving that labor is what gives value to a commodity: "We may therefore conclude that labour does not create value, whether or not the labour theory of value is true" (233).

13. I recognize that this argument goes against the current restricting of the university as a private for profit institution. See Soley and White.

production must be reintroduced as a right of every citizen and become an aspect of everyday ordinary life:

> The point is not to make judgment disappear but to reform the conditions of its practice. If there is no way out of the game of culture, then, even when cultural capital is the only kind of capital, there may be another kind of game, with less dire consequences for the losers, an aesthetic game. Socializing the means of production and consumption would be the condition of an aestheticism unbound, not its overcoming. But of course, this is only a thought experiment. (340)

Guillory's "aestheticism unbound" is an argument for the right of communities to create their own aesthetic self-definitions; it is an instantiation of Cohen's view that exploitation can be overcome only by expanding access to the means of production.[14]

Rather than see its work strictly in terms of canon (re)formation, English studies should imagine itself as a field that is engaged in fostering new local public writing spaces. It should demonstrate to its students how the binary concepts of in/out and canonical/noncanonical are the result of negotiated literacy acts and practices. Ultimately, English studies could push against a literal view of language, one in which language is seen as a reflection of a community's reality, to a view of language as the means by which different language communities bring themselves together for greater explanatory (and political) power, replacing the literal text with a catachretical text. I would even go so far as to argue that, for students undertaking such collaborative work as part of their general education, it would demonstrate the true use-value of the writing process.

It should be recognized, however, that the effort of socializing the means of literary/literacy production necessarily demands a different relationship between English studies and the local community. One of the ways to read the initial formulation of the Glassville project is as a tactical intervention into a local community. Michel de Certeau, in *The Practice of Everyday Life*, defines a tactic as follows:

> [A] tactic is a calculated action determined by the absence of a proper locus. No delimitation of an exteriority, then, provides it with the condition necessary for autonomy. The space of the tactic is the space of the other. Thus, it must play on and with a terrain imposed on it and organized by the law of a foreign power. . . . It does not, therefore, have the options of planning general strategy . . . . It operates in isolated actions, blow by blow. It

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14. Paddy Maguire et al. detail an important effort at such work with working-class writers by the Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishers in *Republic of Letters*.

> takes advantage of "opportunities" and depends on them, being
> without any base where it could stockpile its winnings, build up
> its own position, and plan raids. (36–37)

Within de Certeau's logic, the Writing Program wanted to become a tactical ally, marshalling resources for a "quick strike" against a larger public dismissal of Glassville (although, as noted, we actually operated as a foreign power). Within the Writing Program itself, the *Glassville Memories* publication acted as a tactical intervention into the first-year writing program, moving it toward greater inclusion of locally marginalized community voices. However, when the tactical project fell apart, the partnership could have just drifted away, the book could been put in storage and eventually forgotten, and the individual faculty could have drifted to other projects. For many "failed" university/community projects, the individual (read "tactical") nature of the work allows the department or university to be unaffected. In this way, a tactical approach represents a limited ethical and practical commitment to connecting the disciplinary work of a field to a local community.

For this reason, as English studies moves toward "socializing the means of production," it is a strategic sense of value that must become dominant. According to de Certeau, a strategy is "the calculation (or manipulation) of power relations that becomes possible as soon as a subject with will or power (a business, an army, a city, a scientific institution) can be isolated. It postulates a place that can be delimited as its own and serve as a base from which relations with an exteriority composed of targets or threats . . . can be managed" (35–36). Within the institute (which, as stated earlier, was housed in the Writing Program and English Department), New City Community Press had become a strategic space whose very existence depended on community-based partnerships.

By definition, it was a university/community collaborative. For this reason, the "failure" of the Glassville project called into question the integrity of its borders, creating a scenario in which "foreign powers" (deans, department heads, grant agencies, and other community partners) might use the moment to reclaim the space and resources for other initiatives. It was this development of a strategic community publishing space that necessitated institutional responsibility and recognition of the importance of correcting the project. There was simply no possibility of allowing the Glassville project to "fade away." It would affect not only the community, but the English Department as well. For this reason, I argue that the "hope" of such community-based work can be realized only by the creation of strategic university spaces that bring with them a collective ethical and institutional commitment to the numerous literacy populations that make up a neighborhood, city, or state.

Returning to the connections among English studies, value, and community publishing, I reiterate my argument that the history of English studies (a rubric covering both literary and composition studies) has involved the slow inclusion of vernacular or marginalized voices—a limited definition of value. English

studies now resides in a space, however, from which it can take on a strategic role in alliance with marginalized populations—not only to produce community-based publications, but also to ensure that the emerging commitment to publishing the words and voices of our local communities is enacted in an ethical and institutionally responsible manner. In doing so, English studies will not only further articulate its own traditions, but it will develop a framework to enrich the work of students, community members, and faculty. For this reason, English studies should become part of the effort to socialize the means of literary/literacy production by becoming active in community publishing networks within the residents' local communities or establishing their own small/low-level community publishing efforts. Such are the "common values" that could unite community publishing and English studies.

Common Ground

So how does the story of the Glassville project end? How did this revised sense of value shape my response to the controversy? To answer these questions, I focus on two particular elements of the response: the use of the book in our composition classroom and the production of the second edition.

In the aftermath of the controversy, we were still faced with the commitment to use the book in our first-year writing courses; there were two thousand copies in our storeroom. Recognizing the need to coordinate with the community over the inclusion of the book in our curriculum, I decided to discuss with the neighborhood association how the book would be "used" in university classrooms. In doing so, I explicitly promised the president of the association that, when we used the book in university classes, we would not hide the project's mistakes or the community's anger. It was decided to use the book's history as a way to frame the difficulties and possibilities of a neighborhood/university partnership. The flawed product and the history of its production offered an interesting text for students in our introductory writing courses to study how universities and neighborhoods create "value." (This is not to say that the course abandoned its traditional goals or that judgments based on composition research were ignored; instead, these disciplinary judgments were placed in dialogue with the community's insights. As Guillory argues, the point is not to make value judgments disappear, but to reform the conditions of their practice.)

The particular theme of this first-year writing course grew out of comments by the community member who exclaimed, "I sound like the village idiot," when she saw her interview for the first time. After this remark was made to me, I spent more than an hour talking to the president of the neighborhood association, arguing that everyone in the book sounded like an "intellectual." I offered alternative ways to understand what it might mean to "sound like an intellectual," citing such "cultural studies" luminaries as Antonio Gramsci and Raymond Williams. None of these academic readings of the community "voices" seemed

to have much traction, however. As we talked, I realized that I was arguing from an incredibly privileged space, ignoring the situation of those who don't have the "university" standing behind their "intellect." This led me to consider who is really allowed to exist within such broad and "alternative" definitions of the intellectual. Who has the power to decide that they can afford such a definition? This conversation sparked a debate among those creating the course on what it meant to sound like or to be "intellectual." Or, as it was posed to students, how do we understand the relationship between intellectuals sponsored by a community and those sponsored by the academy? How should these different intellectuals relate? In a sense, the idea of the intellectual became a metaphor for the class to examine how university/neighborhood organizations might interact in the production of knowledge.

Throughout the course, students were asked to inquire into how the book represented the working relationship between students and residents. They were not asked to read the text as an authentic and literal expression of a marginalized voice; they were asked how the text represented a negotiation among different "intellectuals" on the concept of "community." It was also hoped that students, by being engaged in this process, would come to learn the tentative and ev-er-changing character of community. In this way, the course moved *Glassville Memories* from a commodified product into an ongoing social practice in which they could participate.

The students were aware that they were taking part in an ongoing debate about the publication and that they were, in effect, part of the material practices shaping its future. Perhaps because of this, they picked up on the tensions within the book. In particular, a significant number of students felt that the interviews were disrespectful of the residents, both by showing a lack of knowledge about the community and by the brevity of the actual questions. Students pointed out how the interviewers' questions were predominantly personal and rarely asked the residents to offer systemic or theoretical analyses of why the community had managed to remain harmonious in the midst of economic change. In this way, the students' behavior reaffirmed research demonstrating that working-class in-dividuals are often asked questions that imply a lack of authority and knowledge to supply extended information, leading to short answers and a failure to provide them with the opportunity to represent their worldview fully.[15]

Within this context, the students also developed an argument that the book itself failed to accord the residents the space to publish materials that demonstrat-ed their collective intellectual vision. There were few economic facts in the book, either as addenda or graphs, to affirm the personal insights of the residents. No information was given on documents that were produced by the neighborhood association or on any plan being developed by the community to address the eco-nomic concerns presented in the book. Although calling for such texts might be

15. See Ohmann.

seen as an attempt to make the book academic, it was also the case that such work would have highlighted the association's political goals, as well as their personal experiences. As for the students, the *Glassville* book allowed them to see how a failure to imagine the community residents as intellectuals had determined both the scope and the limitations of the project.

Student readers did not, however, romanticize the Glassville residents. They consistently pointed out that many elderly residents appeared to be uninterested in modern culture. The residents, as represented in the book, seemed more interested in reproducing their past than in creating a different type of community that could intersect with the economic and multicultural terrain of modern Philadelphia. Even though residents saw the world and their network of friendships in "Black and White," our students inhabited a multicultural world, with a variety of languages and ethnicities. They consistently noticed the lack of stories and images of Asian neighbors. Many of these issues were framed around the book's cover. Students believed that the cover images accurately represented the book's emphasis on personal stories and historical nostalgia, in contrast to one of the residents' critiques of the book. In agreement with the community, they also faulted the placement of the Black family images on the back of the book. Notably, they also faulted the book for failing to represent the new Asian population in the neighborhood on either the cover or in the content of the book.

The *Glassville Memories* book allowed students to see how a focus on "personal relationships" had failed to imagine the residents as community intellectuals or to challenge their very vision of a "race-free" community. In so doing, it demonstrated to the students the ways in which the seemingly literal language of community was actually the result of a metaphoric act of bringing disparate voices and interests together as though they were unified, even if that unity was actually exclusionary. For a final project in the course, students were asked to rewrite the book by imagining what else the residents might have said, to recategorize the book's structure, to invent oppositional voices to critique the questioners, and to develop new cover and image montages. These moves allowed the students to move beyond simple critique toward a type of metaphorical writing practice.

Even prior to publishing a second edition, the book was a curricular success for the Writing Program. The book did more than "exchange" one text for another. It reframed the relationship of students to their writing about community, as well as the Writing Program's relationship to "community." Through the *Glassville* book, the disciplinary interests of English studies were placed in a material dialogue with the immediate context in which issues of urban literacy and community development occurred. The book also demonstrated how the work of students could not be seen as separate from the neighboring area surrounding the campus. For this reason, the *Glassville Memories* began to model how a curriculum might be seen as the result of more than just strictly disciplinary interests. It offered a different model of how a curriculum could interact with a community, and it articulated the responsibilities of students working in that community.

But what about Glassville itself? How were the community concerns addressed? Soon after the community protest meeting, discussions began on how to produce a second edition of the book. This was not an easy or contention-free process, because many community members simply would not believe that such a big institution could change its pattern of behavior. Throughout the book project (and the plans for the second edition), the residents had talked about the example of Federal Express. Prior to our collaboration, the company had agreed to build a plant right next to the neighborhood and to hire residents to work there. The residents saw it as an opportunity to revitalize the neighborhood. For reasons that are still hotly debated, Federal Express hired individuals who were primarily from outside the community. Residents constantly invoked this incident as a precedent for the Press' complicated relationship with the community.

The process of talking to residents while developing the composition course, however, began to create some trust between the neighborhood association and New City Community Press. In talking to the president of the association and other community members, I was able to invoke this student work to show how, despite the controversy, the book was still a useful tool to teach students about race and community/university partnerships. Particularly important in this process was the student work critiquing the university's behavior in the production of the first edition. This demonstrated that the community concerns were being heard and validated. As a result, a belief in the collective ownership of the revision process gained some traction, especially because it led to discussions about equalizing power and sharing among partners. In this context, a new model emerged, which placed all participants on a common plane for decision making and mandated common access to the "means of production." And, although a full consideration of the category termed "intellectual" is not the work of this essay, it is useful to briefly note Gramsci's insight: "All men are intellectuals, one could therefore say: but not all men have in society the function of intellectuals" (9). As the parties moved forward in the revision process, each began to take on intellectual responsibilities that had formerly been accorded to the students and faculty alone.

Initially, sharing decisions and opening up the means of production meant a new focus on revising the aesthetic and framing aspects of the publication (the cover, the introduction, etc.). For instance, the neighborhood association, the involved professors, and I agreed that the second edition should be jointly designed and approved by representatives from the community and university participants. In response, new covers were designed, featuring a neighborhood scene on the front and a picture of an interracial friendship on the back. Individual pages were also redesigned and organized to meet the residents' vision. The title page was changed to include the neighborhood association as one of the primary editors, and an introduction by the association president was added.

As discussions continued and deepened, however, it became clear that all were inflected by race. As discussed at the outset of this chapter, the Glassville residents imagined themselves to be a community in which "race" was not an issue.

To a great extent, this turned out to be true. Among the neighbors, longstanding friendships had overcome many of the racist or class-based attitudes that marked surrounding neighborhoods. Although we were new to the neighborhood, we assumed that we also had entered this network of "friendship." (It should be added that one professor involved in the project, through a longer and more extended relationship with the community, had actually become part of the friendship network.) Despite all of the members of the Press being White, we imagined that we had transcended "race."

Yet the project clearly had not transcended race. The controversy over the first cover demonstrated this fact. As we moved forward, we had to consider how our elision of issues of race had damaged our partnership and the book. Ignoring race on the university's part also ignored the extent to which our personal and professional positions were based on discriminatory sponsorship networks—networks that intentionally left behind the citizens who lived and worked in neighborhoods such as Glassville. The discourse on "friendship" masked the racial and class components with our assumption that we would control the process and production of the book. For those of us at the Press, strong lessons needed to be learned.

We were not the only ones learning from the process, however. I have come to believe that those who were active in the book's revision also learned the difficulty of presenting their community as having solved the issue of race in strictly "personal terms." By not highlighting the broader worldview out of which their friendships grew, they failed to put in place a discourse or rhetoric to claim rights or power from a large institution. To some extent, I like to believe that the process of completing the second edition of the book allowed them to develop a stronger argument about the rights of a community when it is involved in university or corporate partnerships. (However, to be honest, not everyone agrees with this reading, and it is unclear whether any major corporation would cede power to such a small community group, no matter what arguments were deployed.)

As the second edition emerged, arguments declaring that racism could be overcome by personal friendships or by offering to publish a book addressing this fact were no longer viable. This resulted in an interesting mix of "old and new." Residents ultimately changed very little in their interviews. The disagreements concerning race relations within the interviews remained and, in some cases, were highlighted, although some residents went back to the interviews to clarify their statements about neighborhood history or neighborhood institutions. Some residents appeared to be more open to representing race as an ongoing issue in their community and allowing the tensions in their neighborhood to serve as a case study of negotiation. That is, the "harmonious" new cover and introductory materials were now to be seen in dialogue with the voices of residents who were trying to achieve that goal.

In some senses, the residents began to think of the book less as a literal representation of their community and more as a document that expressed one particular working-through of the issue, a discussion piece for use in their neighborhood. This was evident in their decision not to include more demographic or

research materials in the book. In part, residents felt that the editorial changes to their interviews cumulatively expressed their worldview. In part, they felt that the university courses were providing this perspective for students. In this way, the second edition resulted in academic and vernacular cultures being metaphorically conjoined to produce a dialogue about the nature of language and community, as well as about the intersection of race and class. Therefore, with the second edition of the book, although the Glassville neighborhood association did not have a perfect publication that expressed a utopian vision of their community, they did have a publication that they felt comfortable sharing at community events, giving to new residents, and using to advocate for community rights.

I do not want to leave the impression that everything was permanently solved. That is not how collaboration works. Despite the attempt to reframe the discussion of race, the second edition failed to represent the full diversity of the community: new immigrants, as well as some long-time residents of the community, are not represented in the book. (As the second edition was heading to press, a resident in the community refused to allow a group photo featuring her grandmother to appear in the book because her family had not been interviewed. This act rekindled old feuds.) Although it is true that the book was used in the composition program for two years, neither *Glassville Memories* nor any other New City Community Press publication is currently being used in Temple University's first-year curriculum. Finally, personal divisions still exist among between faculty, community, and program leaders about the history of the project and its value.

Despite such moments, what has succeeded, however, is the strategic space supporting the goals of community publishing. Since the production of *Glassville Memories*, the Press has worked collaboratively to publish oral histories of Mexican farm workers, the photography and writing of displaced union members, the poetry of urban school children, and community dialogues on slavery/freedom. In each case, these publications have been collaborative produced and designed by teams of community, university, and student participants. Each of these books found a home both within the participating community as well as within literature and composition classes; their adoption across the curriculum (not just for first-year writing) can serve as a sign of the long-term success of such projects at drawing together opposing aspects of an English studies department in support of community-based organizing.

In addition, a collaboratively developed curriculum for each of these community publications has enabled them to be integrated into high schools, community organizations, and government agencies in the immediate local context of their production, as well as literally across the country and internationally. In that way, the crisis of Glassville has created a strategic intervention into the work of the department and college, which has enabled a vision of English studies as an active participant in the creation of not only a community-based literature, but also a community-based curriculum at all levels of literary and composition instruction nationwide.

Hard Conversations

I conclude with some general thoughts about how a shift in the meaning of value can bridge some of the divisions between English studies and composition/rhetoric. As we have seen, when value is framed strictly in terms of exchange-value (exchanging one text for another), a certain set of expectations/practices seems to be put into place. The principal agents become the professors and students; the principal site of activity is the university. However, with the introduction of use-value as a guiding metaphor, a different set of interests becomes part of the equation, forcing a different set of responsibilities onto the institution. It becomes possible to imagine each partner (the university and the community) as providing value to the project and being accorded the right to determine its use. Value production can be seen as a communal process, the aim of which is to produce a mutually reaffirming literacy product. Invoking use-value as an organizing principle demands that a common (if contentious) space of negotiation and production be created.

For this reason, I believe that curriculum reform must be more than the simple inclusion of texts that represent "alternative values;" it must mean more than providing diverse texts for students to judge by some moral standard or to use to learn academic discourse. This is important work, but it is only one piece. One of the goals of English studies, and of composition/rhetoric programs in particular, is to help students understand the connections between language and cultural power. To do this most effectively, English studies must create a path for students that is based in both traditional course offerings (which teach the history of literary texts, cultural theory, key concepts in rhetoric, ethnography, and linguistics) and in courses that engage students in the informed production of use-value; that is, in addition to traditional courses, students must participate in both the creation of the aesthetic written object and the economy of partnerships out of which it emerges. Ultimately, the work of producing collaborative publications between the university and their local communities, socializing and expanding the aesthetic means of production, should become a key element of our pedagogical and professional work. Community publishing projects are a primary vehicle for such work.

English studies should also be about embedding our classrooms in a process that allows students to realize that the seemingly most literal language is metaphoric, the result of intense negotiation, of bringing disparate worldviews together. It is this vision of language that will enable them to be active participants in local, regional, and national public spheres. In "Rogue Cops and Health Care," Susan Wells takes the prison visiting room as a metaphor for engaging our students in public writing:

> The image of the visiting room suggests that our work establishes a point of exchange between the private, the domain of production, and some approximation of the public sphere. It is not directed at the political opinions of students, however

progressive or retrograde, but toward the production and read-
ing of texts that move between the public (the political, abstract,
the discussable) and the private. . . . The realignment of rhetor-
ical pedagogy to the public I advocate is not, therefore, a pre-
scription or proscription of a genre of writing. Personal essays
are not intrinsically "private"; technical discourse is not neces-
sarily "public." Rather, publicity is constructed as a relation of
readers to writers, including notions of rationality and account-
ability that are continually open to contest. (335)

Reform is less about assigning a variety of writing modes than about a par-
ticular vision of language, a particular enactment of language politics. Clearly,
such an undertaking will take significant work and hard conversations. Yet if we
want to ensure that the production of value within an academic program is not
seen as simply the circulation of texts, but the creation of venues through which
all participants begin to recognize and regard the ownership of such texts and
the education of students as a communal responsibility, it is just this set of hard
conversations that we must undertake. The story of the Glassville project is not
that our institute or department succeeded in permanently socializing the aes-
thetic means of production. Glassville did not lead to a moment of epiphany, but
to a contentious and difficult process. As I once heard a university president state,
"One of the great contributions of higher education is to show people how to
deliberate over contentious issues together." By taking on use-value as a guiding
principle of our work, I believe that we can contribute to that great tradition.

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Chapter 4. Emergent Strategies for an Established Field: The Role of Worker-Writer Collectives in Composition and Rhetoric

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Perhaps if you saw me
As more than a server
Grant me the credit I merit
Dispose of your pity or mockery
Recognize the resemblance?
Could I be you?

– Danielle Quigley, "Server"

Ordinary people make rhetorical space through a concerted, often protracted struggle for visibility, voice, and impact against powerful interests that seek to render them invisible. People take and make space in acts that are simultaneously verbal and physical.

– Nancy Welch, Living Room: Teaching
Public Writing in a Privatized World

Abstract: We argue that the Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishers, with its dual emphasis on literacy and occupational skills, can serve as a new model for writing classrooms and writing program administrators. We further contend that the "contact zone" classroom should be replaced with community-based "federations."

Within selective and elite universities exist pockets of talented working-class students who are there through a combination of intelligence, determination, financial aid, and community support.[1] Existing between their home community, where occupations have a pre-hi-tech sound, such as truck driver or waitress, and the world

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of the university, where such work is neatly tucked away from view, working-class students often find their own voice and community experiences elided or passed over. As a result, they must constantly negotiate how much of their personal lives can enter classroom conversation and under what circumstances. For local working-class residents, working within or living around the university, there is often not even the opportunity to make such decisions, for they are too often shut out from debates and dialogues about how the institution should define "education" in their own community. Indeed, the local working-class community is often not even represented on many campus maps, where images of university buildings stand adrift in a sea of white background. As educators who believed in composition's history of democratizing literacy education, we began to ask how the work of a writing program might ground the university in its local environment, filling in the white space of campus maps, and, by doing so, provide community support for working-class students in elite writing classrooms. And, we asked, how might the writing undertaken within and beyond our classrooms enable this work to occur?

There was, of course, a large body of scholarship focused on working-class communities as well as pedagogical and curricular strategies designed to support such students' entry into academic literacy. Scholars from Shirley Brice Heath and Deborah Brandt to Annette Lareau have used extended ethnographic studies to demonstrate how working-class communities develop their literacy skills within (and against) the economic and social parameters of their daily lives. Recognizing how traditional composition textbooks and classrooms fail to engage with these literate strategies, scholars such as Richard M. Ohmann (English and Politics), Ira Shor, and Mina Shaughnessy have offered (albeit different) political critiques and pedagogical strategies for composition teachers. Emerging from this work have also been specific classroom-based studies, such as those by David Seitz, which draw together ethnography and critical pedagogy to create classrooms that attempt to provide greater agency for working-class students not only in their writing classrooms, but in university as well. More recently, Tony Scott has examined how working-class identity is being rearticulated within "fast capitalism" and what it means for the work of writing programs, instructors, and students.

There are also concurrent attempts to enable students to move beyond the classroom and study the landscape of the working-class communities that often surround their campuses—the streets and neighborhoods of which they are often temporary residents. Indeed, the conjoined movements of community literacy scholarship and service-learning pedagogies have moved this emphasis on working-class communities into programmatic "social change" efforts that link students with local populations, providing pragmatic experience of the literacy, political, and democratic theories that are often the feature of composition/rhetoric classrooms today. Particularly with Linda Flower, the work of classroom/community partnerships have been linked to participants developing the organizing skills (what we call "occupational skills") to engage in a productive and goal-oriented discussion of contentious community issues. As characterized by Flower, elite college students

and working-class residents here learn to negotiate both personal and community differences through a set of seemingly neutral rhetorical concepts and practices.

And yet, for the working-class student sitting within a world of privilege, we wondered if an unintended effect of such work isn't to turn our students into exotic others—representing a different and alien culture to be explored and probed through the disciplinary lenses of the academy. And while we want to recognize the value of students undertaking literacy narratives or ethnographic studies that present either their own or their communities' working-class identity, we are uncomfortable with such work in isolation from larger networks that present such communities as agents of their own future, creating their own rhetorical and activist models. So while recognizing the value of the above mentioned work, we want to argue against pedagogical strategies that frame the working-class as a marginal "cultural identity" defined by "habits and tastes" that can be explored within the "contact zone" of our classrooms (Welch). Instead, we believe that our classrooms and programs should form writing projects with local and international worker-writer collectives, collectives that are attempting to gain both the literacy and the occupational skills that support larger struggles for representation and rights. For as Welch indicated above, the effort to gain an independent rhetorical space is both a verbal and physical act.

We argue that by drawing such collectives into our classrooms, not only do working-class students gain an important ally, but all the students in the class can gain a deeper appreciation for how the literate and occupational strategies inherent in such groups can impact the production of knowledge in the university. That is, rather than export rhetorical theories to the community, we can import these writing collectives' literacy and occupational practices as a means to ensure working-class student success at elite institutions. Moreover, when taken collectively, the tactical interventions by these collectives in local definitions of literacy represent a location from which a strategic partnership with an activist writing program (Adler-Kassner) can argue for a greater re-alignment in the actual relations of power between the university and its surrounding working-class community. It is in undertaking this pedagogical and institutional work that all our writing students can gain a deeper sense of how particular alignments of language and power act to the benefit (or disadvantage) of the communities that surround their campus.

To develop this argument, we discuss the motivations and results of creating a Trans-Atlantic Federation of Worker Writers (TAFWW), a partnership consisting of Syracuse University's Writing Program, the Basement Writers (a local writing group), and the Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishers (an alliance of writing and publishing groups from throughout the United Kingdom). The goal of the TAFWW project was to provide an enveloping context where working-class student experience at an elite university could be authorized within a writing classroom by the work of the UK writers and held in place by the supporting voices of working-class citizens in the surrounding city, citizens who by the end of the project would also begin to take an active role in defining the goals

of education for their university counterparts. Ultimately, then, the aim was not to create a "contact zone" in which the experiences of our working-class students could be observed and analyzed but to form a "federation" that, through writing and publication, would mutually support the collective literacy and political goals of the working class in the university and the city of Syracuse, New York.

First Contact

Steve Parks' first undergraduate teaching assignment upon arriving at Syracuse University was Critical Research and Writing, a required writing course for sophomore students. The goal of the course is to introduce students into the structure of academic argument within the context of different cultural forms of argumentation, a context necessarily demanding a diverse representation of different ethnic, economic, and sexual experiences. Having just left Temple University, at that time still a predominantly working-class school, Parks was interested in how issues of class, labor, and literacy would be interpreted within Syracuse University, a private institution. With this in mind, he designed a course in which students would read a variety of genres (fiction, nonfiction, vernacular, political, academic) and write a variety of "arguments" (academic, personal, research based) where "work" and "literacy" were the primary themes.

During the course of the semester, then, the students read established authors, such as Barbara Ehrenreich, alternative labor histories, such as those produced by Mike Davis, and community writers, such as Vivian Usherwood. Throughout, students would be asked to negotiate and evaluate how these different texts authorized a particular truth and, in doing so, established a certain discursive reality about the relationship between socioeconomic class and literacy. All the while they were asked to investigate how their own discursive strategies (personal, academic, and political) placed them in relationship to these topics. As an opening assignment, the students wrote about their own working history. As he usually does, Parks passed out two student essays that echoed many of the ideas and rhetorical moves made by the rest of the class. In the first essay, the student described a life of privilege marked by having no actual work history (her father paid all her expenses, including tuition). The essay ended by highlighting her own lack of economic skills when she stated, "I hope one day to learn how to read a bill." Parks had expected the class to talk about how the student had rhetorically constructed her particular privilege as well as a general discussion of how one's occupational literacy, the skills necessary to manage one's life on a daily basis, was directly related to their position in the larger economy. Instead, the paper met with almost complete silence, with only several students affirming a similar experience. The story was so typical as to not deserve extended comment.

Undaunted, Parks passed out another piece of writing by Danielle Quigley, a student from the Syracuse area. Her response was a stark contrast to the experiences of many others in the class. Describing her work history, Quigley had written:

> Growing up, I was quite aware that my parents were not going to be paying my way and if I wanted something, I was going to have to be the one who paid for it. My first job was as a paper collator. This was the glorified title for someone who sat in a dingy room stuffing ads into the mountains of newspapers surrounding them. My shift would begin at four o'clock after school on Friday afternoons. After punching in, I would go downstairs into the dusty dungeon-like warehouse that held all of the printing machines. My first task was to lift 20-pound bundles of papers and move them to our tables. Moving the stacks of ads came second; however, there was usually more than one. Once I had my papers I would put them in a neat line in front of me, sit down on my gray metal folding chair, and begin collating. This meant opening the paper and placing all of the ads in it, then shutting the paper and placing it in another pile. Sounds easy right? Try boring, repetitive, tedious, and all of the above. Where was my desk and chair, or coffee? (34)

Here was a student who to some extent had framed her life around a future of paying bills and, as detailed in her full paper, the slow recognition of the lack of connection between hard work and adequate pay. Moreover, the paper detailed an aspect of the working world that probably few of the students considered—the work of putting ads into their daily newspapers, typically delivered to their doors. The hope was this essay would show the "underbelly" of an economy from which the majority of the students in the class seemed to benefit—or at least this is how they positioned themselves in writing. In creating such a juxtaposition, Parks' goal was to ask them to imagine an essay, "a rhetorical contact zone," that could hold both worlds simultaneously and frame how each student existed within a larger economic and legislative environment.[2] Here the student paper was met with complete silence. Stuck, Parks suggested a ten-minute break.

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2. Working from Sheffield Hallam University, a more working-class institution, Pollard uses FWWCP materials to highlight to future occupational therapists the importance of local working-class occupations such as the "fish and chip man" in understanding the complex relationships that create a community and structure the needs and supports of patients. He uses the example of a local hairdresser who, without knowing it, was the only way a therapist could convince one patient to leave her home. A similar argument could be made for the work of Danielle Quigley, whose placement of advertisement coupons in the newspaper created the savings that allowed the purchase of writing materials or attendance at a writing group. In each case, what becomes clear is the tentative and tenuous set of relationships that must be maintained to allow working-class individuals to fully participate in society. This inclusion of local individuals to highlight the way community must work to ensure access to health care and literacy skills would become a central aspect in the creation of the TAWWF and subsequent publications.

Three students, all raised in or around Syracuse, lingered behind as the rest of the students left the classroom. In forceful whispers, they laid bare their experience of the course and how their attempt to talk about working-class experiences had never been supported in an SU classroom: "Of course, no one had anything to say, what's to say but that the rich always get what they want." Parks let the break linger longer than usual, listening in on their conversation. When all the students returned, classroom discussion moved onto the reading, a selection from Ehrenreich's *Nickel and Dimed*, a text that details the author's attempt to live on the wages of service workers in the United States. The reading generated quite a bit of sympathy for her plight—a sympathy, or empathy, that had seemed missing for the writer of the "paper collating" essay. This image of a "well-off" writer suffering lower-class economic difficulties appeared to be a more adept way to draw them into the debate. Still, as a teacher, appealing to this form of benevolence to generate a connection to the "paper collating" student left Parks no more comfortable than the previous silences.

Afterward, Parks selected the three local students to remain and discuss whether the course was meeting its assigned goals—these weekly meetings with students being a common occurrence in his writing classrooms. After some additional long silences, the students laid bare the socioeconomic viewpoint that structured student discussion—a naturalized assumption by the majority of students that everyone enjoyed the same economic privilege with, perhaps, some undertones of benevolence for those less fortunate. Further, with so few working-class voices in the room, they argued, the deck was naturally stacked against an equal conversation. No matter how many working-class voices read, analyzed, and revised in assigned papers, the class simply was not peopled with enough countervailing voices. In working-class politics, they stated, real strength was in numbers.

Thanks to this conversation, Parks began to recognize that the structure of the class had echoed his current understanding of the larger dynamics of the campus—a sponsoring of elite voices within an environment that silenced the local working-class population. In such an environment, working-class students did not feel authorized to speak. Or rather, they did not feel the dynamics of the classroom would validate their viewpoints. As Gary Cale explores in "When Resistance Becomes Reproduction," writing classrooms that feature different subject positions as represented through alternative readings, even when coupled with a critical pedagogy stance, often fail to provide sufficient support to marginalized students. Speaking of the class period in which his students discussed racism, Cale notes:

> When I suggested that racism affected us all, many White students again claimed that the only time they had been affected by racism was when they had been called "whitey" or "honkey." The concept of white privilege was totally dismissed. As a result

> of such discussions, at least one of the Black students found it discouraging to talk about race in class and stopped out until we finished the unit on racism. (3)

While unspoken, it was clear that the atmosphere of class privilege permeating the room also "silenced" working-class students. Indeed, it was more than a silencing. Through conversations with these students, Parks soon recognized that they felt their own experience of service labor and commitment to working-class values were being actively diminished by the other students, who would rather embrace the struggles of Ehrenreich than those of their colleagues. Why, the local students wondered, was the suffering of a wealthy journalist more important than that of their neighbors and friends?

These students' experiences also pointed to the deeper issue of how composition/rhetoric has adopted a "contact zone" structure as the basis for many of its classes—a concept Mary Louise Pratt developed at an elite institution to broaden and diversify students understanding of culture. For while the importance of structuring classrooms that present alternative and competing cultural and political positions is an important component of a student's education about the relationship between literacy and power, the experiences of these working-class students at an elite institution clearly demonstrate the limitations of that concept. For when such students are isolated within an otherwise non-working-class student population, simply introducing alternative voices does little to alter the power dynamics. As the experience of Parks' classroom demonstrated, such a move actually exacerbates the students' sense of isolation by highlighting their status as "different," indirectly invoking a sense of empathy for the "working poor" that cannot account for the agency and skills it took for those working-class students actually in the classroom to achieve admission to Syracuse University. Indeed, it is this sense of being able to "take control" of their destiny that David Seitz highlights as a key theme within the writing of his working-class students. Creating a textually based contact zone within such a classroom negates this sense of control and indirectly replicates for students a silencing of community voices in elite institutions.

Indeed, the class itself enacted this silencing by occurring strictly within the safe confines of the university's institutional geography—hi-tech classrooms, classic college architecture, manicured lawns, and so on. For elite students with little direct experience of the working-class neighborhoods that surround the institution, this created an atmosphere that enabled them to initially rely upon generalizations about Syracuse, often turning these economically distressed neighborhoods into sites of sympathy or empathy. Or just as often, as Nedra Reynolds articulates in *Geographies of Writing*, turning local neighborhoods into spaces of violence and crime and, consequently, outside the geography our students should inhabit. In such a classroom, students were not made aware of how the connection between literacy and work was the site of collective struggle across the

city—that their seemingly self-evident definitions were being actively contested across neighborhoods and communities. Nor were the students invited into the work of changing the perception and reality of this "verbal and physical" economy (see Marback; Sennett and Cobb).

A typical solution to such a dilemma is to supplement such a course with a service-learning option. Within such a framework, students enter aspects of the working-class community (informed by the insights of the fellow students from the area) and witness firsthand the connections between literacy and economic class through volunteering at public schools, adult literacy programs, or other nonprofits—typical locations for such work. With this direct experience, students would hopefully gain greater understanding of the work and literacy skills necessary to be a successful working-class student—that is, the local framework in which literacy politics are enacted. As Bruce Herzberg has argued, however, such experiences often produce individualistic or charitable responses in students—not entirely different than the students' response to Ehrenreich. As importantly, such organizations also represent existing nodes within the work or literacy geography of a city, held in place by federal, state, and foundation support networks. Yet, as Ellen Cushman demonstrates in *The Struggle and the Tools*, local populations often imagine having to organize against such networks not only to gain agency but also to implement their own sense of community values and culture. Democratic struggles for literacy often occur outside the framework of established institutions—however democratic these institutions may imagine themselves.

To embed students within those moments where working-class communities are developing alternative and self-generated concepts of literacy and work against the predominant legislative and economic paradigms, then, implies an alternative pedagogical structure than has traditionally been drawn out of Pratt's contact zone—a structure exemplified in Parks' Critical Research and Writing course. One way to articulate this difference is to briefly re-examine Pratt's use of Guama Poma as central metaphor for classroom practices. According to Pratt, Poma was most likely "an Indigenous Andean who claimed noble Inca descent" and "who had adopted (at least in some sense) Christianity, and may have worked for the Spanish Colonial Administration" (519). Poma writes, then, within a complex set of legitimate discourses—Andean royal heritage, Christianity, and an official government position.

While each discourse is placed in opposition to the other in the colonial context, they are all legitimate in their respective domains. Poma's "letter" is more a negotiation between these historically legitimate discourses than an intervention that would speak to the needs of the unrepresented mass of the Inca (or Spanish, for that matter). As represented by Pratt, Poma's letter does not imagine a call for an independence movement based upon collective struggle of the mass of oppressed citizens. Instead, a partnership among elites is recommended. Here imagine established literacy institutions negotiating how resources will be

distributed across the network; institutions that the community may or may not imagine acting in their behalf; institutions that also must follow dominant legal and political structures when doing their work.

Yet alternative subject positions exist outside this framework. Imagine for a moment Poma's letter as existing within a terrain where other individuals and groups were arguing for a third position—a different sense of power that worked against both Andean and Spanish "royalty." Arjuna Parakrama attempts to explain the contours of such a landscape in his study of the Sri Lankan "revolt" of 1848. In *Language and Rebellion*, he examines the status of a "pretender king" who exists within the context of active anti-colonial struggle. Through close reading of documents written in official discourses, Parakrama argues that discursive strategies cannot offer an accurate insight into "the rebellion":

> It is, therefore, no surprise that my examination of the discourses on the rebellion have established that one of the reasons for the denial of peasant agency concerns the fact that peasant discourse is predicated on an alternate paradigm which cannot co-exist with any casual-rational-legal model which is the only one that has any explanatory power within elite historiography. Even when there is some accounting for the rebel voice within the discourses on the rebellion, such accounting has become possible only through an exclusion of the types of response that call into question this very model itself. . . .
>
> In this view, if it is possible to formulate tentative statements that arguably present the underlying thesis/theses of the discourse, then one must re-examine the discourse itself for strands that have been left out or covered over. The proper object of study must then be one that defies its propositional representation. (68–69)

Pratt's reading of Poma's letter attempts to position it as a text that defies "propositional representation" since it appears to articulate the collective politics of the marginalized and colonized population, the very politics that colonialism is designed to repress. We would argue that such a reading of his letter is only partially accurate. Its failure to be read does demonstrate the inability of a mixture of elite discourses to be understood by elite Spanish authorities—in that way it did defy propositional representation. Her reading does not, however, attempt to highlight or recognize those non-elite rhetorical models and actions that "defy propositional representation" within either set of elite discourses—the voices of those outside of administrative, religious, or mainstream power structures who are appropriated into Poma's argument. Echoing Cushman, these are the emergent discourses of the working class and working poor attempting to organize a different political and economic network within their community. Such rhetorical models rest upon the

edge of official discourses—the unarticulated collection of experiential, fragmentary, and emergent understandings of potential collective subject positions (see de Certeau; Gramsci). Beyond Poma and the Spanish colonial authorities are the voices and struggles of everyday people; beyond Poma lies the possibility of the formation and production of an oppositional vernacular culture.

To return to Parks' writing course, like Poma, the working-class students certainly had the ability to write essays that could potentially be shared with their classmates. Unlike Poma, however, they were writing within a logic and set of experiences that did not intersect with the primary representational logics within the course—a nonrecognition of systemic labor and educational injustice and an empathetic recognition by the elite of individual working-class struggles. A third alternative—representing working-class culture as containing its own set of values and literacies—could not gain traction within the classroom, that is, the student "letters" could not be "read." Moreover, the classroom had not connected them to non-classroom or non-institutionally based efforts that were located across the city, efforts that were using writing to articulate a new vision of working-class identity and economic and political rights—writing groups, book clubs, self-generated literacy programs, and so on. Yet changing the representational logic that dominated the classroom required such connections if the working-class student voices were to gain power "in numbers." For this to occur, the voices of our working-class students must be aligned with those of writing groups, neighborhood block associations, and other ad hoc organizations working to redefine the representations and discursive reality of the working-class lives. For if this latent vernacular culture is to become reality in the classroom (and larger community), if the students' experience is to reach the level of "propositional representation" among their classmates, processes must be created that can permeate this diffuse terrain and allow the articulation of a common sensibility among university students and these localized moments of literacy politics. Without such an articulation, these local efforts remain fragmented across the city and disconnected from the university, adjacent but not integrated into each other. Words are spoken but not heard; sentences are written but not understood. In this sense, vernacular culture is the successful production of a collective subject position drawn from the personal experiences and knowledges of a community. It is the result of contentious active negotiation and organization. It is this process, we believe, that most accurately represents the terrain upon which the politics of literacy, community, and democracy are manifested.

Shifting toward such a model of partnership, however, has direct impact on the type of writing expected from students. Whereas the former model of Parks' class focused on individual testimony or academic analysis, students would now be asked to write as members of an emerging collective. Moreover, as opposed to models of service-learning where students wrote "for, about or with" the community (Deans), here students would be asked to write "as" the community (Monberg)—enacting the possibility of a greater alliance not only with each other but

the larger Syracuse community. Or to connect our earlier discussion of campus maps, representations that often exclude the actual city surrounding campus buildings, with Nedra Reynolds' discussion of rhetorical mapping, the question for Parks' writing class would become "How do you get there from here?"

The Arts of the Power Grid

The Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishers (FWWCP) provided the initial road map and partnership model for Parks' revised writing course—a "course," as discussed below, that would eventually become a network of lower- and upper-division writing courses.[3] For in the FWWCP, students at Syracuse could gain an understanding of how working-class communities have historically used writing as a means to organize and advocate for expanded definitions of literacy rights across workplace, educational, and legislative institutions. Indeed, the history of the FWWCP, as traced by Tom Woodin, represents the slow re-articulation of this long tradition into modern context—a context marked by the movement in the UK away from national political parties and toward grassroots organizing; the economy's movement away from traditional union-based industries toward a service economy; and the conjoining of technology that allowed offset printing with the political movement for educational equity ("Building Culture").[4]

By the early 1970s, these interconnected moments had created a terrain in which working-class writing groups were beginning to annunciate a sense of collective identity. For instance, in Brighton, a movement to resist a community spa being rebuilt as a casino and luxury hotel sparked a newsletter in which individuals wrote their personal histories of living in the city. With the availability of new printing technologies, the newsletter soon became QueenSpark Books, a formal publishing enterprise of working-class history in Brighton. In East London, a school strike in support of Chris Searle, a teacher who published a book of student poetry, led to a general community reconsideration about who could be called a "writer."[5] Soon after, the Centerprise Bookshop, located a few miles from the school, became a hub of worker-writer activity, publishing a number of locally best-selling authors, probably the most well-known of which is Vivian Usherwood, whose poems (written when he was age twelve) sold over 18,000 copies (see Morley and Worpole; Woodin).

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3.   Working-class writing and self-publishing have been occurring in the UK since at least the nineteenth century (Vincent).

4.   While most of these events occurred during the conservative restoration under Margaret Thatcher, even when Tony Blair became prime minister in the 1990s, culture was understood as an economic engine rather than a means of working class expression.

5.   Since publication of *Stepney Words*, Chris Searle taught in Sheffield as well as becomiong involved in international campaigns for literacy projects in countries such as Grenada and Mozambique.

Indeed, a key element of this emergent movement was the deep saturation of community writing within a local neighborhood. Whereas a prominent national poet could sell a thousand books nationwide, a local poet, such as Usherwood, might sell a thousand or so copies within a town. These small publications served almost as an electrical charge drawing disconnected individuals into a localized power grid—a grid that authorized and gave power to the voices of worker-writers that previously were marginalized within publishing. And while each moment within this grid occurred separately or was only tangentially related, a common set of values seemed to be coursing between writing and publication groups. With some exceptions, these strategies could be summarized as follows:

> Writing groups should be self-initiated and self-sustaining through the labor of group members.
>
> Writing should be considered for how it expresses the cultural and economic history of the writer and, as such, should be understood for how it intervenes in traditional representations of working-class experience.
>
> Writing should be seen as an organic process where revision or responding to peer comments is a necessary stage in a piece's development.
>
> Established popular and literary forms, such as autobiography, detective novels, or poetry, should be made to serve the purpose of expressing working-class experience in all its diversity; working-class experience should not be tailored to meet canonical literary forms.
>
> Publication and performance serve the purpose of both individual expression and fostering a collective identity within the local community. For this reason, publication and performance processes should be managed by group members and directed by their sense of their own public or collective identity.

When the FWWCP formed in 1976 as a means to draw together these separate moments, many of these core writing group strategies were brought into the ethos and policies of the group. For instance, the practice of publications being managed by group members became a general policy within the FWWCP; writing groups had to be self-run, not led by an adult education tutor as if it were a class. One way to read the development of the national Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishers, then, was the creation of a national grid of working-class voices that held itself as distinct from (or in opposition to) the traditional network of social service and literacy institutions.

Initially, writing teachers might imagine the most organic connection between their students and the FWWCP would be the writing skills developed by

its members—familiarity with revision, use of literary forms, the establishment of "real" audiences, etc. Certainly, this was part of the FWWCP ethos. Equally important, however, might be skills best encapsulated under the term "occupational literacy," a term that originates in managerial theory but that we use here to indicate the acquisition or transfer of skills from the workplace, where they serve a profit motive, to the community, where they serve the purpose of creating democratically organized cultural and social activities (Pollard, "When Adam"). What each group was simultaneously developing alongside a body of writing was a set of occupational skills—such as arranging meetings, reserving rooms, overseeing the rental of performance space, collecting funds, and managing contracts with printers and small businesses. These occupational skills were deeply imbricated with the acquisition of literacy skills. In fact, acquiring occupational skills was like "owning the means of production" since they ensured the group's continued ability to meet about "writing" and to produce "community publications." Moreover, these skills could then be applied to developing and maintaining a collective working-class presence within a community, such as the Brighton example above (Morley and Worpole; Batsleer et al.). The FWWCP tradition, then, blends literacy development with the development of a "working-class literacy" power grid.

To capture the sense of how the literacy and occupational skills came together to establish a grid through which further work was supported, two examples directly related to university writing courses and structures seem important to note. Pat Smart, who plays a key role later in this essay, joined a Liverpool writing group after the death of her mother. As recounted to Woodin, Smart states:

> I'd always told children's stories and made up funny rhymes for them but never written them down. I decided to go to a night class, but found it was exactly like it was in school, sat behind a desk with the teacher in front, saying things like, "Don't drift off the subject . . . you'll be sitting an exam soon." The pressure was awful! Well I didn't like that. Then I heard about writers' workshops. I found one in my own area, which was Stockbridge Writers. The main difference between an English class and a writers' workshop was, in the English I thought I was going to concentrate on where to put full stops and commas. They had me writing essays and it had to be in the form they wanted it, and then big red crosses . . . and notes at the bottom like, "try again." But going to a writers' workshop, nobody saw what I'd written. I'd just read it out so all the pauses were correct, where I wanted them to be . . . and the spelling didn't matter on iota., and that pleased me. I don't now why the teachers thought I was soft, because I'm not. I know that now, but 12 years ago, before I discovered the Fed. I would have agreed with them that I was a "stupid girl." (Woodin, "More Writing," 568)

Through her involvement in the writing group and national network, however, Smart also developed the administrative and bureaucratic skills (as well as printing and computing skills) necessary to ultimately lead her to the "chair" of the FWW-CP.[6] In other words, Smart moved from thinking of herself as outside of any literacy network to being a central figure in the national literacy movement of working-class writers in the United Kingdom. Moreover, as the working-class "power grid" further established itself, there was a move to create alternatives to colleges and universities. Pecket Well College, for instance, was initiated as an attempt to create adult basic education "classes" that met the needs of the local community and worked outside of traditional academic formats with courses created around student/ community understandings of what would be "useful" and community building. The goal, then, was not just the production of individual writers or writing groups, but the formation of occupational skills that could allow participants to build a structure that would make manifest the experience and insights of a marginalized working-class experience—the production of a vernacular culture.

So in addition to creating a classroom where students could participate in the writing strategies that were helping to form an alternative definition of working-class culture, the FWWCP highlights the need to create a writing classroom where the related occupational skills could also be learned. Moreover, rather than imaging these skills as having to be imported from our composition/rhetoric traditions, these writing and occupational skills would be drawn from and developed within the context of local cultures attempting to create their own "power grids" through which to articulate an identity and a social and political agenda. For this reason, a writing class focused on the connections between the production of writing and the production of a local vernacular politics would have to recast the role of student writing away from the important, yet singular, goal of learning to negotiate a set of diverse texts. Instead, the student would also be asked to participate as a member of a collective attempting to formulate a new sense of "community"—a negotiation as fraught with conflict as consensus. Reading student texts in this framework demands greater attention to how they are surrounded by other voices simultaneously as well as part of a larger collaborative project to creating a new subject position that can speak across university/community divides about the values and interests of working-class culture. Rather than the singular student voice, our interests as educators committed to the composition/rhetoric tradition of democratizing literacy rest in how such voices intersect within the collective attempt to alter not only the representational logic in which a population exists but also the collective political and legislative struggle around literacy as well—the creation of new literacy power grids.

Within this logic, Poma's "letter" should be replaced with Morley and Worpole's *Republic of Letters (ROL),* a central text within the worker-writers'

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6.   Smart has documented some of this in "A Beginner Writer is Not a Beginner Thinker"

movement. *ROL* was written in response to the British Arts Council's decision that FWWCP work had "no literary merit" and did not merit organizational funding. In response, a committee produced a collage of a book that intermixed worker-writer texts, high literary texts, theoretical literacy discussions, and socialist/class analysis to make the argument for a new "collective working-class aesthetic" category and literary movement. Similar to Poma's letter, this book also had a limited or non-existent reception within the elite culture of the academy—rarely, if ever, being assigned in university classrooms and never receiving any "literary awards." Unlike Poma's letter, however, *ROL* served to further connect (and act as a catalyst for) writing groups and local partnerships across the United Kingdom. It was a letter that was received because it was sent to an emergent collective "republic of letters."

So while we agree that it is certainly necessary to imagine the writing classroom as engaging with texts representing different subject positions, it is not sufficient if the goal is to enact for students and local community residents a true partnership—a space where collective writing is used by individuals for gaining social status as a recognized community that can then argue for legal and political rights.[7] Instead, we would argue that this infused sense of pedagogy demands not a contact zone but a writing classroom partnered with emergent communities. For as articulated within the FWWCP tradition, the work of the writing class should be to both highlight the situatedness of its particular writing domain (the university) while demonstrating how writing collectives operate and can participate in establishing new pathways or grids that can re-articulate existing literacy and political pathways. Moreover, stepping outside the particular literacy goals of a specific writing class, we would argue that the role of a writing program should be to consider how its institutional location might support new connections across university or community collectives that can argue for a more inclusive and democratic vision of writing instruction within its particular region. Or to invoke Linda Adler-Kassner's recent work, rather than producing "contact," an activist WPA might also work collaboratively to produce actual change across the political and social terrain.

While the arguments above could be applied to the specifics of any local university or community setting, the dynamics within Parks' university course necessitated these insights be applied to support the efforts of moving working-class identity from the edge of conversation into a mainstream presence that would alter the range and import of emergent literacy practices. What needed to occur was the creation of a venue through which this cultural framework could be developed by working-class individuals across Syracuse and, eventually, acted upon in a variety of public spheres—educational, occupational, and

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7.   For a discussion of how this point intersects with the work of occupational therapy, see Nicholas Pollard's "Notes towards an Approach for the Therapeutic Use of Creative Writing in Occupational Therapy."

political. It was out of this sense that Parks partnered with Pollard, an FWW-CP Board member, to create the Trans-Atlantic Federation of Worker Writers (TAFWW). As the working-class students in WRT 205 had stated, for the working class, there was strength in numbers.

Federations

Our attempt to create such a writing course began the following term in Civic Writing, an upper-division writing course. As we corresponded online, a belief emerged that the FWWCP's membership and archives could provide a tradition of writing and occupational skills that would enable Civic Writing students to have an alternative conversation in class and act as a ballast for working-class students at the elite university.[8] The eventual goal would be to create a manifesto of working-class literacy rights as well as a related publication that articulated both the experience of working-class individuals within educational systems but also drew upon their own occupational skills in its production, a "republic of letters" of sorts. Together, the hope was these documents might be used to structure additional curricular and community activities.

The initial framing for the course and extended project grew out of the work of a local working-class writing group, the Basement Writers, a name drawn from their basement meeting location and coincidently the name of an existing FWWCP group member. The writing group was initially an outgrowth of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) 1199 Bread and Roses *unseenamerica* project. Emerging within this structure, Parks was initially asked to form the group as a means to model a different type of classroom environment for local labor classes, both as a means to ensure worker attendance and to highlight a more cooperative learning environment within such programs. Over the course of several years, the group had morphed into a steady contingent of about six to eight writers, representing individuals from the trades, health, and service industries, ranging in seniority from union heads to rank-and-file members. And while the initial motivation might have been to record their working lives, the sheer act of looking backward, considering how they ended up as laborers, led to writing that reflected on their own education, drawing together the connections between their working history and their initial literacy goals. In the process, the group developed its own leaders and agenda, with Parks serving a more limited role as facilitator of the group's partnership work with Syracuse University.

As the idea took shape for a collective classroom focused on supporting the emergence of a class-based view of education, latent themes began to emerge within the Basement Writers work. For instance, David Kent, a postal worker in a local

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8. For Diggles, in particular, the establishment of such a partnership with a "prestigious" university in the United States would also serve as a ballast for the FWWCP as it continued to seek support from arts and culture foundations.

hospital, had spent significant time writing about his work history. Within this new collective context, his writing also began to connect with the voices of working-class students in Parks' earlier writing course. In a series of short pieces, which was ultimately published as "I Am a Taurus, Producer, and Hard Worker,"[9] Kent wrote:

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9.   The full text of Dave Kent's piece reads as follows:

In 1982, while in high school looking forward to graduation, my world as I knew it crashed and burned. I was told by educators I could not graduate based on my competencies, which were under state education requirements for graduation at the time. "You will have to stay back another year to make them up."

Well at the time the United States President was Ronald Reagan, who signed a bill that basically said you must be enrolled in a college curriculum by age eighteen in order to keep on receiving social security disability benefits on my mother's behalf. Mom was disabled physically now. We could not afford to lose her SSD benefits or we would lose everything. I could not allow this to happen. So, without any college prep classes and no high-school diploma, I had to enroll in a college curriculum at Onondaga Community College (OCC). I wanted to enroll in electronics technology program at OCC. The program had been filled for two years and there was a waiting list, but based on my entrance exam I was put at the bottom. Yes—a very low exam score. Again saying to myself, *Damn, where do I go from here? Enroll in another curriculum or what*?

So I swallowed my anger and my stress, I went to go and talk to my advisor. She suggested that I consider a humanities program for now, until an opening in my choice program occurred. After a bout of self-doubt, I said I'm going to do it. Boy was I stupid! The study of the human mind! I didn't even make matriculation (the grade point average). The best I received was a 1.9 (of a 4.0 scale). I had 100% participation in this class!

By May of 1982, I was out, and wondering how I was going to pay back a $1,700 school loan. Higher education services knew. At a 1982 education and vocation seminar, I met with Karl and May Knowlton. They operated the industrial work division at Olsten Temporary Services. While under a lot of stress, I approached and asked what type of temporary employment they offered. "We have Industrial labor positions right now," they said. So I figured with my background as a laborer I had a good chance of getting a pretty good job with Olsten Temporary Services. For once, I was right.

They had a position opening for an industrial laborer at Bristol Myers Squibb Company, a very large international pharmaceuticals business. They offered me a temp assignment for about one year on the third shift, which gave me time to plan ahead and start an active full-time employment search, and access those employment and training programs available for dislocated workers, which I was at this time. Even knowing I would not received great employment opportunity, I still pounded the pavement, read the classified ads daily in the Syracuse Herald-Journal, bussed the distance to the suburban Syracuse area or where a classified might take me. Still I never gave up the search, being an optimist permits me to do that. Perseverance was my partner. So I stayed with Olsten Temps until June 1985 in different areas of industrial employment. Yes, I did return to Bristol Labs to various positions. All I know is I was receiving a weekly paycheck that helped my family's economic hardship. I was very thankful for this opportunity.

Let's remember the important issues here in my life are about being from a working class family and, yes, my relationship was much different than those who are privileged to have two working parents, being able to have the finances to afford a good education. I do

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By the end of the piece, Kent has answered this question by demonstrating his ability to successfully find work as a postal clerk at a local hospital, get married, and raise a family. As he concludes, "It's priceless."

Initially in response to this piece, the Basement Writers group spent time talking about the impact of Ronald Reagan on the working class. But there was another story here as well. Kent's piece is also about the struggle to develop an occupational literacy—the literal ability to learn how to "pay the bills." It was this literacy that Quigley, through her paper-collating job, was seeking to acquire (and that other students, such as the wealthy student, had yet to find a reason to learn). In each case, the writing produced operated on several levels. While each used traditional writing genres (autobiography/memoir), the stories that developed represented an interruption of common ways of speaking in their respective

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have a chance to return to school in the future. What matters to me is to make sure that my mother's able to pay our monthly responsibilities with out falling under. Through this sacrifice in my life it was all worth it and if I had to do I would do it all again. The lessons I learned as a youngster and working to bring money into the home to make sure there was food on the table and a roof over our head. To sacrifice this and to persevere is much better than not having anything at all. There is a chance that there is someone out there in this same economic struggle. May I say to that person, remember to persevere there is a light at the end of the tunnel. Just walk forward to the next step and soon enough you'll be there. Don't give up. If you fall, get up and keep walking. Strive to survive. Look at me. I made it. I did not stop. I kept my chin up and my feet in front of me.

I am a Taurus, producer, builder, and hard worker.

contexts. In addition, both Kent's and Quigley's pieces covertly detailed the "occupational skills" necessary to move these voices into the larger discussion—for Kent, negotiating university bureaucracy, working within federal government policies, maintaining family structures, organizing a worksite; for Quigley, organizing a worksite, developing procedures for efficiency, managing funds to secure long-term goals. Yet neither the Critical Research and Writing classroom nor the Basement Writers group had enabled those skills to be put to work in building a collective space to articulate the educational needs of working-class students.

Indeed, very few of the pieces even imagined such a collective space for educational and economic justice was possible. For Kent and Quigley, their histories were each tales of individual struggle. Within the group as a whole, the writing did not attempt to portray how high schools or colleges could be structured to support their personal goals and, in effect, the larger goals of working-class communities. Nor were union-sponsored educational institutions seen as a possible answer. In a piece that was initially read as about gender politics, one writer wrote about how unions educated their workers:

> He called me that afternoon and informed me of my acceptance into the ever so sought after apprenticeship program. It hadn't settled in by the time I took my first steps inside. The classroom was bright and I felt exposed. They all seemed to know exactly what they were supposed to do—My school books were still covered in that clear plastic, exposing my biggest fear of being different. I took my seat in the back corner hoping those two walls would shield me. It was the longest hour of my life sitting in my corner listing to the teacher talk of things that back then was like a preschooler understanding the theory of relativity. The other guys were college students and I was an infant, my insides were screaming . . . What are you thinking. You're not smart enough. "YOU DON'T BELONG HERE."

In fact, the full text of the story traces the destruction of her friendship with one other woman union worker under the relentless assault of chauvinistic union members. She is called a lesbian and accused of sleeping with male co-workers. She is called a "dyke," then accused of being too feminine to succeed. Yet, within this narrative also emerges her ability to continue through this onslaught and hold onto a stronger sense of community values, drawn from her life in the community. In fact, she develops a community among the women in the union program and, despite obstacles, attempts to maintain this community while completing her education. What is only latent in Quigley and Kent, a sense of how to actually build a local supportive educational community, becomes fully articulated in her writing.

Civic Writing, then, would be structured to allow these different populations—the FWWCP, Basement Writers, and SU students—to discuss the

connections between education and economic class, developing the issue within the contexts of access, disability, equity, and curriculum. Through face-to-face and online conversations, the project created a permeable seam through which different populations could transgress boundaries, establishing a dialogue that altered the dynamics that marked Parks' previous class. What became almost immediately apparent was that the partnership with the Basement Writers and FWWCP provided a local and international context that legitimated the voices of the SU students. (In this regard, Parks' role became not to be a participant in either group but to demonstrate the "collaborative" skills required to make such partnerships work.) Instead of generating silence, a person's class background became a generative lens through which to examine the goals of writing and civic engagement. In part, this was done through writing academic papers in which their experience was examined through the theories of Antonio Gramsci, Nancy Fraser, and Geneva Smitherman, among others. Yet, the local students and self-identified working-class students also began to use technology to align their personal stories with a larger set of working-class experiences and skills. This was probably nowhere more evident than in the ability of the collective to establish a "blog" where each participant could frame their initial experience and have it placed into a larger social and political context through interaction with the Basement Writers and FWWCP group members.

As condensed and approved by TAWWF, the following represents their understanding of how the "blog" conversation enabled development of a common understanding of class and education:

> Nick Pollard, UK
>
> The key thing probably in the Fed is an experience of marginalisation, of writing from the periphery. However, there might be more periphery than centre, and the problem is that the centre dominates culture at the periphery. Thus what you see in the mainstream culture of telly, popular press and literature is a kind of Disneyfication of everything, which reduces and insults and encourages a false consciousness or false perception of the way things are. This is an interesting issue and also core to some of the origins of the Fed. . . .
>
> Some of the early writing that came out of the Fed or that was around when the Fed started was with schoolchildren. Chris Searle's work began—with the publication of *Stepney Words*—because when the kids he was teaching started writing about their real lives as opposed to the material they were supposed to submit for schoolwork they were writing with a new depth and vigour. Of course when he published their work he was disciplined. The children organised a strike and he was reinstated.

Pat Smart, UK

I was one of the "scruffs" I was pushed aside, left at the back, not included in discussions etc in class. If I put my hand up to ask a question one certain teacher would give me a "withering" look and tell me to put my hand down! When I did get to ask a question I was usually told, "because I said so!" or "don't be stupid girl!" I wasn't the only one, there were quite a few of us. So that kind of thing (class divide—no pun intended!) certainly did "impinge" on my education.

Even in the State-run (Catholic-run) schools there were class-divides also. I know I was one of the poorest ones, so I was the scruff, the "thicko," the stupid one who's parents couldn't afford the correct school uniform, I was poor, so, therefore I was stupid, etc. etc. (even the school's head mistress, A Nun, told me so quite often usually when she was giving me "six of the best" (a good whacking with a long cane on each of my hands).

Joan DeArtimis, USA

The strange thing is, somehow, I didn't realize that there would be so much of a class difference between me and other college students . . . age, yes, but not class. I have to pass up on MANY opportunities here on campus because I either don't have the time, because I have to work so much, or else I don't have the money.

For example, I simply cannot take an unpaid internship. I can't volunteer my time to anything. I simply must be paid, because I have no other source of income.

Eric Davidson, UK

My parents were working class but strived and found the money to send all 4 children to a fee paying school . . . unusual. But at school my accent was different from the rest and in the boys club where many of the tops schools boys were represented it was even more different. However, there was one organization called the COUNTIES and there I met guys I could really relate to. Eventually I became one of the leading lights and was able to help effect change—to let the organization become more open and inclusive and to let all schools participate.

Melodie Clarke, USA

Our discussions about class, education, and disability made me

become interested about what is being done on our campus to address these issues. I had a wonderful experience with a particular event that I would like to share with you.

At Syracuse University they're doing a program called Writing on the Wall (WOW). In this program they are having 130 concrete blocks painted with symbols or words that symbolize oppression. They can be painted by students and Faculty. . . .

I painted a block with the word disability and a small flower. They had us fill out a card explaining why you chose the word that you did or what the symbol you used meant. I wrote that people don't see me, they see the disability and don't look past that to see me. I feel like I have to prove myself to become visible again. I've been thinking about this subject for a couple of days now. I am using a walker (I'm being weaned off of it, to using a cane) and wear braces on both hands. I feel that when I meet people they look at my disabilities and don't look farther to see me as a person. I am a person beyond the disabilities. I have dreams, feelings, and aspirations like every one else. I feel that people are putting me in a box and it gets harder and harder to push or break my way through. It even goes on at the University level, where just because you have a ramp on the outside of a building does not make it handicap accessible. I get so frustrated at times because I can't get downstairs to the Bursar's Office or upstairs to Financial Aid. I also get frustrated by people who treat me like I'm not there or they have prejudged me based on my appearance or disability. Frustration eventually turns into depression and sadness. I keep pushing against the box wall to get people to see me for who I am, not my disability, not my disease (Sarcoidosis), not because they feel sorry for me and not treating me really different from every other student.

Eric Davidson, UK

I don't know first-hand what it's like in the USA, but in the UK, there is a lot of prejudice against Survivors—we are seen as incapable, socially inept, self-obsessed, boring, incapable of self-expression . . . right down the list to "smelly."

Steve Oakley, UK

You know, so many of us wander around this world never questioning our place in it, every door can be opened, every level reached, every direction understood, and all without a single

thought. Why wouldn't it? It doesn't need thinking about, it's natural, the doors are there to let us in, the levels are a logical use of our space and the directions help us to find our way . . . surely? But they do something else that your experience highlights, they're a very real very present part of the "norm." But as you say, it's a norm based on the assumption that we can even get close enough to the doors to reach the levels, that we can actually read the signs that tell us where to go, and it really gets my blood boiling that when you look closer—for whatever reason—these assumptions are everywhere in everything. (Parks 6-7).

It is important to note that, simultaneously, each constituency was also using the skills gained through the experiences they discuss to gather the resources to further develop the project. The FWWCP highlighted the university partnership to their national foundations by inviting the project to be a featured plenary session at their annual conference, the FedFest. The university students began to write petitions or letters to administrators get the resources to be able to attend the conference—often deploying the rhetoric of service-learning and community partnership, and disability rights to talk about such work as central to the university. The Basement Writers used their union connections and, through blind luck, one member's connection with a local foundation to enable members of their group to attend. These "occupational skills" allowed the production of a working-class literacy framework to be connected to the development of a self-defined "power grid" through which access to resources and literacy institutions was achieved.

At the main plenary session at the FWWCP festival, the combined students, SU community, and FWWCP participants read excerpts from online correspondence (of which the above was a section). Festival participants were provided with writing prompts and asked to share their own experiences of education. Many responded with stories of being marginalized through class prejudice or discrimination against physical or mental disabilities. The discussion ended with the announcement of a special workshop the following day where members of the TAWFF would meet with conference participants to frame a political response to these experiences, festival events, and prior online discussion. Over the course of several hours, the following points were developed:

Education should teach a global humanity (not the humanities) based on an alternative sense of history and where cooperative values and restorative justice are primary.

Education should take place in a safe environment free from traditional social/economic biases with self-respect for each other as individuals as well as members of different classes, heritages, and sexualities.

> All educators must move from subconsciously teaching students to be a Westernized version of "them" to teaching the essential equality among all individuals and cultures.
>
> The conceptual equality taught to students must also be manifested in equal funding and equal access to well-maintained school facilities.
>
> To base an educational system on any other values accepts a fundamental inequity in society and acceptance that now all human potential will be fulfilled. (Abel, Clarke, and Parks 180)

The TAWWF Project and manifesto were then featured in the FWWCP magazine, with a call for more individuals and writing groups to participate. During the remainder of the conference, the TAWFF members were invited to present at a conference in Atlanta; one SU student was even approached about running for the board of the FWWCP.

Upon their return, the SU students and Basement Writers were now in a position to change the visibility of working-class identity on campus. At the semester's end, for instance, representatives from the TAWWF read their work at the Writing Program's annual celebration. This event followed the standing ovation given to the Basement Writers a week prior at the university's Mayfest. To a great extent, there was such strong cross-pollination and dialogue that the populations seem to have melded into a common framework that stood outside the initial university context from which it emerged. Perhaps this was because the benefits transcended the university context and merged into an occupational literacy: students were given advice on how to navigate the costs of living in Syracuse; Basement Writers had support in learning how to navigate the complex terrain of a university. Basement Writer members were profiled in student publications to highlight the strains working-class families faced in the city. A book published by the Basement Writers, called *Working*, featured writing by students and community residents. Some of the members were also invited to produce a book chapter in an occupational therapy text in which they discussed the relevance of the writing group in asserting a debate about disability access in the university (Abel, Clarke, and Parks). A working-class student publication group was formed, gaining access to student activity fee funds. Without romanticizing a conclusion, silence had been replaced by dialogue; solitary experiences had been replaced with collective support.

Yet, the university context could not be ignored. Nor did the TAWWF want to ignore it. As everyone involved recognized, while the above connections were important, they did not change curriculum or issues of educational access. A singular writing course, no matter how seemingly successful, was an inadequate response to the issue. For this reason, there was strong support to take the work of the TAWWF and to integrate its work into the structure of educational

institutions. The vehicle to undertake that work was the collective publication "Crossing Class: The Work of the TAWWF." Over the period of two years, the TAWWF Manifesto and blog became the object of study and investigation in a series of lower- and upper-division writing courses: Critical Research and Writing, Advanced Argument, Civic Writing, Language and Politics, Writing, Rhetoric and Identity, among others. These courses attracted a strong contingent of working-class students who found in the manifesto and community partnerships that grounded the class discussion a tradition of work that enabled them not only to speak but to use their own experience and skills to interrupt the dominant discourses of privilege in many of their classes and draw in their own experiences as bases of legitimate knowledge production. Each course continually added writing to the proposed book, ultimately producing an online publication that will serve as a continual object of collective writing, designed to both articulate the working-class experience of education as well as to further invest that experience in the "power grid" of support and guidance that now exists.

Of course, it might seem far afield from the established terrain of composition/rhetoric to imagine our writing courses and programs as existing upon an emergent grid of working-class struggles for greater self-representation and more democratic access to literacy education. It could be objected that such a framing of a writing classroom or writing program moves us into the realm of politics, not pedagogy. We want to stress, however, that within each classroom discussion many of the "established rules" applied—as noted, students studied academic discourse structures, read and studied key figures within our field, engaged in debates that attempted to define what "literacy" or "good writing" means, and wrote argumentative papers to further their viewpoints. We also want to stress that as a field, composition/rhetoric grew within the progressive political framework of the Civil Rights and social justice movements of the 1960s and 1970s—movements that authorized open admissions and the focused study of multiple literacies and heritages in our classrooms. Today's economic stratification—producing both more "working" students and less working-class access to literacy—demands we become part of the effort to re-ignite these progressive frameworks, not just for our students but for the many in our field whose economic exploitation creates the privileged possibility of our being able to write this very article. As Tony Scott suggests, we need to imagine our work and the work of our students as "embodied" in a political economy of which we are necessarily actors.

Within that larger effort, the TAWFF stands as one example of what we hope (and know) will be a thousand "points of light" upon an emergent worker collective power grid.

Coda: A New Tradition Interrupted

It would be easy to end with the optimism that marked the initial conclusion of the TAWWF project—ending with the promise of a publication that will circulate

widely and support the continued work of bringing working-class experiences into the university curriculum. We want to end on a different note, however. A note, we hope will register the difficulty of developing a pedagogy and programmatic commitment that, in small ways, attempts to level the educational and economic playing field through developing new community-based collectives.

At the end of the academic year in which the TAWFF publication was finalized, the college faculty met to approve the Writing Program's writing and rhetoric major (a struggle that deserves its own article). At the outset of the meeting, our dean, who has been very supportive of the TAWWF project, proudly announced that the college had continued to improve the quality of its freshman class, pointing toward raised test scores and increased "geographic diversity." While this clearly struck a chord with many faculty, within the lens of the TAFWW project it only highlighted the voices that would not be present—the voices of the local working-class students, those graduates of an urban school system without the resources to launch large numbers of its students into elite institutions.[10] To invoke the language of de Certeau, it became clear that the TAWFF project had become a tactic (a small intervention working off what the system will allow), but not a strategy (the establishment on a solid space from which to enact systemic change). Sitting there, I had to wonder both what else needed to be added to this emergent "federation" of working-class interests and, ultimately, if elite institutions can change their DNA enough to move toward "open access"— to serve as vehicles of educational equality.

Within weeks of that meeting, the FWWCP had to go into "involuntary insolvency"—bankruptcy in the U.S. context. After thirty years of existence, this important strategic intervention could no longer raise funds to support its continued work. Although a new organization is being developed, such a moment highlights the tenuous nature of any network of working-class writing and literacy projects (Tait). Ultimately, "it's the economy," and the economy for supporting the self-defined voices of the working poor and economically depressed is structured to almost always ensure their exclusion. So if I had imagined the TAWWF as a new beachhead of such work in the United States, perhaps for the moment the campaign was more Dunkirk than Normandy.

And perhaps these two moments explain the power of the "contact zone" within composition/rhetoric. Without diminishing the intellectual contribution of Pratt's article, we would highlight that it draws upon very traditional occupational skills in our profession—reading academic texts and creating text—driving writing classrooms and programs. Yet a new set of occupational skills will be necessary if composition/rhetoric is to take on the mission of supporting in

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10. SU Chancellor Nancy Cantor has recently established an Early College High School Initiative program in Syracuse designed to provide graduating seniors with up to 30 credits toward a university degree. Such efforts, we believe, represent the type of systemic partnership that universities and writing programs should both foster and support.

collective terms the diverse voices often excluded from an actual presence in our classrooms. These skills can best be learned from the experiences and knowledges of those who are excluded—or only included as disembodied words of assigned essays. The question becomes whether we want to expand our traditions to include these voices and insights. Do we want to gain renewed strength for our field by joining in their struggles? Will we add to their strength with our numbers?

We want to end this article, then, with the full text of Danielle Quigley's poem, cited at the outset of this article. Quigley's poem has been read at numerous public readings and conferences nationally. It has received strong support and applause. Quigley has almost never been there to either read her work or to hear the audience's response. She was always working. We want to end with her voice, hoping it stands for the larger systemic work we all need to do to ensure educational equity in public and higher education:

Server
Perhaps you have seen her
Rushed and flustered
Belittled and beaten down
Forcing smiles
With strained politeness
Biting her tongue?
Perhaps you mock her
"Ignorant profession"
A server tending to your needs
Her trite existence
With meager means—
A lifestyle unlike your own
Perhaps you pity her
"Oh look she's pregnant!"
"And so young!"
Quick, ring check—
"at least she's married . . ."
Poor baby
Or perhaps you are her—
Struggling, hardworking
A college student with honors
A writer with potential
A happily married woman
An excited mother-to-be
Perhaps if you saw me
As more than a server
Grant me the credit I merit
Dispose of your pity or mockery—
Recognize the resemblance?
Could I be you?

Acknowledgments

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Chapter 5. Sinners Welcome: The Limits of Rhetorical Agency

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> Prophetic pragmatism purports to be not only an oppositional cultural criticism but also a material force for individuality and democracy. By "material force" I simply mean a practice that has some potency and effect or makes a difference in the world.
>
> – *Cornel West,* The American Evasion of Philosophy

I want to argue that we have settled for a soft vision of progressive change, a vision that at best produces a hesitant and halting trek across a neoliberal landscape eager to validate our students and our own "protestations" as a sign of rich democratic debate.[1]

I want to argue that the root of this failure is a compromise between the call of disciplinary identity and the need for collective politics, articulated as a nuanced theory of antifoundationalist pragmatism but which is actually a sign of the abandonment of a longer history of structurally transformative political strategies. And I want to consider whether a different path is possible.

To make this argument, I explore one generative moment in which the relationship between composition's disciplinary identity within English studies and political action within the larger culture is both activated and distorted—the set of theories and practices that occur under the framework of "community partnerships." Such partnerships often present themselves as articulating new strategies that can alter the local landscape in politically progressive ways for the benefit of residents and students alike (Goldblatt; Wilkey; Welch). Yet, in the effort to theorize the political impact of such work, the need to actually change the systemic exploitation of distressed communities has been elided—often justified by invoking a version of Cornel West's prophetic pragmatism. In effect, we have turned to the social and away from the political.

It is this finessing out of the need to engage structural power relations that marks the current "grand" compromise English studies has taken toward its stated commitment to social and economic justice. In previous work, I have discussed the role of community publishing within English studies to transform how our

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field might relate to the community within our classrooms (Parks, "Strategic"). In this essay, I hope to expand this conversation outward toward our political goals as a field, offering an alternative vision, but ultimately posing the question of whether collective political action is even possible under a disciplinary rubric.

Foundations for Agency

Linda Flower has produced one of the most articulated theories on how community partnerships can produce "social change" (16). Based on their work at the Community Literacy Center, Flower and her collaborators have crafted courses, forums, and publications that reframe public rhetoric away from "advocacy, authority, or expressiveness" and toward "inquiry" and "dialogues across difference" within local communities (6). Flower argues that these forms of rhetorical agency result in "teens, tenants, mothers, low-wage workers, and college students of community literacy tak[ing] rhetorical action not just by speaking up but by acts of engaged interpretation and public dialogue carried out in the service of personal and societal transformation" (206; emphasis in original).

Notably, Flower does not position her work as representing more than a particular practice in response to a local moment. She specifically declines to imagine her work as a national "model," repeatedly speaking of it as a "working theory" with immediate value in its local context (91). Yet, despite such efforts to contextualize her work, Flower's model has become an influential framework for understanding the general role of community partnerships in producing social transformation, a term Flower uses repeatedly (see Gilyard; Long; Deans). It is the very strength of Flower's community literacy model that makes it a useful starting point to explore the basis for political action in our field.

In *Community Literacy and the Rhetoric of Public Engagement*, Flower argues that community literacy work has removed rhetoric, replacing it with a version of English studies and critical cultural theory that denies the power of the individual rhetor and that fails to provide a positive social vision. Flower believes that many of these theorists have fostered a pedagogy too focused on negative critique and too often linked to a less-than-nuanced view of community members. Relying on what she terms "popular account(s)" and "simplified forms" (195), Flower writes that such critical theory "enables us to relate to Others in an urban community as victims or at best as comrades in arms—united in a theorized battle plan (that academic intellectuals supposedly understand better than do the victims)" (115). She argues that critical theory's narrowing reliance on foundationalist categories—such as Marxism—further mitigate against informed and subtle solutions.

Flower imagines her work as having a larger purpose. She writes, "This aspiration to engagement lays down a challenge: How can teachers and students learn to speak up and against something but also learn to speak with others (by which I mean across differences) and for something as a necessary part of literate education?" (81) Comparing the complexity of cultural critique to the solutions

offered, she continues: "Where is the parallel and equally articulated statement of a better alternative? Should we be satisfied with generalized assertions of social justice and democracy? Such undeveloped arguments sound like a monosyllable hurled at the problem when what we need is a complexly persuasive invitation to Martin Luther King Jr.'s beloved community" (116). Putting aside the broad brushstrokes with which those scholars engaged in critical theory are discussed, Flower's primary point seems to be that critical theory emerging from English studies has framed community literacy incorrectly. Such work needs to be built on a different model, one more focused on individual agency and positive "multisyllable" dialogues.

Flower argues that such a model should be premised on a social cognitive rhetoric located within the needs of a community. Such an "intercultural rhetoric" would provide "a space for embracing difference in acts of collaborative meaning making" (99). To this end, Flower educates her students, who then work with the community, in how to understand the complexity beneath a public statement, working to build a rhetorical nuance that creates alliances among speakers at public events. Indeed, "[t]he two-way street between the university and community and between research and social action helped shape both a social cognitive theory of writing and a working theory of personal and public performance within a local intercultural public" (99). It is this rhetorical agency that Flower ultimately attempts to bring to the local community.

It is worth noting that Flower spends very little time articulating where such community dialogue might already occur. Instead, her book is full of statements implying that such spaces do not exist in Pittsburgh, such as her characterization of the "standard urban community meeting devoted to complaint and blame" (222). Perhaps it is for this reason that Flower argues that her "rhetorical agency" provides a community "a unique capacity to scaffold local public deliberation and to challenge, even reinvent that public's expectations" (220). Notably, Flower never records if these events actually lead to a change in existing social, political, or economic policy. Instead, she argues that such an event (often with accompanying publications) "changes the social script for dialogue" (225).

Flower does not see the lack of political change as indicating a lack of "community" agency. Instead, she develops an argument based on the work of H. Richard Niebuhr and Charles Taylor that agency can be defined as the ability to make decisions in a deliberative fashion, endlessly assessing contextual factors within the framework of personal or communal values. It is this deliberative capacity, the "outward indications of an activated inner-life" (201), that her blending of cultural context and cognitive rhetoric enables community members to achieve. Agency, then, is actualized in the discussion, not in the production of systemic policy change.

But can such agency provide the necessary tools for the community to actually create that social transformation that social turn toward actual justice? If not, then what does transformation mean?

The Limits of Rhetorical Agency

There is a troubling underside to how the field has taken up this form of rhetorical agency: an underside best framed in terms of a think-tank session, coordinated by Flower, in which residents, community elders, and business leaders discuss the difficulties caused by the then-new welfare reform legislation—legislation that required recipients to work as well as put a cap on lifetime benefits. Flower argues that the session enabled the marginalized voices of welfare recipients to gain credibility and ultimately shift the very terms of the discussion.

> The welfare recipient has reframed the HR representation of *workplace* versus personal problems (in which an individual needs counseling or family help) into a more inclusive image of *worklife* problems. In her representation, the reality of inexperience, limited resources, and low-wage jobs constitutes a joint problem. One could argue that supporting *effective working lives is as essential to local economic development as it is to social justice*. (228; first and second emphasis in original; third emphasis added).

Flower concludes that the think tank "not only documents the hidden expertise and the rhetorical agency of everyday and silenced people; it asserts the possibility of a transformed understanding" (228).

What is not part of this transformed understanding, however, is a critique of a neoliberal paradigm that is shrinking federal and state support for welfare programs, instantiating private-public partnerships in its stead and moving unemployed individuals into employment at low wages, displacing current workers and depressing wages. This sense of a collective political commitment to economic justice does not fit into a discussion focused on helping one individual navigate a business context. Nor is it clear how individual agency can adequately respond to this context. The personal benevolence generated within human resources officers might alter an internal policy; it does not alter the overarching political context in which that empathy occurs.

Further, this type of political interchange among individuals misses the central attribute of power—power accedes nothing without a collective fight, a point understood by Martin Luther King Jr. when he spoke of the aforementioned creation of a "beloved community":

> The nonviolent resister must often express his protest through noncooperation or boycotts, but noncooperation and boycotts are not ends themselves; they are merely means to awaken a sense of moral shame in the opponent. The end is redemption and reconciliation. The aftermath of nonviolence is the creation of the beloved community while the aftermath of violence is tragic bitterness.

Collective action that is designed to create an ethical and actual power-based popular movement seems the first step to the creation of such a community—of a social transformation.

Here is where West's prophetic pragmatism enters to buttress the political vision of community literacy. Flower notes that West's pragmatism connects to issues of global systemic oppression and focuses on the most oppressed by society. As argued by David Wood, however, West's conversion to prophetic pragmatism marks a step away from his more class-based Marxist work and toward what might best be called a neoliberal framework—a framework where West imagines an increased role of business in public affairs, where the problems of capitalism are framed not in terms of systemic exploitation, but in terms of management greed. As framed by Wood, West defines the work of prophetic pragmatism as the protection and expansion of the individual and individual rights—a move picked up on by Flower—where a working life framed within a reformed welfare system to support a local economy is used as a false metonym for social justice. Such think tanks, then, when generalized into a common practice, become moments of transformative space only in the sense that they attempt to ameliorate the disinvestment by the state in the public sphere; they do not, however, attempt to organize a collective sustained response to such policies.

Within such logic, transformative is always a prophetic term (pointing toward an unrealized idealized future), not a pragmatic verb detailing the current work needed to produce systemic change. Individuals come together for sponsored forums, sharing insights and possible solutions, but then disperse back to their own individual locations, with no collective actions planned, no sense of a new collective space of action as a continual resource to tackle systemic problems. Consequently, invoking Michel de Certeau, community literacy becomes embedded within the belief that negotiating with power on issues of community rights is a tactical enterprise, an attempt to claim a temporary space to make a rhetorical intervention as individuals to elite power brokers. It is not a strategic enterprise designed to reclaim the ability of the community to actually have an independent, sustainable organizational space from which to seek control of its political future.

Yet having made this critique, I understand why Flower's local work might have become a powerful national model within our discipline—why we tend to conclude with discussion instead of moving onward to collective action. As Flower notes, rhetorical agency draws on our disciplinary interests and situates us as providing avenues for marginalized individuals to gain a "voice." Such a model nicely intersects with the current neoliberal paradigm, where calls for collective action to readjust economic disparities are seen as old-fashioned (despite Occupy Wall Street) in the face of government-business partnerships designed to "empower" the poor as individuals. Having done significant work within Flower's paradigm, however, I have now come to see it as the "disciplinary compromise," which allows us to invoke the political rhetoric of a West without having to engage in traditional forms of political organizing that his insights ultimately require.

Indeed, Keith Gilyard reminds us that West's pragmatism—like much cultural theory in English studies, from Raymond Williams to Edward Said to bell hooks—should be "inextricably linked to oppositional analysis of class, race, and gender and oppositional movements for creative democracy and freedom" (13; emphasis added). Further, Gilyard argues that the recognition of the difficulty and possible failure inherent in efforts to build such a collective base of activism should not block composition scholars from taking on such work. Instead, he reinvigorates West's concept of tragicomic hope as a way to call us into the public sphere, to invest our time and labor into such struggles, and to work within the prophetic belief of better times to come.

It is to one such effort that I now turn.

Collective Agency I

In *Home*, Syracuse's Westside residents describe their community as one rich in family, where different generations live within blocks of each other. It is a community with a deep work ethic, one initiated by Native American populations who were the original inhabitants of the area, continued by European immigrants who worked in many of the neighborhood's now-defunct factories, and currently entrusted to the recent immigrants from Latin America and Eastern Europe. Residents also describe a community facing high unemployment. There is crime, a drug trade, and the sense of a harassing police presence. Of course, police data might confirm the need for such a presence, citing the number of shots fired in the neighborhood compared to the rest of the city. Yet, the residents will tell you that such facts exist within a network of neighborhood history, social service organizations, and churches dedicated to building off this collective heritage, pointing it toward a more economically and socially secure future. The residents, that is, would see their neighborhood as a rich amalgam of contradictory narratives.

Through New City Community Press (NCCP), I had been working in the Westside for approximately two years, partnering with residents and schools on a series of community publishing projects whose goal was to create an extended community dialogue about urban life, social justice, and economic rights. Our initial theme had been "community," sponsoring a discussion on how different generations understood the neighborhood. This project resulted in *Soul Talk* by Kristina Montero. A second publication project, *Freedom!*, focused on this concept, framing it within local and national, historical and current, contexts. Each event culminated in a public reading and discussion of these books, as well as their circulation across university and public school classrooms. These events had garnered strong support from university and foundation leaders.

The community, however, responded differently. Residents shared a belief that once a collective community-based position had been articulated, more was expected than a single event, a temporary coalition. Indeed, there had been endless "voicing projects" by faculty or community members that had produced very

little change on issues such as crime, housing, education, and unemployment. Consequently, there was a desire for a space that might unite both types of efforts (university and community), where such work could move beyond rhetorical agency toward a collective agent for change. The question became how to graft the emergent discursive space of community publishing onto emergent actions in response to changes in the neighborhood.

The concern about effective collective agency became particularly heightened as an economic reform effort came to the Westside, for as the NCCP community publications were appearing, the Near Westside Initiative (NWSI) had begun its work. NWSI was a $54 million redevelopment effort focused on a one-square-mile area of the neighborhood, the area "nearest" to downtown. As part of a generalized effort to turn Syracuse University into an active partner in the city's continued revitalization, NWSI had initially been funded by New York State's forgiving of a loan to the university, with the condition that funds be used to seed such a project. This redevelopment project worked in tandem with the university's commitment to "scholarship-in-action," a centerpiece of our chancellor's efforts to reframe scholarship as both an academic and a community enterprise. In addition to leveraging funds to support economic revitalization, the university also supported faculty hires, research projects, and service-learning activities across the university. For instance, I had received significant funding to support community-based initiatives with local labor unions and international writing groups, among others (see Parks, "Strategic"). The university had created NWSI as a nonprofit organization, with community resident, private foundation, local bank, and university representation providing oversight and direction. This led to a responsive attitude. After an initial survey of residents highlighted the desire to restore the crumbling factory buildings in the neighborhood, NWSI launched a campaign to turn these sites into both business and residential opportunities. Simultaneously, in partnership with Home Headquarters, a project was created to provide low-interest loans for individuals to purchase homes in the neighborhood. NWSI also sponsored a community organization, Near Westside on the Move (NWSOM), that would provide leadership opportunities for residents, eventually enabling them to take over NWSI—for the project's stated goal was to place NWSI under the control of the neighborhood residents and partnering organizations.

Despite all of these efforts, however, some NWSI partners were concerned that the community's collective voice was not sufficiently connected to actual policy decisions. Residents who were not in existing organizations, had not been able to attend NWSOM meetings, or felt generally disenfranchised from the community seemed to have no space through which to express their opinions. This concern produced a request for NCCP to create a project designed to support these residents' voices. Given NCCP's track record of building collaborative partnerships with both Westside and citywide organizations, efforts that resulted in publications and public forums, part of this work would also be to create a platform for the voices to be heard.

Then it got complicated. For although NCCP had developed a Syracuse presence, the history of the press went back to its roots in Philadelphia—where it had been involved with communities attempting to unionize immigrant workers, fight for disability rights, and broaden public school curriculum (see Parks, *Gravyland*). Even in Syracuse, the press had been active with 1199 Service Employees International Union Bread and Roses Cultural Project on a national campaign for labor rights. And most recently, the press was part of the Undergraduate Community Research Fellows Program (UCRFP), in which students were learning how to connect academic research skills to activist campaigns.

Indeed, the Syracuse Alliance for a New Economy (SANE) had just approached UCRFP. SANE represents an alliance of labor unions in the city. Its most recent project focused on generating community benefit agreements (CBA) between developers and affected residents in Syracuse. A CBA is a legal agreement articulating how the developer will meet community concerns over the intended construction. Such an agreement had recently been signed with the school district with little or no rancor. Given that Westside residents were concerned about protecting the historical legacy and current diversity of their community, a CBA seemed to be one instrument to address those issues. For this reason, it was decided that with our resident allies, our collective resources would sponsor a project to support unorganized residents articulating their concerns and hopes for the neighborhood. Then, based on the residents' collective insights, the partners would develop a plan to support their stated goals, with the CBA being one possible vehicle.

As agreed with our NWSI-aligned partners, we would start by having UCRFP conduct door-to-door interviews, accompanied by neighborhood residents who were part of the project. The NWSI partner offered $5,000 to pay residents for their labor. The interviews themselves occurred only after the UCRFP fellows had spent approximately six weeks learning the history of the neighborhood, forming partnerships with residents, studying the scholarship on community literacy, and receiving extensive training in such work. Simultaneous with these interviews, the project sponsored meetings concerning the nature and goals of a CBA.

Notably, although our NWSI partner had supported exploring a CBA as a possible vehicle for the Westside, support for a CBA was hardly universal. In an early meeting with NWSI to establish a collaborative relationship, the focus on a CBA was seen as unnecessary. Because the goal of NWSI would be to hand over the project to the community, the end result would be that the residents were, in effect, the "developers." As an NWSI representative stated, "You can't really sign an agreement with yourself, can you?" Our project was supported, however, because of previous productive partnerships that had occurred. It was within this context that the door-to-door interviews with residents occurred.

At the end of the three months, approximately sixty interviews had been conducted, and the results were presented at a community meeting with close to 100 residents in attendance, including representatives from neighborhood

organizations and NWSI. There was no "smoking gun" of discontent. Much of what was reported did not surprise residents—satisfaction with friends, neighbors; and concern over crime, unemployment. At the end of the presentation, however, several residents asked, "What happens now?" "How will these insights be supported into action?" "What is the role of the 'press' in continuing this work?" There were calls, that is, for continuing this new space where the residents and students acted together, but where the resident voice was primary. As a collective, we decided to pursue this idea over the summer, exploring different strategic models.

Unfortunately, this decision turned out to be deeply contentious.

Beyond Rhetorical Agency

Flower's work models the value of time-specific spaces for community dialogue. It is a tactical enterprise. The goals of the Westside residents were strategic. They wanted a sustained and independent space from which to organize for systemic policy changes. They wanted any organizing effort to build on the collective memory of the community as agents of change, working within their own capacity to organize, and building from their own interpretation of how the community should move forward. For that reason, community memory, not social cognitive rhetoric, was the first building block of our organizing efforts.

Richard Couto argues that the stories a community shares in the face of oppression or systemic change are a central asset to activist campaigns. These stories keep alive a tradition of values and mitigation skills that allow individual acts of resistance to be understood within a utopian vision of the community. Couto's work reminds us that communities already have a rich legacy of intercultural resources and idealism that can be built upon to produce social transformations. For instance, in our Westside meetings, there were individuals who spoke of how they acted as unacknowledged community negotiators, trying to calm tensions between neighbors and "authorities"; others related how being a tenant organization chair taught them how to speak to power. Indeed, recognizing the neighborhood as already possessing a history of such rhetorical resources enabled a different set of strategies to emerge.

Here the work of Marshall Ganz becomes useful. His research emerges from the experience of being a community organizer with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) as well as the United Farm Workers (UFW). Based on that experience, he argues that such personal and collective stories need to be embedded within a strategic vision that builds from the values of participants, within the possibilities of their resources, to produce actual change. Ganz's mantra is "Strategy is how we turn what we have into what we need to get what we want" (8). Much of his work concerns how individuals can develop a common agenda out of personal experiences, and then use existing skills to become part of a leadership team that supports a community achieving its collective goals.

Ganz focuses on the early career of Cesar Chavez, one of the founding members of UFW, as a central example. He cites the fact that the great majority of UFW leadership had emerged from the farmworker community. Indeed, the actual organizing work began through visiting individual farmworker houses, listening to individual stories, discovering a shared set of cultural values, and creating a collective process that resulted in UFW, an organization that Chavez understood not just as a typical union, but as a movement: "A union is not simply getting enough workers to stage a strike. A union is building a group with a spirit and existence all its own. . . . [A] union must be built around the idea that people must do things themselves, in order to help themselves" (Ganz 89). Chavez then linked the UFW rhetoric and sense of narrative to larger cultural institutions, such as the Catholic Church. In fact, the preamble to the UFW constitution invokes Pope Leo's *Rerum Novarum*:

> Rich men and masters should remember this—that to exercise
> pressure for the sake of gain upon the indigent and destitute, and
> to make one's profit out of the need of another, is condemned by
> all laws, human and divine. To defraud anyone of wages that are
> his due is a crime which cries to the avenging anger of heaven.
> (qtd. in Ganz 89)

By infusing UFW's work with such values, Chavez created a story that emerged from the local experiences of farmworkers and moved outward to larger, culturally significant narratives within the community. Ultimately, this story resulted in greater economic rights for farmworkers.

Ganz's research also provides an argument that particular moments give enhanced power to existing community resources. He argues that the value of resources depends on the political and economic environment in which they exist:

> Opportunities arise not because we acquire more resources, but
> because resources we have acquire more value. . . . Opportuni-
> ties often occur at moments of unusual structural fluidity, such
> as the beginning of a project or at times of "role transition" in the
> lives of individuals or communities. At these moments—which
> combine uncertainty with significance—we have a great deal of
> choice and our choices have a great deal of consequences. . . . A
> simple victory, its occurrence may so alter the environment that
> prior expectations are thrown up for grabs, creating an oppor-
> tunity to reconfigure the whole struggle. . . . One strategizes to
> turn opportunities into outcomes. (9)

As the Westside underwent a profound "transition," the question became whether the inherent resources of previously unaffiliated or unorganized residents could be marshaled in such a way as to "turn opportunities into outcomes." How might the creation of an independent space through which to share common stories produce such a change?

Here Chavez was additionally instructive, for he was able to connect the values and collective resources of farmworkers with an emerging opportunity to create structural change. A case in point was the 1966 UFW "march" to Sacramento, California, to highlight the group's struggle for labor rights. UFW was engaged in an action during the growing season to compel Schenley Industries to recognize UFW and to sign a formal contract. When the growing season was over, UFW's immediate leverage (refusing to pick crops) was diminished. Looking for a strategy to continue to apply pressure, UFW ultimately decided on a march to Sacramento, using Governor Pat Brown's need for their votes to leverage his support. The march was also framed as a pilgrimage to be completed on Easter Sunday, tying it into Catholicism, with Catholic imagery embedded throughout the march. Clearly this strategy worked, for as is well known, by the time UFW reached Sacramento, it had won its battle, securing the first true union contract for farmworkers.

The case of UFW, then, highlights the possibility of the local Westside residents connecting their stories to their resources and using those resources to create immediate opportunities that achieve a set of concrete goals. To Ganz, these are the elements of successful strategy:

> So in discussing effective strategy, I refer not a single tactic, but to a whole series of tactics through which strategies may turn short-term opportunity into long-term gain. And long-term gain is most securely won when one not only acquires more resources (higher wages, for instance), but also generates new institutional rules that govern future conflicts in ways that privilege one's interests. (10)

The work to be done, then, was not a workshop or a forum, but a community-based strategy designed to concretely alter the rules of power. For UFW, this shift in institutional rules was the union contract. In the Westside, we thought it might be a CBA; as we would learn, however, for the Westside, it was something else entirely.

Agency Lost

Although our project had been born within a network of support, tensions began to emerge when it became clear that there was movement toward supporting an independent, resident-controlled organization. One reason for this interest was the CBA. Early in the process, meetings were held to discuss the idea. When it became clear that not enough groundwork had been established in the community to have such a conversation, these meetings were put aside. In this sense, the CBA was off the table. The sheer fact of the conversations, however, was perceived as a direct challenge to the NWSI economic development model, appearing to position the formation of any independent resident organization as against

NWSI and NSWOM. Nonprofit and for-profit interests became concerned that our real goal was to "damage the NWSI" (personal communication). Several cited an article by one of our partners who claimed to be bringing "democracy" to the Westside. Soon after, several of our initial funders—who had ties to the university and redevelopment effort—withdrew financing because the project was "too hot." This constellation of events frightened community members supported by NWSI who "did not want to be in the middle." They also stepped back from the project. In fact, just prior to our first community organizing workshop, the sponsor of our original meeting place withdrew support.

Stories also circulated within the university. People who had previously supported NCCP publishing projects were now using surrogates to learn what was "happening on the ground." Previous assessments that praised the work of our students were now dismissed as we were asked to assure individuals that the project was "pedagogically sound" and not "anti-Syracuse University." In a very short time, the status given to NCCP for previous work had been replaced with an aura of concern and suspicion.

As Ganz might argue, such turmoil was predictable. The neighborhood was undergoing a seismic shift in power relations. Traditional identities and alliances were being restructured by the introduction of a large amount of capital into the neighborhood. In the midst of this change, any movement to organize residents acted as a further catalyst, calling into question the strength of the "new normal" as well as raising the question of who could legitimately be said to "represent" the community. Given the real stakes involved—contracts, awards, job opportunities, and so on—it is not surprising that a shift from achieving rhetorical agency to securing collective agency would produce such a response. The question became how to strategize collectively to move a plan forward. And it is within this context, then, that what were informally called "Ganz" workshops occurred.

Ganz had developed a two-day workshop that facilitated community members using their individual and communal experiences to develop a collective agenda for action. The workshops were designed to draw out the values and resources in a community, providing a space for developing a strategy for shifting institutional power in favor of a community's collective goals. Here it is important to note that compared to Flower, Ganz positioned the community participant in a much different position. Ganz's method seems to operate on the belief that for social transformation to occur, more is required than public forums. For change to occur and be maintained, an independent, community-led organization is required. That is, any rhetorical agency must be supported by the consistent application of pressure from the community. (To view Ganz's full project, see www.hks.harvard.edu/organizing)

At the end of the workshops, then, residents proposed the development of a new grassroots independent organization, the Westside Residents Coalition (WRC), a name that spoke to an inclusive and traditional sense of the neighborhood. WRC would also be democratically controlled by residents but would work

to foster dialogue between nonaffiliated residents as well as among different non-profit, economic development, and religious organizations. The WRC mission statement speaks to these goals:

> The Westside Residents Coalition (WRC) is a culturally diverse, resident-based coalition of individuals and organizations that seeks to listen and give voice to, represent and advocate for, residents who live in the area bounded primarily by West St., W. Onondaga St., Bellevue Ave., W. Fayette St., and S. Geddes St. WRC will move beyond this area as the coalition develops. We seek to do so inspired by the values of love, mutual respect, integrity, inclusion, democratic decision-making, and shared leadership. We expect that the WRC will work for the better-ment of our neighborhood through coming together, outreach, coalition building and advocacy around issues of interest to residents such as empowering and educating youth, improving neighborhood environment, increasing safety, improving access to job training and opportunities, achieving housing fairness, working towards economic justice, and improving information about all these matters.

Finally, instead of a singular call for a CBA, WRC cited housing, crime, and jobs as its areas of focus. The mission statement, then, claims a grassroots identity while also reaching outward to different organizations and constituencies in the neighborhood. WRC was a coalition, not a vanguard party (to invoke Flower's concern about critical theory ideologues).

The atmosphere surrounding WRC, however, was still stifling. Several members aligned with previously existing groups soon stopped attending meetings. Others expressed concerns that they needed to choose between WRC and NWSOM—a position never endorsed or supported by the NWSI or NWSOM leadership, who had remained engaged throughout the process. The fact that Syracuse University and SANE were involved also led to concerns that WRC was not truly independent. Instead of being seen as a grassroots organization dedicated to speaking for pro-ductive change in the neighborhood, it was being portrayed as an obstacle to such progress. WRC was wrapped in a set of narratives that it could not control.

At this moment, Ganz's insight about resources becomes relevant— "Oppor-tunities arise not because we acquire more resources, but because resources we have acquire more value" (9). For despite all the attempts to weaken the WRC, one primary resource at its disposal remained untouched: WRC was run by resi-dents, individuals known in the community. This resource gained increased pow-er at a moment when the neighborhood was undergoing a profound transition by "outside forces." There was an opening for WRC to claim an authenticity in repre-senting and advocating for the neighborhood. With this in mind, WRC decided to hold a picnic—a reiteration and revision of Flower's public forums.

WRC recognized that the community wanted increased opportunities to come together, share stories, and talk about neighborhood issues. WRC also recognized a picnic as a chance to demonstrate how WRC was directed by residents. For this reason, all elements of the picnic were organized and decided on by the WRC members. Given the organization's lack of funding, many of the aspects of the picnic (food, games, and so on) were donated by members or provided at discount by local organizations. The sheer act of residents going to local sites to ask for support, cooking much of the food that would be served, and appearing as lead figures throughout the day demonstrated the grassroots nature of WRC. Moreover, the picnic featured an open mic for residents to express their thoughts about the neighborhood. Community, nonprofit, and political leaders were also invited to speak, with service organizations also being given time to talk about their mission in the community.

This is not to say that NCCP, SANE, and Syracuse University students suddenly absented themselves. The goal was to create a common collaborative space. For this reason, SANE paid for the insurance required to host the picnic in a local park, students worked different booths at the event, and NCCP helped to record resident opinions. John Burdick and I also met with university and nonprofit leadership to reframe the goals of the project—alleviating concerns and accepting responsibility for any missteps along the way. Moving tables, chairs, food, barbeques, and other heavy lifting was also part of the partnership work.

I suppose we became the comrade in arms about which Flower expresses such concern, but with one key difference. As noncommunity partners, we did not broker relationships for WRC to make the picnic happen; we did not leverage our assets to assure the event would occur. Instead, we were in the role of partner—suggesting ideas, carrying tables, being part of the effort, but ultimately being led by the WRC members. Notably, the picnic attracted over 200 residents. As a result of this work, WRC was rebranded as "neighborhood based," drawing in new members and reestablishing old partnerships.

Agency Found

The newfound power of WRC became evident when the Syracuse Police Department decided to use antiterrorist funds to put surveillance cameras into the neighborhood to "deter crime." The Westside residents were very divided about the cameras. WRC chose not to take a stand, arguing instead that the real issue was community policing. Cameras were not the only, or even necessarily the best, solution to relations between the police and community. In this stance, WRC found itself aligned with NWSI, which was concerned with how such cameras would be perceived by the businesses and residents being recruited into the neighborhood. From different positions, WRC, NWSI, and other organizations were able to come together to advocate for better police practices.

The result of this alliance was not, however, the removal of the cameras. In a meeting with the mayor, the "fact of the cameras" was not even discussed. Instead, the alliance led to the creation of a police delegation, which meets monthly to discuss the interactions between officers and residents. Consisting of WRC, NWSI, and the deputy of police, the delegation discusses how to improve the policing as well as specific incidents that have occurred. As a result, residents report improved police behavior, less harassment, more cooperation, and greater access to police officials. As noted earlier, Ganz contends that "long-term gain is most securely won when one not only acquires more resources (higher wages, for instance), but also generates new institutional rules that govern future conflicts in ways that privilege one's interests." Such is the hoped-for future of the police delegation activities.

This story ultimately leads back to the community publishing efforts that initiated working in the Westside years before. For it would be simplistic to portray WRC as now completely accepted by all constituencies. Coalitions change constantly; progressive change means constantly engaging with power, constantly retelling and revising a collective vision for the neighborhood. Yet having experienced losing control of its own narrative, its identity, WRC moved to create its own community publishing house, Gifford Street Community Press (GSCP). Here the goal is to be able to consistently represent community voices, on their own terms, ensuring a consistent presence in public discussions about the neighborhood.

The press has already published two books, *Home* and *I Witness*, the latter edited by Ben Kuebrich.[2] A new book focused on an advocacy campaign against absentee landlords has just been completed. In each case, these projects were part of the continued effort to develop a mutually cooperative space between WRC and the Syracuse Writing Program. Indeed, most recently, the university has agreed to fund the publications of GSCP for five years. Community publishing, that is, has become intertwined within a partnership focused on fostering systemic change. These publications, which help to frame the goals and needs of the neighborhood, circulate within an activist community and activist campaigns. Initially the site of controversy and opposition, the residents who created WRC have "flipped the script," generating a collaborative space from which the collective neighborhood voice can be heard and the rules of power can be altered in their favor.

Sinners Welcome in the Afterlife

In the heart of the Westside rests St. Lucy's Church. Across its primary entrance hangs a banner, "Sinners Welcome." It was a banner that I thought about often in the midst of the summer crisis and counterresponse. Yet through the difficult work

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2. For a detailed account of the production of *I Witness* as well as the implications of such work for community partnership work, see "White Guys Who Send My Uncle to Prison," by Ben Kuebrich, who was a vital part of all the work described here.

of building and then rebuilding alliances, confronting rumor with fact, and working through division toward collaboration, the banner has taken on particular resonance for me: it has come to symbolize a promise of working toward the "beloved community" invoked by King, an implicit understanding that any one moment of conflict, of failure, needs to be understood within a larger utopian vision.

I am arguing for a utopian vision for our field, one that transgresses our currently accepted compromises. It is a vision that moves beyond a sense of agency as rhetorical, as something used to sponsor a circulation of dialogue, to a sense of agency as change, as something that redistributes how power and resources are distributed. And I want to argue that English studies should take on the work of such collective political action—expanding the scope of Linda Adler-Kassner's recent call for an activist writing program administrator (WPA) to the idea of an activist English department. I do this not only out of recognition of our field's engagement with the progressive social movements of the 1960s and 1970s (see Blackmon, Kirklighter, and Parks), but also because if we take seriously our increasing adoption of "prophetic pragmatism," then such work must necessarily follow.

Prophetic pragmatism has been framed as the production of rhetorically savvy individuals, negotiating with elite power brokers, within a narrowly defined political set of goals. Some might differ on whether this set of goals is neoliberalism, but few can deny that the actual work of creating wholesale systemic change for the benefit of oppressed communities has failed to be at the forefront of conversation. Yet as Gilyard reminds us, above all else, West is a philosopher activist, deeply concerned not only with creating democratic conversations, but with economic democracy on a local and global scale. West asks us to "dream big," recognizing that there is no dignity lost and much honor to be gained in such continued efforts. It is, perhaps for this reason, that he asks us to imagine a tragicomic aspiration for our work—a call for endlessly moving and working to shift power, endlessly recovering and renewing our effort at each sign of failure.

And to undertake this work, I would argue that we must move beyond a volunteerist ethos, where individual students learn to understand the power of their individual rhetorical agency in the context of temporary forums, and move toward a collective voice, premised on coming to understand how community histories can act as the foundational moment for strategic interventions in power networks. Rather than seeing such work as outside of our disciplinary parameters, I would argue that gaining this understanding draws on the very meaning of "community partnerships" the belief that a collective appeal to common values is a primary way to understand a neighborhood, a region, or a nation. It is this spirit, I believe, that West was trying to call forth when speaking of a prophetic pragmatism—the attempt to overreach current political boundaries within an understanding of the endless need to assess and renew our efforts.

I recognize that such a focus takes us outside of our current disciplinary paradigm toward what many might consider to be overtly political work. I also recognize that Ganz's rhetorical positioning of student and community members as

advocates, as members of a campaign, touches on deep issues of our role as teachers. But I would also ask this: If we embed our work within a prophetic pragmatism without engaging students in such collective politics, what are we teaching them about community? If they never experience the direct struggle to build community agency, work within and against power structures, and see the nuanced literacy that has to result, what have they learned about the nature of power and language? If students are not involved in a strategic understanding of community, what can we actually be said to be teaching about community literacy? About the goals of cultural theory? For these reasons, perhaps a focus on how English studies can work within the grassroots activism for community justice needs to become part of our curriculum. Perhaps we need to move beyond the social and toward the political.[3]

I understand that such work does not characterize discussions of community literacy and partnership at this time—that the field has taken a different direction in its definition of the political. I want to end, then, with the hope that the Westside, however problematic an example, is not an isolated incident—that as the decade continues, we will embrace the need to move our field outward toward community struggles and engage our students in the collective work of community building, of working with neighborhoods to use their memories as a resource for building a vision of a utopian future, working collaboratively to link existing resources with that vision, and shifting the networks of power to ensure, at long last, that the playing field is tilted in favor of the oppressed. This prophecy is one worthy of our ambitions.

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Chapter 6. Dreams and Nightmares: The Legal Legacy that Authorized Civil Detention Centers in the United States

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Abstract: A study of the juridical and legislative creation of the United States immigration framework premised on a concept of the nation-state as protective of the White male of property, with a case-study of its enactment through the policies of the Trump Administration. The essay concludes with a consideration of alternative governance structures to protect the political rights of citizens/non-citizens of a political state.

> [T]he exemplary moment of sovereignty is the act of deportation.
>
> *– Hannah Arendt*

The photographs and stories have gone viral, sparking outrage over an inhumane immigration system operating in the United States.[1]

South and Central American refugees, packed in cages, covered in sheets made of metallic foil.

Migrant children lying on concrete floors or looking out from behind iron-mesh enclosures asking for their parents.

The Justice Department insisting it is not required to provide soap, toothbrushes, or adequate bedding to children in immigration custody.

A mural of President Trump plastered to the wall of an immigration detention center that reads, "[s]ometimes losing a battle you find a new way to win the war."

These moments make up pieces in the mosaic of American immigration.

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1. This chapter originally appeared as "Dreams and Nightmares. The Legal Legacy that Authorized Civil Detention Centers in the US," by A. Moss, S. Parks, and L. Shorr, 2019, in *Tortura e migrazioni/Torture and Migration*, Edizioni Ca' Foscari, edited by Fabio Perocco, pp. 181–201, Digital Publishing, (https://doi.org/10.30687/978-88-6969-358-8/008). Reprinted under Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International Public License.

Collectively, they tell a story that enables a particular cultural narrative on the current meaning of the United States. They tell the story of a sovereign entity born from a bygone era, beset with structural racism, and at battle with its sense of self. A national identity established by the state and its borders and historically premised on whiteness that embedded in its political, legal, and judicial discourses the noncitizen as "alien," an alien who is excluded first through denial of rights then through deportation from the body of the nation. In the context of immigration, this exclusion of rights means ignoring the U.S. Constitution's Eighth Amendment and diminishing due process protections of the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments. It makes for an ill-conceived immigration system. It creates humanitarian crises.

The non-citizen as "alien" is a linguistically deviant device that dominates the immigration process (Cunningham-Parmeter).[2] It establishes a rhetorical framework around immigration that dehumanizes the migrant, refugee, or asylum seeker to distract from the constitutional crisis produced once found in the United States. Culturally, the word, "alien," is grounded in "the Latin words alienus and alius, which mean 'of or belonging to another person or place,' 'hostile,' 'strange,' and 'other'" (Cunningham-Parmeter; Skeat). Thus, when the law speaks of aliens, it speaks of "dangerous others who are marked by their strangeness" (Cunningham-Parmeter). The United States Congress created the "alien" to diminish the noncitizen.[3] Courts, then, took the term, "alien" and twisted it into something nonhuman. Non-Citizen aliens have been described like hunted and caught animals, "who succumb to the lure" (*Michigan Department of State Police v. Sitz*). Aliens have been described as inanimate objects, "imported into this country" (*United States v. Brignoni-Ponce).* Aliens have been described like extraterrestrial body snatchers, who undertake a "silent invasion" (*United States v. Ortiz*).

We will argue that the "alien" has not so much invaded our land but has been produced by a governmental state that imagines itself the protector of the "nation-state." That linkage of governmental state/nation-state enables an understanding of the current political moment in the United States. Through this conceptual framework, we can articulate that while popular to image the Trump Administration's immigration policy as an aberrant exception in United States jurisprudence, the inhumane treatment of noncitizens took root in the nation's imagination more than a century ago. It is the result of a carefully crafted body of legislative law and judicial interpretation founded in a logic that interlinks coloniality, nationality, and self-sovereignty; a system premised on Whiteness as the subject of law and the non-White peoples as the "other," the outsider to be denied entry and equal access to legal protections. In this way, the "stateless" individual, the "noncitizen", the "refugee," the "alien," are all bricks in a border wall written into the system. To create a political context that provides such individuals with

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2.   See 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(3) ("[t]he term alien means any person not a citizen or national of the United States").

3.   8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(3).

rights and legal recourse, we will argue means breaking down fundamental connections between the state and nationalism; it means imagining a different legislative framework. It is to dream of a state moving beyond nationalism, beyond the current nightmare.

To draw out the contours of the current immigration system, this article begins by tracing the story of Liliana Velasquez, whose memoir *Dreams and Nightmares*, traces her journey from Guatemala to the United States. While personally harrowing, Liliana represents her story as a triumph of how a "model" and "humane" refugee process might produce future citizens. Within her narrative, children pulled away from parents, placed in cages for months, seems an aberration. This article, however, seeks to demonstrate the common legal framework that produces these more common than not moments. In doing so, it exposes the fundamental linkage of the state with White nationalism, denying any current or previous state actor a claim of innocence or ignorance with regard to the current humanitarian crisis. Here, the article draws upon Critical Race Theory (CRT) within the United States to, ultimately, critique the Westphalian nation-state system. The article concludes by positing "critical regionalism" as an alternative framework to the racially homogenous nation from which the state might govern, a framework informed by a vernacular sense of political agency. The overarching hope is to begin a conversation on how to secure fundamental human rights of all individuals.

The Dreams of the "Good Refugee"

Liliana could have ended up in a cage. Instead, she received a "green card."

Liliana Velasquez left her home in Villaflor, Guatemala, alone, at the age of 14, to escape the mental and physical abuse occurring within her family. She sought refuge in the United States. That same year, in 2012, there were 10,146 unaccompanied children making a similar journey. In 2013, the number of unaccompanied minors doubled to 20,715.[4] This surge in children seeking status in the United States relates to the ongoing economic and political crises that mark modern Central and South America. Crises, which often result from neoliberal policies enacted by global corporate entities that are endorsed by both Democratic and Republican legislators in the United States (Harvey; Mignolo). Exploiting the Americas for the benefit the United States has always been a bipartisan effort.

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4.   According to Factcheck.org, a project of the Anneberg Public Policy Center, "The surge in unaccompanied children from Central America is largely due to increased violent crime in the "northern triangle" (Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador). A July 3 report by the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service says 48 percent of apprehended children "said they had experienced serious harm or had been threatened by organized criminal groups or state actors, and more than 20 percent had been subject to domestic abuse." Honduras has the highest murder rate in the world." Also see the June 2018 Council on Foreign Relations report, "Central America's Violent Northern Triangle.

Liliana's individual journey, then, must be understood within a context where global forces both motivated her journey, then, reframed her identity as an "unaccompanied minor" and "alien." These classifications are deeply intertwined with the cultural conscious of the United States. The language is deliberate and describes a political motivation. A political motivation to "blame the victim" for needing to seek status in the United States over the turmoil in their own country and without regard for the catalyst. Donald Trump's 2015 presidential campaign captured the political moment: "When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best . . . . They're sending people that have lots of problems, and they're bringing those problems with us. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people" (Time Staff).

Luckily, Liliana was understood as one of the "good people" by those involved in the immigration system at that time.

As noted in her memoir, Liliana begins her journey by trying to escape family abuse by herself. She then joins up with a small cadre of individuals attempting to reach the United States. Both collectively and individually, these people are robbed at gunpoint, exploited by corrupt police/army officers, and consistently threatened with sexual abuse. Finally, Liliana crosses over into the United States and is immediately captured by federal agents, who Liliana describes as dressed like soldiers; "soldiers" who handcuff her and force her to march for an hour to reach the border control car, before taking her to an immigration detention center in Tucson, Arizona. There, she witnesses "children, mothers, men, women—some sleeping on floors some sitting up, some covered in plastic to protect them from the rain" (Velasquez 130) She faces the chilling reality of "so many people who were going to be deported to their country" (Velasquez 103).

Importantly, these experiences occur during the Obama Administration. Of course, it should also be noted that the Obama Administration established an in-country refugee/parole program in Central America as part of the United States' Refugee Admissions Program:

> The Central American Minors (CAM) Refugee/Parole Program aims to provide a "safe, legal, and orderly alternative to the dangerous journey" that many unaccompanied children have taken to the United States. It allows certain parents who are lawfully present in the United States to request refugee resettlement for their children who are still residing in their countries of origin. Children who are found to be ineligible for refugee status but are at risk of harm can be considered for parole, which allows individuals to be lawfully present in the United States temporarily. (Meyer, et al. 9)

It also attempted to support economic growth within such countries through economic aid, linked to enhanced border and security requirements. While seemingly more humane than the Trump Administration—who ended the domestic

abuse allowance that ultimately authorizes Liliana's ability to remain, both administrations premise their work on "securing the border," a framework which will be discussed further below. Thus, the evils of immigration under the Trump Administration are not simply aberrations. They are just the latest symptoms of the same old ill-conceived immigration system.

Unlike the children who remained in the cages of Tucson, Liliana continues deeper into the heartland of the United States immigration system. As her journey progresses, she begins to fashion a narrative where the system's ability to work rests not so much in legal avenues; but instead, on the individual humanity of those directly involved in her case. For instance, Lilian is transported to Phoenix, a trip she describes as being marked by kindly immigration officers who provide her with an influx of snacks. In Phoenix, she faces placement in a new form of immigration detention. A program known as the House of Dreams. Inside the House of Dreams, she finds caring individuals who assuage her fears and provide her medical treatment. She even gains access to a lawyer, despite that fact that she has no constitutional right to counsel. Her lawyer then spends months working to have Liliana reunited with her brothers in North Carolina. When that fails, she finds placement in a foster family from Philadelphia. Up to this point, each moment of the process seems designed to create a safe and caring environment for Liliana. She experiences a system that appears to act in her best interest.

Indeed, it is only in Philadelphia, when placed in a North Philadelphia home, where she encounters direct mistreatment—the foster family refuses to share food with her, forces her to provide childcare, and limits her movement outside of the home. Lilian is saved from this situation when her social worker—who had previously recommended not creating an issue about her living conditions—breaks with standard practice and ensures access to La Puerta Abierta, a center which provides mental health services for noncitizens. Here Liliana meets Layla, a psychologist at the center, who takes up a special form of advocacy. Layla successfully petitions the court to allow Liliana to join her family. Through her commitment to hard work, to never giving up (as expressed in her memoir), Lilian is able to secure a green card, finish high school, and enroll in college. She now travels across Philadelphia and the United States, sharing her story with grade school and college classes. Considered within her self-defined history, Liliana's nightmare has turned into the American Dream.

The Dreamwork of Nation-States

We start with pictures and stories for several reasons: first, nations and nation-states are built upon their origin stories, stories which make clear who founded a country and, thus, who are rightful citizens. These stories are, as they say, "written by the winners of history." Where such stories start, what events are included or omitted, what is emphasized, and who are cast as heroes all act

to undergird the status quo. These stories, when left unexamined, authorize the mistreatment and even torture of those portrayed as the outsider or intruder by the nation-state. Consider the power of the story just told—a story which ended with a refugee using her experience to gain access to college, to speaking engagements. Liliana's story exists within the narrative of the "good refugee" within the current public discourse of the United States. For as noted at the outset, Liliana describes a journey through a Central America replete with abusive family member, rapists, and bad cops. Indeed, it is through the exceptional few, such as a kind coyote, that the cultural/political geography is established. In the United States, by contrast, Liliana describes a terrain full of kind committed individuals, with the notable exception of the foster family who acts as proof of "the general rule."

Essentially, through Liliana, we learn, the refugee/immigration system "works" for those dedicated to working hard, not giving up, and believing in traditional notions of family, home, and education. By the end of her memoir, she has transformed the image of those left caged in Tucson. What once represented images of abuse, punishment, or torture, now represents an acknowledgement, even if reluctant, that some individuals need to be deemed inadmissible, detained, and deported back to their country of origin, perhaps even back into the violence they (like Liliana) sought to escape. That is, there is a need for a border, a "wall," that can protect current inhabitants from countries that do send "their worst." Thus, the narrative of the nation-state (and its relationship to the state) is important for how it reframes the chaotic and diffuse reality of existing bodies spread across multiple terrains into a set of concept-metaphors that create a stable identity, a habitus called "citizen" who is then granted the benefit of particular unalienable rights.

And the dream work of the United States, the desire which informs the citizen habitus, as with all states, is to create a homogenous nation. As Judith Butler writes, reflecting on the work of Hannah Arendt:

> Arendt argues that the nation-state, as a form, that is, as a state formation, is bound up, as if structurally, with the recurrent expulsion of national minorities. In other words, the nation-state assumes that the nation expresses a certain national identity, is founded through the concerted consensus of a nation, and that a certain correspondence exists between that state and the nation. The nation, in this view, is singular and homogeneous, or, at least, it becomes so in order to comply with the requirements of the state. The state derives its legitimacy from the nation, which means that those national minorities who do not qualify for "national belonging" are regarded as "illegitimate" inhabitants. . . . The subsequent status that confers statelessness on any number of people becomes the means by which they are at once

>discursively constituted within a field of power and juridically
>deprived. (Spivak and Butler)

Historically this exclusion from the United States' nation-state has been enacted upon Indigenous populations already present in North America and African populations brought to this continent, both of whom are seen as illegitimate inhabitants. In a post-Civil Rights Era, there is a popular narrative that such legal/political exclusions have been removed; Whiteness decentered. That equality under the law now exists. CRT, however, has been audacious in its critique of the very foundations of the United States' legal system, to its commitment or lack thereof, for the equal protections of all of its citizens. Focusing primarily on how the legal system impacts descendants of formerly enslaved African communities, the work of CRT scholars meticulously articulates how the most basic assumptions and tenets of the United States' legal and legislative systems assume the legitimate subject of these structures continue to be White. That, in fact, the popular frameworks of "Whiteness" are constructed in part through the power of legal discourses to invest/disinvest humanity in particular populations.

Recently the paradigms of CRT have been extended to articulate the racially exclusionary immigration laws, which also are understood as reinforcing the subordination of domestic minority groups. In equal parts, it recognizes that the Trump Administration shares fair blame for the egregious and inhumane treatment of noncitizens; but also, the Trump Administration is not the first to enact racially exclusive immigration policy nor attempt to justify human rights abuse (Johnson). For the overarching concern about these abuses does not start or stop with the Trump Administration. The concern centers on the legal and legislative rulings that long ago created a rhetorical comparison to conflate two concepts into one legal identity that defined all noncitizens, be they: refugees, asylum seekers, migrants, or criminals, as the same "alien" entity not worthy of protection. Those dehumanizing associations are deeply engrained into the cultural conscious of the United States and do more to distort notions of justice in the immigration system than any one administration.

Here, the concept of "statelessness" can be an important lever of analysis. CRT deconstructs "statelessness" as a racially informed concept. It is a powerful explanatory legal concept used by lawyers and critical theorists alike. "Statelessness" means, "a person who is not considered as a national by any State under the operation of its law;" it is "a person who is not only homeless but productionless" (United Nations, Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons Art. 1). Provided that in the United States the concept of the "nation," itself, is premised on "Whiteness," then what rights remain to empower or protect those crossing without documentation from Central or South America, from non-European heritage nations? Through a consideration of the "stateless" individual, we can ask what is the governmental paradigm which requires just and humane treatment of these individuals?

CRT invokes the strategy of the "counter-story" as a way to begin to argue for a different form of governance. In this regard, CRT shares a concern with decoloniality, which in response to coloniality's imposition of the White male of property as the subject of rights, rights infused with global capitalist values, attempts to learn from Indigenous forms of knowledge/communal structures. (The very values which, as discussed above produced the political/economic crises driving immigration in Central America.) For conceptual schools, counter-stories call into question the legitimacy of now existing legal/political prejudices. Indeed, Delagado, one of the first CRT theorists highlights how language helps shape human perception. With words, humans comprehend meaning in the world that surrounds them. He writes: "Stories, parables, chronicles, and narratives are powerful means for destroying mindset—the bundle of presuppositions, received wisdoms, and shared understandings against a background of which legal and political discourse takes place" (Delgado 3).

Our first rendering of Liliana's memoir was to read it within her own terms as a successful story of a child who crossed borders and cultures to gain certain citizenship rights (a "green card). As just discussed, this story rested upon a larger governance structure premised on a coloniality that premised "White male" subjectivity as both the subject of rights and national identity. Returning to Liliana, now framed as "stateless" within the workings of a historically determined juridical-political system, we want to articulate the system in which such habitus of citizenship rights are offered or denied. And in doing so, we hope to ultimately provide a space to frame a counter-narrative to the legitimacy of the nation-state as "protector of human rights."

The Nightmare of the Refugee in the Nation-State

By the time Donald Trump took office, Liliana already had lived in the United States for four years. During this time, the immediate crisis of rising rates of unaccompanied minors crossing the border lessened. From 2014 to 2016, the numbers dropped from 51,000 to 18,500 (Kandal). This drop correlates with an approximately twenty-year trend. To be certain, in 2000, the monthly average of unaccompanied minors crossing the border equaled 71,000 to 220,000. Yet by 2018, those numbers had dropped to between 20,000 to 40,000. In that time, the reasons for crossing into the United States also changed. What started as primarily economic reasons increasingly turned into reasons concerning political hardship. Despite the numbers, there is an exigency to continuing to produce the stateless as a means to reaffirm the legitimacy of the nation-state proper. There will be so long as the nation-state remains. For as Judith Butler argues, "[t]he state derives its legitimacy from the nation, which means that those inhabitants who do not qualify for 'national belonging' are regarded as 'illegitimate' inhabitants." All subsequent status that confers statelessness on any number of people becomes the means by which they are at once discursively constituted within a field of power

and juridically deprived" (Spivak and Butler 30-31). Thus, despite the numbers, there is an exigency to continuing to produce the stateless as a means to reaffirm the legitimacy of the nation-state proper. This need is particularly urgent today at a time when 1) the free circulation of global capitalism has called the sovereignty of the nation-state into question, 2) the failed neoliberal projects in the Global South have caused new massive global migrations and 3) all of this has ignited the fear of disenfranchisement in those workers displaced in the Global North.

Undoubtedly, the Trump Administration has taken to this task with great vigor. Intentionally implementing policies and arguing agendas designed to incentivize would-be refugees and migrants to stay in their home countries. These tactics include but are certainly not limited to the utilization of facial recognition software to sweep civilian databases, the militarization of ICE, coordination with local law enforcement, pretextual traffic stops, and increased reliance on criminal statute. Consequently, approximately 39,000 people are now being held in immigration detention centers. Around 2,000 are children. Many of these children are being separated from their parents through the utilization of 8 U.S.C. § 1325, which makes it a federal crime to improperly enter the United States.[5] Use of this statute means the initiation of criminal proceedings. That process all but guarantees the separation of families. The person charged with violating 8 U.S.C. § 1325 will be transferred from ICE custody into the custody of the United States Marshal Service (USMS) to stand trial. Whereas ICE custody takes place at immigration detention centers, USMS custody typically takes place at regional jails. This process can take years to complete. In the meantime, the children are left in immigration detention centers, where, as noted above, they live in tents or cages without simple necessities for health, hygiene, and safety.[6] In these conditions, people die. Indeed, under the Trump Administration at least three minors have died while being held in immigration detention centers. As a result, Sanctuary Cities (which refuse to support ICE activities) as well as consistent protest have emerged across the United States.

Throughout, those residing in the United States have learned two important lessons about its immigration system.

First, it is a system of dehumanization; confinement; aggressive policing, punishment, and deportation. It is a system of contradictions and competing rhetoric

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5.   See 8 U.S.C.A. § 1325 ("[a]ny alien who (1) enters or attempts to enter the United States at any time or place other than as designated by immigration officers, or (2) eludes examination or inspection by immigration officers, or (3) attempts to enter or obtains entry to the United States by a willfully false or misleading representation or the willful concealment of a material fact, shall, for the first commission of any such offense, be fined under Title 18 or imprisoned not more than 6 months, or both, and, for a subsequent commission of any such offense, be fined under Title 18, or imprisoned not more than 2 years, or both").

6.   For example, The Trump Administration defines soap and toothpaste as non-necessities.

where noncitizens found in the United States are subjected to torturous psycho-logical, emotional, and physical abuse while detained pending deportation pro-ceedings. Similar to what happened to Liliana along her journal, pistols may be held to the heads of refugees. Cement floors may act as their beds. Death may come to them before deportation does.

Second, no matter the severity of the treatment, it likely will not be found to violate the legal standards of punishment or deprivation under the United States Constitution. These individuals will not be accorded the constitutional safeguards relating to cruel and unusual punishment or the deprivation of life and liberty. It looks like punishment. It feels like deprivation. It may well be torture. But it is overwhelmingly likely to be determined constitutional.

While the Trump Administration has made their "tough on immigrants" stance a central tenet of policy, Trump did not invent this system. It is allowed within the fabric of our legal system and supported by the legislative intent of immigration policies. In part, the ability to treat noncitizens with such cruel-ty is due to the fact that for more than a century the United States has defined the deportation process, including detention, as a civil process exercised by the power of Congress.[7] This Congressional power is rooted within notions of White supremacy, xenophobia, and the Supreme Court's 1893 decision in *Fong Yue Ting*. There, the Court upheld a provision in the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1892, which required a Chinese person, "claiming the privilege of remaining in the United States, to prove the fact of his residence here at the time of the passage of the act by at least one credible white witness" (*Fong Yue Ting v. United States*, emphasis added). Here, we see the resonance of White-vouching for immigrants echoed in Layla's endorsement of Liliana.

Within this racist framework, the Supreme Court accepted the maxim that this nation had an absolute and unqualified right, a "power, as inherent in sov-ereignty, and essential to self-preservation, to forbid the entrance of foreigners within its dominions, or to admit them only in such cases and upon such con-ditions as it may see fit to prescribe" (*Fong You Ting* v *United States*).That power falls to Congress. It is "recognized that the determination of a selective and ex-clusionary immigration policy was for the Congress and not for the Judiciary" (*Harisiades* v. *Shaughnessy*). There it has remained. No matter how crude, cruel, xenophobic, and racist, the responsibility of immigration laws reside in Congress, even when "such determination may be deemed to offend American traditions and may, as has been the case, jeopardize peace" (*Harisiades v. Shaughnessy*). Witness the cruelty of a system that would create conditions where a father and daughter die on a riverbank attempting to cross into the United States from El Salvador to escape violence.

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7.   *See Hinds v. Lynch*, 790 F.3d 259, 264 (1st Cir. 2015) (citing *Fong Yue Ting v. United States,* 149 U.S. 698, 730, 13 S.Ct. 1016, 37 L.Ed. 905 (1893); *Reno v. Am.–Arab Anti-Discrim-ination Comm.,* 525 U.S. 471, 491, 119 S.Ct. 936, 142 L.Ed.2d 940 (1999).

Although Congress repealed the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1943, from the time of *Fong Yue Ting v. United States,* the absolute power of Congress to exercise "[d]eportation, however severe its consequences, has been consistently classified as a civil rather than a criminal procedure" (*Harisiades v. Shaughnessy*). As an original proposal, this doctrine is highly debatable in light of the close association that exists between criminal convictions and deportation (*Harisiades v. Shaughnessy*). Nevertheless, the United States Supreme Court has considered the matter closed for many years. To be certain, in 1913, the Court held it thoroughly established "that Congress has power to order the deportation of aliens whose presence in the country it deems hurtful. The determination by facts that might constitute a crime under local law is not a conviction of crime, nor is the deportation a punishment; it is simply a refusal by the government to harbor persons whom it does not want" (*Bugajewitz v. Adams*). While it may be the case that alignment of local penal law with the policy of Congress is a jurisprudential coincidence, it is far from coincidence that both are accomplished under the logic of state-building which employs the exclusion of individuals based upon race/ethnicity as part of its creation of the modern nation-state.

What is neither coincidence nor accident, however, is the inhumane treatment of noncitizen migrants in the United States, which has arisen in the wake of *Fong Yue Ting v. United States* and its progeny. For the century-old legal fiction that makes deportation a civil matter also makes the Eighth Amendment's prohibition against cruel and unusual punishment inapplicable to the detention of people pending deportation hearings because, again, "deportation is not a punishment for crime" (*Ingraham v. Wright*). Deportation is civil, albeit in name only, and there is no Eighth Amendment concept of punishment in a civil proceeding: "Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel or unusual punishment inflicted" (emphasis added).

What constitutional protections may remain exist in due process. For no one in the United States, no matter her origin, can be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law. Whatever other rights denied by virtue of status, the Fifth Amendment and Fourteenth Amendment demand due process protections against deprivations of life or liberty at the hands of state or federal officials. The due process clause may not invalidate all inflictions of severe hardship faced by noncitizen migrants (*Harisiades v. Shaughnessy*). However, certain conditions or restrictions will implicate Fifth and Fourteenth Amendment concepts of punishment, which may trigger the recognition of constitutional protections and relief for those who suffered.

Still barring exceptional circumstances, the due process clause has little power to protect noncitizen refugees and migrants, who unlike Liliana do not encounter the humane bureaucrat or find the concern citizen advocate. Their constitutional protections remain limited by that absolute and unqualified but "overriding concern that the United States, as a sovereign, maintain its right to self-determination" (*Lynch v. Cannatella*). The due process clause has even less power to prevent

the level of inhumane treatment required to bring a cognizable claim of "punishment" in civil proceeding.[8] Acts of "gross physical abuse" or "malicious infliction of cruel treatment" may constitute punishment.[9] However, these determinations must be made by finders of fact—a judge or a jury—in a civil trial, which is cost prohibitive and to which no right to free counsel attaches. Legal standards like these further distinguish Liliana's story because she was provided access to legal advice while in custody. More often, such legal standards make for more legal fictions that further shield human rights violations from coming to light and being litigated in courts of law. There is a very thin constitutional protection against inhumane treatment for noncitizen migrants in the United States. The poorer the person the thinner the protection.

The False Dream of International Human Rights

A thicker line of protection potentially exists under international standards. The United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights includes "the equal and inalienable rights and fundamental freedoms of each human being" (United Nations General Assembly, Universal Declaration of Human Rights Res. 217A (III)). Its *Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment* recognizes "the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family" as "the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world" and derives those rights from "the inherent dignity of the human person" (United Nations, Convention against Torture Art. 6). In the same spirit, the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* decrees, "[a]ll persons deprived of their liberty shall be treated with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person" (United Nations, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights Art. 10).

The *Declaration*, however, is premised on a Westphalian nation-state system put in after World War II. Under this system, the concept of justice is defined in terms of internal citizenship rights. As Nancy Fraser writes, "Subtending the lion's share of social struggle in the postwar era, this view channeled claims for justice into the domestic political arenas of territorial states. The effect, notwithstanding lip-service to international human rights and to anti-imperialist solidarity, was to truncate the scope of justice, marginalizing, if not wholly obscuring, cross-border injustices" (Fraser 214.) Thus, while the United States is party to these international prohibitions against cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment, its participation is subject to reservations and declarations. Those make it "bound by the cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment prohibitions," but "only to the extent that those words mimic the cruel and unusual treatment or punishment prohibited by the Fifth, Eighth, and/or Fourteenth Amendments" (Budhrani emphasis added).

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8.   See generally, *Bell v. Wolfish*, 441 U.S. 520 (1979).

9.   See *Medina v. O'Neill*, 838 F.2d 800, 801 (5th Cir. 1988).

Consequently, the limited protections afforded to noncitizen migrants under the United States Constitution narrowly adheres to, if not violates, the norms established under international human rights law.

To make matters worse, the United States has declared these international prohibitions "non-self-executing." This means that no private right to action exists in the United States to assert these international prohibitions against cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment, absent express congressional legislation: treaties 'may comprise international commitments. . . they are not domestic law unless Congress has either enacted implementin"[W]hileg statues or the treaty itself conveys an intention that it be self-executing and is ratified on these terms" (Budhrani). No such legislation exists. On the contrary, history makes clear that Congress will control, detain, and exclude those it has deemed undesirable, "[h]owever severe its consequences." (Budhrani). The dream of the United Nations is no match for this American nightmare.

Here, it seems important to return to Liliana's memoir, the narrative which establishes the very humanity which many of the United States border agents, bureaucrats, and advocates seem to recognize. It is important, that is, to realize this entire legal system is premised on taking away that very humanity from Liliana. Unlike the personal narrative of her memoir, this narrative focuses on her statelessness. In this narrative, the moment Liliana arrived in the United States, she stopped being a child. She started being an "alien." She was caught, not as a child seeking refuge and reunification with her family; but instead, as an alien unlawfully present in the United States.

Immediately upon arrest, she was subject to immigration detention. The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 establishes that "an alien may be arrested and detained pending a decision on whether the alien is to be removed from the United States (8 U.S.C. §1226(a)). Her confinement in the program known as the House of Dreams was a form of immigration detention. Immigration detention is considered civil detention. Civil detention exists outside the Eighth Amendment's prohibitions against cruel and unusual punishment. In the absence of the Eighth Amendment, civil detention comes with a decreased adherence to the standards that control constitutional conditions of confinement. During the four months she remained detained at the House of Dreams, it could have easily become the House of Nightmares. Liliana was, in essence, an alien at the mercy of her captors.

Her story could have been what is found in Figure 6.1.

And here, then, is the final rendering of Liliana's story. The successful conclusion of her dream should not blind us to the nightmares faced by others. Liliana might have suffered the fate of Hernandez Vasquez and two other minors who died while in federal custody. She might have suffered the fate of Óscar Alberto Martínez Ramírez and his daughter, Angie Valeria, who died on a riverbank attempting to reach the United States. That is, her success is deeply enmeshed within a legal system premised on excluding, debasing, and abusing those most in need of political asylum.

Declaration of J.   O   A   ·M: ,   and

J.   A   C   A   (An Infant)

I, J.   O   A   ·M: , declare under penalty of perjury that the following is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and recollection.

1. I came from Moncagua in San Miguel, El Salvador. My birthday is I am 16 years old. I lived in my grandfather's home with my 20-years-old fiancé, J   A   C   ·M   , my 20-year-old sister, L   A   A   ·R   and our one-year-old daughter, J   A   C   A   . Our daughter's date of birth is

2. My fiancé, daughter, sister, and I had to leave El Salvador because our grandfather saw the gang kill our neighbor. They threatened to kill him and so we all had to leave. He is old so he went into hiding and we came to the United States because we have family here. My fiancé's uncle, D   C   ·M   , lives in Virginia and wants to sponsor us. His telephone number is

3. My fiancé and I crossed with our baby into the United States at Port Juarez and had to cross the river by foot. It was very deep so I held our baby and my fiancé held onto me to keep us above the water. Two hours after we crossed, we met Border Patrol and they took us to a very cold house. We slept on mats on the floor and gave us aluminum blankets. They took away our baby's diapers, baby formula, and all of our belongings. Our clothes were still wet and we were very cold and so we got sick. My fiancé, our daughter, and I got sick from being so cold. We were there for about ten hours.

4. After that they took us to a place with a tent. There was also a structure with a roof, but no walls. They put us in a cell together. Until this point, our family was kept together, but here they came and took our daughter and me out of the cell and separated my fiancé from us. We were all very upset. Our baby was crying. I was crying. My fiancé was crying. We asked the guards why they were taking our family apart and they yelled at us. They were very ugly and mean to us. They yelled at him in front of everyone to sit down and stop asking questions. We have not seen him since.

5. They made us all sit in lines and all face the same way. If we tried to shift positions or turn around and look the other way, they would yell at us and tell us not to turn around. There were about 30 children there. They also were made to sit on the ground lined up and all face the same way. They made us do that for like five hours. Our one-year-old tried to stand up and take some steps and the guards told me to make my baby sit down and stay still. They got mad at me because I was having trouble making my baby, who is a toddler, sit still for so long. My back was hurting me from sitting there on the ground with my legs folded and my baby in my lap trying to hold her still.

6. After that, they brought us here to Clint. It was about a 40-minute drive. We stay i room with 45 other children. There are ten bunkbeds. We sleep two children per mattress so four children sleep in each bed. The other children sleep on thin mats the concrete floor. The way the beds are assigned is that the child who leaves give their bed to someone else. A girl left the facility and so she designated that bed fo daughter and me. Until then, my baby and I slept on a cement wall. There was no so my baby and I slept directly on the cement. We had two blankets (one each) an I put one underneath us and the other one on top of us.

7. I have been in the U.S. for six days and I have never been offered a shower or bee able to brush my teeth. There is no soap here and our clothes are dirty. They have never been washed. My daughter is sick and so am I.

8. In the morning, they give us Jello, oatmeal, and silver pouches of fruit punch. At lunch, they give us instant soup, another pouch of fruit punch, and a cookie. At dinner, they give us a bean burrito, Jello, and a silver pouch of fruit punch. There nothing else in the burrito. No rice or cheese. They give my daughter formula, but otherwise we get no milk. We get no fruits or vegetables.

9. My baby asks for her dad all of the time. She frequently looks for him and wonde where her dad is. We both miss him very much and don't understand why they br up our family.

I, J   O   A   ·M   , swear under penalty of perjury that the above declaratio true and complete to the best of my abilities. This declaration was provided in Spanish, a language in which I am fluent, and was read back to me in Spanish.

_____   June 18, 2019

Figure 6.1 – Immigrant affidavit document. AL(Case 2:85-cv-04544-DMG-AGR Document 569-2 Filed 06/26/19)

Beyond Dreams and Nightmares

We began this essay with a series of images and stories initially framed through the words of Hannah Arendt: "[T]he exemplary moment of sovereignty is the act of deportation" (Arendt, quoted in Spivak and Butler 102). In doing so, we hoped to demonstrate how the United States is enacting a crisis of its sovereignty. And as intimated in the essay, we see the roots of this crisis in the results of a neoliberal economics that has created a global political and economic crisis. Which is to say that as a push for the open borders of global trade have been implemented, the resulting poverty (and consequent political oppression to maintain order/privilege) has produced as an equally global refugee/immigration crisis. In the context of the United States, the refugee/asylum seeking populations, in our opinion, then, are simply asking the perpetuator of their strife to recognize their responsibility.

What is occurring, however, is exactly the opposite. Clinging onto historic connections between the state and nation-state, we see a form of governance (legislative and juridical) which doubles down on a White-supremacist power structure, a structure that works to enact political borders which deny culpability and "blame the victim" for their status. The rare "good immigrant" might be allowed to enter, but only as an alibi for the exclusion of the unfit "alien" invading the nation—an "alien" for whom there is not political vehicle to claim restitution for harm or political refuge. Here we are reminded of Foucault's argument that the ultimate act of sovereignty was to punish the very body of its subject through torture or imprisonment. Here we note again the detention centers where daily adult and children refugee/asylum seekers have their dignity and humanity denied in the name of a "national identity" in which they will not be allowed to participate.

For if the pressures of global capitalism have struck a mortal blow to the nation-state and we are now witnessing its demise, these images and story of refugees—both the dreams (Liliana) and the nightmares (caged-children) are pushing us to ask some hard questions about our country, our waning nation-state, our government, and our definition of citizenship and to come up with some solutions on how to bring our rhetoric of "equality for all" in line with this new global reality. Which is to say, this political destabilization requires us to consider alternative concepts of political/human rights which move beyond the limitations of nation-state structures—structures which as noted repeatedly above do not act in the interest of the dispossessed. We need an alternative model to the reactionary politics of the Trump Administration (as well as nascent and overt nationalist leaders in Europe and the MENA region).

In their long interview, published as a book *Who Sings the Nation-State*, critical theorists Gayatri Spivak and Judith Butler investigate many of the themes of this article: the limits of the concept of the nation-state, its diminishment under global capitalism, the rise of nationalism, the legal dispossession of U.S. immigrants to political agency, and the examination of some nascent geopolitical formations that might take the place of the ailing concept of nation-state.

Spivak, in particular, suggests the concept of "critical regionalism" as a way to "go over and under nationalism, but keeps [sic] the abstract structures of something like a state. This allows for constitutional redress against the mere vigilance and data-basing of human rights, or public interest litigation in the interest of a public that cannot act for itself" (Spivak and Butler 94). That is, the state is something we need in order to address issues of "redistribution, welfare, and constitutionality" (Spivak and Butler 90). Yet unlike the nation-state, premised on homogenous concepts of the citizen, this type of critical regionalism-informed state formation would include heterogeneous publics and cultures, would include the sovereignty rights and democratic principles of self-determination and self-regulation to a variety of populations, and adhere to a "post-national understanding of what human rights might be" (Spivak and Butler 106).

Of course, in the current moment of crisis, it is difficult to imagine what such a formation might entail. Yet in the struggle of Indigenous populations against the Dakota pipeline in the United States; Indonesian farmers against the global corporations who attempt to take their farmland; and Columbian women creating new forms of community in response to gang-led violence, we recognize the seeds of alternative concepts of political rights being enmeshed within restrictive nation-state concepts. These struggles of Indigenous populations are even more complicated when they traverse national borders, as is the case for the current refugees, Indigenous people of the Americas, who are now held captive in Detention Centers on the very land that only 200 years ago was part of a different nation; 500 years ago was populated by the Caddo and Apache nations. Through such examples, invoking these different historical geographically-located legacies, we can begin to see how expanded publics within a homogenous "nation" might gain political recognition for populations too often excluded from power within a geography whose history transcends that nation-state's particular history and borders. Decolonial struggles, perhaps, begin to offer us a multi-versality from which to articulate space of political agency and human rights for those too often defined as stateless, those seeking a right to dignity that should not be reliant on national boundaries.

Still, we recognize that the very idea of a new form of governance not predicated on the nation-state/nationalism may seem to be a far off "solution" to the foundational causes of the detainment centers at our border. And in the current moment, much of our energy must be placed in addressing the immediate rights of children in detention centers, adults being deported back to dangerous contexts, individuals suffering deprivation and death in their struggle to gain political agency. Yet as we make these arguments, we would argue, we must build the framework from which a future can be built. We must endlessly strive to articulate a future for which there is seemingly no model, but which in its utopian promises mobilizes individuals and collectives to build a governance which fulfils not only current needs but our future hopes. As Judith Butler tells us: "The declaring does not make it so, but it is part of the discursive process of beginning

something new; it is an inducement, an incantation, a solicitation" (Spivak and Butler 95). We must work in the present for increased rights, then, for those most oppressed, but also work to solicit and enact a future where such rights are always already accorded to every individual.

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Chapter 7. Alliances, Assemblages, and Affects: Three Moments of Building Collective Working-Class Literacies

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Abstract: This article explores how assemblage and affect theories can enable research into the formation of a collective working-class identity, inclusive of written, print, publication, and organizational literacies through the origins of the Federation of Worker Writer and Community Publishers, an organization that expanded its collectivity as new heritages, ethnicities, and immigrant identities altered the organization's membership and "class" identity.

> Insofar as millions of families live under economic conditions of existence that separate their mode of life, their interests and their cultural formation from those of other classes and bring them into conflict with those classes, they form a class. In so far as these small peasant proprietors are merely connected on a local basis, and the identity of their interests fails to produce a feeling of community, national links, or a political organization, they do not form a class.
>
> – *Karl Marx, "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte"*

The connection between a literacy act and a political act, the intersection of word and action, within the context of social democratic movements has been a principal site of investigation within modern rhetorical/composition studies (Flower; Kuebrich).[1] Recently, however, the terrain on which that research oc-

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curs has undergone a significant change. Scholars have begun to understand the word through theories of affect—the feelings, intensities, and resonances that course through language, exceeding a particular word's overt meaning and creating a collective sensibility (Rice). And action has been reframed as being less a moment of determined causality and more a moment of assemblage where the interaction of human/nonhuman actants spins within ever altering networks of potentiality. When placed in dialogue with each other, then, seemingly settled connections between word and action have become destabilized. And, as such, it has also become uncertain what it means to study, rhetorically engage, and act effectively in social movements for collective justice.

We want to argue that the theories broadly nestled under the terms affect and assemblage can allow us to understand literacy as a materially produced site of networked practices; as such, they can help us understand the production of collective identities and actions. To support this claim, we intend to explore the opening moments in the creation of the Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishers (FWWCP), an international network of locally situated working-class literacy/publication groups, which existed from the late twentieth to the early twenty-first century. The FWWCP formed in the United Kingdom in 1976 from eight writing groups and literacy classes, many of which were based in adult education. It grew, with member groups changing as some joined and others left, into a network with approximately one hundred self-sponsored working-class writing groups, circulating thousands of publications and holding annual writing festivals and other events for almost thirty years.

Through a series of interviews with founding members of the FWWCP, we hope to trace how the affective and material assemblages articulated at the outset of its formation enabled the production of a collective identity that could sustain a working-class literacy that placed emphasis on workers producing writing, critically discussing their written expression of experience and its significance, and then circulating it through locally available print and performance venues to, ideally, multiple audiences.

In other words, critical theories of affect and assemblage might help us not only reflect on what the FWWCP sought to achieve, but also present its history in such a way that acknowledges the complexities of building and sustaining collective identities within their contemporary moments. Ultimately, then, we want to suggest that new theoretical connections between word and action allow us to use the FWWCP as a self-defined site of working-class literacy, to recast working-class literacy within frameworks that not only demonstrate the production of collective practices but also highlight the equally important understanding of a collective identity open to revision and expansion—a working-class identity without guarantees.[2] And out of such understandings,

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2. Of course, the FWWCP was only a section of working-class literacy, as there were many other local organizations and networks, but, on the whole, many had not come

we hope, a new materialist working-class politics for the present moment might emerge.

We also hope to move discussions of working-class literacy and politics toward a more central role within writing studies, which have seemed only marginally represented to date (see DeGenaro; Russo and Linkon). Here we align with Mike Rose's *The Mind at Work*, which argues for the need to reconsider our definitions of "intelligence and methods of assessing it" because they are "woefully inadequate" (xviii), when taking into account the intellectual skills and social action of working-class laborers too often mis- (or under-) represented. Indeed, our essay can be seen as a direct response to this very concern through its direct articulation of working-class literacies and skills as collective practices. Finally, we see our work as part of an interdisciplinary rekindling of working-class studies with the emergence of the new *Journal for Working-Class Studies* and a leading article by scholars Sherry Lee Linkon and John Russo that argues we must reach across disciplines, sites, and populations: "we must recognize that we cannot focus too narrowly on 'our' work. We cannot work only within academic settings. We need to continue to connect our research and teaching with emerging forms of activism and struggle among working people" (10). Ultimately, then, as a collective, we assemble as writers across disciplines, organizations, and countries to understand how new theoretical models might allow us to enact this important call to action.

Of Alliances, Assemblages, and Affects

We begin within new social movement (NSM) theory with its shift away from the study of political struggles over social and economic citizenship rights and toward "the analysis of symbolic challenges, collective identity and cultural politics" (Martin 74).[3] NSM theory works from the idea that movements are con-

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across the FWWCP or chose not to affiliate for various reasons involving the organization's political nature.

3. We recognize the seeming contradiction of producing an article on working-class collective literacy practices in the discrete and specialized language of academic theory—even when attempting to make such language as accessible as possible. It is important, however, to see this article as part of an assemblage of the FED (an organization based on FWWCP principles and values and comprising many of its original members; FED is not an acronym, but the nickname given to the FWWCP by its members, and it was applied to the new network of writers in 2008 after the original FWWCP lost funding and membership), Syracuse University, Sheffield Hallam University, London Metropolitan University, and Texas A&M–Commerce designed to support the historical and current writing/publication of worker writers. This assemblage has produced the re-publication of the *Republic of Letters*, an FWWCP manifesto discussed in this article; *Pro(se)letariets*, a community publication featuring US/UK working-class writers and students on working-class identity and formal education; *Preserving Hidden Histories*, a community publication

cerned with "post-materialist values" and exist in complex society suffused by "surplus opportunities, resources and choices" (Martin 81). For this reason, Alberto Melucci argues collective action has shifted to cultural grounds, challenging dominant codes, language and symbolic systems ("Symbolic"). NSMs are seen as part of a cultural politics developing in a postclass society, concerned with "the production and re-appropriation of meaning" (Melucci, "Strange" 221) and with practicing alternative lifestyles (Melucci, Nomads).[4]

From this context, NSM theorists highlight the significance of everyday social interaction and networks of relations to social movements (Melucci, Nomads). Melucci argues that a movement is, first, "a field of social relationships where, through negotiation among various groups, a collective identity is structured" and, second, "a terrain in which identity is recognized and unified." Importantly, networks within a movement provide some kind of continuity and stability for "the identities of individuals and groups in a social system where this identity is constantly fragmented or de-structured" ("Strange" 223–24).

The work of NSM theorists, then, demonstrates that a sociocultural movement should not be seen as a singular entity. Indeed, its plurality might be better captured, following Hetherington, by the term assemblage. Assemblage can be understood as "a collection of heterogeneous elements," brought together in particular relations (Macgregor Wise 78). Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari argue:

> We will call an assemblage every constellation of singularities and traits deducted from the flow—selected, organised, stratified—in such a way as to converge (consistency) artificially and naturally; an assemblage in this sense is a veritable invention. (406)

In the work of Deleuze and Guattari, assemblage refers not only to the elements—which could be people, technologies, things, social institutions, concepts, ideas, words, and so on—but also to their qualities, affects, and effects at

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premised on the creation of the FWWCP archive and the collaboration between college students in America with FED members through a study-abroad writing course held in London; *Crossroads*, a similar anthology focused on the complexity of class identity; and the FWWCP archive (http://fwwcp.gn.apc.org), which features 2,500 unique publications by group members. This nexus of publications, in academic and non-academic discourses, is part of a larger collective strategy by all involved to both draw material support to the FED (through grants/in-kind support) as well as an international network of readers/scholars to the FWWCP materials. In its own way, then, we understand this article's use of academic theory as an attempt to establish a connective circuit with our field, drawing its members into the assemblage, supporting the continued work of worker writers and community publishers in the UK and US.

4.   However, critics of NSM theory argue that concern with material issues (such as material redistribution and citizenship rights) persists in contemporary "new" movements (Diani 388). And, it is argued, old social movements were also multidimensional and concerned with culture and identity (Martin 81–82).

a particular moment. Importantly, an assemblage is constituted by lines, flows, and speeds as well as objects (4). So, our attention is directed to not only what an assemblage is but also what it does (Macgregor Wise 78) and so to movement and change. Assemblage, then, refers to the process of arranging, organizing, and fitting together parts. However, this is not the assembling of predetermined parts into an already conceived structure, nor is it a random collection of things, rather there is a sense that "an assemblage is a whole of some sort that expresses some identity and claims a territory" (Macgregor Wise 77).

Invoking recent assemblage theory, we would argue that the study of working-class social movements needs to examine not only meanings, ideas, and actions, but also the material machinery through which they are circulated: that is, to move beyond individual or "human"-based actants to include nonhuman entities as well. As Kathy E. Ferguson has argued in "Anarchist Printers and Presses: Material Circuits of Politics," in order to understand the elements that went into production of a social movement, human actors must be placed in relationship to machines/ ecologies, which together shaped the possibilities of action available. In Ferguson's case, she traces how the relationships among newsletters, printers, and printing presses represented an assemblage that ensured the circulation and continuance of anarchist culture. Indeed, Ferguson traces how particular presses and fonts were circulated in a fashion that assured continued publishing in the face of extreme political oppression:

> All printers, I imagine, participated in brain-body-machine assemblages, but those assemblages would probably have been more intense and extensive in anarchist communities, where the press, the printers, and the publications were vital to the politics that held them together. Presses were the connectors in anarchist assemblages; they were participants in the "powers of self-organization and creative transformation" that allowed anarchism to be. (404)

The study of working-class literacies within assemblage theory, then, would involve not just the "content" of a publication, but the tools that were used in its production, the skills such production required, and how those skills and tools circulated among different members of the movement, replicating actions as a means to build and sustain a community. And as Ferguson notes, in the process of this circulation and community maintenance, the very tools themselves begin to take on an affect of community that circulates with them.

For these reasons, the study of collective working-class literacy practices should also take account of affect in encounters, relations, and processes of identity formation. Following Deleuze and Guattari, we understand affect to refer to the force or intensity of an encounter—present in a coming together of different entities to form assemblages—and transition. The idea that "affects are becomings" (256) focuses attention on possibility and change as people,

technologies, and ideas meet one another and things happen. Affect as intensity refers to sensible experience beyond "organizing systems of representation" (Colebrook 22) that is unrecognized and unqualified (Massumi). As such, affect theory draws attention to inarticulate sensible experience, a developing atmosphere, temporary affective alignments, possibility, process, transformation, and movement to act in various ways. It presumes relationality rather than causality and, as such, offers a way of thinking "how" rather than "why" something happened. Indeed, affect helps us think more deeply about the feelings—not yet articulated—that infuse, propel, and variously connect word and action in collective writing practices.

Within this logic, the FWWCP could be understood as some form of new social movement since its primary activity consisted of the production of literacy artifacts (groups, books, festivals) and not legislative or economic or political change. While FWWCP members did not see themselves in a NSM postclass society, their literacy production gains importance when viewed through the lenses of affect and assemblage theory. This NSM affect/ assemblage paradigm clearly draws attention to the content of publications and the processes of crafting a new cultural space through which to articulate a complex and multifaceted working-class identity. It also highlights, however, through the entanglement of action, interaction, technologies, narrations, and memory, the production of an assemblage through which the FWWCP bodies and publications circulated—a countercultural space that emerged, which was about not only creative freedom but also the formation of alternative identities.

Rather than diminish the commitment to working-class literacy as a basis for political action, new social movement theory, affect theory, and assemblage theory allow us to expand our understanding of literacy not just as content or validation of linguistic patterns and literacy practices, but also as an understanding of how working-class bodies, in relationship with material objects, produce assemblages of possibility and affective intensity through which individuals can create new forms of collective meaning and action. And it is this new form of "working-class" assemblage that, we argue, provides a tentative path forward in the current moment.

Assembling Methods and Foundations

In order to investigate the generation of the affective assemblages in which the FWWCP gained meaning, we conducted focus group interviews. As a research method, focus group interviews are well suited to exploring ideas on a particular topic and the complexities of opinions and attitudes. They tend not to record the unfolding narrative of an individual's experience, but they do foreground interaction between group members as they respond to, agree with, or challenge each other on different topics: co-constructing meaning and shared understandings. That is, focus groups enable researchers to study how individuals collectively

make sense of phenomena and why they feel the way they do. Some researchers argue that attitudes, feelings, and beliefs are more likely to be revealed via the social gathering and interaction entailed in a focus group as it provides a more naturalistic (albeit constrained) setting than other methods (Bryman). We decided to use focus groups to gain insight into the formation of the affective energy and assemblages, which enabled the production of the FWWCP.

We conducted two focus group interviews, each involving four authors formerly active in the FWWCP or in the FED (the new network that developed after the demise of the FWWCP) in June 2015. These interviews were the first phase in developing a broader project to collect and preserve the history of the FWWCP, which involves digitizing and archiving FWWCP publications and collecting oral histories of its participants. The purpose of the interviews was to ask participants what they thought about creating a history of the FWWCP and its relevance for contemporary audiences and literary activism.

We invited fifteen former authors mostly from the London area to meet us at London Metropolitan University. Eight were able to attend on one of two nominated days, and so we formed two focus groups, one on each day. The authors of this article were present at each interview in the role of moderators, although one moderator (Nick) was also a former FWWCP member. Each interview lasted about one and a half hours and was audio-recorded and later transcribed. We began the interviews with self-introductions. The authors of this article explained the purpose of the focus group interview and the broader project (digitizing FWWCP publications, interviewing writers, producing a history of the FWWCP, producing a pop-up exhibition based on this history, promoting these resources to new audiences). All interviewees consented to the use of interview material in writing about the project, which was approved by the London Metropolitan University Research Ethics Review Panel.

In preparation for the interviews, we identified a few key topics for discussion: we planned to ask participants what they thought about creating a history of the FWWCP, key moments in the FWWCP history, who should be interviewed, and who might be interested in a history of the FWWCP. In the actual moment, we did not get to ask many questions. The initial question about creating a history of the FWWCP was met with enthusiasm, and discussion flowed freely from that point: participants began to tell some of that history, including the negotiation of geographically, ethnically, and gender-based differences, describing how groups variously organized shared practices of reading, writing, and publishing, spaces and places of activism, and the contemporary political context. Focus group discussion included lively accounts of the origins of FWWCP activism, networks, and events. We tended to let discussion run its course, bringing it back to our brief agenda only toward the end.

Next, we discuss the texture and topics of focus group conversations. When citing from the FWWCP focus group interviews, we have included the use of T for the written transcript followed by a page number. For example T2, 3

indicates Transcript 2, page 3. These can be found in the Works Cited as "FW-WCP Focus Group Interviews."

Here it should be noted that prior to the formation of the FWWCP in the 1970s, there was already a long history of working-class literacy movements (Thompson), as well as a more recent emergence of working-class adult literacy programs. In this sense, historically and in the current moment, there were numerous "moments" that might have been selected as the origins of the FWWCP. As such, it is not surprising that within our two focus groups of FW-WCP members, the story of the FWWCP origins was articulated with different emphases. Within the FWWCP focus groups at least two origin stories were constructed—the "Chris Searle" protest and the "adult literacy workers" collaboration. Such differing emphases (protest and collaboration) should not be seen as contradictory but instead indicative of the complexity of the movement's formation and the richness of social and affective ties it embodied. We believe the stories detailed in the focus groups (discussed below) demonstrate a crucial ingredient in the ability of the FWWCP to engage in an ongoing production of a collective identity and framework for collective action through social relations and interaction, that is, assemblages.

It was the first focus group that spontaneously introduced the topic of the FWWCP's beginnings. Sally Flood, a member of Basement Writers, one of the founding FWWCP member groups in 1976, started by articulating the ethos of the FWWCP — it was "for everyone . . . it was the interest in writing and everybody helped each other"—and stating that a teacher named Chris Searle "actually started the movement." She went on to explain that Searle worked at a school in East London in the 1970s, where truancy was frequent, and that he tried to engage children in literacy by asking them to write about "their experiences and their lives." Despite opposition by school governors— "they didn't think the children were worthy of this kind of thing"—Searle had the children's work published. He then lost his job, which set in motion a series of events.

> And he got sacked . . . but what happen is . . . without him knowing, the children all came out in strike . . . every one of them . . . the first I know about it was only [East End Night] there was a picture of them on strike with their flag all marching to Trafalgar Square to get him back and eventually he did come back and then he started the [Basement Writers] at the Town Hall in Cable Street. All these children who had been truants in school joined him. . . it first comes back to Chris because he started the first group. (T1, 6–7).

Others concurred with Sally's account. Indeed, participants in the second focus group also spoke of "the famous story of the formation of the Basement Writers" through Chris Searle, who was sacked from his teaching post "for publishing his kids' work without permission of the school's governors" (T2, 6).

That the Chris Searle story endured as a foundational story of the FWW-CP, even though he himself was never a member, speaks to how it activated FWWCP writing groups as part of a countercultural movement articulating protest, involving the communication of discontent concerning education. That is, the focus groups demonstrated how the protest entailed the performance of defiance in the face of an educational authority—through the publication of students' writing and a strike—and demarcated "us" from "them," creating a sense of collective identity and a basis for collective action (Eyerman). The embodied actions of participants enacting spirited rebellion and their representation in the mass media at the time, and their retelling since, helped create a sense of togetherness and articulated what it felt like to live the realities of social inequality, including limited access to cultural capital. Specifically, the Chris Searle story tells of a power struggle around literacy. And, as such, it has been consolidated as a foundational FWWCP myth through its reiteration in the countercultural space affirming working-class literacy and activism.

The second focus group, however, narrated an alternative story, which highlighted different events and connections. These participants told the story of an ongoing connection between adult literacy workers Sue Shrapnel, based at Centerprise, a community bookshop, café, and cultural and educational facility in Hackney, and David Evans, based in Liverpool, who established Scotland Road Writers, a community writing group, in the late 1970s. Both were running writing groups and decided that members of Scotland Road Writers in Liverpool would come to London to meet writers at Centerprise to talk about what they had in common and read their work. This meeting was followed by a day trip in a minivan to Liverpool, noted by Roger Mills: "and that was a big thing for the East-end lot because a lot of them had never even been out of East London so it was quite interesting to see Liverpool . . . you know . . . to meet these [Scousers, or Liverpool inhabitants] who were . . . you know . . . doing the same thing" (T2, 1). Other participants agreed that the Federation had started with the activities of Sue and David and that, subsequently, a meeting took place in the basement at Centerprise in 1976, with the eight groups that established the FWWCP. Here the narrative that emerges is of an unrecognized and unarticulated number of working-class writing groups "doing the same thing," an insight only made possible through the materiality of travel and group meetings, but which again spoke to a countercultural space of activity.

And while both stories seem to find a common moment of articulation in alliance around worker writing groups recognizing a commonality of feeling as well as the existence of others "just like them," it is the broad range of possible further articulations that enabled the FWWCP's continued existence. For instance, the Chris Searle story evokes an assemblage comprising bodies (students, teacher, governors, media reporters); actions (writing, protesting); things (books, flags, images, media reports); places (classrooms, streets, offices); technologies (for publishing, reporting); ideas (about literature, working-class

culture, education); identities (working class, East London, professional); and emotions (grievance, resistance, solidarity, pride, loyalty, discontent, outrage, defiance). This assemblage captures not only the complexity of performing opposition and counter-cultural activity but also the emergent circuits through which such activity could expand.

The London-Liverpool story suggests an assemblage and circuitry that comprises encounters across geographical distance; vehicles for travel (a mini-van); places and spaces (London, Liverpool, Centreprise); bodies (adult literacy workers, writing group members); performances (reading work); and ideas (commitments to adult literacy, working-class writing, sharing). This assemblage helps to capture a sense of the spontaneity and newness of encounters in moving beyond the familiar.

Affect helps us consider the enthusiasm and passion that moves bodies but is otherwise unarticulated as well as the social and affective dimensions of physical copresence and sharing writing. This assemblage helps us to understand connections across space, movement, and the interweaving of ideas and action. Thinking in this way (about assemblages) helps us also imagine the energies and intensities that made things happen: bringing people onto the streets; waving placards; making demands; propelling people to make long motorway journeys to read their work and listen to others. Affect helps us consider the enthusiasm and passion that moves bodies but is otherwise unarticulated.

Taken together, what begins to become evident is the embodied and material network of the emergent FWWCP through which the affective energy of working-class identity in relation to literacy activism was being produced. That is, assemblage is a useful concept here because it helps us understand how various configurations of heterogeneous elements were able to express some kind of collective identity that could claim a newly emergent cultural political territory of working-class identity at a political time, from 1979, when that very term was soon to be under attack by Thatcherism (see Jones). Moreover, a new form of political space was being created that was not based upon previous manifestations of working-class politics, such as the Labour Party, but upon the current experience of a newly diverse working-class population (see discussion of the Annual General Meeting below). The various assemblages that constituted the FWWCP, then, at particular moments were suffused with and propelled by affect—a range of different feelings, rhythms, and energies—that ebbed and flowed and were circulated through assemblages consisting of publications, events, travels, and meetings, a materiality that would result in a space where new types of "political work" could occur.

Indeed, interview participants, in narrating the ideas, ties, and affects of the FWWCP/FED origins, drew attention to its activity-based understanding of the FWWCP's "politics." That is, the members of the focus groups stressed that what was "political" was not always the content of the work (for example, Sally Flood

writing on kittens), but the activities of producing and sharing writing.[5] One member, Roger Mills, remembered:

> you know they were sharing their work about things they want-
> ed to get across. . . so in my mind it was small "p" political . . . but
> not necessarily a party . . . certainty not [party Political] and also
> not even consciously political . . . I think the politics was that it
> was actually happening. (T2, 4)

Here, focus group participants appear to suggest that in order to understand sociocultural activity, we need to take account of a broader cultural political context with its possibility of multiple antecedents. In doing so, they also offer a more nuanced snapshot of "the political" as assemblage, an open articulation of possibility for alliance: comprising multiple reflections of lived experience by differently positioned actors and various connections with other people, institutions, and processes. And as invoked by the interviewees, it was the constant rearticulation that occurred in embodied common space, such as the Annual General Meetings, that allowed this emergent and newly defined working-class "political" activity to develop within the context of multiculturalism and identity politics.

Assembling, Disassembling, and Reassembling

In discussing the original meeting that initiated the FWWCP, Sally Flood said: "eight groups all met up at Centerprise and that first night was wonderful" (T1, 5). Yet the same cars that allowed Liverpool to talk to London also allowed other parts of the UK to come together through the FWWCP. And the same feeling of existing in a countercultural and unrecognized "working-class" space could also apply to issues of gender, race, and immigrant status. In this sense, the original assemblage, which formed the FWWCP around a countercultural practice of working-class literacies, could not help as it expanded as an organization but encounter newly forming and alternative collectivities of "working-class" communities.

In this regard, the FWWCP Annual General Meeting became a key part of constituting the FWWCP as a heterogeneous assemblage that continued to claim a territory and collective identity. Over the course of its history, the FWWCP held over thirty such meetings in all, sited at university campuses with a weekend of workshops and performances. This annual event, initially referred to as the "AGM" and later as the "Festival of Writing," was significant in that all FWWCP member groups in the United Kingdom (and groups from abroad) were

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5. Some individuals or groups, however, might have had overtly political aims, but this varied from group to group or even between members.

supposed to attend to reaffirm their membership. But as membership changed, so did the collective meaning of membership in the FWWCP.

In understanding the AGM, then, we were interested in how the focus group participants narrated the social encounter and atmosphere created by such events among a changing membership. Tom Woodin said that the AGM "stimulates so much enthusiasm. That coming together of different people, . . . it was a crucial kind of engine for the whole thing" (T1, 7–8). Roger Mills further explained this environment, saying, "It was a very social occasion. It was a way for Federation people from all over Britain to come together . . . at least on that once a year . . . for the weekend . . . it was an entire weekend . . . to meet each other socially . . . as well listen to each other's work" (T2, 6).

At their peak, the AGMs were attended by around two hundred people and comprised readings, workshops, and meals together (T2, 6). Participants told how, in getting together, writers fiercely debated differences based on gender, ethnicity, and locality—how even the term worker writer was put under pressure by the growing presence of the "middle-class" in groups and at the AGM. In doing so they highlighted the capacity of the FWWCP to enable and endure often violent exchanges that helped to distinguish it from other organizations. Tom Woodin stated:

> There were these very . . . strong debates . . . that relate to the nature of class and wider identities and the Fed . . . as an organization, it was very open . . . if you remember the Labour Party they wouldn't tolerate these kinds of debate. . . whereas in the Fed it was kind of the Wild West . . . they were just being expressed in an open and visceral way . . . Doors were slamming about women only writing groups . . . and black only writing groups and what this meant. I remember people like [Lemh Sissay] refuse to get on stage because there's too many white people on the stage and so he wouldn't . . . it was quite tense at times. . . but at the same time . . . you know . . . across those debates, the thing that stands out in a way is that there were a lot of alliances across all these debates and differences so people could be friends even though they have so violently different opinions on these kinds of matters. (T1, 5)

Here, participants describe performances, forms of acting in public, through which tensions were negotiated and mutual understanding developed. In narrating the passion with which differences were manifest, felt, and accommodated, participants helped to produce the movement's distinctive identity as embodying and celebrating diversity. These accounts narrate the production of a heterogeneous and reflexive collective identity. Nick Pollard stated:

> We were kind of negotiating our way through what was sexist, what was not sexist . . . what was racist . . . what was not racist,

> what was classist . . . and so forth . . . and my guess was we were
> sort of negotiating a lot of stuff together (T1, 16). And, the Fed
> was always about . . . very much about . . . the way that we . . . al-
> low for a lot of diversity in the way that allowed people to take
> control of their identity . . . and that sort of integrity aspect is
> really, really important. (T1, 24)

Participants also spoke of how the FWWCP, despite internal tensions and differences, felt the need (and were able) to come together to present a sense of unity to "outside" others: specifically, educational authorities and the orthodox left. Ken Worpole said, "and I think in a way we could have . . . you know . . . been like family—you keep your private discussions in private, but you have a different relationship with what was going on outside" (T2, 6).

Interview participants described the AGM as a fluid space of encounter and negotiation—bringing together different bodies, alignments, perspectives, feelings, and intensities—which generated new meanings and alliances. Such assemblages were, it was claimed, the "engine" of the FWWCP. The FWWCP was concerned with self-representation and enabling people to "take control of their own identity" and with an emphasis on integrity, diversity, and mutuality within that process (T1, 24). It "was never a message" or an attempt to capture "the true representation of working-class lives" (T2, 3); rather it was a process involving the negotiation of the complex politics of representation.

Each AGM, as assemblage, included social interaction and multiple performances (reading, writing aloud, and debating). They also provided a space to listen and learn from each other through writing workshops, run by FWWCP members themselves. Moreover, the AGM also became a space to highlight and circulate the social and technological processes of publication (such as cut-and-paste methods; photocopying), through Book Stalls, which comprised the selling of the year's publications. In this way, the Book Stalls represented one piece of the assemblage between members and the practices that enabled the publication as products, representative of constant relationships between both people and technologies, within this network.

From the ways in which FWWCP members narrated its ties (in the interviews), it appears that the AGM assemblage embodied a pronounced relationality and mutuality and that its performances were suffused with exuberance and enthusiasm. Stories of the AGMs also signal the more elusive quality of listening: the capacity of members to attend to, connect affectively with, and be moved by the writing of others. And through these embodied and material contexts, the FWWCP was able to formulate a concept of "worker writer and publisher" situated in opposition to traditional working-class collectives, such as the Labor Party, and traditional literacy institutions, such as grade schools. Consequently, the AGM as an assemblage and its affects managed to articulate a complex, heterogeneous, and malleable collective identity and capture cultural political space at particular historical moments.

The Machinery of Expanding (and Limiting) Assemblages

In understanding the assemblages and affective culture, which initiated the FW-WCP, the significance of actual book production cannot be underestimated. Not only did the material production of books create affective relationships between person and machine, but the circulatory abilities of "books" allowed additional linkages to be made by FWWCP groups to the larger culture, as well as demonstrating the borderlands of their emerging community—the place in which additional assemblages could not be made.

It is significant, then, that focus group participants actively described the processes for preparing writing for publication as an important communal task. They noted, for instance, differing practices within groups; few groups edited, except for spelling and grammar; some had word limits; some allowed a writer to publish one book or one piece in an anthology created by the group. They also described the material processes whereby members of writing groups would get together to cut, lay out, and paste down text ready for printing. Here Tom Woodin and Sally Flood noted the affective energy created:

> It was a social process wasn't it? . . . because everyone originally
> had to cut and paste . . . with scissors and cut and stick it down
> on a bit of paper and that would take a long time. (Tom Woodin,
> T1, 4). We never bother to send it out to somebody to actually to
> do it . . . because we would do it ourselves . . . we didn't have the
> money . . . to fund all that. . . . anyway it took much longer to do
> it ourselves. (Sally Flood, T1, 4)

The availability of specific technologies—the know-how and machines—to print came to embody a nascent equality: "so the technology made it equal" (T2, 5). And, in effect, this created opportunities for groups to come together throughout the process to collaborate, even if it took a long time to complete, and develop a community.

Indeed, one of the results of the affective energy within FWWCP (and local groups) was to enable it to expand outward, disrupting and/or expanding the set or traditional conceptions of working-class identity in both countercultural and mainstream environments. That is, focus group participants talked about how the FW-WCP transgressed boundaries to claim new territory for collective acting. Similar to the ethos of the AGM, publishing enabled a new type of working-class collective identity to emerge. Ken Worpole described the expansive nature of the FWWCP:

> It was in the way pre-figurative of the fact that life is complicat-
> ed and identity . . . is complicated and it was set up in a period in
> which people wanted hard and fast barriers . . . they knew what
> literature was—they knew what history was . . . they knew what
> oral history was they knew what left wing politics was . . . and

> they knew what working-class culture was and the Federation kind of leaked into every one of those things. (T2, 7)

Stephen Yeo also spoke of the unstoppable momentum of the FWWCP, writing groups, and writing with their boundless energies, creativity, enthusiasm, passion, and hunger.

> Well it wasn't very difficult to demonstrate the need for Federation type work . . . at least in writing . . . because the demand was . . . self-evident . . . you actually couldn't stop it. . . . This is not romanticism . . . you had much more to do with than you could possibly cope with because one book led to another . . . [unclear/gap] . . . and then there was another one . . . and then there was another one . . . and so this is organic. (T2, 8)

Nor were attempts by mainstream institutions able to dampen the enthusiasm being produced. Roger Mills mentioned how an early application to the Arts Council for funding received a dismissive response suggesting that the writings were "the scribblings" of taxi drivers and schoolboys (T2, 8). However, Mills also noted the impact or affect that these very writings had on him personally:

> But it was the exact two books . . . the scribblings of the school boy [it was written by Vivian Usherwood] . . . and the taxi driver from Hackney [Ron Barnes] which were the two books that made a huge impact to me because I discovered them on the shelves at Centerprise[6] . . . and I thought "wow . . . you know . . . black school boys writing poetry . . . middle age taxi drivers writing about their lives" . . . you know. . . . We could all join in this . . . you know . . . we could all tell stories . . . and create things and it was an [eye opener for me] that normal people can be writers it was an enormous impact on me . . . and there were lots of different books. (T2, 8–9)

Indeed, the "dismissal" by the Arts Council led to the collective writing of *The Republic of Letters*, a manifesto on the value of self-published working-class writing as a means to demonstrate both the complexity of working-class culture and the narrow confines into which British mainstream culture and educational institutions forced it to be understood.

Here it is important to note that Centerprise published poetry of Vivian Usherwood, a young Caribbean schoolboy, and attempted to sell it to schools. Focus group member Ken Worpole stated that

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6. See Usherwood's *Poems* and Barnes' *Coronation Cups and Jam Jars* for more information. You can also find more information in FWWCP Digital Collection: http://fwwcp. gn.apc.org.

> there was great need for teaching materials that students in sec-
> ondary school found relevant: It was material for education it
> was part of that sort of cultural evolution going on about . . .
> whose lives are represented in school in the history books in the
> literature. (T2, 5)

Indeed, sales of Usherwood's book were "phenomenal and eventually 10,000 copies were sold" (T2, 5). While it is somewhat unclear how many of the books were used in schools, the fact the book crossed between community and class-room at all speaks to the ability of the FWWCP to introduce elements of its new conception of working-class identity into traditional educational environments.

Indeed, participants described the FWWCP as "pre-figurative" in the way that it introduced new ideas about what counts as culture and who can be a writer, articulating new practices in producing writing, writers, and books. New practices emphasized an affective context, atmosphere of solidarity, inclusivity, and mutual learning. Ken Worpole commented:

> So in a way . . . again . . . it was pre-figurative . . . of a notion that
> . . . you know. . . that not surprisingly can be taught but actually
> support . . . and sympathy and comradeship and mutual learn-
> ing . . . is actually a very healthy atmosphere which can improve
> what you are writing. (T2, 10)

This inclusive atmosphere that sparked a "writing group—self-publishing—cabaret" assemblage also meshed with broader networks, affective contexts, and countercultural activities. That is, the events and products within the FWWCP also connected to and expanded into other networks at the same time: alternative theater and comedy as well as punk and acoustic punk. As Roger Mills put it:

> The Federation was quite a porous type of thing in a way . . . but
> the barriers were . . . you know . . . very soft and so you would
> get cross over . . . you got Alan and the theatre group . . . alter-
> native comedy . . . punk rock . . . music stuff . . . the Federation
> wasn't in isolation . . . you know . . . there were lots other things
> feeding into . . . feeding off of it. (T2, 14–15)

Such sentiments represent the height of FWWCP's expanding territory. However, as it grew, the FWWCP also began to connect to "machines" in a fashion that fractured the community and drew a hard line about who was or wasn't an author. As Tom Woodin notes, the earlier sense of equality through publishing technologies didn't last forever. He describes technology to allow more professional "books" as a potential reason for the decline in publishing by FWWCP members over the years:

> I guess there was the impulse to make it a bit more profession-
> al and it started off another debate. It started off as easy and

accessible and quite cheap to do a pamphlet you can sell it for
10, 20, 30, or 50 pence . . . and then [for] a mixture of reasons
. . . partly professionalized . . . [partly] technology started to
become more available . . . [FWWCP member group] Queen-
Spark . . . started publishing two or three books a year that were
kind of well produced. . . . It might've cost you a 1,000 pounds
to print . . . which also relates to the argument about culture
which still goes on now . . . [If] it looks cheap . . . you know . . .
on the one hand it is accessible, free, and easy and everyone can
participate easily . . . but on the other hand if it looks cheap, then
it means kind of working people . . . [are] kind of second rate
somehow . . . they should have a proper book. (T1, 8)

Here QueenSpark stands in for the move by some groups to publishing
store-quality bound books, with ISBNs and glossy covers—each element of which
demanded further integration into the mainstream publishing industry ma-
chinery. Once a "professional bar" entered the FWWCP network, it led to some
groups moving to an economic model that mandated fewer publications per year
and, often, expensive print runs that left many books unsold, depleting scarce
resources in the group. Such a moment represents how the FWWCP collective as-
semblage could be altered by its articulation into mainstream publishing culture.
In this sense, we see how the FWWCP created a countercultural territory through
the collaborative creation and circulation of its own products, performances, and,
most importantly, the social interactions these processes engendered, but that
larger market economics ensured that success and endless expansion was by no
means guaranteed.

A Working-Class without Guarantees

We began this article with a citation from Marx's *18th Brumaire*, a work where
Marx implies class identity is more a result of consciousness collective formation
than in other of his works, which can be read to imply class formation is the
necessary result of economic forces. Using new social movement theory, coupled
with assemblage and affect theory, we then demonstrated how the FWWCP cre-
ated a countercultural space, premised on a collective "feeling" of working-class
identity, enacted as both a conceptual and pragmatic literacy practice (word and
action).[7] In some sense, we were almost situating the FWWCP as possessing its
own theory of assemblage/affect as they developed their "federation" of work-
er writers and community publishers, endlessly articulating new horizons and
boundaries of their identity.

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7. Interestingly, Word and Action was the name of a FWWCP member group based
around adult literacy in Dorset. Some of their publications are now housed in the FWW-
CP archive at London Metropolitan University.

We hope, however, that we have also reframed what is meant by class formation and, in doing so, have begun a conversation concerning how activism can grow from assemblage and affect. For even in the *Brumaire,* we would argue, there is still a latent belief in economic fundamentalism—a definition of class read off the means of production in a way that produces a singular static identity. What the process of understanding the development of the FWWCP has shown is something slightly different—but a difference that seems important for us to notice. This is the recognition that one's economic identity is differentially spread across a neighborhood, region, and country. It is endlessly wrapped up in micronarratives that are stitched together to maintain an assemblage of global capitalism, but it is a globalism, which is never more than actualized local moments of negotiation. In this sense, one cannot claim a singular "working-class identity" but instead must work to understand as we move throughout our day, endlessly shifting rhetorics and physical landscapes, how we are bodily wrapped within a web of narratives, affective relationships, and assemblages that tilt toward inequality and injustice. And, just as important, we must consider how to reconfigure such assemblages toward a future that is more equal, more just.

For us, then, the FWWCP's creation of a "federation," enacted in local literacy writing groups, national generalized meetings, and dispersed through publication as well as performance, represented how countercultural politics, informed by the endless proliferation of micro-embodiments can be stitched together, collectively, to allow an alternative, diverse and diversifying, understanding of class alliance to be developed. And at this historical moment, the moment of Trump, when media outlets, mainstream parties, and leftist activists are organizing under the need to understand the White working class and their needs, it is important to remember the micro-moments out of which such broad slogans emerge. It is important to recognize the exclusionary and marginalized visions of class they enact.

Instead, like members of the FWWCP, we propose, as writers and as teachers, that we place our labor in the interstices, in those moments of failed intersections between populations whose status on the wrong side of privilege is currently articulated as the fault of, or in opposition to, those suffering the same fate. We might explore the physical acts of meeting, writing, and publishing; of gathering and debating; and of building assemblages where such emergent feelings of commonality are linked together, assemblages that can begin to provide a counterweight to the nationalism, xenophobia, and racism emergent in the United States and Europe.

It is an enterprise stripped of guarantees, humble in its actions, potentially blocked at many moments, but perhaps exactly the work that needs to be done.

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Part 3. Global

"I felt so proud to be part of this small mission."

– Ibrahim Shebani, "Four Days of the Revolution," Revolution by Love

Being responsible requires being globally aware. Our dreams cannot be imagined within the contours of a nation-state, such as the United States, without supporting a reality that excludes and oppresses much of the globe. Or to state the case slightly differently, "Writing Beyond the Curriculum" should not imply that concepts and practices framed within the specificity of a 21st century United States can be applied without negotiation within contexts as diverse as Syria, Lebanon, Bolivia, Myanmar, or Serbia. To some extent, such a statement is self-evident. Yet as I have worked with global democratic advocates over the past decade, I have learned that "self-evident" does not mean "self-policing." Which is to say, that even a conceptual framework that naturally defaults to nation states to describe international work (see previous sentence) handicaps the formation of new political and collective possibilities for those too often on the wrong side of privilege.

The impact, however, is not just in our public work. Our classrooms are also impacted when the rhetoric of "international partnerships" frames student collaboration which crosses existing national borders. In the same way that "community" had to be fractured to allow alternatives to emerge, our international partnerships must facilitate the creation rhetorical spaces which allow alternative identity and collective formations to be created. Such rhetorical spaces are particularly important at a moment when the public dialogue concerning the dynamics between nation-states, colonized populations, diaspora communities, and human rights to a question of "justified violence," state sanctioned or otherwise. In this environment, I would argue, we have a collective responsibility to enable spaces where micro-connectivity among individuals can seed possibilities of peace and safety. To not take on such work, to place it outside of our immediate concerns, seems, to me, the ultimate example of privilege.

The essays in this section trace how I came to this understanding, an understanding that I recognize needs to continue to grow. "The Goals of Grassroots Publishing" traces the move of New City Community Press from a focus on local moments within the United States, detailed in the previous section, to an expanded global viewpoint through involvement with Arab Spring advocates. Through work with these advocates, I came to understand the necessity of a global understanding of our responsibilities as community-engaged scholars and teachers. The following essay, "Then Comes the Fall," traces the tension between the rhetorics surrounding international human rights (as well as classic tropes

of American democracy) and the "realpolitik" actions undertaken by individual nation-states become manifest. "Universal Human Rights," advocates discovered, were no match for nation-state desires. As such, these essays ask our field to reconsider the comfort implied by theories premised on community human rights premised on nation-state protections.

It asks to what extent there is a need to move toward concepts of collective political identity which move beyond such conceptual structures, perhaps endorsing a critical regionalism that allows alternative identities to gain political legibility (an idea that was first suggested in the "Dreams and Nightmares" essay featured above.). "Of Rights Without Guarantees: Friction at the Borders of Nations, Digital Spaces, and Classrooms" provides one model of how such alternative frameworks might be created within a U.S.-based required writing course linked to an English as a Second Language course in Algeria. The student dialogues were initially premised on "nation-state" differences within the concept of "universal human rights." Students soon used the opportunity to create frameworks which exceeded these categories, often moving towards the value of local communal conceptions of equality. In doing so, a concept of rights emerged which both rejected "universal rights," given a historic sense of how they had authorized colonialist actions. (Consider the history of Algeria.) Instead, human rights emerged, not as universals, but as a negotiation among different communities, secured by consent involved, premised on mutual understanding. As Arab Spring advocates discovered, though it is an open political question whether such rights can stand up to the "universal" power of dominant nation states.

At the same time, the essays in this section argue the "old rules still apply." In a collection of essays that focus on disrupting disciplinary borders, this might seem surprising. One of the most important lessons I have learned from working with global democratic advocates, though, is that the practices of academic research carry significant importance in their struggles. The concept of a neutral researcher, using recognized methods, to produce factual data offers a space from which to document the atrocities of authoritarians and to based arguments for justice. For this reason, this section ends with two essays focused on Syrians for Truth and Justice (STJ). The first essay, which carries the name of the organization, focuses on the development of STJ and the importance of documenting the war crimes and brutality of Bashar al-Assad. In doing so, it builds on the argument that as scholars, we have the responsibility to undertake such work. In "I hear its chirping coming from my throat," the brutality of Assad is presented through the story of a young boy held in a detention camp. From a moment of brutality, I try to articulate how our work can contribute to ensuring such moments do not happen again.

And without claiming to have any of the courage of the advocates detailed in these essays, invoking Libyan advocate Ibrahim Shebani, I am proud to have played even a small part in their labors to build a more just and peaceful world.

Featured Essays

"The Goals of Grassroots Publishing in the Aftermath of the Arab Spring,"
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Chapter 8. The Goals of Grassroots Publishing in the Aftermath of the Arab Spring: Updates on a Work in Progress

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> Our mission is to provide opportunities for local communities to represent themselves by telling their stories in their own words. We document stories of local communities because we believe their voices matter in addressing issues of national and global significance. We value these stories as a way for communities to reflect upon and analyze their own experience through literacy and oral performance. We are committed to working with communities, writers, editors and translators to develop strategies that assure these stories will be heard in the larger world.

> *– New City Community Press, circa 2000*

> I was heading downtown and all I could see are these big clouds of smoke coming up from most of the regime's buildings. The people of Benghazi were attacking unarmed. All they had was gas, matches, rage and will.

> *– Ibrahim Shebani, "LIBYA: Four days of the Revolution," circa 2012*

Over a decade ago, Nick Pollard told me of a local poet in London, Vivian Underwood, who as a teenager had written a small book of poetry.[1] Published in 1972, *Poems*, available at the local Centerprise bookshop, sold over 15,000 copies. The point of this story, Pollard told me, is that the total number of sales exceeded those of the then national poet laureate, but did so in a small geographical area, a sub-section of the city of London. This was the power of community publishing. When done well, it could reach deep into a neighborhood, echoing and supporting a collective vision of community, while also articulating common goals and aspirations. It was out of this belief that New City Community Press (NCCP) was launched.

In the more than ten years of its existence, NCCP has published over twenty books, supported local writing groups, sponsored public readings, and helped

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1. This chapter originally appeared as "The Goals of Grassroots Publishing in the Aftermath of the Arab Spring," by S. Parks, 2012, *Reflections: A Journal of Community Engaged Rhetoric and Writing*, vol. 12, no. 1, pp. 134–51. Copyright New City Community Press. Reprinted with permission.

to organize international writing festivals. In total, NCCP has highlighted the personal stories, testimonies, and political insights of hundreds of neighborhood residents, activists, and organizers. It has done so out of the growing belief that the distribution of these stories could affect local debate, shift the terms of power, and open up greater opportunities for democratic dialogue.

Over the past several years, as local, national, and global events have pushed the meaning of democracy towards sometimes surprising ends, I would argue that traditional and new forms of community publishing can play an even more engaged, activist role. For publications that reach deep into a community's identity, that identity is only as powerful as the organizing that enacts and follows through on the vision expressed. Ultimately, democratic dialogue is the only as effective as the activist practices it produces.

For that reason, I have come to believe that long-standing community publication projects, like NCCP, need to directly join their resources to the rhetorical and material work of local and global activists, embedding democratic dialogue within a call for progressive structural change. With this in mind, I want to use the following pages to briefly show NCCP's developing relationship to the question of community organizing, share a forthcoming essay from a forthcoming community publication on the Arab Spring, and conclude with a discussion of what it might entail to work for democracy in the current political moment.

Writing Beyond the Curriculum

New City Community Press was initiated in Philadelphia. It was started during a time when I worked at Temple University and, with Eli Goldblatt, was actively developing a "Writing Beyond the Curriculum" (WBC) model of a university writing program. NCCP was designed to be the outreach element of our emerging community writing/partnership groups. As such, the initial publications were distributed across the city and featured writing by urban youth, undocumented workers, disability activists, and marginalized neighborhood residents. In the case of some publications, such as *Espejos y Ventanas: Oral Histories of Mexican Farmworkers and Their Families*, these "local" voices gained national and international attention, reaching an audience far beyond our initial expectations.

Still, each of these publications was developed and articulated within a "Writing Beyond the Curriculum" model. To that end, their principal goals were to support a series of writing courses linked to community organizations, to improve the literacy skills of those involved, and, ultimately, to demonstrate the insights of local residents. During the period of WBC's growth, then, there were a series of such partnerships that came together, did a piece of literacy work, and then dissipated. As noted, NCCP books stood as testimony to the results of this effort. In my more cynical moments, I would call these partnerships "bubble communities" for the way life was breathed into them, only to watch them pop as they hit the harsh reality of structural oppression. That is, I

found it difficult to argue much progressive structural change had occurred as the result of our work.

Institutionally, however, it was a very successful model, supporting a myriad of programming, gaining approximately 1.5 million dollars in funding, and creating an on-going endowment to continue such programming well into the future. Eventually, however, university support for the work of WBC and NCCP went away. Although I often felt no real change had occurred in the lives of the involved communities, the college could only see these efforts as "political agitation" and/or "social work." Threatened with being essentially starved of funds and shut down, I moved NCCP outside of Temple University and, eventually, to Syracuse University; Eli Goldblatt moved towards a partnership with Treehouse Books. Our sustaining collaboration continued but was now practiced in two different locations. (For my version of this history, see *Gravyland: Writing Beyond the Curriculum in the City of Brotherly Love.* To see Eli's version of this history, see *Because We Live Here.*)

In Syracuse, which has its own rich history of industrial growth and decline linked to progressive movements for economic/social justice, NCCP found a supportive university and community network within which to expand its work. Over the next several years, multiple writing group/book projects were launched which featured the voices of urban schoolchildren, union workers, and community activists. (See "Emergent Strategies," with Nick Pollard, for a partial accounting of this work.) In fact, the press had gained such a strong local reputation, that NCCP was invited to act as a community liaison by a local foundation for residents whose neighborhood was in the midst of a redevelopment project. Located just off of the restaurant district of downtown, the neighborhood had been home to many small and large industries during its heyday, a period which also saw the neighborhood act as an economic incubator for the aspirations of recent immigrant populations. As with many such industrial neighborhoods, economic downturns had devastated opportunity, if not the community's spirit. The goal of the redevelopment project was to revitalize both business and community prospects.

Here is where the story moves towards the role of writing beyond the printed page of community publications. It is one type of project to support a neighborhood's ability to "tell their story." This had marked my work in Philadelphia. It is, as I discovered, another thing entirely to link the "story telling" to efforts to fundamentally change power relations through actual community organizing. Yet, for this project, as part of the process of collecting neighborhood insights, a door-to-door interview campaign was initiated. The collected insights about the residents concerning their hopes/concerns for the neighborhood were shared at a resulting open neighborhood forum. Not surprisingly, there was deep ambivalence about the redevelopment efforts. Or rather, there was broad support for efforts to improve the community, but ambivalence about the ability of the residents to be active participants in that process. As a result of the neighborhood

forum, there were calls to form a new neighborhood coalition, an organization which would attempt to be an active force in the community. Our work soon turned to such efforts.

All of these actions occurred before a single word was printed on a page, turned into a book, and distributed across the neighborhood. Yet the immediate fact of the printed word being joined to community organizing efforts, efforts mistakenly seen as against the redevelopment project, created a harsh backlash. As a result, there was an immediate loss of funding from national grant organizations for our neighborhood projects, strained partnerships with the "mover and shakers" involved, and the creation of lingering distrust about whether the community was being "manipulated" by "outsiders." Here it must also be noted that the development project had initiated its own power-sharing plan, which while disputed in some sections of the neighborhood, was also respected and supported in others. The point here is that who were "outsiders" and/or "manipulators" was greatly dependent on a person's position in the neighborhood. In spirit, however, I believed everyone imagined they were working toward the same goal of community-led progress.

Despite this deeply conflicted context, the work continued. The new residents' organization sponsored a community picnic, supported completely by their own efforts, which made real their claim to be community-based. At this picnic writing prompts about the community were circulated. Later, writing groups focused on the neighborhood were initiated. Eventually, NCCP helped to create an aligned local neighborhood press, under control of the residents, linked to the emergent community organization, as a means to reframe the image of residents and their goals as a community. Entitled *HOME*, their first publication featured personal testimonies such as the one by Susan Hamilton:

> My initial encounter with the neighborhood was accidental—I got lost on streets that veer off on a diagonal and that took me to an unexpected destination. In the same way, I didn't really plan to live here. I owned a home on the Southwest side, and though I was dissatisfied with its lack of porches, its small yard, and the size of the mortgage payment, I was not actively looking to move. Then an acquaintance who knows I like old houses urged me to tour one that was coming up for sale on Holland Street. The previous owner had died in her 90s, leaving this house something like a museum. Most of its Victorian splendor was intact, right down to the intricately wrought metal pulls on the pantry drawers, and I was immediately hooked. The area didn't frighten me; it reminded me of Deep Rondo, the inner-city, racially mixed neighborhood in St. Paul where I lived as a young child. I had been working as a community organizer on the Near Westside, so I already knew some of my new neighbors. But I wasn't blind to the problems, such as the drug house across the street and decades of neglect

by local government. The lot next door, where a house had been set afire to cover up a burglary, had been vacant for more than a decade and used as an informal dump. When I bought my house, I began cleaning out the lot's trash and trying to mow the thicket of weeds, some taller than my head, with a push mower. When drug dealers would congregate at the curb, I walked around them, picking up the food wrappers and subtly giving the message that I too had a role to play and a claim to that space.

A little over two years later, early in the morning of Labor Day 1998, a freak storm blasted Syracuse. I was awakened by the shriek of a box fan being blown out of the window by 115 mph winds. I closed windows and laid back down on the bed, which moved as the whole house swayed. Lightning flashed green outside, like strobe lights, and thunder punctuated the sound of falling trees. When I got dressed and went downstairs, I could not see out the windows because they were all streaked with rain. I opened the back door and could see only leaves where my car was parked. My dog Che, terrorized by the storm, cowered at my feet. Before I could decide whether to take refuge in the basement, the worst of the storm passed. The electricity went out—and would not be restored for a week. Peering out the front door, I could vaguely see the shapes of big trees on the ground, power lines snared in their branches. Then I heard voices from the darkness. A group of young men from the surrounding houses appeared, holding cans of beer and flashlights. They asked if I was OK, and I told them I was afraid that my car had been crushed. Disregarding the danger of fallen electrical wires, a couple of them scrambled over branches to reach the backyard and returned to report that the car was unscathed under a mound of small twigs. Then the guys moved on to the next house, calling out to the tenants to see if they needed help.

As I came back inside to comfort my dog, I realized that for the first time I really felt at home in this neighborhood, where people do look out for each other and pull together during crises. During the next week of post-storm recovery, people shared food from their freezers, told where ice could be purchased, helped one another cut up trees that littered yards, and cheered together when the Hydro Ontario trucks sent from Canada finally restored power to our streets.

Though still neglected by local government, we could take care of each other. (85-86)

When published, *HOME* demonstrated a much different argument about residents than typically seen. Typically, residents were portrayed as poor, uninformed, and ungrateful by mainstream publications/organizations. *HOME* demonstrated that long-term and short-term neighbors wanted a developed neighborhood, but one that respected its traditions of diversity, hard work, and community support. The book implicitly argued that these values had not been sufficiently recognized by those in authority both historically and in the present moment—that they had not been brought into the actual power sharing of any project in terms that the resident organization recognized (with HOME being italicized to express the fundamental nature of true representation). It was also an attempt to reframe the students involved in the project that were being portrayed as manipulative and insensitive to the "actual" needs of the residents. Through the press, the collaboration of students/faculty was shown to be directed by the residents. A different power dynamic than the criticism's had implied had also been created.

NCCP had clearly published such books before. Yet only when these stories were supported by an activist organization were the concerns expressed raised to the level that local leaders, real estate developers, non-profit organizers, grant foundations took notice and responded—initially in very harsh terms, but eventually in collaboration. The fact of the neighborhood organization had reframed the book as a vehicle to claim the power to control their neighborhood, a claim which eventually enabled partnerships with many community, business, and religious organizations focused on structurally addressing primary concerns in the neighborhood, such as crime. (This element of the story should be told by Ben Kuebrich who worked with residents to record their concerns about police conduct as part of a police/ neighborhood delegation, publishing a book which became a site of citywide debate, entitled *I Witness*.) Publishing plus organizing had helped to create the possibility of grassroots community-led structural change to occur.

While I intend on writing a longer book length account of this experience, for the purposes of this article, I want to highlight the ways in which the simple documentation of a neighborhood story was seen as an insufficient response by a neighborhood faced with an immediate challenge (or so perceived) to their "way of life." The "bubble" community of the first iteration of NCCP was not up to the task of moving "writing beyond the curriculum" toward actual social change. The residents, faced with fundamental challenges to their way of life, recognized that stories unconnected to efforts to organize were insufficient if the actual goal was to shift power relationships.

And here I would hazard to guess that most of the documentaries that emerge out of community-based partnership work either directly or indirectly to offer a challenge to the status quo, a call for a different dynamic between residents and the dominant hegemony in which they exist. The experience of this particular community project highlighted the need to rethink our role as community documentarians and to consider in what ways it also implies a related sense of community activists. To what extent, that is, are we morally obligated having taken up the former to

also inhabit the latter subject position as well? And when that moment arrives, how does a claim to support "writing beyond the curriculum" mutate into the need to push beyond the status quo toward progressive and structural change?

Writing a Revolution

Since 2012, NCCP has been working with activist/teachers from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) to create a book focused on the meaning of democracy and democratic activism. The publication, initiated by the individuals in the book, was created during a summer period when they were all in Washington, D.C. The publication will feature individual testimonies from Libya, Egypt, Tunisia, Bahrain, Palestine, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, as well as other countries in the region. Many of the participants were or are educators, community- and/or school-based. All are under the age of 30. The individuals in the book wrote their own piece, were interviewed, or produced their chapter by some combination of these two methods.

In their stories, bombs explode in the next room; army soldiers hold guns to their heads; husbands are pulled out of cars, arrested, and taken away. It goes without saying that each of these individuals share experiences that are both striking in the terror they experienced and admirable for their courageous response. Here is an excerpt from one of the participants, Ibrahim Shebani. He named his piece "Libya: Four Days of the Revolution":

> [O]n the 15th of February, I received a phone call from one of my friends, Ahmed, telling me that Benghazi has awakened. There was a massive protest in front of the security directory . . . by the mothers, daughters and wives of massacred Busleem prisoners. Everybody was chanting "Wake up, wake up Benghazi. The day you have long waited for had just come." . . . [We] couldn't predict what was going to happen, but I was certain of only one thing, that I must leave for Benghazi. (22)

> I arrived to Benghazi on the 16th of February. My friends Ahmed and "Suliman" came to pick me up from the airport and we went straight to downtown where many young Libyans had started already protesting and clashing with police forces loyal to Gadafi. . . . [W]e could hear people chanting, whistling, and clashing with police forces . . . [We were] very scared to join. All I could see was security forces trying to clamp down on the protestors and angry protestors shouting, Down! Down, Gadhafi! and The police's duty is to serve and protect the civilians! and The people want the downfall of the regime. This all took me by surprise and a boost of adrenaline rushed through my veins. I wanted to join the front line of the protestors and shout many

things I dreamed of saying ever since we came back to live in Libya from exile in the early 90s. I turned on my mobile phone video camera, [covered] over my head with my hoody, and wore the sunglasses I had in my pocket. (23-24)

I went to join the protestors and I couldn't stop screaming, The people want the downfall of the regime. [The] security forces started chasing the protestors capturing as many as possible. . . . We decided to leave. (24)

[On February 17th,] I woke up early like a little kid on his way to his first day of school. February 17th is the day all of Benghazi was going out. Although I knew that the protest won't start until at 3 pm, I just got ready and waited for my friends to pick me up. Suliman arrived at around 1:30. We drove towards downtown . . . . [As] we were passing on the bridge of Juliana that crosses the lake of Benghazi where there is a massive garden often visited by families, I saw something I didn't understand quite well at that time. The garden was full of workers wearing yellow helmets, probably over a 1,000, clearly immigrants, mostly Africans and some Asians. I looked at Suliman and told him, This is pretty smart. They brought workers to clean up the mess of the protest to show the world that nothing in happening in Benghazi.

I had no clue what the regime had in mind for the protestors. (25)

There weren't many people out in front of the court, but protestors already had started chanting Constitution, freedom and equality. We went and joined them, waiting for the rest to arrive. . . . Thousands of people were marching from downtown Benghazi and through the western part of the city. We were clearly over 5,000 Libyans, all in one voice, Tell Moamer and his sons, Benghazi is full of real men! and provoking some Libyans who kept watching from distance, out of fear, encouraging them with a chant, Join us! Join us, and no harm would reach you. (26)

I couldn't stop calling family and friends telling them about what I am witnessing!

We waited for the marching groups to join us, but no one arrived! We received a phone call from our friend, Osama, and he told us his side of the story. Over 10,000 men were marching. . . . These men went over the bridge crossing the lake of Benghazi and had no clue what was waiting for them, including my friend, Osama.

As they were passing the bridge, mercenaries dressed in custodial outfits and yellow helmets were providing support to the army who were shooting at the unarmed protestors. With heavy artillary, anti-aircraft weapons, Kalashnikovs, tear bombs, batons, machetes. Chaos broke through. Protestors were being pushed back, and those on the front lines were murdered. Many of them jumped in the lake and many of them were captured. The people gathered in front of the court were receiving phone calls and many stories were being told and anger was showing on the protestors' faces. Everybody was shouting People want the downfall of Gadhafi!. I saw rage and anger that nothing could stop. . . .

On the 18th, I woke up early. . . . (26-27)

I was heading downtown and all I could see are these big clouds of smoke coming up from most of the regime's buildings. The people of Benghazi were attacking unarmed; all they had was gas, matches, rage and will. Security forces were being push backed from downtown towards either the Alfadel Buomar Brigade Compound or to the Security Directory Building. As I approached the court, the only thing I could see was a massive independence flag waving from the courthouse! This flag was even forbidden to talk about during the past 42 years and the majority of Libyans were born and raised under the Gadhafi regime didn't even know it existed. In front of the court there were thousands and thousands of protestors. Many of my friends that I haven't seen for a while were there too. The feeling was indescribable. As I was standing and chatting with some of my friends, I saw Mohamed . . . . He told me he was going home to bring a satellite Internet system to the court in order to connect Aljazeera. He wanted to go live on the air to show the world what was really happening in front of the court of Benghazi. At that time, no proper videos were broadcasted, only some amateur camera phone videos. He was trying to find other people to come with him to carry the satellite. We got into a pickup truck. . . . (28)

It took us almost 45 minutes. . . . As we were getting closer to the city, the streets were empty, and the only thing you could see was the smoke of the burning buildings. We arrived safe to the court. That was my mission of the day. People were happy to see the satellite. Finally, the world would witness our happiness, our liberation. I felt so proud to be part of this small mission. (29)

In addition to such experiences, individuals also tell stories of running for political office; teaching classes focused on gender equity; and leading workshops

on democratic organizing. Activism, the book argues, comes in all forms, but takes place across the region as a united effort. It was not a "spring" that occurred, these authors argue, as much as the emergence of a series of long-term grassroots efforts designed to foster a democratic spirit and set of concerted actions by a new generation. If the work in the city of Syracuse reframed the goals of NCCP, forcing it to recognize the need to link publication to local activism, the "Arab Spring" book poses the question of how community publishing can align itself with larger global efforts at grassroots activism.

In drawing such a connection, I recognize it would be far too simple to equate activists in Syracuse with those across the Middle East. Nor should the danger faced by those involved in the projects be equated. Reluctant real estate developers should not be compared to brutal dictators. And while I may have lost some funding for publishing *HOME*, the MENA lost friends, families, and, too often, their homes as well. Also, some members of the MENA publication collective were even unable to participate fearing retribution would be taken out on their families. Yet, it would also be too simple not to establish connections but, instead, to assume that the two projects, two audiences, could not talk back and forth across religious, ethnic, language, and geographical barriers. Nor should it be assumed that no lessons could be drawn from the other's project—that mutual insight is not possible. So instead of drawing simple connections across continents, I want to suggest possible tactical and strategic possibilities suggested by both projects.

NCCP began in a print-based community-publishing world—a world still marked by the strategies of Vivian Usherwood's *Poems*. The publication of *HOME* bears the traces of that history. *HOME* was a printed book linked to a grassroots community effort that deployed classic organizing strategies—door-to-door interviews, public meetings, focus on key community issues, etc. The MENA publication occurs in a world of social media. To read Ibrahim Shebani's engagement as an activist is to hear of cell phones, video cameras, satellite TV, international television stations blending with traditional strategies of street protest and mass organizing. To a great extent, the strategies of the MENA book demonstrate the ways in which "community publishing" now needs to occur across platforms and media, making the experiences and insights of its participants immediately available, part of the flow of rhetorical argument and material practices informing the actions of those involved. The "book" represents one moment in what would ultimately be a networked set of "publishing" actions designed to empower the work of those engaged in social/political struggles for justice.

While I do not want to claim these MENA activists' linking of rhetorical social media work and grassroots strategies are "new" (rather I see them as having a track record of success), I do want to claim they represent a step forward for framing the traditional community-publishing project. For instance, in the case of the MENA project, we are actively building an accompanying website for the publication which will feature "links" to related organizations, efforts, and activists engaged in the work of democratizing their communities and countries.

There is also discussion about creating an accessible database onto which protest/organizing footage could be collected/distributed—creating an on-going archive of sorts. And we are considering how to support/foster the myriad of technologies which allow conversation to occur in contexts where the act of conversation itself is dangerous and a cause for persecution. Here "traditional" boundaries of publishing as a means to reach an "audience" come up against more immediate needs of organizing in hostile environments.

All of this work exists with the knowledge that internet access cannot be considered a common resource for many communities. Here the ability of "print" to physically move across communities enables a different form of circulation to occur. That is, the distribution network associated with printed books allows the ideas to circulate across communities where technology may not be as accessible; where cell phones, video cameras, and computers are not (or are no longer) the principle means by which ideas are shared. This was certainly the case in the Syracuse neighborhood in which *HOME* was circulated; I would hazard to guess similar communities exist across the MENA countries as well. For this reason, the MENA book will be printed in both English and Arabic, circulated in the U.S.A. and MENA countries. Taken collectively, then, what *HOME* and the MENA book bring forth is the need to work across emergent and traditional technologies, always linked to a grassroots effort at changing actual structures of power through democratic activism. In doing this work, activist and academic communities are thinking through how to use the histories and resources of a community press to serve as a "organizing site" through which to capture the aspirations of their neighbors and to formulate actions in their efforts to bring democracy to their daily lives.

Clearly much more could be said about the possibilities of such cross-platform community publishing/activist efforts. And I do not want to pretend or to claim any unique knowledge or insight (nor any particular models for success) on how this will new form of hybrid community publishing, with its new responsibilities, will be accomplished. For me, this is a radically new experience, one in which I am learning whether a decade's worth of publishing work might have produced resources to support the work of activists both local and global. I am suggesting, however, that as teachers, professors, and, more generally, citizens, we need to place ourselves in positions where our institutional resources can be used for purposes beyond our "writing careers." For ultimately, if we are true to our rhetoric, many of the progressive arguments surrounding community literacy, service-learning, neighborhood partnerships should lead us into such activist partnerships. That is, I believe we need to become active agents in the fostering of democratic dialogue and change if we are to impact the current political moment.

Democratic Dialogues/Democratic Actions

I want to end by invoking the work of Amartya Sen who argues for a definition of democracy that is premised on the need to foster public dialogue designed to

correct fundamental injustices. Sen's work is particularly appropriate since he invokes different "MENA" kings, philosophers, and leaders throughout history as a means to demonstrate that attempts to open discussion, foster tolerance, and provide fundamental rights occurred in that region prior to Western Europe, while still acknowledging the West as an important site for theorizing democracy. This cross cultural/cross-historical framework is a useful to consider when articulating the meaning of democracy, as both a local and global practice.

Sen's work is focused on the power of democratic states to address fundamental human injustices—the existence of torture, the growth of the sex slave trade, the perpetuation of gender discrimination. He believes that democratic governments are uniquely situated to address such issues. To argue this, he uses a study of famine in Bengal, India, during British occupation. In that study, Sen demonstrates that it was not the lack of food which led to the famine but the failure of the wages of marginalized workers to rise in response to the increased cost of food—partially attributed to the increase of British troops and consequent demand on food supplies. Providing support for worker wages would have eliminated the famine as well as addressed fundamental issues of poverty. It is Sen's contention that such famines have never occurred in a democracy, where public opinion, protest, and activism quickly draw attention to such issues. Such practices were not possible given British ruling practices in India. For a democracy to function adequately, then, requires a constant flow of information and discussion, a dialogic cross hatching that is endlessly informed by multiple sources. This is the necessary foundation to insure that recognized democratic or human rights are not just recognized but actualized.

I want to suggest, then, that Sen's focus on democratic debate and fundamental injustices might provide a more invigorated framework upon which to base our political work in composition/rhetoric. In writing this, I am aware that, within Sen's theory, it is somewhat difficult to adequately assess what counts as a fundamental injustice and, accordingly, the opposite category of a fundamental right. He initiates his project more as the ending of the negative than the articulation of the positive. Consequently, he frequently lists issues such as the lack of adequate health care, gender discrimination, and famine as essential injustices, putting forth how each demands a certain type of action based upon a person/community's location. When flipped to the positive, these are not necessarily different in kind from a generalized list of individual rights that most liberal humanists might endorse. For Sen, however, the focus on injustice is meant to also carry the burden of a duty toward others. For Sen, individual rights are placed within a larger paradigm of collective duty and collective duty requires action.

In developing an appropriate plan of action, Sen asks individuals to analyze how, from their unique position, they can collectively address (and collaboratively) redress a fundamental injustice—an injustice that clearly evidences a betrayal of basic humanity. He argues such actions should be premised upon creating an engaged democratic form of public debate, one that links rhetoric to action,

argument to policy change, and stated political right to the capability to use it. In this way, we have not so much moved far from the concepts deployed by many scholars active in community partnership/publication work as much as shifted the paradigm in which they occur—they must be premised on a fundamental injustice. And here I would argue, a different type of partnership work is necessary.

For if community engagement has meant supporting after-school literacy projects, and neighborhood writing groups, Sen draws us into an analysis of the deeper cause—fundamental issues of the economic injustice and school funding formulas that cause literacy stratification. If community publishing has been a vehicle to foster debate between students and residents about urban crime, Sen mandates that we do more than just publish a story, we must move beyond the word to the actions that can address the injustice of police behavior. Ultimately, Sen's focus on injustice moves us off our comfortable classroom and disciplinary based actions, pushing us into the streets where democratic words meet collective action. For now, the assessment is not whether words are written, but if injustices are resolved.

It is for this reason I have come to believe that community publishing can and should mean more than a circulation of stories. Our work can and should produce more than words on a page. It must be linked with local and global attempts to foster democratic dialogue and democratic rights. It must endlessly consider how the resources inherent in such work can be expanded across platforms, communities, and borders to foster the type of collaborative practices that address fundamental injustices—efforts that do not just ameliorate the problem but alter the structure in which it exists. I am not so arrogant as to presume that any of the projects discussed here offer such solutions. I am sure, however, that the above experiences have led me to a new place from which to consider my future work.

I am also sure that to achieve this larger goal, as a field, we must analyze our own position, actively seek alliances and partnerships which turn private resources toward the public good, and move beyond an identity simply framed as writer, teacher, and publisher to the more complex and conflicted world of democratic activists. In doing so, we might begin to reinvigorate the progressive elements of community publishing and partnership. We might, that is, begin to put in place the practices required for writing and publishing in a post-Arab Spring world.

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Chapter 9. Then Comes Fall: Activism, The Arab Spring, and the Necessity of Unruly Borders

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> 470,000 dead—an approximate total of individuals killed in the Syrian uprising.
>
> – *"World Report 2017," Human Rights Watch*

> 11,000 people—an approximate total of the torture victims in Syria as of 2014.
>
> – *"Syria Accused of Torture," BBC News*

What are the proper connections among an individual's tortured body, the barbarous acts perpetrated upon a civilian population, and the seeming logic of academic writing?[1] How do we understand our responsibility as academics to develop ways of speaking that, in conjunction with activism, can blunt barbarity and produce an expansion of fundamental human rights? Or is the very question a sign of disciplinary arrogance?

For the past three years I have been fortunate to work with Middle Eastern and

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North African (MENA) activists and educators advocating for an expansive vision of democratic rights that include not only the right to vote but also a right to gender, religious, and economic equity. Beginning within U.S.-based disciplinary scholarship in community publishing, this work produced a collection of essays entitled *Revolution by Love: Emerging Arab Youth Voices* (RBL) that focused on these individuals' involvement in the Arab Spring.[2] This collection offered personal testimony founded upon a sense of national identity and was premised on a rhetoric of hope. Today, in the aftermath of the Arab Spring, such rhetoric seems inadequate to the current moment. Consequently, a new rhetoric is now required that not only recognizes the complicated period of the post—Arab Spring, with its failures to broaden the number of stable independent democratic nations in the region but also validates the emergent anticolonial border struggles of formerly oppressed identities.

To make this argument, I begin with the production of *RBL*, then move to the work of a human rights defender in Assad's Syria, and finally conclude with the work of a coalition of Syrian activists (of which I am a member) that has created Syrians for Truth and Justice (https://stj-sy.org/en/). In doing so, the essay moves from an examination of human rights arguments linked to an essentialized vision of national identity, to a Westernized framing of political rights, and then ultimately to a post-nationalist rhetorical framing of the human right to self-determination. It is this last definition, I believe, that places academics in solidarity with those struggling for a geographically and culturally informed definition of international borders. Although the actual practices of such a rhetoric are necessarily difficult, I would argue it is the unruly nature of such work that speaks to its vital importance.

Finally, the work discussed in this essay is the result of the collective efforts of those listed as authors as well as many other individuals. To mark this collaboration, we have chosen to list those who have direct editorial and organizational experience in the projects discussed as authors. Dala Ghandour, Emna Ben Yedder Tamarziste, and Mohammed Masbah worked on *RBL* and, along with myself, approved the section on that project. Bassam Alahmad worked on STJ and, along with myself, approved the section on that project. All conclusions drawn from these projects in the "Revolution by Bodies" section, however, should be attributed only to me.

Revolution By Love

In the immediate aftermath of the Arab Spring, I had the opportunity to work with MENA educators and activists who were trying to understand the events that had just occurred. Many of them had spent years doing the slow grassroots work of building collectivities designed to produce an oppositional force against undemocratic and oppressive political regimes. They were now in the United States, at Syracuse University, to learn how to expand their work toward building civil societies that could cement the progress that had seemingly been made.

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2.   For scholarship in community publishing, see Steve Parks, "Sinners Welcome."

Progress, however, is a tricky word. As the participants moved through the program, an uneasy sense of dissonance occurred between the attempts to provide civil society models premised upon US frameworks and the actual historical meaning of the United States in their countries. As a result, the participants were looking for an alternative space to articulate their collective vision. With the support of their university sponsors, I was contacted in my role as founder/ editor of New City Community Press (newcitycommunitypress.com) to help them organize and publish their thoughts. The result was *RBL*.

Rather than rehearse the intricate history of that publication, the goal here is to read *RBL* as an attempt to create a rhetorical space in which to understand the work of democratic political reform in the MENA region within context of a U.S. global hegemony. What did these participants imagine to be the rhetorical moves necessary to gain support from the West for democratic reform while also acknowledging the United States' own complicated (and complicit) role in the region? And what unintended consequences might their imagined rhetorical stance, when taken on by hegemonic global powers, have produced in justifying state actions against these very goals?

Within this context it is important to begin by looking at how the United States is invoked in RBL. For instance, in the introduction, the editors note:

> Simply put, this story reveals how young Arab women and men from the Middle East and North Africa, who come from very diverse backgrounds, regions, continents, share the same passion for their countries, the same audacity of hope, for a better tomorrow, the same dream of making their country proud of them. All of the writers who were committed to this project were deeply convinced that *one should not ask what their country can do for them, but rather what could they offer their countries*. In a world where barriers are constantly being erased, where virtual communication turns the world to a global village, what is this strange bond that ties this Arab youth to politics and public affairs? (*RBL* 1; emphasis added)

Later this argument continues: "[Our collective stories] could even give the reader a more nuanced understanding of the people who are behind this so-called phenomenon of the 21st century: The Arab Spring. This mysterious, catchy, used and reused phrase, in every current political analysis of the MENA was made b*y the people, for the people*" (*RBL* 3, emphasis added). In effect, the Arab Spring is recast within terms that rhetorically resonate within the context of the United States. There is the invocation of a globally inflected multiculturalism free from consideration of economic or neocolonial contexts— "very diverse backgrounds, regions and continents, [that] share the same passion for their countries." There is Obama's "audacity of hope." There is Kennedy's "ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country." And finally, there is Lincoln's Gettysburg's

Address— "of the people, by the people, for the people"—invoked as a means to understand the framework by which young activists took to the streets.

Indeed, *RBL* is replete with instances where each of these hoped-for values is invoked by the collection's authors. Dala Ghandour discusses Beirut as a city that has historically been blessed with diverse cultures and heritages. Raghda Abushahla speaks to how Palestinian women tend to the graves of British soldiers from World War I. Each imagines a common understanding of humanity that can move across contentious religious, political, and international divisions despite the actual historical facts on the ground. Individuals also demonstrate the commitment to being personally engaged in working for political change. Mirelle Karam Halim discusses her work in sponsoring workshops for young Egyptians on democracy. Shadin Hamaideh highlights the sacrifices that men and women made in protesting for greater freedoms for all Arabs. Finally, Mohammed Masbah, along with all the writers, speaks of the need for collective action to foster more representative governments.

Interestingly, in light of the invocation of Lincoln, the writers do not speak of their actions as fostering a civil war against the government; none consistently invokes previous political activism based in other paradigms, such as anticolonial struggles. Almost without exception there is a commitment to their country as a framework that seems to transcend the colonial history that produced its political borders. In this way, an essentialized national identity where borders are seen as natural and not the result of Western colonial powers is invoked as a means to produce the possibility of a collective political movement for change.

And it is a national movement seemingly premised on the possibilities of new technology.[3] Throughout all the essays, there is a sense that social media played a fundamental role in the Arab Spring. Here it is useful to return once again to the introduction of *RBL*, specifically the following sentence: "In a world where barriers are constantly being erased, where *virtual communication* turns the world to a global village, what is this strange bond that ties this Arab youth to politics and public affairs?" (1, emphasis added). This belief in new technology is perhaps best represented by Ibrahim Shebani's involvement in the Libyan protests. His narrative begins with a Facebook message calling for an uprising, which leads to a series of cell phone calls to connect with friends, followed by additional Facebook posts featuring clips of political protestors—all of which are designed to bring the non-virtual bodies of Libyans to Benghazi to protest the arrest of the Busleem massacre lawyer in front of the security directory.[4] (Here Shebani also notes Gadhafi's use of digital cameras to videotape protestors.) The piece ends with Shebani, along with others, bringing a satellite dish to the site so as to broadcast images of the protests

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3.   For a particularly pro-social media account of the Arab Spring in Egypt, see Wael Ghonim, *Revolution 2.0*.

4.   In 1996 over twelve hundred political prisoners were executed on the same day, within several hours, inside the Busleem prison (Chulov and Smith; Franklin).

internationally, an effort he admits was already being somewhat achieved by cell phones. The piece ends with the following: "That was my mission of the day. People were happy to see the satellite. Finally, the world would witness our happiness, our liberation. I felt so proud to be part of this small mission" (*RBL* 29). Technology, coupled with mass protests by individuals, had won the day.

Taking these rhetorical strategies collectively, and at some risk of a loss of nuance, I want to highlight what I believe to be a symptomatic rhetorical argument surrounding the Arab Spring that was occurring in the U.S. context. Succinctly stated it might go something like the following: Informed by models of U.S. democracy, MENA activists used social media to bring together hundreds of thousands of individuals, creating a mass movement that ultimately toppled dictators and put the region on a (perhaps temporary) path to democracy. I would argue that such a rhetoric works to affirm cherished beliefs about the United States, technology, and democracy. Within this rhetoric, the borders in which these nationalist struggles occurred are taken out of the colonialist context in which many were created. That is, the rhetoric naturalizes a colonialist history while it simultaneously overlays a U.S.-informed Western model of democracy on the region as a whole.

This is not to argue that *RBL* simply existed within such a rhetorical framework, that *RBL* only invoked but did not critique such a vision. Indeed, within the collection itself, the authors consciously manipulate the rhetoric for maximum impact on the reader. In the essay, "The Pearl of the Gulf," for example, Amal Mater begins by framing Bahrain in terms similar to those found in the other essays in the book:

> The pearl of the gulf is what Bahrain used to be called. Not only because it is a beautiful small island on the Arabian Gulf that used to depend on the pearl industry, but also because its people were well known for their kindness, openness, pureness like a shining pearl. Bahrain was always known for its tolerance and openness to other cultures and religions, and comparing to other neighboring countries, was advanced in terms of education, civil society and women's rights. It was well known throughout history that Bahrainis regardless of sect or religion were living in harmony and socializing with each other with mixed marriages, friendships, and neighborhoods. (*RBL* 11)

Mater then traces those values back through Bahrain's history—from Delmon, Tylus, and Awal, through being a British protectorate, to independence and the establishment of the Al Khalifa as the ruling family. It was soon after the new constitution was put into effect, she argues, that the ruling family of Al Khalifa in 1973 suspended the parliament in response to protests, instituted the States Security Law, and began the process of ruling through extra parliamentary procedures. Stating that Bahrain was "the first Gulf country that responded to the wave of democracy movements," Mater then details how the rhetorical

construction of a social movement—one that was not "looking for democracy only for a better life in terms of jobs and economy, but also in terms of liberty and dignity" was confronted by national, regional, and international military violence, a violence that would sacrifice human rights aspirations on the altar of realpolitik (*RBL* 13).

Almost immediately after recounting Bahrain's identity, settling her narrative within the comfortable rhetorical framework of the book's introduction, Mater describes her work as an ophthalmologist at the only public hospital in the country. In response to the Arab Spring protests, she argues, the government responded violently, "killing over 80, injuring, detaining hundreds, and dismissing thousands from their jobs" (*RBL* 13) Moreover, in concert with Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), a force created to protect Gulf states from "outside" invasions, the hospital was surrounded, troops then invaded and killed some protestors, and tortured others. Matel's husband, a member of parliament, was arrested and detained for months in an unknown location (Holmes). In attempting to understand the cause for such a brutal crackdown, for the introduction of the GCC, Matel notes the following: "Sadly, the Bahraini regime is supported not only by the GCC monarchies, but also largely by its ally, the United States. Bahrain is a strategic non-NATO ally for the United States, hosting the US fifth fleet" (*RBL* 17).

She further comments: "Unfortunately, democracy and human rights don't seem to come first in the foreign policy of the United States. What we see on the ground is that the stability is what really matters. As long as this regime guarantees the interests of the United States in security and oil, any change is considered worrisome" (*RBL* 17). She ends her piece with the hope that the citizens of the United States will compel the government to act differently—invoking U.S. citizens and U.S. nonprofit organizations as having a truer sense of democracy and human rights: "In contrast to our frustration with the US government, the Arab spring was an eye-opening experience to the wonderful dynamic American civil society. We were amazed by the huge support we got from the American democracy and human rights organizations" (*RBL* 18).

Within that context of a hegemonic U.S. presence, Raghda Abushahla details her family's history in Palestine. Beginning with her mother's birth prior to the creation of Israel, Abushahla moves through a history of violence enacted on her family (and by association to Palestinians), "the 1948 War (Al-Nakba), the 1967 Six Days War, and the Operation Cast Lead on Gaza, the Intifada, the recurring Israeli invasions, the internal clashes and on and on" (*RBL* 104). Her family's story then gets translated into her father's and her own struggles to gain a passport, framed as legal recognition by the international community of their very existence, as they were shuttled between Egypt and Libya. With such an emphasis, Abushahla details the political instability of a Palestinian identity in a U.S. dominated context—juxtaposing the family struggles with the use of U.S. military power to punish Libya for the Lockerbie bombings, U.S. support of Egypt, and U.S. silence over the systemic oppression of Palestinians on the West Bank and

Gaza by Israel. She writes: "Gazans are marked as terrorists and imprisoned in the Gaza enclave for so many years with severe shortages of money, electricity, fuel, and other essential life commodities. Nevertheless, a small percent of the Gaza population is in possession of weapons or rockets. The vast majority of the population were middle class people who suffered years of hardships and now live in poor conditions and aspire to survive" (*RBL* 90).

Ultimately, the *RBL* collection demonstrates that the earlier, somewhat idealistic rhetorical version of the Arab Spring does not fully account for deeper economic and geopolitical forces that are buffeting and damaging the possibilities that these democratic movements might be fully realized. The GCC, Israel, and the United States form a triad of forces clamping down on grassroots movements for democratic reform that move beyond limited constitutional revisions and that might challenge geopolitical alliances. There is seemingly no version of political reform that might entail the Fifth U.S. fleet leaving Bahrain. Nor, does it appear, is there any version of reform that might move the geopolitical discussion of Israel toward an examination of that country's own human rights record or colonialist status. Indeed, it seems to be exactly at moments where such a possibility occurs that the formerly democratic bodies of protestors are marked as "unruly" and need to be made "proper," disciplined by these larger geopolitical forces that want to reduce the protestors' actions in meaning and actual possibility to the softened rhetorical narrative that brings together U.S. visions of democracy and the power of technology.

In this sense, the rhetorical argument invoked in *RBL* represents the aspirations of those involved in political change and in its dark underbelly. For it is at the same moment when the writers invoke an essentialist national identity, a Westernized vision of democracy, and a faith in technology to tip the balance of global power that the writers also demonstrate how this same rhetoric, when deployed by Western powers minus the simultaneous critique of that very rhetorical stance, justified the international actions that led to the goals of the Arab Spring (again admitting a lack of nuance) being swept up into and limited by larger geopolitical forces.

In saying this, I am not discounting the power of this rhetorical model as an organizing structure at a given historical moment or diminishing the important work of individuals done within this framework—many of whom continue to work actually and rhetorically for more democratic societies. Rather, I am suggesting the need for U.S.-based academics to recognize the historical specificity and limitations of any rhetoric that invokes an idealized view of "Western values" as a means to form alliances with MENA-based activists. Given the historical legacy that such a view inhabits (and how it is currently being enacted), it is not clear such a framework would be effective in supporting the work of activists in fostering fundamental democratic political change in the current moment. As is clear to everyone, the political terrain has only become more complicated in the interim between the publication of *RBL* and today.

Revolution By Arms

Syria is not featured in *RBL*. The individuals from Syria who traveled to Syracuse chose not to participate in the book. With their families currently being held by the government and with government forces attacking their neighborhoods, they believed the act of publishing stories of resistance and democratic activism would put their families in danger of being arrested. For, although in the United States it seems that, in community publications, "disempowered voices" have become a trope almost devoid of political significance, for these Syrian individuals, "going public," having any association with Western organizations and rhetorics, would have real and dangerous consequences (a fact to be demonstrated below).

The Syrian "Arab Spring" protests began in March 2011. At first, the protests were in alignment with many of the demands seen across the region: increased democratic rights, systemic political reform, an end to emergency powers, and a crackdown on corruption. In the beginning there were also a few calls for the resignation of President Bashar al-Assad. Initially, the protests were peaceful both in intent and in government response. Then beginning March 18, the Syrian troops began to fire upon the crowds, such as in Daraa, and protestors began publicly to ask for Assad to resign. Assad soon claimed that the protests were sparked by outside agitators and hostile governments, but such arguments had little impact on the anti-Assad protestors who continued to grow in numbers, even as the violence increased. By the end of May, over one thousand civilians had been killed.[5]

During this same period, Syrian officers defected and created the Free Syrian Army, and in Turkey the Syrian National Council was formed. While consistently shifting policies in an effort to find "moderate allies," the United States has essentially aligned with the Free Syrian Army, a force that has been unable to overthrow Assad and, increasingly has been equally concerned with the rise of ISIS, which had been preceded by the emergence of numerous Islamic and Jihadist groups. In addition, the region of northern Syria controlled by Kurds declared itself the "Democratic Federal System of Northern Syria," while the Kurdish-controlled region of Iraq has named itself the Kurdish Regional Government. Slowly, then, the national borders of Syria and Iraq—drawn by the France and United Kingdom governments at the end of World War I as part of the Sykes-Picot Agreement—are being reframed in terms outside the "existent nation" nationalism that marked a primary component of the Arab Spring. New borders and new nationalities seem increasingly likely.

It is within this context that organizations such as the Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression emerged. The center was established in 2004 but became more active in 2011. As framed in its mission statement, the center was a "non-profit, independent" organization that was "not linked to any political,

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5.   For an extended study of the civil war, see Reese Erlich, *Inside Syria*.

religious, partisan or economic side, [either] inside and outside Syria."[6] Its primary purpose was to use professional journalistic standards to report on the events in Syria. In articulating a framework for the center's mission, the organization invoked John Stuart Mill, the Magna Carta, the French Declaration of Human Rights, and the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Like *RBL*, the center frames itself solidly within a Western framework of democracy and the belief in the political right to free speech within properly functioning nation-states.[7]

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6.   The center revised its mission statement and goals in response to the ongoing Syrian conflict as well as the discussed actions by Assad against their organizations. The text cited here is from their original mission statement. Their current organization framing is available at www.scm.bz/en/. Given that the earlier text is no longer available, I cite it at length in the article and accompanying footnotes.

7.   Indeed, their organizational goals echo this belief in the need for free expression and a commitment to an international vision of human rights:

Disseminate the culture and consciousness of freedom of opinion and expression and belief and respect for the opinions of others and diversity and tolerance within the Syrian society and in collaboration with government agencies and civil society organizations.

Raise the normal theoretical and practical level for the media and journalists and workers in the field of freedom of expression and through seminars and workshops and training process and the publication of studies and research on freedom of opinion and expression sessions, encourage creative initiatives in this area and provide legal support to reporters.

Review of legislation and local laws and regulations and to provide scientific proposals to align them with international standards on freedom of opinion and expression and human rights and to contribute in theory to build a state of law and institutions, civil society and democratic.

Publishing and dissemination of new cultural values within Syrian society, such as the abolition of discrimination against women and children's rights and environmental education and consumer protection and taking into account the special needs and psychiatric patients' rights and people living with AIDS and housing rights and minority rights and the right to development and personal freedoms and abolition the death penalty.

Adhere to international standards of a set of laws and charters and conventions and international declarations and international conventions on freedom of opinion and expression and human rights in order to bring about a fundamental change in cultural infrastructure and cultural and intellectual formation and social within the Syrian society and foundation to find a material cognitive learning [that] is consistent with the principles of freedom of opinion and expression and the International Bill of Human Rights and notes the social inequalities and cultural that characterize the Syrian components of society and trying to bridge the gap by focusing on the aspects of convergence and build on them and monitor changes and influences that contribute to the creation of a social dynamic and the analysis of its implications for the understanding of transitions in the course of civil society in Syria.

Discrimination in the relationship between states and societies between the level of governments and political interests that relations control and decisions and between peoples' level, which all share the humanitarian concern and highlight the positive effects of the interaction between people and intermingling among civilizations for the benefit of all mankind and to help support the dialogue of cultures.

Given the critique of the romantic view of some of the rhetoric in *Revolution by Love*, it would be easy to understand the center's goals as being unaware of the ramifications of invoking such ways of speaking in the context of the actions of global powers, such as the United States and Great Britain, who might co-opt such rhetoric. (This seems particularly the case when both countries' support of human rights in Syria has been troubled at best.) Yet the history of the center reminds us that the danger of such rhetoric lies not just in its co-option of ends other than intended but also in the fact of its perceived alignment with Western powers.[8] Indeed, the center in Syria was violently shut down by the government for being "aligned" (rhetorically) with Western powers. Ultimately, the center had to relocate to Turkey—a country that today seems a complicated location to enact the principles of a "free press."

Indeed, individuals in this center, along with many other such journalists, were tortured by the Syrian government for seeming to align with rhetoric associated with Western powers and enacting the principles of a free press. Here it might be useful to listen to the voice of one human rights defender and activist employed by the center, who with his colleagues was arrested for being perceived as an "outside agitator" because of their use of Westernized arguments concerning human rights in their reporting:

> When they picked up all of us, I was working with others who were publishing about what is happening in Syria especially the number of people who demonstrated or the number of cities or places which had demonstrations. We were putting the information on our Facebook page, sending it to media centers, to channels, to everyone to say "This is exactly what happened."

> We were representing ourselves as internal opposition, doing it for our country. We were telling the people that we are not like the other people outside of Syria, who have a relationship with the West. Our narrative to the regime said we would not cooperate with people outside of Syria because the government considered all channels, all countries except Iran and Russia, enemies. So you cannot talk with the human rights commissions. You cannot talk to anyone. So we said, "We care about internal issues. We are from Syria. We stayed here. We didn't travel. But that we need some kind of reforms."

> We were working in the middle of Damascus. They stormed our office. There were about thirty people, snipers, with guns. They

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8. The *RBL* authors were aware of the consequences of seeming to be aligned with the United States, even as they invoked elements of its history in the book. Many feared they would be branded as spies upon their return.

motioned to us with their Kalishnikovs. At first, I didn't think they meant to come to our office because we were working publicly. We were not doing any kind of arms. I thought they had come to the wrong place. Then they did kind of a drama, a theater. They acted like there was a real investigation. They asked a lot of questions. They saw our computers. They tried to discover something about us: "What are you doing here? Why are you publishing the news?" Then they brought a big bus and took all of us.

Once on the bus, in each second, we were thinking thousands of things at the same time. But when we saw there was a bridge, and it was the bridge on the only road towards the Air Force detention center, we discovered where they are taking all of us. We just . . . we didn't talk. We just looked towards each other's eyes. This Air Force branch is very famous. It is worst branch around Syria. All of us were just saying, "Oh my god." I cannot describe it. It was very difficult.

After they took us off the bus, they took our mobiles, keys, wallets, all things. They put something to blind our eyes and took us to a room on the base. By coincidence or not, our room was behind the investigation room. While there, we saw how they hung the people from the ceiling by their hands with distance between their feet and the ground, which is very very awful. One of our friends, in our room, they do it to him, hanging in our room for more than 24 hours. They chose him because he was a doctor. They said you are supporting terrorist people, giving them medical aid and support.

They interrogated us the first day, then, I don't know, maybe three or four days later. But they just repeat the same questions. When it was my time to go into the room, they asked me to take all my clothes off, then they closed the door. Our work was a little bit famous in Syria, so we were exceptional people to the investigator. He tried to present himself as an intellectual, knowing everything. He tried to make it kind of a discussion, like "Yes I understand the situation." He tried to be our equal but he was not. He was very stupid. He started asking us questions. "Why are you doing something like this? You are doing something against your country. From where are you getting the money?" You know many many questions. He argued the protests were not occurring because of anything the government was doing. His narrative was about all of our enemies,

that everyone is against us because we are fighting Israel, the United States, because we are strong. You know, these kinds of very stupid things. . . .

After 28 days, we did kind of a hunger strike. We said, "You have to release us or transfer us to the Judge." And we told them, "See we are like activists. We know exactly how we can get our voice out. We can tell all people around the world what happened here." We did hunger strike for five days. They asked us to stop our hunger strike but we didn't. Then they transferred us to another security branch, which when compared with the Air Force branch, the Air Force was kind of a five star hotel.

When we arrived there, they did not ask us anything. They just started to beating us without any kind of question. They were just beating us with sticks, with electricity, with cables. Every night. We couldn't see anything. We were just like hearing our voices. I don't know how long each day they beat us because we are like so tired. They repeated that for six days.[9] They said, "We will teach you about doing hunger strikes in our places. You are not allowed to do something like this because other prisoners will see you and learn from you." After that, they didn't beat us every day, just every two to three days. They would come and choose some people, but it was not systematic.

In this branch, after 33 days, I don't know how or why, but they came and said my name and the names of two others. They said come with us and took us back to the Air Force branch and gave us our mobiles, wallets and money. Then they took us to the military police station. We stayed for one night and then they transferred us to the central prison. It was much better. There was like a doctor. There was food. There were new clothes. I was there 20 days. After they transferred us to the military base, then the prison, we thought will be released, the three of us, because in Syria if you are transferred from the secret detention center, that means you will be released.

Still, they didn't leave me go totally. They transferred us to the military court. The judge asked us, "If I release you will, will you remain in Damascus and attend the court again to face

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9. Lest we imagine the United States is not capable of similar actions, see the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, The Senate Intelligence Committee Report on Torture: Committee Study of the Central intelligence Agency's Detention and Interrogation Program.

charges." I signed the paper saying I would attend, but after they did something like this, I prepared myself and left the country.

My hopes for the future? Maybe we can distinguish between what we wish and what we think. I wish Syria to be unified, to return to the same cohesion between all Syrians, but with a new political structure. But objectively, we are in a real civil war, a very brutal civil war. We are doing our best as activists, who demonstrated from the first day, to do our best to like stop this kind of killing, the human rights violations, and teach people about how can they live life together. But unfortunately the sound of guns, the sound of barrel bombs, of ISIS, is louder than our sound. We are weak. We are very weak. We wish to be loud, to be more strong. We wish to be more strong by having more people on our side. But, unfortunately, no, because unfortunately they are strong instead.

I think it is important for people to know that there are a million Syrians that want to lead a normal life like them. They are not killing or beheading. They can do a lot of focusing on this issue supporting Syrian people, activists, especially supporting peaceful activities and non-conflict resolutions. (Parks, "Interview")

The human rights defender's narrative shares many characteristics with those by the authors in *Revolution by Love*. There is a faith in social media to expose the truth of a situation and garner international support. There is also a faith that activism can act as a moral force to produce necessary political change. There is a belief that the citizens in the country share a common value to live in a nonviolent world and lead normal lives.

What is not part of the narrative is a faith in the possibility of Syria continuing on within its established borders. Today, reluctantly and with remorse, this individual has diminished hope for a unified restored Syria under the control of a democratically elected government. Indeed, with colonial borders being redrawn, with Syria becoming a battleground for Western global power struggles, and in a position where activists are "weak," "very weak," the individual has articulated the need for a new vision of "states" to be produced that seemingly rely less on Western(ized) visions of a political order of nation-states in service of the West. Instead of propping up such a network of nation-states, a new rhetorical and political model should work to tame the violence, eliminate the barbarous acts of too many of the principal actors, recognize the legitimate claims of unrecognized populations for governmental and territorial status, and restore a semblance of hope to the region and those who live there. This may or may not result in a "nation-state" named Syria. Most importantly, at this political juncture, this nuanced rhetoric of human rights must be developed so as to navigate a narrow

political space between strategic use of Western visions of democratic and human rights while simultaneously muting the ability of global powers to use this same rhetoric to enforce political and economic solutions on the MENA region. As all of the above has demonstrated, it is a rhetoric that must be connected to bodies that can physically challenge the facts on the ground.

Revolution By Bodies

The above discussion provides two powerful lessons about activism in the current moment: Bodies have returned to the public square. Bodies are surrounded by and enact rhetoric. In the above stories, individuals and collectives positioned themselves not only as part of the public sphere but also as physical entities taking up public space. The bodies were initially drawn together by emergent and traditional activist tools: Cell phones and Facebook; workshops and training sessions; non-governmental agencies and political parties. These individual bodies formed a common "political body" through a rhetoric that framed their actions as well as the counteractions of their opponents. Ultimately, these emergent political bodies demonstrated how a U.S.- and Western-based rhetoric of democracy can both enable protests and generate oppression: the unruly body tortured in the name of nationalist and geopolitical interests. And so, the question emerges: Where is the space, and what is the work, of an unruly rhetoric, of unruly bodies, at the current moment?

In answering these questions, I would argue that an unruly rhetoric cannot draw upon an uncritical sense of U.S. democracy, a rhetoric both invoked and then critiqued in *RBL*. For such a rhetoric is necessarily premised upon the United States' colonialist history in the region—a colonialism that is both geographic and economic. It is a rhetoric, regardless of its perhaps more expansive historical vision, that is now also premised upon the economic and military needs of the United States. It is deployed to justify an essentially imperialist dream premised upon an open market ideology that allows the exploitation of natural resources and of human beings. Such a rhetoric seems to me capable of supporting dictators or democracies with equal enthusiasm from Western powers, often with UN support (either overt or covert).

It is within this context that a post-*RBL* project has emerged. Working with Bassam Alahmad as well as three other Syrian activists, we are developing Syrians for Truth and Justice (STJ), a nonprofit that records the torture experiences of Syrians, some similar, some far worse than the above story. The documentation, however, will cast a much wider net than just nation-state actors. In addition to the Syrian regime, STJ will also record the atrocities of the Free Syrian Army, the PYD (Kurdish Forces), and Daesh/ISIS, among other military and militia forces. As an organization, STJ will not endorse a naïve vision of a "multicultural free space" but embed itself in a reality where minorities are singled out and where religious background or gender identity becomes cause for persecution. Supporting

this work will be a network of citizen journalists in Syria who are documenting the current human rights abuses by all of the above actors.

Unlike the personal narratives of *Revolution by Love*, these stories will serve multiple purposes. A journalistic version of the testimonies and stories will be provided on the STJ website. This information will also be collected and categorized for potential use by nation-states, NGOs, and international human rights organizations and courts as evidence in attempts to seek justice for victims. STJ, that is, will work to integrate its findings into actual UN International Court actions. This same information will, we hope, be used to support a series of gatherings (or workshops) among Syrians both within and outside the country to begin a dialogue on the future of the terrain named "Syria," but which exists now only as a battlefield for global power struggles. These workshops will ask what a future society might look like, what values it might inhabit, what it might understand as its "borders."

Ultimately, I believe the United Nations should not become the assumed framework through which a collective future is imagined—particularly as new political structures such as the Democratic Federal System of Northern Syria continually emerge from within the borders of Syria/Iraq/Turkey.[10] For while it is strategic to call upon the U.N. International Court to punish perpetuators of human rights abuses, there also must be a strategy that will support the creation of new forms of political collectives that perhaps transcend current understandings of "nation-states" and their relationship to current hegemonic powers. This is particularly the case if new borders, new "nations," are to be constituted, which can move the Arab Spring activism from its initial hope and current conflicts to a newly restructured world order.

Here the work of Michael Lowy's framing of nationalism is useful to consider. Rather than seeing nationalist claims based upon an essentialized sense of soil or blood (as at times invoked in *RBL*), claims to national status, he argues, can be premised on the right of historic communities to self-determination (79). Under this logic, self-identified political collectives could claim a right to a legal status that could stand in contradistinction to the needs of the global powers, often enacted by the United Nations, or regional powers such as Israel. That is, the individuals and collectives that have inhabited "Syria" would be seen as having a right to imagine their own collective future outside of existing claims by third parties and international systems of governance. In casting a rhetoric for the current moment, one that pushes against human rights abuses and toward a future marked by new forms of "borders," then, this seemingly contradictory rhetoric of working within and against the current nation/international political structure must be developed.

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10. Here it should be noted that this new model does not imply that new governance structures within the existing borders of Syria are impossible, nor that recognition of historic communities within its borders cannot be negotiated or recognized under the correct politically negotiated system.

For ultimately, this new rhetoric works to move beyond international, national, and regional bodies, toward a deep engagement with the formation and reformation of communities within the context of their right of self-determination. This rhetoric recognizes an ever-forming sense of continuity and identity by communities, which necessarily means the consideration of new forms of political organization, neither nation nor United Nations, but bodies and coalescing political bodies forming under an expansive vision of human rights liberated from "nation-state border" restrictions. In many ways, the attempt, in such a project, is to achieve a revolution that yet has no model because it imagines an international definition of human rights that moves the discussion of rights within existing nations to the populations whose identity has suffered most under previous attempts at national unity or colonialist nation building. It is a vision of regionalism (invoking Spivak's articulation of this concept) that works to articulate new subjectivities representing a diversity of identities under different democratic governmental/political regionalist structures—structures that do not have to align with U.S. interests to maintain power, structures that do not need the U.N. "sanction" to be seen as legitimate entities.[11] In recognizing the destruction of (neo)colonial borders, this rhetoric calls for a new political landscape to emerge.

It is, perhaps, a rhetorical reach to frame the STJ project in such a bold fashion. In reality, the project is the work of five individuals, operating within an international context replete with cross-border and intra-border violence, the ongoing persecution and political exile of hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees, and acting within the global rivalry among the United States, Russia, and Iran. But sometimes, the power of rhetoric (however small its instantiation) lies in its ability to point bodies toward a utopian future that transcends the brutality of the present moment.

And in such work might be the beginnings of a truly unruly rhetoric.

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11. See Gaytri Spivak and Judith Butler, *Who Sings the Nation-State*?

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Chapter 10. Syrians for Truth and Justice: Articulating Entanglements, Disrupting Disciplinarity

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Producing Truth (Steve Parks)

There is a danger to any conversation focused on how the "truth" is produced.[1]

There is also a danger in our overestimations of our ability, our actual power, as individuals and as a discipline, to create a progressive inclusive "truth" in response to recent national and international events.

I say this because over the past several years, I have been witness to individuals in Syria who have had their truths, their collective ethical values, tortured, gassed, and bombed until the very streets on which those aspirations emerged no longer exist (see Figure 10.1).

With some of these very individuals, I have been part of a collective attempt to confirm this harsh reality. We have documented chemical bombings in Syria that are deliberately timed to inflict pain onto families in local markets. We have recorded the stories of prisoners so closely packed into a prison cell that their sweat formed condensation that rained down on them. We have proven the existence of prison cells deliberately located near the very rooms where torture occurred and where resulting dead bodies were stacked.

Throughout, we have tried to escape the rhetorical box which reduces these individuals to the sum of their torture by projecting the agency of those who still live in their neighborhoods (See Hesford). We have attempted to demonstrate the collective attempt by these individuals to build a future for their families, their neighbors,

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[1]   This chapter originally appeared as "Syrians for Truth and Justice: Articulating Entanglements, Disrupting Disciplinarity," by S. Parks, B. Alahmad, and A. Kumari, in *Making Futures Matter*, edited by R. Wysocki and M. Sheridan, Computers and Composition Digital Press. Copyright University Press of Colorado and Utah State University. Reprinted with permission.

and their land based upon local values of tolerance and rights. Organized as Syrians for Truth and Justice (STJ), we have tried to attach our work to other efforts dedicated to producing a new configuration of moral and political apparatuses that might enable a different constellation of truth upon which to build a more just future.

Figure 10.1 – "An illustration of a torture method. Caption reads: "Shabeh, a common torture method used during interrogations in Syrian Security apparatus. In this method, detainees are suspended by the wrists for several hours, with their feet barely touching the floor, and some other times the feet are left hanging above floor level."

Figure 10.2 – An illustration of a torture method. Caption reads: "Illustration depicting the 'German Chair' torture method. Although there are different testimonies on the position of the chair, all testimonies confirmed that the purpose of this method is bending detainee backward (head towards foot sole) causing awful pain, in addition to severe physical damage, sometimes causing fracture in vertebrae."

Dulab" an Arabic word meaning "Tyre", one of the torture methods used widely in Syrian security" dungeons. This position involves the detainee being forced into a vehicle tyre, then interrogation starts with a shower of curses and beating all over the body using different things like whips, sticks and electric shocks. When detainees are forced into this position, they cannot make any move

Figure 10.3 - An illustration of a torture method. Caption reads: "Dulab, an Arabic word meaning 'Tyre,' one of the torture methods used widely in Syrian security dungeons. This position involves the detainee being forced into a vehicle tyre, then interrogation starts with a shower of curses and beating all over the body using different things like whips, sticks and electric shocks. When detainees are forced into this position, they cannot make any move."

Throughout, I have tried to articulate the conceptual, programmatic, and institutional contexts in which my professional identity exists into these efforts. I have tried to understand how the history of my field, as now embedded across a range of concepts—such as public rhetoric, community partnership, social justice—might allow new possibilities of alliance and effort between myself and Syrian activists. I have tried, that is, to understand how our overlapping waves of effort could be formed into a structural intervention.

Yet, I have often been asked whether such work can honestly be described as within our field: "Isn't it really just activism?" Indeed, as the field moves aggressively to produce its own truth—through concepts such as writing about writing; through expanding apparatuses such as graduate programs and undergraduate majors—this is not simply a rhetorical question. Indeed, as the "we" of our field continues to consolidate, this same "we" needs to consider whose identities, heritages, knowledges, and world views are being actively excluded from our concern. This same "we" needs to consider what is lost when certain projects seem to fall outside of the true work of our field by being considered "primarily activism." And there is a need to be concerned when our field cuts itself off from the political firmament and actions which led to its disciplinary status today, even in the name of seemingly productive possibilities.

Using the creation of STJ, I want to offer an example of how existing within the complexity of a moment and working within the differing subject positions being

offered by disparate institutions and conceptual frameworks, it is possible to build new institutional mechanisms dedicated to the enactment of an inclusive vision of truth and human rights. And in doing so, I want to argue that we are better off as a field deeply committed to the humbling work of producing important 'truths,' than cutting our ethical conscience to open up disciplinary possibilities within a university structure which has historically cared neither for our students nor our labor.

Syrians for Truth and Justice (Steve Parks and Bassam Alahmad)

As a result of the current conflict, Syrian civil society has struggled both in Assad and counter-Assad held regions. Stores, banks, and government offices that typically offer important services have been closed (or destroyed). Networks of communication among Syrians have been damaged. This situation has led to the creation and public circulation of deliberate fake news as well as inaccurate rumors that increase sectarian divisions within communities already suffering from military attacks and terrorist strikes. Within this environment, there was a need to create a verified and trusted source for information that documented to the outside world what was occurring in Syria as well as provide information to local Syrian communities to mitigate against festering tensions.

Syrians for Truth and Justice (STJ) was created with the goal of sponsoring a public rhetoric that provided validated information about the conflict, as well as conducted workshops that can enable local communities to foster a new rhetoric designed to build a future civil society premised on tolerance and equity. The first stage of this work involved activating a network of human rights activists who would work with witnesses to record events as they occurred on the ground in Syria. To this end, STJ created an information network, initially premised on cell phone technology but later expanding to having individuals travel into Syrian war zones. (Here it should be noted that STJ has been unable to provide adequate protection for women activists; thus, the STJ documentation network in Syria is primarily conducted by men). This network works with local residents to report what has occurred in their area. The act of Syrian activists and local residents documenting the acts of violence against their communities provided a legitimacy for STJ's reporting that state-controlled or corporate-controlled media outlets could not possess.

"Truth," however, was not simply the result of eyewitness testimony. With the support of the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Fund, STJ developed a submission protocol for all stories that designated the degree to which the story could be trusted. This system has led to "vetted" stories which document, from the local residents' perspective, instances where military forces from all warring factions have deliberately targeted civilians, violated cease fire agreements, and used internationally banned weapons, such as chemical agents. In the most recent chemical attack on Khan Sheikoun-Idlib, STJ was able to send reporters directly

into the area to confirm that the attack was the result of weapons connected to the Syrian government, to collect video footage of the impact site, and to interview/ videotape resident testimony of the human costs of the attack. This report was then co-published with the Justice for Life Organization and circulated on-line to media outlets, human rights organizations, and public officials. (For an informed discussion of the production of "data," something central to STJ's mission, see Patrick Danner, "Becoming Data.")

Testimony

Based upon this work, STJ has received funding from international foundations to sponsor reconciliation workshops within Syria as well as refugee sites. These workshops will use STJ's data to create a venue in which local residents can begin to piece together how the current conflict has impacted their communities, not only in a material sense of damage and death, but how it has fractured elements of their civil society. Part of this work will be attempting to bring together those residents who supported different factions and militia within the conflict, perhaps even being involved in violent activities against the community. Since the goal is not to romanticize the past, these conversations will necessarily touch upon gender-based and religious-based discrimination occurring long before the conflict. There will then be an attempt to find a pathway forward based upon local values of tolerance and compassion which emerge from local histories of such actions. (For a discussion of how trauma needs to be systemically addressed within our scholarship and classrooms, see Michelle Day, "On Trauma and Safety.")

Hani Zeitani: An Account of a Survivor

Hani Zeitani was a member of the Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression (CMFE), where he produced studies of Syrian press coverage during legislative and presidential elections. As a result of these studies, he was detained and interrogated by Syrian security officials. In 2012, the Interrogation Department at the Military Airport of al-Mezzeh stormed the Center's offices and took Zeitani and other CMFE employees into custody. His detention lasted three and a half years.

Jafal Nofal: An Account of a Survivor Told in Three Parts

Jafal Nofal is a licensed doctor and psychiatrist. He has been detained four times by the Syrian government, initially for his activities as a member of the Communist Labor Party. These detentions led Nofal to reject violence as a means of political change. During the current conflict, Nofal established the Doctors Coordinate of Damascus, which provides aid to peaceful protestors wounded by Assad's forces. He also established the Syrian Youth Assembly, which chanted the original revolutionary slogans associated with the current unrest across several

parts of the city, the period before it turned violent. These activities also resulted in multiple detentions.

Impact

Still, it is difficult to assess the success (or ability) of STJ to support an alternative future. It is still relatively new. It is unclear whether its news stories, testimonies, and reports are gaining access and traction with mainstream/popular networks of information—the evidence in local communities is more evident. Still this much is known:

> Over 900 individuals have read each of STJ's special reports.

> Over 27,000 unique views of STJ videos have occurred on its Facebook in July 2023.

> Almost 15,000 individuals have actually joined its Facebook page, with over 100,000 individuals accessing the site in general.

> STJ has also cooperated with regional media agencies inside and outside of Syria, such as Alwan Radio and Orient Television to support and expand coverage of the conflict.

> International media organizations, such as Radio Netherlands Worldwide, as well as human rights based organizations, such as Justice for Life, have reached out to develop common projects.

> STJ has developed a partnership network that includes the Transitional Justice Coordination Group, the Syrian Center for Justice and Accountability, and the International Federation of Human Rights.

> STJ founders have been asked to appear on CNN international channels, to testify at the United Nations, the European Union, and state-based forums/committees.

Yet, despite this seeming success, in the time it has taken for me to draft this article, 657 more people, approximately 21 people a day, have been killed as a result of the military conflict. Clearly, this "truth," these harsh facts, show the need for more work to be done.

Building Community Partnerships (Steve Parks and Bassam Alahmad)

Syrians for Truth and Justice has been described within this essay primarily as an organization, an existing entity doing documentation and reconciliation work. It

is also, however, a community partnership—the result of individuals, embedded in communities, deciding to find common cause in an effort at structural and political change. In this particular partnership, the goal has been to be part of creating a future for Syrians that "matters," that is premised on concepts of democratic and human rights. Such ambitions, however, emerged and developed within the particular networks in which its original partners circulated, sometimes with and sometimes against existing global patterns of military and economic power. To understand how "futures" are created and ladders to potential success formulated, then, it is important to examine the "moment where all ladders start/In the foul rag and bone shop of the heart" (Yeats).

It is important, then, to begin at the beginning: I met Bassam Alahmad, future co-founder of STJ, at a workshop for Middle East/North African democratic activists focused on the use of narrative in community organizing. We arrived at Syracuse University through different trajectories but imbued with a similar faith in importance of supporting human rights. We also both carried with us an intuitive belief in the need to connect our personal lives to collective efforts for change. Bassam's arrival at the workshop emerged from his work in literature in college and activism on behalf of Kurdish culture. He then moved to working more broadly on human rights in Syria, work that resulted in Bassam being arrested and tortured by Assad's regime. Rather than being reduced to Assad's brutal acts, Bassam escaped to Turkey, developed an idea for a way to continue his work, and journeyed to Syracuse University to enact that plan.

I had found myself conducting this workshop at Syracuse University as a result of a journey that included growing up on military bases as the son of an Air Force Master Sergeant and hearing stories of his missions in Viet Nam and Cambodia. As a child, I walked through military hospitals in the Philippines where the wounded and disabled were resting in the hallways, waiting for a visit from Bob Hope or some other visiting celebrity. Prior to this workshop, I had spent much of my adult life drawing these latent threads together into a critical vision of United States military involvement, its effect on local populations, and the potential power of concepts such as human rights that pointed toward a more humane future.

Now, from the opposite side of the globe, within a network that seemed broadly implicated in the human rights abuses occurring in the Middle East/North African (MENA) region, I stood in the same room with Bassam. As individuals and as part of collectives, we were using the workshop to consider how to respond to the current political crises in the MENA region. As one strategy within the workshop, I had split the participants into small groups, asking each of them to imagine a project that might grow out of the skills acquired that day. Bassam's group developed a book project focused on testimonies by Syrian victims of torture, which I offered to help publish through New City Community Press if completed. It was that moment which initiated our partnership. Over the course of the next eight months, as the conflict in Syria worsened, the book project morphed into a recognition of the need to create Syrians for Truth and Justice.

Yet, if this was the personal beginning of our work together, I now want to use this partnership to highlight more explicitly how our interactions were situated within an existing network of institutional, political, and economic networks that enabled or disabled collaborative possibilities. That is, I now want to tell the story of the creation of STJ as an institution circulating a human rights public rhetoric, which was the result of negotiating the different possibilities existing within a network of material apparatuses (such as government or university institutions) and the conceptual rhetorics that existed within and beyond such institutions. While not strictly a "new materialist study of entanglements," I want to broadly invoke such a framework to highlight how Bassam and my own identity acted as collective nodal point which allowed new truth mechanisms, such as STJ, to emerge. (For a discussion on how this strategy intersects with "new materialism," see Chris Scheidler's "Making Future Space").

With this in mind, I want to return to and expand upon some of the conceptual and institutional networks that existed prior to working together. Currently, I am a cis-gendered, abled-bodied, White male with United States citizenship living in Philadelphia and—at that time—working at Syracuse University. My intellectual/political work involves community partnership and organizing within local communities. I have not been to Syria. I have no cultural or familial relationship to Syria. And I do not speak Arabic or Kurdish. My primary relationship to this region prior to knowing Bassam emerged from stories told by my father's military friends. Bassam was defined as Kurdish by the Assad state, only gaining official Syrian citizenship near the outset of the current civil war (despite living in the territory called Syria his whole life). As noted above, he worked as a human rights defender in Damascus, prior to his being arrested and tortured. He is now a refugee in Istanbul, which is undergoing its own political transformation. He speaks Kurdish, Arabic, and English. Prior to the conflict, he had travelled to numerous countries. These different identity networks offered different affordances and restrictions for our work together. For instance, as a United States citizen, I have travelled to approximately ten European countries as a "United States professor," having travelled previously as part of a military family. To leave Turkey currently, Bassam often has to have me, as a United States-based STJ Board member, validate the reason for his trip. In this case, my national/state identity, and perhaps academic credentials, "authorized" his travel. Yet, at other moments, Bassam's "Syrian" identity (not necessarily his Kurdish heritage) has brought Middle Eastern/North African allies into our work in ways my United States identity/location could not achieve.

As we began to develop STJ, then, there was a need to develop language which would draw together Bassam's resources as a human rights activist and my own resources as community partnership advocate to create arguments to secure funding from foundations or government agencies. In the beginning, our strategy echoed (worked within) the language of community literacy partnerships now placed in the Syrian context. There was a focus on collecting testimony,

publishing, and circulating victim insights, and, thus, providing a platform for marginalized individuals/communities to be heard. There was, then, a latent sense of community change based upon models within the field of composition/ rhetoric. Yet because it emerged from a States-based disciplinary enterprise, I would argue such rhetorical models imagined a local population rooted within a certain geography; it imagined a sense of the state, with recognized borders, where within that space there was some semblance of a free press and a protection of speech; finally, there was often an implicit sense of nationalism or appeals to a public "citizenship," or civic action, that spoke implicitly to a "higher ideal" of civil society with the United States as an implicit model.

This combination of human rights/disciplinary frameworks was challenged as actual grant money began to move through the work of STJ. At the outset STJ had no legal status. Initial grant funds had to be held by Syracuse University, given my identity as a faculty member. Within the University, the formal system of budget keeping works within a paradigm of an individual being geographically located within a state, possessing identification from that state, and being networked into the financial systems of that state—a bank or credit union. Yet, many of the individuals helping to form STJ had fled Syria for Turkey or Jordan. They did not always have the required paperwork. Nor, given the complex politics within Turkey and the MENA region, did these individuals necessarily want US dollars entering their bank accounts.

Here it is worth noting again that STJ is registered in Turkey, a decision made prior to the recent government crackdown. For a period, the United States was considered a possible registration site, but United States foreign policies (and now Trump) coupled with the registration being so far geographically from the crisis, removed it as a possibility. Now, with the post-coup political situation in Turkey, increased fees are being applied to non-profits, which threaten our sustainability. There has also been a political crackdown on dissidents, professors, and protestors. The United States is still not a viable alternative, again think Trump, but we are exploring whether a state government exists in Europe that will allow STJ, and its activities, to claim a legal status and receive funds. Here, the very geographic state identity of its founders (Syrian and American) now becomes the very reason why some states might deny its entry as a legal civil society entity. (For a discussion on how "mangle" might be a productive lens through which to view this partnership, see Layne Porta Gordon's "Transformation and Agency in Activist Scholarship.")

To successfully build STJ, then, it was necessarily to understand our identities as enabled by a series of conceptual/institutional overlaps which opened up possibilities for the creation of STJ, as its own nodal point of redistribution of possibilities. In this sense, the concept of "community," as a generalized concept, had to be particularized within the material practices through which it was instantiated within an institution or institutional network. These material practices, such as budget processes or travel documentation, had to brought into alignment, if only momentarily, to allow passage of STJ's conceptual framework across seeming

borders. And it was only this particularized vision of community and expansive vision of "entanglements" in our work that allowed STJ to ultimately emerge as its own institution with material practices—the practices of Syrians documenting the human rights abuses in their neighborhoods, then using that same documentation to rebuild.

By working within and through an unarticulated network of possibilities, STJ became articulated into reality.

Disrupting Disciplinarity

A consistent theme across many of the essays in this collection is entanglements (Sheridan). Those moments where we cannot but be implicated in oppressive narratives (Pimentel) and where we must strategize to build an alternative ontology within an activist ecology (Rhodes). While this essay has been more colloquial in its use of the term "entanglements," somewhat based on the work of Karen Barad, the intention was to explore what networks our discipline might understand themselves as always already existing within; what assemblages, both sedimented and emergent, might it imagine as the field of its activity. This essay has been an attempt to answer such questions as: Is the work of STJ really the work of composition and rhetoric? Why not just take up activism? And this essay has implicitly argued that such a question is a desire to articulate our discipline out of socio-political contexts. It is asking us to pivot into a field where writing teachers focus on writing, or as mentioned at the beginning of this piece, one might even say focus on writing about writing.

Yet, such a pivot ignores how the sheer fact of essays for a collection on rhetoric and composition (let alone a conference dedicated to them) is dependent on the work of our elders, such as Black, Latino, LGBTQ, working-class, Asian American, Indigenous, and disabled activists who literally entangled their bodies into the apparatus of the university. Elders who demanded an accessible education for all students as well as courses and programs which spoke to the intellectual and moral heritages in which their identity was fostered (see Kynard, "'I Want to be an African'" and *Vernacular Insurrections*; Smitherman; Parks). And we cannot but be aware that many of the very bodies that made events like this possible are still systematically and institutionally blocked from taking full advantage of this legacy of public and institutional activism. So, we would argue, that yes, such activism concerning human rights based on localized histories was, is, and always should be an inherent part of composition and rhetoric.

We would further argue that to disentangle ourselves from the global context—except for the production of rhetorical analysis of discursive structures—is to give ourselves a moral alibi, dressed in cloaked professionalism that allows for the continued and systemic human rights abuses by the United States and other global powers. (And if this is particularly true in the Middle East and North Africa, it is equally true in the legacy of colonialism which covers the ground on

which we walk every day.) What is the sense of privilege that understands acting against the immorality of Assad's brutality as not part of our profession? Why does the "disciplinary we" being produced for "scholars" and "teachers" in our field get a pass? Why does this "disciplinary we" become allowed to disentangle itself in the name of professionalizing the writing classroom when other bodies are being entangled in brutal and inhuman systems?

For as we draw from the work of elders, we understand public rhetoric not as an object of study, but an enactment designed to alter oppressive apparatuses; community not as a romanticized whole, but a constellation of interests attempting to alter the micro-material practices which currently exclude but which can be transformed into openings for new possibilities; and partnership, not as an act of benevolence, but as a collective project from which new insights and skills can be produced. And across all these domains, we can see how we were always already enacting our field within an international terrain marked by both Indigenous and colonialized legacies. With Kynard ("Teaching While Black"), then, we can begin to recognize the contours of White United-States/Eurocentric privilege (too often framed in ableist terms) and perhaps, strike a blow against it. (For a discussion of how we too often work within ableist paradigms when announcing progressive disciplinary projects, see Caitlin Ray, "The Shit that Still Haunts Us: Disability in Composition and Rhetoric Research." We are grateful for how her essay allowed us to see such limitations in this essay.)

Yet here is the sad truth. Much of what we have just said, much of the work of building STJ, much of our colleagues' activism, is not considered the work of composition and rhetoric. Consider graduate education. All too often, graduate students are taught to write for academic journals; not how to use their academic knowledge to right systemic wrongs. They are too often taught their labor is valuable only in the classroom, not in the community. They are taught history through James Berlin, not through the activism of the Latinx, Black, Queer, or Native American caucuses. And they are taught how to talk to administrators, not to the public activists, policy makers, and international human rights advocates.

We would go even further here and argue our graduate programs actually de-skill committed individuals in the name of their only learning how to work in writing classrooms. My own graduate education (Parks) provided almost none of the skills needed for the work described above. And while we all need to work for a more just labor system within the university (see Schell/Stock), preparing students with skills that seemingly only have value within that currently unjust labor system seems wrong—particularly when we often sell that future in mantles of activism and justice. If we claim to be a socially-committed discipline, if we recognize the activism that was a fundamental foundation to our field, then we also need to claim the responsibility of fully preparing our students to take on such work in writing program and in public writing projects.

So, yes, it is true, much of the work discussed in this essay, and many of the individuals highlighted, are not seen as being entangled in the work of

composition and rhetoric. And what, we wonder, does that say about the future of our discipline?

Epilogue

When I Am Overcome with Weakness

by Najat Abdul Samad
Trans. Ghada Alatrash

When I am overcome with weakness, I bandage my heart with a woman's patience in adversity.

I bandage it with the upright posture of a Syrian woman who is not bent by bereavement, poverty, or displacement as she rises from the banquets of death and carries on shepherding life's rituals. She prepares for a creeping, ravenous winter and gathers the heavy firewood branches, stick by stick from the frigid wilderness. She does not cut a tree, does not steal, does not surrender her soul to weariness, does not ask anyone's charity, does not fold with the load, and does not yield midway.

…

I bandage my heart with the determination of that boy they hit with an electric stick on his only kidney until he urinated blood. Yet he returned and walked in the next demonstration.

I bandage it with the steadiness of a child's steps in the snow of a refugee camp, a child wearing a small black shoe on one foot and a large blue sandal on the other, wandering off and singing to butterflies flying in the sunny skies, butterflies and skies seen only by his eyes.

I bandage it with December's frozen tree roots, trees that have sworn to blossom in March or April.

I bandage it with the voice of reason that was not affected by a proximate desolation.

I bandage it with veins whose warm blood has not yet been spilled on the surface of our sacred soil.

I bandage it with what was entrusted by our martyrs, with the conscience of the living, and with the image of a beautiful homeland envisioned by the eyes of the poor.

I bandage it with the outcry: "Death and not humiliation."

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Chapter 11. Of Rights Without Guarantees: Friction at the Borders of Nations, Digital Spaces, and Classrooms

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Ahmed Abdelhakim Hachelaf
Generations for Peace

It has become a truism that over the past decade, many countries in the Middle East and North Africa have been in a period of political transition towards (or perhaps away from) democratic structures.[1] Within that truism, we believe, has often rested a false sense that the United States is somehow not also in a similar state of transition, not involved in a movement towards (or away from) its own democratic heritage. The election of Donald Trump has surely changed this sense of stability. Today, a shadow of authoritarianism lingers over both regions. Thus, despite one of us hailing from Algeria and the other from the United States, we now find ourselves consistently invoking a similar mission for education—the creation of classrooms focused on concepts of civic leadership and human rights that can support democratic social/ political change within our respective nations. And we find ourselves consistently wondering how, despite geographical distances, we might combine our pedagogical efforts to confront authoritarian practices, enabling the next generation of democratic leaders and activists to see themselves in alliance with other such advocates across the globe.

Our collective hopes are occurring within a disciplinary moment where the ability of social/ digital technology to support such transnational pedagogies is often also optimistically aligned with arguments about the creation of new politically liberatory spaces for those involved (Rice and St. Amant). Within this framework, arguments about a hybrid embodiment have also emerged, where digital spaces become linked to off-line activist practices for expanded democracy in both local communities and national contexts (Bridgman; Ghonim). Experience has taught us, however, that national, digital, and personal borders are not so easily crossed (Scott and Welch); that democratic alliances are not so easily embodied (Parks, "Sinners"); and that concepts of "justice," "progress"

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and "rights" exist within a pluriversality of histories and standards (Mignolo and Walsh). Indeed, we have come to believe it is in the friction caused by such transnational dialogues, in the differences in technology access, in educational framings, and in politics through which the seeds of an alternative future will first be articulated; and it is in the resulting locally embodied conceptions of activism that actual change will first emerge (even when such embodiments "contradict" political framings of our global allies.) (See Lawton, Cairns, and Gardner; McDonough and Feinberg; Demaine).

It is within this contradictory and complex context, then, that we intend to discuss the genesis of the Twiza Project. Initially premised on the imagined ability of a seemingly seamless transnational digital space to foster an online dialogue focused on justice, rights, and democracy, our initial partnership (out of which Twiza would emerge) hoped to link such dialogues to the work of writing classrooms already focused on civic engagement/leadership. We intend to use the hope that initially informed the beginnings of our work to discuss how the reality of differing political contexts and traditions provided an alternative sense of what a transnational dialogue might produce among students. To do this work, we will begin with an overview of how composition/rhetoric has imagined its relationship to concepts of justice, rights, and progress. We will then provide some background on Algeria's political/education context. At that point, we will discuss the experience of our linked classes, ending with how this experience led us to create (and then expand) the Twiza project.

Ultimately, we will argue that while the instantiation of such an alternative transnational framework might create unresolvable contradictions for those involved—disrupting the idea of borderless space—it simultaneously points to the demanding work that must be undertaken. Our current work, then, has turned to creating out of such inherent contradictions the possibility of a relationality and collaboration under the banner of multiple forms of "truth" and "traditions" and pointed toward multiple forms of justice (Mignolo, "Delinking"). It is that shift in action that we hope to document in what follows.

Justice, Democracy, Rights, and Progress

It is difficult to announce an origin point for when the field of composition and rhetoric associated itself with concepts of justice, democracy, rights, and progress. While it is possible to claim roots as far back as ancient Greece (Corbett and Connors), for our purposes we will situate this claim within the post-World War II period in the United States, when there was an attempt at a national consolidation on the meaning of "democracy," as well as its consequent exportation as an economic/political model globally. As has been discussed elsewhere (Parks, *Class Politics*), this initial post-war articulation of our field as a nationalized entity is best encapsulated in the 1960 NCTE *The Teaching of English and the National Interest*, a document which positions the field as fully supportive of the

Cold War politics of the time. Indeed, even when the field later drew upon social movements to create progressive classrooms as a counter-model to such politics, invoking the Southern Christian Leadership Council's Civil Rights campaign and Students for a Democratic Society's anti-war activism, such pedagogies often remained predominantly couched in a sense of American exceptionalism—often eliding or misrepresenting anti-racist/anti-colonial framed movements, such as elements of Black Power (Kynard, *Vernacular*) and later stages of anti-war activism (Parks, *Class Politics*).

Indeed, as a model to justify the simultaneous critique of U.S. democracy from the inside (Civil Rights Movement/anti-war protests) while also being broadcast as an international model of democratic idealism (Marshall Plan, Peace Corps, etc.), this framework of democracy, rights, and justice was seemingly able to balance contradictory forces, demonstrating how the US could critique its own democracy while "fighting" for democracy elsewhere. For in each case, the field of struggle focused on reforming nation-state structures (U.S. government and Viet Nam) within a sense of the American "ideal." And within the field of composition and rhetoric, it is possible to understand many of the field's progressive turns during this period as occurring within this "rights" framework—consider the Students Right to Their Own Language, an appeal for including more voices in classrooms/society within an argument about the "promise" of the United States (Parks, *Class Politics*).

We choose this moment, then, to highlight the extent to which the field of composition and rhetoric in its modern period initially established its democratic ethos (and sense of rights) within a particular sense of "justice." Here we are aligning our argument with Nancy Fraser, who has argued that appeals to justice have typically occurred within nation-state structures where the "who" making the appeal was assumed to be the citizen, and the endpoint was either economic improvement or cultural recognition by the nation-state (Fortunes). (Again, think Students' Right.) In this regard, Fraser stands in relationship to other scholars, such as Wendy Hesford, who understand the concept of "rights" to be premised on the fact of nation-states articulating and enforcing them (Hesford). Working within these scholarly paradigms, we are arguing that justice within our field has been understood as the moment when articulated rights, emerging from contexts of equal/expanding participation (i.e., social movements) are implemented within nation-state contexts.

And if you look at the genesis of justice-oriented service-learning and community partnerships within predominantly White U.S.-based universities (the unique histories of HBCU/HSI/Tribal Colleges excepted; see Sias and Moss for part of this history), there is a clear emphasis on creating programs where formerly under-recognized communities were positioned to argue more effectively for justice, for the right to certain types of economic and cultural participation within assumed nation-state structures (Flower). Parks' own work, along with the powerful work of Paula Mathieu and Eli Goldblatt, might serve as representative

examples. In each case, the discussed projects are pointed toward intervening in local discourses, enmeshed within cultural and legislative power networks, with the aim of opening up participation rights of local communities in public decision-making practices (Mathieu; Goldblatt; Parks, *Gravyland*). This was an important articulation of democracy, rights, and political progress in post-WWII composition/rhetoric. And in the case of Goldblatt and Mathieu, important contributions were made.

Situating our work on democracy, rights, justice, and progress within an historical context, however, also exposes the underbelly of such desires, an underbelly premised on colonialism's drive to define the "world" within a singular framework of what constitutes progress, as well as an economic and knowledge production framework premised on legitimating systemic exploitation of workers, both industrial and rural (Quijano; Spivak). Under this particular articulation of justice, democracy, and rights, for instance, two-thirds of the world were seen as essentially lacking the rhetorical, intellectual, or political skills to successfully integrate themselves into what is defined as a singular, unified concept of "progress"—a progress here defined as nation-states' acceptance (forced or not) of U.S. versions of democracy supportive of global capitalism. And as Hesford has argued, more often than not, arguments to "recognize" or "identify" with victims of human rights abuses, often from failed nation states, are typically premised on these very categories of what counts as "progress" (Hesford). (Our field's accountability in such narratives is a topic for another essay, but we would point you to Mignolo and Walsh for a possible lens of interpretation, as well as the work of Ruiz and Sanchez for how these paradigms have impacted key terms in the field.)

Today, the original post-WWII instantiation of global capitalism, premised on strong nation-states moderating its excesses, has been replaced with a neoliberalism premised on weak nation-states abandoning any role in moderating capitalism as well as any protection of public sectors/workers' rights, all in the name of supporting transnational corporate profit. In such a world, a rhetoric of transnationalism, border crossings, and flows has infiltrated how classrooms are framed as well as how our "justice" work is understood. As Tony Scott and Nancy Welch have argued, one result of a lack of focus on the materiality that produces "open borders" is that our students' "bodies" are being divorced from their "writing," particularly as they are asked to imagine themselves as writers within this new transnational and traveling community (Scott and Welch). Instead of locally situated bodies, their identities become recoded as floating signifiers of the possibility of global communication, seemingly placing them in collaboration and partnership with individuals/communities across the globe (Sanchez, as cited by Scott and Welch). It is out of this context that the imagined hope of "transnational dialogues" appears.

By focusing on the "flow" of voices and ideas, however, Scott and Welsh conclude, our field has turned away from (ignored) the actual bodies that make such "flow" possible—the underpaid workers who mine the minerals which support

cell phones, the non-union workers who have to fix the cables on which conversation travels, and, the nation-states held in an unequal relationship with first-world countries whose citizens (we use that term deliberately) enjoy the benefits of the immediacy of global communication. In such a framework, concepts of "justice" need to be reattached to the embodied needs of these exploited workers; "rights" need to be recast in ways that recognize the transnational community of laborers being exploited; and new models of civic engagement/ democratic activism need to be formulated which can situate students in relation to (and in alliance with) other understandings of what "progress" might entail that support the liberation of locally oppressed bodies across the globe.

Clearly, then, we want to argue that another sense of "rights" and "democracy" is possible, one premised on a community's local and historic practices, drawn from residents' personal experience of living in historically colonized spaces as well as their experience of having their historic spaces colonized through the western models of nation-states existing within a neoliberal global economy. Here we are thinking of the work of Mignolo and Walsh, who argue that there exist regions where, admitting the lack of any pure space, populations have maintained cultural/ethical practices that draw primarily from non-capitalist/colonialist communal standards. As examples of such practices, we would point to the resistance practices of Indonesian communities confronting "loggers" who want to describe the forest as "empty" despite generations of families having practiced traditional farming technologies on that land (Tsing) and to the feminist collective Tejido de Communication para la Verdad y lad Vida, who invoke local concepts of *palabrandar* to resist strategies designed to take their land and co-opt their leadership (Mignolo and Walsh). Focusing on more disciplinary-based research methods, we would point to the work of Ellen Cushman and Lisa King et al., who draw upon Indigenous practices premised on relationality to talk about how Native American communities are structured and should be represented in archives and scholarship (Cushman, "Wampum"; King et al.) and, finally, to the work of Adam Banks and Cristina Kirklighter, who actively listen to the traditions of African American and Latinx communities as guideposts for how to proceed, how to align their work with definitions of progress emerging from the community (Banks; Kirklighter).

For us, the importance of these other models is in their attempt to articulate a sense of rights and political participation that emerges from histories/epistemologies that do not originate within U.S./ European modernist frameworks. In this sense, they are "otherwise," attempting to move toward a relationship with a colonial history instead of existing within such a history, i.e., indirectly invoking liberatory frameworks that participate/emerge from that very colonial history such as "progress," "economic rights," and "globalism." What we are suggesting is that as the field moves toward a sense of itself and its classrooms as "transnational," there is a consequent danger of encoding the colonialist models of "rights" and "democracy" into our students, models which were initially used to steal

land/ resources from existing societies as well as to invoke nation-state models (premised on U.S. versions of democracy) that allowed an elite segment of that society to retain/gain power over the needs of the mass of the population (Butler and Spivak).

Aligned with the work of the above scholars, we argue that a "transnational" disciplinary effort (research, community, and classroom-based) must exist within a "pluriversality" of epistemologies and practices. Such an argument, however, poses questions to a field imagining itself within a "transnational" context but typically deploying U.S.-generated concepts of democracy and state-protected rights:

> How do western-originated concepts of "human rights" fracture when articulated within global contexts? Do these alterations also fracture the meaning of a "transnational" space?

> How might the new forms of relationality created through embodied local histories and epistemologies also potentially reframe the goals of student transnational collaborative dialogue/work?

> How might such relationality be enacted by students outside of the writing classroom in local communities? How do we make sure decoloniality does not become a metaphor instead of an interventionary practice?

> How do such actions stand in relationship to the concepts of rights and democracy that have framed progressive work in composition and rhetoric?

Heading into our collaborative project, these were not the research questions we imagined. Initially, the Twiza project was premised on an Algerian concept closely aligned with a "barn building," where a rural community joins together to build an important structure for a neighbor. The initial thought was that the students in our classroom would mutually build a new, online dialogic space that would enable a common vision across national borders to be developed on the meaning of justice, democracy, and rights—a vision that could then be deployed in local acts against existing cultural and government structures embedded within neoliberal policies.

Just as practice norms theory, however, so implementation humbles hope. And the above questions emerged as each of the students' local and national contexts created friction, demonstrating an inability to create a seamless transnational framework which could circulate online as well as in the streets and neighborhoods of a community. The dream of a unified space, that is, conflicted with the necessity of a pluriversality of knowledges. Traditional disciplinary concepts of dialogue began to falter, demanding that new ones emerge. We ultimately moved

from a modernist-composition premised in post-WWII frameworks to a new space, premised on a pluriversality of possibilities. We are not arguing the project became "decolonial," but rather it began to rest on the edge, the promise, of such options. It is to the importance of that theoretical and political movement that we now turn.

Collective Trauma and the Goals of Democratic Education

Democratic education necessarily occurs in what, to echo John Dewey, might be called the unconscious influences of the environment, the emotional, political, and historical resonances that form a "national identity." Within the context of Algeria, this unconsciousness is infused with a colonial legacy that shapes the inter-relationship of concepts such as identity, knowledge, and heritage, often within the current context of sectarian conflicts. This complicated landscape is further infused with a collective memory of trauma—initially by colonialization, then with the struggle for independence and, most recently, with the violence of the Black Decade, a decade which saw over 200,000 civilians killed and entire villages massacred (Evans and Phillips).[2] Within such a fraught context, the production of a post-colonial education focused on civic engagement and democracy is being articulated within a space where the political borders drawn around the meaning of human rights and democracy has also become a restrictive force to their very implementation, rights being simultaneously announced and rendered mute.

Indeed, such a framing can help us understand the current leadership of President Abdelaziz Bouteflika (elected four times since 1999), who in response to the Black Decade invoked a discourse of reconciliation through initiatives focused on "healing" and "dialogue." That is, the government represented itself as the bulwark against violent and "traumatic" possibilities seemingly inherent in large-scale citizen political participation as well as the endorser of certain limited forms of civic dialogue concerning the future of Algeria. Here it is worth citing the argument of Wendy Hesford, who has argued the image/framework of trauma

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2. For our purposes, it is important to note that the Black Death massacres occurred within the above cited collective historical memory of trauma and violence. As Franz Fanon argues, the impact of trauma and past struggles are defining features in the history of the nation, that such traumas live in the present and define tacitly or explicitly many aspects of the lives of the citizens. In his "Les Damnes de la Terre," Fanon argued that trauma and violence can serve as a unifying force and that, in Algeria, it was the violence that arose in response to the colonists' first violence that mobilized the people, throwing them collectively into "one direction" towards independence (Fanon). Writing decades later, Rahal sees the resort to such violence from that moment onward "as a form of Algerian fatality" (143), a central pillar of national identity. Unlike the independence struggle, then, the violence of the Black Decade became seen as something to be repressed, a symbol of the need to control mass movements for political freedoms which might spin out of control.

often removes the historical complexity of events like the Black Decade, substituting a "universal subject" who is then rescued by Western-originated concepts of human rights, rights often articulated through neo-liberal models of economic growth and governance policies (Hesford). In the case of Algeria, it is possible to understand the move to politically define this historical event as "traumatic" as a means to step outside the complexity of events (which might lead to attribution of guilt for parties involved in the Black Decade) and implement political rights that are framed in the service of such global economic trends.

And here the Algerian Ministry of National Education should be seen as a primary vehicle to instantiate this political and civic culture, using its centralized authority to mandate common curricula as well as standards (and thus civic values) for primary and secondary classrooms across the nation. Within the Algerian education system, for instance, the curriculum is generally geared towards the formation of the citizen, with this term often being preceded by terms such as good, active, decent, responsible, effective, and global (Hachelaf). Yet the Orientation Law of 2008 also situates this "good" citizen within larger national and international contexts that align it with neoliberal frames:

> Since the end of the last millennium, Algeria has undergone rapid transformations at both the political and economic levels: democracy, citizenship, human rights, individual and collective freedoms (which have gradually become concepts in our daily lives), market opening, globalization of the economy, internationalization of information and communication are no longer mere slogans but concrete facts. The task of the school in the face of these developments is essential. In addition to its traditional task of transmitting knowledge, the child should be taught how to become a responsible citizen, able to understand and contribute to the changes in the society in which he /[she] lives.

Within such a context, the "good citizen" becomes the individual who embeds their understanding of political rights with the neoliberal paradigm of market openings and the globalization of the economy. Markers such as race, ethnicity, social class, language, gender become erased within such a national discourse and within such policies of economic liberalization. That is, a focus on the individual, not communal identity, dissipates the importance of collective action for economic/ political change (Brown; Davies). In such a framework, then, Algeria's educational mission is articulated into a global neoliberal identity, with firm parameters on the meaning of democratic activism to produce change.

Both elements of this curriculum (neo-liberal attitudes/limited democratic possibilities) can be seen in two sample student assignments. Consider the following example from an official first-year secondary school which invokes values distant from the traditional and current Algerian culture (Riche et al):

Grown-ups Say Things Like

Speak up
Don't talk with your mouth full
Don't stare
Don't point
Don't pick your nose
Say please
Make less noise

Take your hands off
Shut the door behind you
Stand up straight
Say thank you
Don't interrupt
Stop kidding
Take your elbows off the table
Don't drag your feet.

(*Chivvy* by Michael Rosen)
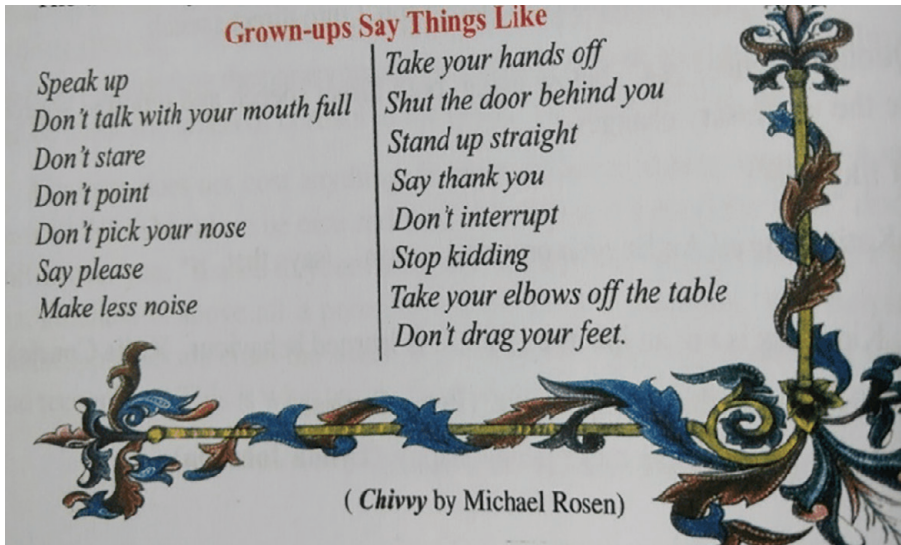
Figure 11.1. Teaching Civic Values, Students' Book: At the Crossroad.

The example of "take your elbows off the table" implies an Algeria where all communities use (or should use) tables, while, in fact, many cultural groups still sit on a carpet to take their dinner. The objective of this "poem" seems to be to socialize learners according to the values of the dominant socioeconomic group or class: those most benefitting from a globalization premised on Western (White) middle class civility (Auerbach). Thus, while it is important to acknowledge progressive trends to introduce global citizenship, through themes such as tolerance and intercultural understanding, it is equally important to understand the economic endpoint of such efforts often work systemically to further divide citizens economically. For, in the model being taught, traditions that are "otherwise" to global capitalism, offering alternative models of community/democracy, are moved to the side in the name of progress. A history of Indigenous communal values captured in a dinner held on a carpet is replaced with a Westernized dinner table.

Within this framework, political critique or civic engagement is also mutated into limited visions of democratic activism. Ideally, that is, a democratic education produces informed citizens with a collective political voice in public life. Yet in one of the few examples of such education in the Algerian curriculum, only limited channels are offered for such public engagement in political change. When students are asked to write a persuasive essay for their imagined campaign to be a mayor committed to reforming corruption (see below), that is, the suggested pathways imagine a "leader" who can dictate solutions, a leader who does not also consider the larger economy of laws/regulations that foster an inequity that works in concert with limited access to networks of power.

> ↗ Think, pair, share ↖
> ● Prepare a short public statement saying what you would do to fight corruption if you were elected mayor of your town. Follow the procedure below.
> ① Individually, jot down ideas about your anti-corruption programme using the following spidermap.

Details: _____

Details: _____

edict stringent regulations

appoint honest civil servants

anti-corruption programme

Details: _____

Details: _____

fight tax evasion

rehabilitate the value of work

Figure 11.2. Teaching political engagement: Students' Book, New Prospects.

That is, how open can an authoritarian system become when considering "corruption"? To what extent might such corruption ensure a continuance in political power at odds with democratic practices and norms? Indeed, within the MENA region, the actual result of a nation's movement toward free market polices has been the creation of a clique of individuals, aligned with the government, who reap the rewards of privatization, further removing the government from being responsive to the will of the people (Achcar). Speaking broadly, then, if neoliberal economics fail to foster actual collective democratic rights and a robust civic culture, longer traditions of communal decision-making/justice might offer an alternative. As evidenced above, however, such alternatives are effectively removed from the curriculum.

Negotiating "trauma" for educators/activists in Algeria, then, means exploring how to ensure such moments are not invoked in support of policies that promise safety at the cost of economic justice. Instead, education should exist within a complex history, one framed upon pre-nationalist traditions and arguments that demonstrate the value of dialogue and engaged citizenship practices to produce peaceful change. And such pedagogies, such curricula, should present an alternative vision that is wide enough for all identities, across Indigenous histories and irrespective of their geographic location or racial/linguistic background, to flourish peacefully in ways separate from economic imperatives. In Algeria—and as will be seen below, the US—educators must work to produce a pedagogy that positions their students not only as "otherwise" to dominant culture but with the tools to foster actual change.

Democratic Work in the École Normale Supérieure, Algeria

It would be incorrect, however, to imagine that such pedagogies are not emerging or already in practice in Algeria. Hachelaf's pedagogy is a case in point. His

classroom practices emerge from a lesson concerning the Arab Awakening: Drastic change can easily be confiscated. As a result, he came to believe the classroom offered a site for sustained support of broader conceptions of civil/civic society. And he came to believe that for such a classroom to be enacted, students needed to become publicly engaged in their own communities. Hachelaf joined the École Normale Supérieure, then, with the aim of training future teachers to show how their classrooms could produce leaders focused on such systemic and sustainable change. That is, he wanted students (both his own and those of the future teachers) to learn that the duties of citizenship transcended the limited visions of civic behavior and democracy dominant in MENA political culture, that if there was to be a counter-balance to authoritarian impulses that currently limit the meaning of good governance in the MENA region, educational institutions could enable a generation to move towards a broader conception of rights and justice than neo-liberal economic/political paradigms allow.

Since that time, Hachelaf has attempted to use the limited autonomy available to him as a university lecturer within a centralized system to design courses focused on producing the next generation of democratic leadership. His courses aim to provide students with a different perspective to reactionary pedagogies (discussed above) that have prevailed within education, where curricula objectives were too often intended to integrate students into the economic limitations of a "post-traumatic" state. In that sense, his class strives to be a reflective space to create a counterbalance focused on democratic education, civic engagement, and participatory leadership. Here the classroom is understood as a micro-version of the larger society, where teachers and students inhabit (and are not divested of) their personal, political or Indigenous identities. The goal is to see how, out of an alliance of such identities, collectivities for change can be created.

With this in mind, one of the key concepts discussed is power distribution. In Hachelaf's university classes, students engage in reflection activities such as designing circle diagrams representing factors such as gender, age, tribal, and sectarian affiliations that dis/able them from moving freely up social, economic, and political ladders. The discussion leads to a deep understanding of how the classroom is also socially stratified, opening up insights into how seemingly small pedagogical policies that teachers feel are benign or even good teaching practices may be harmful. For instance, a teacher who decides to design a social media project or a website to exchange course materials might hinder a segment of the classroom population that lives in an area without access to internet, thereby privileging those already favored by society. Echoing Paulo Freire, Hachelaf's class comes to understand that being critical in everything teachers do as educators forms the first step to a democratic and just society.

Hachelaf also creates spaces where teacher authority can be challenged. Outside the classroom, he encouraged future teachers to support and allow their students to form civil society groups. To this end, he presided and founded an "English Club" that offered students opportunities not only to practice this second

language but also to debate local and international issues through student-student debates, excursions, magazines, environmental campaigns, and mock United Nations sessions. Unlike the traditional Algerian university classroom, where lecture dominates, these clubs provided the give-and-take of public debate, allowing students to enact the forms of critical and civic dialogue discussed in class through the lens of their own personal/cultural/regional histories. Here it should be noted that such clubs are highly unusual within Algerian universities. And it is also important to note that these École Normale Supérieure student clubs have inspired similar efforts at dozens of campuses in central/southern Algeria. The growth of such clubs represents a proliferation, then, of spaces for civic debate to occur outside the knowledge frameworks of the mandated curriculum and other than the accepted viewpoints taught in schools.

We recognize that such efforts may appear somewhat ordinary to teachers outside of the Algerian context. They may not appear to enact the political work stated as necessary in the earlier section of this article. We want to highlight, however, that framing the work of teachers as facilitating students learning collective leadership skills, asking students to understand themselves as citizens fostering public debates outside of accepted paradigms, all within classrooms situated within a community context, are seen as radical departures by those in authority. In fact, in response to these practices, colleagues placed serious pressure on the university to re-assert traditional teaching models focused on teacher-centered/lecture-based pedagogies, their argument being that it was not possible to share power with students and effectively teach.

The clubs were seen as particularly objectionable as they allowed students to enact genres of debate and discussion that stood outside of accepted civil dialogue, moving beyond limited notions of what it meant to be an active citizen. Parents and authorities actually challenged these efforts, often seeking to eliminate any form of support. Unsurprisingly, then, when university students recently went on strike for increased educational/financial support, they were harassed. They were picked up, driven into the country, and left there to fend for themselves. Perhaps unlike the US, civic education in Algeria is not so much seen as neoliberal volunteerism but as a political commitment to citizen's collective rights to organize and reform civic culture. And as the recent strike has shown, perhaps somewhat expectantly, such an education is seen as both disruptive and dangerous for those involved.

Diminishing Discord at Syracuse University

An English Club?

When Hachelaf visited Parks' advanced writing class at Syracuse University, Donald Trump had been President-elect for approximately eight weeks. In the class period immediately after Trump's election, a somber air of trauma and fear seemed dominant. In a course that had been focused on social movements, from

Students for a Democratic Society to Black Lives Matter, the fact of President Trump seemed to take the wind out of our discussions, leaving many rudderless as they looked ahead. Hachelaf's visit, then, focusing on the radical nature of sponsoring English Clubs in Algeria at first, seemed out of place, too moderate, not speaking to the current U.S. context.

It was only in the following weeks that Hachelaf's argument about creating alternative spaces for democratic practices and values gained increased relevance—particularly as proposed travel bans and ICE actions swept across the nation. Where, Parks' students wondered, would be the safe spaces through which democratic dialogues could be fostered, expanded upon, and eventually acted upon in the public sphere? In many ways, it seemed to Parks that the students were adopting Nancy Fraser's argument (an assigned text) about the need for subaltern counter-publics as a tactic to create collective platforms for intervening in dominant discursive political structures ("Rethinking"). In Fraser's case, the focus was on women's rights; for Parks' students, the focus was on creating arguments about the political rights of all individuals in the US, regardless of race, heritage, gender, or legal status. At that point, Parks' students could not be aware of future policies, such as those which would separate refugee children from their parents at the U.S. border. They could not be aware of the future need for such expansive defenses of political/human rights.

Yet in those immediate weeks after the election, and echoing Hachelaf's vision, the classroom became a space in which to frame concerns, to seek support and consensus on the value of collective deliberation, and to use the pedagogical space as an incubator towards a pathway forward. As discussion continued, it became clear that some of the students' everyday experiences of racist encounters, sexual harassment, and anti-"immigrant" attacks demonstrated that the pre-Trump era was less a pivot point than a moment exposing deep historical "wounds," suggestive of some alignment with Mignolo's invocation of "colonial wounds" ("Delinking"). That is, it became clear that the public rhetoric on campus (perhaps in the larger culture) that framed these current encounters as "traumatic" had smoothed over a complexity that spoke to different historical legacies of colonialism and slavery into which the legacies and unique trajectory of sexism was often articulated. As both a means to frame their own experience, and a way to build a different collective identity together, "trauma" came to be seen as an inadequate conceptual tool for forward movement.

The writing produced for the remainder of the course can best be described as uneven as students struggled to locate themselves within that current moment, attempting to reinvent the history we had studied around political activism—with its own legacy of blind spots—into a productive space for dialogue. Academic theories intended to help students "invent the university" were twisted into "inventive" strategies to protest campus culture. And visual rhetoric assignments would be used to bring these conflicting histories, theories, and experiences into clashing images that attempted to articulate a future in which their voices would

be heard. Unlike many of Parks' courses, which often include producing a publication, none of this work would circulate outside class. For many of the students, in fact, there was a sense that there was no space on campus that would move their fledgling formation of an intersectional alliance and discourse into productive action. (On a local level, the students had seen such a formation at collective action against oppressive university structures, the General Body, be threatened with expulsion in the midst of a sit-in at the Chancellor's office building [Mettus]).

It was not until the following academic year, almost eight months into Trump's presidency, that a vehicle emerged through which such student dialogues might be supported and concepts of intersectional alliance/community building developed. And in many ways, it was the digital version of Hachelaf's English club. Parks' new course was an advanced rhetoric/composition course focused on the rhetorics and practices of human rights advocacy, a course which included partnerships with local and international human rights activists. The local partner was a refugee resettlement project, where the students would work with young adults to record their experiences of living in Syracuse. Instead of Hachelaf, the international partner was based in a different MENA country and hoped to establish projects which foster progressive discussions about education and community building. Before the class even began, however, the MENA partner had to withdraw over concerns about the nature of such work in the current context of her country. Concepts of rights and justice, it seemed, did not flow smoothly across borders. Indeed, the classroom (which consisted of many students from the earlier class) had become enmeshed in global struggles over the meaning of education, human rights, democratic dialogue, and political progress. The question became how to respond. Enter Hachelaf, his students, and the seeds of the Twiza Project.

The Hopes, Reality, and Post-Trauma Work of the Twiza Project

This article began with our belief that that while each of us work within different geographical locations, we began to see ourselves as facing a similar pedagogical issue: how to create a classroom which would enable a more expansive nuanced sense of civil/civic society as the basis for public engagement and activism. And as our conversations continued, we began to realize that both of our classes appeared to be situated within contexts publicly framed as "traumatic," the limitations of which our students were trying to move beyond. When the withdrawal of the first MENA partner opened the opportunity to join our classes together, our hope was that such seemingly similar experiences might generate a virtual community that could lead to productive and material work by our students on expanding civil society rights/practices in their local communities, one that supported students attempting to create a "non-traumatic" future.

It is important to note that unlike the Twiza Project that emerged later, our initial collaboration was decidedly ad hoc. Parks' course had already started; Hachelaf's would begin in several weeks. Hachelaf's students, who initially would respond as a collective group, not as part of an assigned class, would move to working primarily through a classroom focused on education theory; Parks' students would continue to work outside the classroom with the previously mentioned refugee project and focus on literacy theory. In addition to different readings, there was also little to no coordination between the classes in terms of assignments. In fact, as the collaboration among students began, Parks altered the assignment expectations to include the work of developing specific writing prompts to initiate dialogues as well as building a website to archive the dialogues. At the outset, it was thought common prompts would be used by all students, including those in the refugee project. This idea was abandoned as it became clear the intensity of the U.S./Algerian student dialogue organically moved to a focus on the situated nature of human rights discourse (see below).

To meet this need for shifting and emerging strands of conversations, Parks' students developed an online discussion tool using the platform Discord, which is more typically used as a gaming platform. Discord enabled the possibility of group conversations, specific topic conversations, and "closed" conversations among select students. The goal here was to enable a discussion on "human rights" featuring all the students in our class. As specific side discussions emerged, a unique conversational thread would be developed, and, when necessary, "closed conversations" would be created for students who wanted to speak privately with each other. In this sense, the discussion seemed premised on a concept of rights that was defined as transnational at its foundation—a belief in a common set of values and practices from which the needs of local circumstances could then be analyzed and public engagement created.

The initial prompt (used by all students in all locations) to introduce students to each other was "Describe a meal which represents your country"; this somewhat broad framing changed as U.S./Algerian dialogues became focused on the students' current educational and political situations. At this point, abandoning "prompts," the conversations began to focus on questions such as "What are human rights? What do they look like?" Perhaps if the course had been more formally prepared, different conversations might have occurred. But within this loose structure, Parks' students almost instinctively entered such a discussion focused on the possibilities inherent in the new transnational dialogic "space" to support human rights—a move Hesford would have probably predicted. For instance, one student wrote:

> When I think of a basic human right, I think about freedom of speech. I'll admit, being in a first world country, I take food, water, clothing, shelter and medical care for granted. However, the reason why I think that the freedom of speech should be an essential human right is because of what this Discord symbolizes.

> We are all equals here, with no one voice being treated as "better" or "more valuable" than another. We all exist in a community that talks about huge global issues that need solutions. These issues have immense challenges caused by the powerful and the wealthy who want to keep the status-quo. I can't imagine how much harder it would be without the ability to communicate with one another. An example I would give would be North Korea (as it's covered in the media today). It's described as a place where the Kim family have reign over a starving country, filled with people who cannot express their wishes for a change in government. It doesn't surprise me that North Korean citizens have fled for China or South Korea when the rights to protest or democratically vote on policies don't exist. I can only imagine what North Korea would look like right now if the Kim Il Sung (the first premier and dictator of the country) had established freedom of speech and democracy for its citizens. Long story short, so many ideas, talents and energy can work together in incredible ways when everyone is allowed to speak freely and their communication is valued equally. (SU Student)

Here the framing of digital space as a utopic geography of equality is clearly articulated. Such a framing is immediately complicated by other Syracuse students who contrast the imagined free digital space of the dialogue with individuals who lack the right to a good education in "real life." This alternative framing of unequal access to (or implementation of) rights within the United States, however, is then presented not so much as a result of the failings of the US but as individual communities not valuing such rights: "My community only had families like mine who gave their children no choice but to graduate high school and earn a higher education. So, I can't even imagine growing up and education not being a priority" (SU Student). "Other" countries are then discussed as lacking similar commitments to fundamental human rights such as education. A Syracuse student, who was working with a child that was a refugee from North Africa and now living in Syracuse, wrote: "One of the students I was with pointed out that having a free education was one thing that she didn't have back in her native country. Ignorantly, I never really thought about all kids not granted a free education."

The failings of these other countries to support human rights was then expanded to political rights. After a discussion on how the United States has expanded voting rights, for instance, a Syracuse student writes: "There are plenty of countries who do not encourage or allows [sic] voting by either/any people at all or just a select few. . . . A government must create opportunities and regulations that favor all, not just one person or group." This final comment not only erases the current efforts to deny citizens voting rights in the US but also frames the current commitment to voting rights in the US in terms that slide into neoliberal

arguments about government creating "opportunities" to enact rights, not guarantees of such rights being enacted/enforced. If the US is marked by communities who fail to take advantage of their rights, "other countries" are marked, then, by the failure to "encourage" or even "allow" such rights.

To some extent, this framing of rights confirms Hesford's argument that human rights discourse tends to work on a model of "empathy." In using this term, Hesford implies not only personal concern for individuals who are denied voting in other countries but also an implied judgment that such failures speak to a lack of communal values and functioning governments. Note the empathy of the Syracuse student towards the young refugee child coupled with a judgment about her country, for instance. There is, Hesford argues, an implicit value judgment with echoes colonialist arguments that regions such as MENA countries lack certain Western traditions, traditions which might be profitably exported to these regions—perhaps with a dash of economic exploitation as well. Indeed, what this set of student comments demonstrates is how the embedding of such arguments within a transnational digital space demonstrates how such Western values are now being spread across regions. To reiterate the comment that began student discussion: "We are all equals here, with no one voice being treated as 'better' or 'more valuable' than another. We all exist in a community that talks about huge global issues that need solutions" (Syracuse student).

Here it should be noted that in the opening moments of the dialogues, students participating from other universities, such as the University of Djelfa students, also stepped into this discursive structure, this habitus of human rights. These students affirmed both the empathetic narrative as well as invocations of "trauma" from which citizens have a right to be protected. One student wrote:

> Human rights cover all aspects of life, but for me one right stands for them all, and that is the right to live. Some people can't even dream about healthcare or education, their only wish is to live to see another day. No one has the right to take an innocent life, but that's something we hear every day especially in wars or other places where people are killed for no reason whatsoever. My heart aches whenever I see the news, or just hear about an incident in my city. We all have the right to feel safe, to live a stable life, to sleep at night without having the fear of someone breaking in and hurting us or our families. All in all, and to put it in fewer words to show how important it is to fight for this right, is that no other right can exist without it. (École student)

In this contribution, the right to safety is the fundamental premise on which all rights are based. And within the context of Algeria, the student notes how her "heart aches whenever I see the news, or just hear about an incident in my city." Within a discussion of the government's role to secure the opportunity for "rights," this intervention also articulates the logic of the state protecting its

citizens from such "trauma," while often, as noted above, not placing such trauma within complex historical frameworks. Given the historical context in which the students were writing as well as the rights discourse in which they were situated (ala Hesford), these opening comments should have been predictable. The creation of a "We" premised on the spread of Western-based human rights as a buffer to the trauma and lack of political democratic rights facing non-Western countries seemed to be where the conversation was leading.

The students, however, soon began to try to actively disrupt this emerging empathetic relationship, "unsettling" it to invoke Hesford's use of La Capra (2011). The lever that led to this disruption emerged through a discussion on how gender rights were (or were not) articulated as fundamental to human rights. In discussing the importance of education as a right for women, in particular, an École student wrote:

> As a woman sometimes I think of what if I haven't been sent to school, how would my life be now, how do girls in my age manage to live a life that doesn't include any studies, any cultivation, or any plans for a future job that would give her an independent life to do something in the world no matter how small it is; therefore, I believe that for women to defend their rights they need to be educated and cultivated. (École student)

This fracturing of the universal subject of human rights, initially splitting into types of gender, led to a series of further articulations of identity categories which began to argue how any universal claim to a "We" had to be implemented through intersectional politics. A Syracuse student wrote:

> Because I am a woman of color, specifically a black woman, these problems are only amplified. The stereotypes of being an "angry black woman" are constantly being thrown my way regardless of how passive or submissive I may choose to be in a particular moment. That reality is what has evolved me into the kind of thinking that makes me say women are to live their lives as they want them. Society will find a problem with an outspoken woman. They'll call her "bossy" or "rude" . . . . This mentality is something I have to continuously reinforce as I navigate throughout various spaces but it is the only way to exist in the way I would like, while being conscious of my positionality relative to the person or space I'm interacting with at the moment. Being a woman of color in the United States includes a miscellany of emotions and politics but it's the intersection that most frequently informs who I am.

In response, an École student writes:

> To be yourself, that is a woman in a world that is dominated by the male population is very difficult. . . . As for harassment,

women are always the ones who are blamed for this act. We are always that one's "at fault." Even rape is regarded today as not that "important of an issue" anymore. I think the only way to solve all these problems of sexism and harassment is [for it] to treated as a "disease." It needs a diagnosis, prognosis, and preferably a cure. Some men out there can do with a dose. I know and I've heard of many examples of women being assaulted, harassed, or in the act of being abducted by some man in the street. Thankfully, at the time of these [incidents], things did not get that bad and the women were rescued. The big part in these stories is that the women in question did not file or complain about anything to the police. Most of them could describe the assaulter perfectly, but they didn't because she was afraid. They know that the man in question can get back at her and do worse things and no one would be the wiser. We are, in some cases, really afraid of some men because they are physically stronger than us. And men know that and sometimes they use it against us because they know we, in most cases, can't retaliate, especially when they give you that smirk which says: "I can hurt you woman, and you know it and I dare you to act on it." It is the bitter truth.

Within this emergent dialogue, there is neither the invocation of a universal subject of human rights nor the creation of a binary West/non-West geographic context. What emerges is a framework that demonstrates how human rights discourses can co-exist within structures that oppress/fail to account for locally specific acts of gender discrimination across borders. And unlike the initial articulation that began the class dialogue, these students are no longer in a transnational digital or geographic space where "We are all equals here, with no one voice being treated as "better" or "more valuable" than another. Instead, the question becomes what other traditions might be called upon to establish greater justice and rights for women. Indeed, it is at this moment, during this conversation, that students entered into a group conversation (as opposed to class-wide conversation). Instead of a transnational "free space," then, a "digital hush harbor" for women students was created (For the concept of "digital hush harbor," see Kynard, "From Candy Girls").

Human Rights as Locally Enacted

A conversation premised on a universal sense of human rights, enacted within an imagined "free" transnational space, had initially enacted what Hesford calls the empathetic rhetoric of rights discourse. As that conversation continued, however, students began to push back against a binary center/periphery framing, arguing that gender discrimination existed as an undercurrent in both students'

local experiences in the US and Algeria. While this critique was initially premised on individual experiences of harassment/assault, the conversation began to step outside of the personal concepts of an essentialized identity politics to a concept of rights as the creation of a locally created habitus from which gender discrimination could be confronted. The series of comments from which this transition occurred gained initial articulation from École students. In discussing the role of the state in supporting gender rights, an École student wrote:

> One example of women gaining power in Algeria, as far as I'm concerned, has to be [one of our current Ministers] She studied abroad, so she uses French instead which sounds ridiculous to me; not to forget her controversial ministerial decisions, because of which she is constantly being criticized. She's a great example of women misusing their only chance to show how influential and powerful they can be, and it still amazes me how her being a woman combined with her wrong choices still didn't affect her very important position in the ministry, which sheds light on how the whole topic of women's power and equality is pretty messed up here in Algeria.[3]

It should be noted that here, again, the identity of the individual in question is fractured from a universal identity, first to a gender position, then to her linguistic/educational positioning, and finally to her ministerial position. For our purposes, it is also important to note how this comment separates the "identity" of the individual's gender from a particular political stance. What becomes clear is that her failure to support gender rights exposes how the habitus created by the state was a weak/inadequate response to reform structures to enable women to recognize both the extent of their discrimination and the ability to argue for their rights. This recognition of the need for systemic change within the state then expands from the government to political parties. A different Algerian student wrote:

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3. As is well known, Algeria gained its political independence from France as a result of a fierce seven-year war. At the dawn of independence, however, schools were still staffed with expatriates using French materials. Through the introduction of an Arabization policy, Algeria restructured and re-staffed schools as well as universities with materials created by Algerian educators. (Kohli). Indeed, Arabization became a process of converting all French-dominated disciplines and sectors to Arabic and, as such, was "a reaction against the cultural and linguistic domination of France" (Aitsiselmi. In this sense, Arabization and the Algerianization of school materials were also part of a widespread movement to regain a national identity, reclaim natural resources, and participate in the production of a pan-Arab unity (Kawmia Arabia; Evans and Phillips). In critiquing a government official, the student is invoking the history of such educational efforts, indirectly positioning the official as little better than the colonizing educators who previously directed Algerian students' educations.

> The Constitution of Algeria in 1976 incorporated the rights of
> women in the political, economic, cultural and social spheres.
> With regard to item 42, the Constitution emphasized gender
> equality. But honestly it is not enough. I had a last discussion
> with my friends and we were talking about political women,
> because last Thursday we saw the legislative elections. [One
> person] said, political women does not exist in our community,
> women are just tool under the use of men. I really do not care
> about her life or what people say about women's success. In no
> way will people criticize. I really appreciate political women al-
> though I hate to be one of them.

Here the student demonstrates how cultural attitudes limit the ability of women to enact a gender-rights politics within the state or political parties, even when the structure or "politics" would seem to be open to such transitions. Within these comments, gender rights are seen as emerging out of particular political/cultural contexts and, importantly, the discursive and material field of action seen as most relevant is not an abstraction to "human rights" but the local work within these complex cultural/political contexts.

As a result, what begins to occur, then, is a new model of rights arguments. There is less emphasis on appeals to human rights as a universal and more towards local traditions, whether emerging from religious or cultural traditions, as the seeds from which an increased enactment of "rights" is possible.

And increasingly in the dialogue among the students in the two classes, an argument emerges which utilizes terms such as "allyship" and "intersectional." One example of this is from an Algerian student, who had been writing about the importance of Islam to tackle gender discrimination in Algeria; this student writes to the African American SU student:

> The prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) said: There is no difference
> between the Arabic on the precepts and not between black and
> white except by piety. We are equal in the eyes of God, and peo-
> ple always criticize whether you are white or black, don't forget
> you have beautiful heart and beautiful soul. Although I don't
> know you but I imagine that so don't care what they say be your-
> self and don't pretending for them. We all face things that make
> us angry not because black women are always angry, you know
> Oprah is a black woman and a successful woman I like her. Be-
> lieve in yourself that's all you need to convince them about your
> presence and important in life.

What is important about this moment is that while there is an alliance imagined among the two students, there is no call for both to share the same essentialist grounding in their local struggles. Working within the framework emerging from

her fellow École students, the argument for gender rights will be premised on the Koran, invocations of women's previous struggles for human rights (of which the Algerian constitution is one example), and a continued attempt to stitch together gender rights arguments across political/cultural institutions. In doing so, this student positions herself against the universal/government frameworks enforced by the United States' foreign policies, policies often linked to neoliberal and unacknowledged "Western" concepts. For the African American student, as the student herself states, the work will be equally intersectional, only for her focusing on U.S. based histories/arguments of feminism, Civil Rights, and a sense that government should "ensure that the citizens' basic needs can be met," here inclusive of economic rights. In doing so, however, she is also invoking frameworks that when enacted internationally by the US have actively worked against the collective rights of her "transnational colleague," given how these rights campaigns are often also used to justify US intervention in other nations to enforce such "human" rights (Spivak).

Both students imagine constellations of ideas, identities, and institutions that expand the ability of women to move through society as equals, free from violence. Both argue from a position premised on the complex possibilities of their local/national environments. Yet in doing so, both produce contradictory appeals in the international rights-based context. To a great extent, the values invoked by the U.S. student are exported in a fashion which only furthers the neo-liberal contexts and supports limited democratic states that the École student is positioning herself against. Ultimately, these students seemed positioned in contradictory fashion to each other, even while imagining themselves as allies.

To reach an intersectional understanding between them, more work would need to be done. At this point, however, the term ended. Still, however embryonic they were, these dialogues enabled students to re-imagine their digital transnational space as no longer moving from a disembodied position, flowing across borders. Instead, they began to recognize how "human rights" masked over legitimate political claims by specific populations, as well as how ultimately such claims should be based less on an essentialized identity and more on an alliance-based restructuring of positionality. In this very process, however, students also began to see how locally/regionally based frameworks ultimately pushed against transnational appeals to universal human rights, leading to potentially contradictory or conflicting local strategies and protests. And it is from this perilous moment of possibility and conflict upon which our new work will attempt to build.

That is, as our collaborative work moved forward, we formalized our efforts under the title of the Twiza Project, a term that invoked communal efforts to build important structures and also expand the classrooms involved, drawing in university students from not just the US and Algeria but Morocco and Kurdistan/Northern Iraq. We have redefined the classroom to include NGO educational programs in rural areas within the MENA countries, often disconnected from digital spaces but impacted by transnational flows of capital. The curriculum is also becoming more organized, moving from readings premised in Western

concepts of rights to include a focus on Indigenous communal practices within each country. Indeed, it became clear as the initial dialogues occurred that the epistemologies and communal legacies that students could draw upon were limited; they seemed divorced from the histories of the peoples who populated the land in which their classrooms were located, the communities that populated the land prior to neo-liberalism and colonialism. If the Twiza Project is to help students create a space "otherwise" than a Westernized framing of human rights, elsewhere than a framework supporting a neo-liberal flow of global capital, then we believe the students must understand the complex and powerful histories that have informed the geography upon which they will make their alternative future.

Finally, we intend for the Twiza project to directly provide training in the material skills of community organizing—the nuts and bolts of calling meetings, developing agendas, building campaigns, and assessing successes/failures. Too often, we have found that "dialogue" serves as an alibi for action; alternative futures remain metaphors, not disruptive practices. In this effort, however, we work with the realization that bodies move differently through local and global environments. The same act done by a U.S. male citizen-student will not have the same ramifications as that of an Algerian woman student; nor can the political safety of any student of color in the United States be assumed or the willingness of governments in the MENA region to allow such civic activism be considered a given. If democracy is a "contact sport," we act with the understanding that any education in activism also has to be an education in safety. To do otherwise, for Parks at least, would be to assume the privileges accorded to a White gendered male body, a body also named as a citizen of the US, could be the model upon which all activism can be premised. It would be, in short, a move back to a universalism that works against an "otherwise" future.

And at this historical moment, the world could surely benefit from something other than the status quo.

Enacting Pluriversality: Of Rights Without Guarantees

Since the initial drafting of this argument, traumatic events continue to occur—witness as one example children being separated from parents at the US/Mexico border, an act that in many ways moves beyond the ability of the word "trauma" or any other word to describe. At such moments, broad appeals to human rights certainly have their place. And within such a context of human rights abuse, we understand that a project such as ours might seem too small, too limited, or too insubstantial to meet the current need of this moment.

Perhaps, however, the Twiza Project can serve a purpose for our students, here and abroad, who see trauma invoked as a way to mask a political complexity which must be articulated, addressed, and resolved. Perhaps, students who are placed within a rhetoric of transnationalism and open borders, but whose daily life is seeing political borders hardened through racist appeals or imagined

threats by democratic collective action, can use the Twiza Project to begin to find an alternative path forward. As the small sampling discussed above demonstrates, the power of a space to think through how their identity is being constructed, positioned, and actualized in this current moment begins the process of allowing another conversation to begin: a conversation premised on a knowledge of their local context, of the levers that might produce change, and of the possibilities a collective response might provide. Such conversations allow students to find an agency which moves beyond a traumatic response to concepts (and eventually actions) which realign political dynamics for a future that speaks to their aspirations and those of their generation.

It is a conceptual move, however, that leaves behind the seeming guarantees of a universal declaration of human rights, leaves behind a sense that the instantiation of such rights would even create the expansive definition of equality to which they seem to be heading. Such a conceptual move requires increased focus by our classes on the local traditions/frameworks of justice, historical moments of local activism which pointed toward a greater sense of equality. It would demand an education that provided the organizing tools which would enable material alliances to be drawn, collective bodies brought together, strategies that could produce change formulated, and plans to ensure that change does not quickly evaporate. It would require us, as teachers, to support our students' aspirations for something better than this current moment.

This is the generation of the Arab Awakening and the Obama presidency, of Egyptian crackdowns and Trump Border Walls. It is a generation that has seen hope turned to despair, seeming progress followed by retrenchment. Our belief is that this experience has not left our students traumatized but determined to actualize what was momentarily glimpsed. Twiza is one attempt, however small, to keep open a space for such conversations, a space where local knowledges can be drawn upon to expand justice, democracy, and political rights. It clearly is not enough, but we have come to believe it is also not nothing. Perhaps at this moment, such a hint of possibility is enough to continue to move forward.

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Chapter 12. "I Hear Its Chirping Coming from My Throat": Activism, Archives, and the Long Road Ahead

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Several weeks ago, I opened an email from my colleague Bassam al-Ahmad, with the message, "Can you please proof this interview for inclusion in our archival database."[1] The database was the result of a year-long partnership which had produced Syrians for Truth and Justice (https://stj-sy.org/en/), an organization founded by human rights activists which had created a network of citizen journalists across Syria to record the many abuses associated with the current conflict. Indeed, many of the founders of STJ, themselves, had been the victims of harassment, detention, and torture by the Assad government.

Looking quickly at the attached document, I learned that the subject of the interview was Dr. Jafal Nofa, a Syrian doctor who was arrested by Syria's Assad government for using civil disobedience to advocate for human rights. Near the end of the interview, when reflecting upon his experience of extreme torture and deprivation, he tells the following story about a young boy:

> The most painful incident I can never forget is the story of a young boy.
>
> The boy was arrested during a police campaign along with fifteen other children. They were detained for 10 years. A few months before release, he was brought to Adra civil prison. He was a young man in his twenties at the time. He was hyperactive, moving a lot, and playing all the time. I asked him whether he gets bored from doing this or not. He answered that he cannot rest and he could never know the meaning of being quiet. I asked him why and he narrated his sad story to me:
>
> > After I was arrested as a young boy, I was taken to Palmyra Prison. One cold day, they put us out in the yard to stand there as punishment. A small bird fell on the ground, unable to move its wings or fly. I stared at it with the

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tenderness of a child, but one of the guards saw me and asked whether I liked it. I remained silent because I was afraid to answer. So he asked me again, but this time in an aggressive and loud voice. I hesitantly answered that it was a nice bird. He ordered me to go and get it. When I held it in my hands, it was chirping. For a short while, I thought that this guard hadn't lost all of his humanity or maybe he is here against his will. I hadn't completed the thought when I heard him asking me to swallow this bird. I didn't understand and I asked how could I swallow it alive! He shouted at me and ordered me to swallow it. So I did. This incident happened years ago, but up till this moment, I hear its chirping coming from my throat, especially in moments of silence. I hate to remember that incident, and this is why I don't like to stay calm.

Part of the goal of this symposium is to address the question, "What is to be done?" One way to situate a response would be to talk about the need for activism—connecting our classes to community campaigns for justice, organizing street marches, and lobbying against discriminatory and racist policies (see Trump's Executive Order 13769, titled "Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States"). Such actions are vitally necessary. And I hope to be able to continue to do such work in the near and distant future.

I want to use this space, however, to focus on a different type of work, one perhaps seemingly a bit distant from such actions—the creation of archives as sites of documented experience as an aligned strategy from which the above-mentioned activism can benefit and draw upon. And I want to do so by discussing a set of projects in which I have been fortunate enough to participate—projects that begin in the UK, extend to the Middle East, and ultimately end in documenting a young girl's journey from Guatemala to Philadelphia.

Archiving History/Documenting Atrocities

For the past twenty years, I have been working with the Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishers (FWWCP). The organization originated in the late 1970s in the United Kingdom, during the period which would lead to Thatcherism, the deliberate destruction of working-class institutions, and the implementation of a neo-liberal agenda marked by de-industrialization and, as recently debated in the UK, increased global immigration. During this period, as you might expect, there was an intense reconsideration of working-class identity—a reconsideration that manifested in some instances to an uptick in the National Front, to some working-class allegiance to Thatcher, and to the consistent defeat of Labor. Clearly I am painting with a broad brush here.

Within this historical moment, the FWWCP was an interesting counterweight. For the organization was a network of close to 100 individual working-class writing groups, spread across the United Kingdom, who self-published their individual and communal histories. The writers were miners, dockworkers, and sign painters; some of them could write with ease, some of them struggled with basic literacy tasks. As the organization expanded, the writers began to include Caribbean, African, and Middle Eastern immigrants. Writers began to emerge from disabled, LBGT and survivor communities. And through yearly meetings that brought these groups together, they collectively did the difficult work of creating a vision of the working class which was inclusive, premised upon the value of laboring experience, and which attempted to organize for an increased recognition of working-class values and legitimate needs. To me, they were organic intellectuals, organizing as a community for increased cultural literacy and political rights. And their literacy activism soon became the model for my own efforts to establish similar work first in Philadelphia and then in Syracuse. But the FWWCP and its writers were also mostly poor or working poor. And in 2007 and 2008, the organization went bankrupt.

Suddenly a network that had lasted 30 years, circulating over one million self-published working-class writings, was reduced to a disparate set of locations, where publications were resting in attics and basements. That is, the FWWCP had been too poor to have established its own archive, and, within the UK, their work was not seen as "literature" (at least by the British Arts Council) so they also had no university presence. Consequently, it seemed to me and my UK partners, the FWWCP's legacy would be unavailable for future worker writers and working-class literacy activists.

And so, with my colleague, Nick Pollard, from Sheffield Hallam University, Jessica Pauszek, from Syracuse University, and the members of the newly formed "FED" (a reconstituted FWWCP), we decided to create an archive of this work. In this sense, my involvement in archival work emerged in response to a specific crisis within a community that was in danger of having its self-defined history slowly vanish. While there are many methodological and theoretical issues which could be explored, for the purposes of this article, I just want to point out that, after many setbacks, an archive of over 2,500 FWWCP publications now exists at London Metropolitan University.

And I want to highlight one aspect of our collaborative work. In creating the archival categories, we invoked the practices of community literacy partnerships. We worked with FWWCP founding members and members of its former writing groups to create the organizing categories of the collection. We also attended annual festivals of the new FED to get feedback and insight. That is, our goal in creating the archive was not merely to save the texts, but to articulate the theoretical and cultural framework within which those texts were produced—the FED's understanding of what it meant to be worker writers writing about being working class. Moreover, our strategic goal was to use the prestige of the university to

claim important work had been done by the FWWCP—work that scholars and students could learn from.

This sense of needing to preserve the voices and texts of oppressed individuals and communities, of the need to build a model which demonstrated the framework which produced those stories, and using university prestige to validate the results of this work, ultimately led me to my colleague, Bassam Alahmad and, as a consequence, to read the "bird" story which appeared in my email.

Prior to our meeting, Bassam had worked at the Syrian Center for Media and Free Expression. At the outset of the Arab Spring protests, the organization's offices were stormed by Assad's troops. Bassam was captured, tortured, and held in a detention center for almost a year. At one point, he was granted a trial and released on the promise of returning to face charges. Instead, he escaped to Turkey. I met him when he was a Democracy Fellow at Syracuse University. Together with other Syrian activists, we created Syrians for Truth and Justice (STJ), a project partially housed at Syracuse University. As noted above, STJ uses a network of in-country Syrian citizen journalists to record the systemic violation of human rights now occurring, such as the intentional bombing of civilian sites. Through connections in refugee camps and refugee communities, we are also recording testimonies of survivors of torture not only from Assad's government, but from ISIS and the proliferating militias.

We are currently developing a project to sponsor a series of reconciliation workshops designed to help repair some of the damage done by state-sponsored sectarian violence, militia sponsored relocations, and ISIS atrocities. And we are beginning to attempt to map the network of detention centers used by each of these organizations and, by doing so, demonstrate how these personal experiences were the result of systemic efforts. Here the goal is to record the horrors produced by that system and, hopefully, help to create spaces where individuals and communities can rebuild a sense of a future, a future marked by inclusion and tolerance.

Creating Networks at Home

Viewing the recent presidential election from the perspective of my English and Syrian colleagues, it was clear how the past year has been marked by the articulation of working-class concerns into an anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim bigotry, a bigotry always existent under a false decorum of manners, but now being expressed with full-throated enthusiasm. When additionally interwoven with blatant sexism, it too often felt like much of the progressive inclusive rhetoric that has attempted to mark work in literacy in composition had been for naught. Or at least, what we imagined to be the political efficacy of our work, the strategies taught to students and infused in our partnerships here and abroad, seemed to be called into question. Certainly, "community" as an organizing term hadn't carried the collective power imagined in the face of a nationalist "Make America Great Again" mantra.

It was for me, at least, a very depressing period—a period made worse when placed in the context of colleagues who can no longer enter the country; of students who face (along with their families) deportation, often back to violent and conflict-ridden contexts; of classrooms where an undercurrent of distrust and animosity always seems ready to break forth. And to be honest, I am less than sure about any answer I might offer to "What can be done?" And yet, like so many others, I need to move forward.

And so, I have recently taken on a new project brought to me by an old friend, Mark Lyons, whose work on Mexican migrant farm workers was published by my press, New City Community Press (NCCP), over ten years ago. He approached me about an oral history concerning a fourteen-year-old girl who travelled from Guatemala to the United States, primarily by herself, only to be caught at the border and placed in detention. Her detention led to a hearing, which led to an abusive foster home, and ultimately to her being brought into the life of a Philadelphia family where education and a future were made possible. Of course, I am clearly shrinking the complexity of this story quite significantly. I mention elements of her story to state that my press also agreed to publish the testimony. And in deciding to publish the story, I was also deciding to use elements of our field (community publishing, narrative, cultural rhetoric, etc.) to invest her experience within a network that could produce a curricular, cultural, and legal response to the current political moment. Similar to the work with STJ and the FED, then, it was an attempt to create a counter-narrative in which actual (not alternate) facts could be established and used by multiple parties in support of important political work.

Now I had certainly attempted such work before, often in the service of producing a systemic change in a local neighborhood. With this book, I am thinking about how to begin a process of weaving together a new constellation of alliances, one that perhaps begins in the local moment of a classroom but that is fully articulated across the parallel streams of local, regional, national, and international networks of economic and political power. Too often, I think, by not drawing these additional contexts into the work at hand, I have come to believe that the small change produced by such publications only ameliorated the worse elements of systemic trends, masking the true source of the problem actually being faced. And I have come to realize, hopefully not too late, that there is a connection between the history of this (now) young woman from Guatemala, the experiences of the working class in England, and my colleagues in Syria. It is not a straight line, a clear path, but it is a network that needs to be brought to light in community publications so that readers can find commonality, not enemies, as they look outward from their home to the broader world that dictates much of their existence.

Moreover, the goal should be more than to simply trace rhetorical or material networks of possible alliances. It should also include a search to think through moments where potential alliances had been disarticulated, fractured, under the force of the past election cycle. These nodal points needed to be re-established,

needed to be brought back into contact to maintain and expand the possibilities of equity, inclusion, and justice. In *History and Class Consciousness*, György Lukács speaks of capitalism as a state of constant crisis management, one endlessly stitching together micro-moments to sustain its global dominance. I understand the current moment as one in which the "global order" is attempting to patch over the Trump/Brexit phenomena of economic nationalism (though not perhaps the bigotry implied in such attitudes). And I see our role as countering this attempt, drawing together different alliances, moving in a different direction.

That is, I am less interested in learning how to stitch my values into the current triumph, discover a nostalgic (and racialized) vision of "middle America," then I see the work as being part of a concerted effort to create alternative networks which establish the hegemony of progressive inclusive economic and cultural values. And for this to occur, the term "community" and community publications have to be re-cast less as a description of bounded geographic spaces, but instead as moments of global narratives being imbricated in local histories. An imbrication that if interrupted by local moments of resistance could ripple outward, and, if such resistant moments could be aligned with other such moments, perhaps an alternative future could be created.

For here is the essential point, undergirding all of the above: each of these archival projects are premised upon the ability of bodies—defined by others and literally fixed in space by policies and treated as other, as "illegal" or "terrorist,"—that found a way to move anyway. That is, these documentation projects reveal an agency, a mobility, which both disrupts the centrality of Western narratives which demonize their bodies and demands we align with them, work to support and expand their ability to move beyond such narrow categorizations, and support those local moments of resistance until in their sheer number they tip the web of connections that stands for "global" into a new direction, perhaps one based upon a sense of a different set of values, goals, and dreams.

And here, I should add that, in practice, the work looks much less "revolutionary" then might be imagined from the above rhetoric. In fact, a lot of the work of publishing the book and drawing it into a larger effort has meant creating a small team of dedicated students (Rafael Evans, Molly Velaquez, and Zach Barlow), long-time immigrant activists (Mark Lyons) and myself. It has involved considering what resources could be linked to this story, how those linkages could materially interrupt work at schools, agencies, detention centers, and policies in Philadelphia. It has meant considering how such interruptions could be linked/aligned with regional and national moments. It has been the slow work of calling individuals, establishing moments of intersecting interests, creating common conversational and policy-informed spaces. That is, it has meant using all the rhetorical skills, conceptions of literacy, and understandings of power that mark our field in the service of deliberate actions, momentary tactics, and strategies for change.

Finally, on a personal level, for me, it has meant the beginning of re-situating the landscape of my location in the discipline, primarily marked by a focus on

local communities, outwards towards a focus on a system of momentary alliances and friction that produce "the global" in all its oppressions and opportunities. And I am in the process of re-educating myself to be an effective ally in this new landscape, to understand what engaging in work that frames community within multiple global contexts simultaneously can and can not produce. I consistently ask myself how the voices of those in Syria, the UK, and the US, from Daraa to Birmingham to Philadelphia, could be linked in a disruptive fashion towards an articulation of an alternative set of nodal points that better support an inclusive world. So where I realize others came to this realization earlier—have written more theoretically and eloquently than I am now—when pressed for an answer to "What do we do now?" And I have found myself replying, "We learn, we act, we build, and we continue."

The Long Road Ahead

I began by posing archival and documentation work as aligned and supportive of political work being done by street activist, policy advocates, and non-profit organizations, all of whom are attempting to navigate the new "information landscape" that has emerged post-election. And through the work of the FWWCP, STJ, and NCCP documentation projects, I've tried to show how such work can demonstrate the power of past collective actions, the importance of recording the present, and the possibility of building a better future.

That is, the FWWCP archive is about documenting an inclusive and, we might say, human rights-based conceptual framework for working-class identity; STJ is about archiving its opposite—an armed network dedicated to torture and violence, to the elimination of any such a human rights framework; and, finally, the work of NCCP has become about documenting the experiences of those on the margins of the current political/economic system and beginning to consider how such experiences might produce the possibility of new alliances, new futures.

I want to end, however, with a more immediate purpose for such work. In all of these documentation projects, there is an attempt to use our disciplinary skills to accurately record, document, and archive fundamental facts about what occurred at specific historical moments to communities in crisis.

Facts which can document systemic human rights abuses.

Facts which can be used, we hope, to bring the perpetuators of such abuses to justice and reconciliation.

Facts that demonstrate the possibility of building, through dialogue and collaboration, inclusive visions of just communities.

I end with this stress on the value of facts because, today, it could be argued that we are increasingly living in a fact-free media culture or, at least, in a culture where basic facts are placed into "equal time" conversations with propaganda and false news. Within such a toxic media mix, my fear is that the voices and experiences of those on the wrong side of privilege and progress are being lost. Or

rather, I fear the concerns of the oppressed have few platforms which can validate the legitimacy of their claims, can present evidence for the need to redress their concerns, and can be used to collaboratively develop new economic policies premised on equality and tolerance, policies not smeared with racial animus but meant to create the context for true social justice.

And so out of these beliefs, several years ago and still today, I turned to archival and documentation work—to the slow methodological collection of testimony, texts, recordings, and visual artifacts that evidences an alternative moral universe, an alternative framework from which to shape a public and political agenda. And I do so intentionally from and within a university setting because, despite the slowly eroding effect of right wing attacks on such institutions, there is still a legitimating function we can serve. As scholars and researchers, we can use our degrees, our publications, and, yes, our archives to validate the struggles of those whose bodies are on the front lines of human rights struggles.

That is, I like to believe that perhaps, even from our most privileged of positions, and perhaps, even in the smallest of ways, we can claim to have stood in alliance with those whose humanity is under assault, but who continue to try move forward.

Perhaps, that is, we help create a world where birds can fly and young children are allowed to look at them in wonder.

Part 4. Conclusion

Chapter 13. Navigating on the Wrong Side of Privilege: Building a New Common Sense

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When my academic career began, I had a solid sense of being on the wrong side of privilege. I felt that sense imbued in almost every action taken for almost the first fifteen years of being a professor. As privilege accumulated (tenure, reduced teaching, grant funds), I began to witness the academy from a different position—that of an insider. I found myself beginning to accept the "limits" of what a professor, department, or university could achieve. My vision began to align with the pragmaticism of the institution. It was professionally and personally a precarious time for me. To put it in Gramscian terms, I began to find myself gliding comfortably into being a traditional intellectual, shoring up traditions and disciplinary concepts rather than continuing to maintain an organic connection to the communities that had worked so hard on my behalf. In concluding this collection of essays, I wanted to highlight that trajectory as an almost cautionary tale, explaining how (hopefully) I have continued to keep a consistent moral trajectory.

My hope is that the essays that precede this conclusion speak to the diverse community, academic, and international colleagues who have influenced my research, teaching, and advocacy. I wanted to end the collection, though, by highlighting three colleagues whose careers over decades have tried to model an ethical and intersectional form of advocacy that enables them to be an accomplice in the work of those on the wrong side of privilege in creating actual material political change. And in particular, I wanted to highlight three colleagues who shared my subject position (CIS-gendered White male), with all the inherent privileges it might authorize, but who dedicated their time to pushing against the system which ensured their own comfort. Sometimes, I think, it is up to those born into or who work into positions of privilege to teach each other how to work for justice. And to teach each other that we must overcome our sanctioned ignorance, our privilege as our loss, if we are to be effective. What follows is one trajectory of how I learned such lessons.

Writing Beyond the Curriculum

I have been in dialogue with Eli Goldblatt for over three decades. But as I made clear in the opening of this collection, our first discussions were over the public role of rhetoric and composition; more precisely on how to bend the language of our field to create greater opportunities for advocacy focused on structural change. In the conversation below, we reflect on our "Writing Beyond the Curriculum" article, reminding ourselves of why the concept was a useful tool to begin our work as well as how the argument might have hopefully influenced the field a bit. We end by considering how one element of our argument, fostering new collaborations, might be even more relevant at this current moment.

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Parks: I picked up "Writing Beyond the Curriculum" while bringing together the essays for this project. I don't think I had read the essay in over twenty years. For instance, I had completely forgotten that our work was framed in terms of Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC). With so much time passing, my memory had recast the origin of our work, incorrectly, as based in advocacy, theories of political change. So maybe a good place to start our discussion is with the question, "Why WAC? Why not Cultural Studies? Social Movement Theory?"

Goldblatt: Working a WAC program was really what I was hired to do as Writing Program Director at Temple University. I didn't really know very much about WAC when I was hired. I knew folks in WAC, but I didn't really know even very much about writing program administration. I'd been a professor for five years. I was just getting my feet underneath me about what I wanted to teach, what I wanted to write. And I had just published my first book, *'Round My Way* (1995). When I got to Temple, I really was thinking very hard about how writing connected and ran against the grain of disciplinarity. I felt too constrained by writing across the curriculum. I felt that there were a lot of issues around literacy and around university learning that were not really being considered by any of our colleagues, both inside the department and outside. And that I was also really losing track of the fact that there was a life outside of the campus. That had always been so important to me. So, I think the WAC part probably came from my position within the hierarchy of both the department and the university. We needed a base. And it could not be an academic base, such as cultural studies, because there was no cultural studies or, really, any of that work. None of those existed at Temple. We needed a concept like "writing beyond the curriculum."

Parks: I remember when I landed at Temple, besides the fact I had no money, thinking, well, now I'm in safely within a left leaning community. The fact that there was no cultural studies program or, at least in the English department, any public work was surprising to me. I assumed that Temple English professors, like Dan O'Hara, had established such work in the department. I thought the department was going to be deeply committed to public engagement. Probably

not "in the streets" engagement, but at least noticing the streets. It wasn't at all. And then, it struck me: Everybody wanted to be Harvard. And I quickly decided, fairly or not, that the literature faculty were not interested in my public work. They just didn't care. I didn't quite get why they hired me, to be honest. So, I can remember very strategically thinking of what are the other constituencies with whom I might align? I think in a similar way to you, I needed some sort of label or disciplinary backing to look legible so that I wouldn't just get pulled under the "Let's be Harvard" framework. I thought WAC was great for that purpose. It was such a central term and then we twisted it. Do you know what I mean? To my thinking, basically, I thought we could move across disciplines without actually saying cultural studies.

Goldblatt: The turn to WAC was really about institution building. We were trying to do something radical, but within our awareness of the institutional limits. We wanted to see a writing program as more extensive, or at least more flexible, than anybody imagined. We soon realized that we were going to have to make shit up to do what we wanted to do. It just wasn't there in the field, at least not until Ellen Cushman's "The Rhetorician as an Agent for Social Change" (1996). That was a really important article, as was the work Linda Flower and her team were doing in Pittsburgh. We began to develop relationships with the people we knew nationally who were interested in what became known as "community literacy." All of us were all trying to develop the language, the intellectual approach, and the institutional platforms to do this kind of work.

Parks: I think that's very true. This could just be my own arrogance, but I think the Institute and New City Community Press were two of the first very successful community-focused project in a department or in a college at that time—notwithstanding potentially earlier models in the 60's or 70's. I feel "Writing Beyond the Curriculum" helped us create something new for that moment. I like to think we can see elements of our work in many community projects today. Again, that might be wishful thinking. But as I reread our article recently, I began to wonder if certain elements of our argument failed to gain traction in the field.

In the article, there is a lot of talk about bridging between departments, between our college and the school of education, between faculty and public-school teachers, about trying to create bridges with literature faculty. I don't know if I think of community engagement as concerned with those issues anymore. I think the field has gotten more self-contained. It has more of its own mechanisms to produce and distribute its work. I don't know if community literacy sees itself as having to link with literature faculty or sees public schools as a primary target anymore. Sometimes it seems that the work is much more focused on ideological positions that might frame itself more as "in the streets" than as coalition building to materially rebuild the streets.

Goldblatt: I think that, in general, the field has really followed a professionalizing line. It was a jagged line, but it was a line which kind of ends up in writing about writing. And then there was this counter response that was associated with

the racial reckoning after George Floyd. From my own perspective speaking from my retirement room, I don't feel like I even have the right to say what the field is or where the field is right now. But I don't hear people talking about some of the very basic concerns that I had going into it 30, 35 years ago. How do we help people write better so that they can accomplish what they want to accomplish? Or how do you get people who write in all kinds of contexts to see that they have something in common, something they could share with each other?

Parks: I feel like everyone's moved into their little domain because there's enough resources that you can now live in your little domain. Not in terms of a living wage, of course, but in terms of having avenues to publish, present your work, teach your classes. Consequently, you don't have to build coalitions that can build a "new middle" to gain access to an audience. There is, in some ways, less of a need for a new common sense that can give you power. But I feel like a lot of "Writing Beyond the Curriculum" is about us learning how to navigate the power networks of Temple University and the discipline. And our answer was coalition building, basically, because we had to join constituencies together to have our own platform.

Without that material need, I feel like now there is an argument about keeping a sense of purity in our field; a sense that other communities can be dismissed if not properly aligned with a particular stance or position. That's why I think the subtitle of our essay, "fostering new collaborations," is the part of the article that seems to have had the least traction, but, today, is probably the most important point to be made. I see hundreds of interesting projects, but I don't see a lot of cross identity or cross institutional collaboration—with the exception of the CCCC identity caucuses and SIGS. And I worry that without a push to actually rebuild a coalition that can effect change, protect our institutions, what we consider to be our public work will be gutted by neoliberal higher education frameworks which will beggar our students and dismantle their future. See West Virginia University.

Goldblatt: I think the idea of coalition building needs to be seen within a much longer time frame. I think right now we're in an era of people pulling back into their camps. There's a certain level of self-protective cadre building. I think that the idea of coalitions, the idea of the power of the middle, as you say, is not a popular idea. I think that's a shame. But again, it's not really my place to call people out for not doing it. I do think that my attempts in the last five years to write about, and encourage other people to write about, literature and literacy as having some shared intellectual and institutional ground is aimed at such coalition building.

In my recent essay collection, *Alone with Each Other: Literacy and Literature Intertwined*, I have tried to make the argument for building cross disciplinary bridges. Perhaps more precisely, I have tried to indicate arenas in which a wide variety of writers and thinkers can talk to each other, even though they come from very different literacy orientation. I think that it's still very important and

valuable work to recognize each other, respect each other, and move forward with some sense of what we want to accomplish in common. I don't see that happening a lot, but I will say this: I see a tremendous hunger for that kind of move beyond disciplinary limits. In a new collection Jonathan Alexander and I are co-editing, the contributors—especially scholars of color—have written compellingly about not accepting the conventional division between literature and literacy. Today, students are using literature as well as other genres to speak out of their own identities, to shape their own sense of power and history. I don't think that hunger goes away. I don't think that those types of coalitions have fallen out of fashion.

Parks: I don't know. I think certain forms of collaboration, the literature/literacy faculty talking to each other, that's still there. In some ways there's more of a desire for it. I think one of the reasons literature and literacy folks are probably aligning a bit more is a sense that, together, they have more power. They have a greater voting bloc. But I feel within the field there's a hesitancy to step out of a very fixed political position and move towards something that would pull in someone else's political position, partially out of a sense of purity, partially out of a sense of risk. It is risky to say certain things right now. But if we live within our risk bubbles, we also never gain the real power to change the structures which repress and oppress those on the wrong side of privilege.

And I'm not sure that for all of our speaking and writing about how "we are political" if, as a field, we actually spend time working through how that means you have to step off your particular position; that you have to build coalitions which expand your powerbase across many communities, even if you find elements of their community objectionable. I often say that to build coalition, for instance, you have to talk to the police as if they're just family members and not cops. You have to see past the uniform to see the potential of building an alliance. But when I say this in a class, you could not get a quieter classroom. You could not get a more silent moment with your colleagues. But that's the move that I thought community literacy would foster. This recognition of the difficult work required to build new and actual coalitions of power. When I review articles, book proposals, manuscripts, I just don't see a governing sense of how power works, which I find disappointing.

Goldblatt: The reason it's hard for us to articulate that stance and to achieve it is because it's very, very hard to do. And most people are much happier drawing on their particular group. They want to stay on their bowling team. And it's very hard to do the other stuff. This is talking about things that are difficult to say. I have no commitment to a specific religious position. I don't want to be a representative of any particular religion. But I will say that, and this comes from my experience at Villanova's Center for Peace and Justice Education, among other places, certain religious orientations do offer this additional yearning for something that is not simply "my side" winning. Now, we unfortunately don't often see mainstream religious organizations act out of this wider yearning, an impulse that goes beyond tolerance to solidarity and acceptance. But there is a way of

religious thinking that searches for meaning and advocacy not simply rooted in the material benefit of one group or another. We see this desire for unity, for example, in the POWER Interfaith Movement. I believe there is a moral imperative to do this work. There is a value in saying certain ways of being have moral weight to them. And I think as I'm reading what we wrote twenty-four years ago, that's always been our orientation. Our orientation has always been "being with others."

Parks: When I wrote this article, I was much more anti-essentialist, deconstructionist. But the more I work with global human rights and democratic advocates, they are possessed of such a strong moral certitude about the importance of seeing oneself as "being with others," needing to see the necessity of working with others for the collective good. I have found myself embracing that stance. I don't think I would have been as open to that stance during my anti-essentialist days. And I still carry a sense of any community as tentative and necessarily creating an *other*. But increasingly, I see the importance of speaking in terms of fundamental values of justice, democracy, and human rights.

I think the phrase I've been using lately, that has been lingering in my head, we are essentially responsible for each other. There's an essential connection there mandates we're not allowed to sit back. You know what I mean? When I first went to Temple, I recognized that certain colleagues thought they were allowed to sit back, to not get involved. Back then and still today, that seems unethical to me. I've worked with or interviewed advocates from all over the world. Folks who have suffered some horrible abuses for their advocacy. Sometimes I'll interview them in front of my class. And I usually end with a question, such as "You have been in prison, released, imprisoned again, tortured, released, imprisoned, tortured, brutalized, released. Why didn't you stop? Why do you continue?" And to a person, they do not understand the question. They are necessarily connected to the welfare of others. "What do you mean stop?" That's where my head is right now.

Goldblatt: I really understand that idea of saying, how would you quit? What would you do? You don't have the luxury of quitting.

Parks: Exactly it. To me it's like the moment when my students understand commitment because they're all wondering why the advocate didn't quit. Mind you, almost every advocate they meet has been brutally tortured. Part of this work is just so depressing. But they do not quit. It's a moral obligation to others. Since re-reading our article, I was wondering if that moral obligation might replace WAC, which frames our work in terms of strategy of utilizing a home constituency and not ethics. I wonder how much of our own subject position might also have been critiqued through such an ethical lens. I think I'd probably make a much more ethical argument, one which might implicate us much more directly.

Goldblatt: I think that the concept of home constituency is one that needs really to be, as they say, examined. Much, much more than we did. But we were in a very different time of our lives. The field was in a very different time. And for that matter, English was at a different time. I mean, when we were doing this,

if the English department lost its Shakespearean, the Provost would immediately give them a line to replace their Shakespearean scholar. That's not true anymore. And literature faculty don't have the privileges that they had 25, 30, 40, maybe 50 years ago. They don't have the aura of Matthew Arnold's mission to teach "the best that has been thought and said." To some extent, their fall in power and prestige is their own damn fault. And to some extent, the world has just changed, not entirely for the worse. But I think if we were to write this today, we couldn't write what we wrote because we were trying to change very different institutional structures then. Educational institutions are in a very different place today. American "higher education" as a whole has to rediscover its core mission.

Parks: The lesson I learned with the Institute is always build your own structure, one that exists between all the other structures, because then you're never captured. But you're also very unstable. I mean, the other part of this is the institute New City lasted for 20 years. I mean, in one form or another, it's kind of continued, which I think is not unimportant. You kept it going.

Goldblatt: I'm retired now but the work actually still continuing, Steve. The Temple Writing Program is still engaging with schools to help support kids. Tree House Books, which New City helped to found and fund, is an afterschool literacy program going strong and in fact expanding this year. So, there are traces of the Institute that still function in North Philadelphia.

Sinners Welcome

My decade long dialogue with John Burdick ended on July 4th, 2020, when he succumbed to cancer. The absence of his voice this volume (and in my current work) is and always will remain heartbreaking to me.

I met John within a month of my move to Syracuse University's rhetoric and composition program. Over the course of our conversations, we developed many curricular and community-based efforts, partially documented in "Sinners Welcome." What is not fully expressed in that article (and was to be the focus of a jointly written article prior to his diagnosis) is an argument about the actual work of advocacy. What I learned from John was that while my work might invoke advocacy, there was not an actual model of political change operating within the projects. "Literacy" provided a vocabulary about change, but not a set of tools to create change. John provided political change models, such as those by Marshall Ganz, as well as concrete experience in building an advocacy organization, the Westside Residents' Coalition.

Within those lessons was also an emerging sense of coalitional politics. In meeting after meeting, John would navigate the alternative possibilities being discussed to find a common ground, sometimes on the thinnest of premises, that would allow a movement to build allies, gain strength. He also demonstrated the value of talking to your opponent, understanding that beneath a title or a uniform was a human being with whom a connection could be made. It was out of

those experiences that an effort to rebuild *common sense* emerged in my work as a strategic model of change designed to engage with actual structures of power. My sense then, and now, was that John refused to rest comfortably within the privileges offered him as a full professor at an elite private university. He was continually opening himself up to being challenged for his blind spots, his assumed sense of stability or resources. If Eli had offered a pathway to navigate an institution, using privileged terms to push resources to systemically marginalized communities, John provided the ethical self-awareness necessary to ensure the uses of such resources were democratically decided upon.

And in some ways, this is the central struggle—navigating a privileged discourse and resource rich institution through the lens of the communities intentionally excluded from power. Within that nexus, the *professor* faces fundamental choices about identity, identification. I have found it is somewhat easy to secure funds for community projects which accept the ruling logic of privilege. Think neoliberalism coupled with disciplinary progressive language. Think the bake sale fund raiser, the after-school arts program. Clearly such efforts provide resources to communities. Clearly, they offer universities the opportunity to show their public commitment. I would argue such projects also allows many tenure/tenure-track professors to rest comfortably within their privileged positions. (Such a framework often won't even consider the status of adjunct professors; the important work of community college teachers actually teaching the students who enter college from resource excluded communities). What is much harder to gain support, funding to create are efforts which use the framework of the community to restructure the workings of an academic department, public project, college, or university. It is almost ludicrous to suggest such an outcome is even possible.

And yet . . . .

By working with John, I began to see how the coalitions across different communities might begin to pressure a change in behavior by a university. *The Westside Residents Coalition*, discussed in "Sinners' Welcome," did, in fact, alter how a multi-million-dollar university-sponsored gentrification project went about its work. It did alter the behavior of police assigned to ensure the Westside residents understood a *new regime* was constellating their community. I am not arguing some type of coup d'état occurred; this was much more a Gramscian war of position. But what it did demonstrate was the power of not acceding to the limited position of a *professor who does outreach*. That instead, a coalitional politics that aligned with the community's vision could manipulate that *professor* subjectivity into a tool for change. That was only possible, however, if I pushed back against a traditional framing and maintained an organic relationship to the communities which created me. And I would only be effective if I also maintained an ethical stance that allowed disciplinary terms to be redefined for purposes other than intended.

I suppose such lessons might have been learned through reading scholarly articles of the time. I will remain forever grateful, though, for John having been such an effective teacher.

The Democratic Future Project

As detailed in the preceding essays, at a certain point, my work moved to an international context. And here again I can thank John Burdick, through whom I became associated with Syracuse University's program supporting democratic advocates from the then-recent Arab Spring. This work led to my co-creating Syrians for Truth and Justice while at Syracuse. Today, however, that work has led to a new project at my new institutional home, the University of Virginia. The Democratic Futures Project (DFP) is an alliance of academics, advocates, and policy makers focused on supporting grassroots efforts at democratic change in authoritarian nations. The DFP supports academic/advocate research alliances which bend university methodologies to produce the knowledge needed in real time by non-violent movements for change. To support these efforts, DFP has created a series of undergraduate required writing courses where international democratic advocates bring students directly into their projects, asking them to research specific needs then produce public writing which addresses those needs. Think *Writing Across Nations* or *Writing Beyond Authoritarianism*.

A central partner in this effort has been Srdja Popović, whose OTPOR! organization deposed Serbian authoritarian leader Slobodan Milosevic. Since that time, Popović has helped to co-create the Center for Applied Nonviolent Actions and Strategies (CANVAS), which has provided training in non-violent social movement practices in over 53 countries and, for which, it was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. In the dialogue that follows, we discuss how the academy must transform its identity to fulfill its rhetoric of supporting democracy and human rights across the globe. And we discuss how, in particular, this means altering the way we teach students about literacy, advocacy, and political change.

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Parks: One of the issues we've worked on quite a bit is whether there is a role for academics in supporting the work of global democratic advocates. What did you imagine to be the traditional role of academics working with advocates, prior to our partnership? How would you describe the best model of such a partnership?

Popović: Looking from the point of activists within the pillar of academia, I will use my usual approach. The academy is a very important institution which can be pulled in many different ways. To some extent there is a growing interest in academia about social change, about how it is achieved, and about the role of social movements. There is also no lack of people discussing the disconnect between public mobilization and the quality of democracy in the country. So, the interest is there. However, the way academia approaches this is very dry. And it is dry, in my opinion, from two different perspectives. One perspective that it is looking at the dead things. It looks at data. It looks at history. It looks at

conditions. It looks at the unmovable things that are too exact to be applicable. And what I learned through my work of empowering advocates is that skills are more important than conditions.

Two, academia doesn't interact enough with live people, with actual advocates. I think more interaction with live people, which is what we try to achieve through the Democratic Futures Project, provides an important opportunity for research. It is one thing when you are looking at articles. But there is no academic writing that can express the power of meeting advocates. You can get the story about the dates and the times and the number of the times a political video has been seen, such as with Evan Mawarire's #ThisFlag video. But hearing Evan's story about how he was praying with the police that were about to arrest him gives you a very different angle about the dynamics of the struggle. This is exactly the moment where you see everybody's jaw drop. It is not only because the story is great and touching and appealing on an emotional level. It is also that you never think about social movements with this particular angle. I believe that more interaction with advocates leads to better understanding and, probably, better analyzing of the situation.

Such interaction also leads to understanding the needs of advocates. There are a lot of needs that academia can meet when it comes to the world of activists. Some of these needs are pretty obvious. You need to study more, you need to write more, you need to research more on the work of activists. I'm just to co-publish a paper with my friends, Slobodan Kjinvoic and Professor Edwin Mujkic, from UCCIS, on the innovative tactics of OTPOR! resistance movement in Serbia, which happened over 23 years ago. The fact that I, a non-academic, should have to write down in academic writing such simple advocate actions, like the use of parallel vote tabulation, dilemma actions, humor, branding, means nobody has really published about one of the most influential movements in this field. And I'm not praising it because it's my movement. It was copied Georgia. It was copy and pasted in Ukraine. In Egypt. The question is "Why? What about the movement allows such connections between different countries?" And you only understand these connections if you talk to the advocates on the ground, who are using prior movements, and creating actual change in situations where scholarly research argues change is impossible. Advocate voices can alter how research understands the possibility of political change.

Parks: Why do you think academics don't reach out to advocates? What is your sense of why these interactions don't happen?

Popović: I think for some reason academia is very locked into a certain toolbox. And with any toolbox, you only have a certain number of tools, like a hammer. Every problem looks the same, like a nail that needs struck. So, when I was invited to do the joint research on of the most thrilling and inspiring elements of nonviolent tactics-phenomena we call dilemma actions, with amazing Penn State Professor Sophia McLennan and Professor Joe Wright, I was thrilled. However, throughout the process I was overwhelmed with academic criteria, and figured

out that most of the time what you do is you are digging through this methodology of how academic research should be structured in order to be published. My point of view is always, "Cmon . . . . These are live cases. This is what has happened. This is what we need to really touch people. To help them see how to create change." But as primary target of academic research is academic audience, now you need to focus on for me very exotic things like data set or "coding". And within the process of creating a dataset and coding, if you have half of my activist mindset you lose every single motivation to even talk about it. That's the point. It's like that the very academic process that is kind of designed to kill anything which is inherent to the actual advocacy. There are certain scholarly norms which needs to be fulfilled, of course and I understand that. But unless academics expands its toolbox, I don't find it of much use to advocates defending and expanding democracy globally. Our work on dilemma actions may be one of most useful practical finding in the field, clearly showing that creative planning of tactics increases possibility for success of nonviolent movements. But if it had stayed only in excel sheet dataset table—no advocate in the world would ever read it, nonetheless use some of its important findings. This is why the Penn State team and mine have taken a different approach, and created platform for activists as well…but I will talk later about that.

Parks: It is generous of you to equate academic theory with a toolbox, given most academics are not in a position to actually get their hands dirty in creating political change. Some of this is that the current labor situation in the academy produces a precariat labor force where the economic risk can be too great to speak out. But I also think that academics are not really provided with a "toolbox" that contains the tools to create change. We are taught theories of change, but not the process of building coalitions, analyzing pillars of power, etc. When we work with advocates, that is, we are driven by research models that create "data sets," not alliances that support actual movement needs. And given the tremendous pressures faced by advocates, particularly within authoritarian countries, it is not like answering academic questions are at the top of their agenda. How might this lack of communication, partnership, be addressed?

Popović: I see several quick fixes or quick tips about how to make this process more effective. First of all, the people who are fighting for democracy, they are alive. They are very accessible. And if you bring them to your campus, if you give them a temporary home, they can help academics learn what questions are being faced by advocates. Through sustained dialogue, new research angles might be developed to create a proper long term cooperative relationship. If we want to study how certain elements of democratic advocacy (or how democracy advocacy works generally), we should be linking people operating in interesting environments with academia, meaning they are in touch with professor, with students. Because the marvelous things can happen from these interactions. These interactions are kind of making advocates getting more "scientific" and academics getting more in touch with real frontline.

Parks: I agree, but part of the difficulty is how the university has framed who is an intellectual. To a great extent, the university has defined the intellectual as the person with the Ph.D., with the published articles, with, as you say, footnotes. An intellectual is someone who perpetuates the university system. And I think part of the struggle of creating this possibility is working to redefine the intellectual as someone with organic knowledge of their community, its aspirations, and unique understanding of democracy. I think there is a pull to continually define intellectual knowledge as that which serves the academy, instead of knowledge that serves the community. There is just more prestige and comfort in taking that position professionally. There are no merit points for providing resources for advocates pressuring for systemic change. In fact, success in the academy is pretty much premised on activities that shore up its intellectual status.

Popović: In my language, that's a target audience issue. Clearly academics are trained, used to writing the articles that will be published in academic journals, then read, peer reviewed and quoted by other academics (in academic journals, where else?). They are creating useful knowledge—but mostly for each other and in part for students. It is also about their production of the research. It goes to the audience which keeps operating in a more or less closed circle or at least closed to those who are most in need for this type of insights. It's not only that they're listening mostly to other academics, but they also seem to not understand how to listen to the activists or produce something in activists (very different) language.

Parks: This makes me think of your research with Sophia McClennen on dilemma actions and humor, which you mentioned earlier. As part of this project, you created an extensive Excel sheet with thousands of points of data. And while it might be somewhat true that the "data" killed the live parts of the advocacy, you are now sharing this data with advocates as you move across the globe. You are almost acting as a transfer portal between academics and advocates.

Popović: As someone who deeply understand the value of "doers" Sophia and Joe took innovative approach, and decided to do "hard science part" but let me and CANVAS team to act like a bridge. So on top of research and dataset and coding our clear attempt was to make something "user friendly" for those who may apply it—activists and advocates themselves. This is how "Tactics4change" (www.tactics4change.org) the interactive website and platform which is based on the research was born. The website is easy to navigate, has appealing design and people can add their cases. The world of activists is world of interactions, so on Tactics4Change people who are interested in creative activism can not only see each of these cases, but upload their own cases of dilemma actions as well; actually contributing to the sample of the database! It is a great tool for advocates. And aims to be fruitful harvest for a dataset.

In fact, In the first two months of website traffic we assume that almost 90% of the website audience was not from academia but from the frontline advocates or professionals that are working in organizations related to advocacy. And yes… three of us will also publish an article based on the dataset which will be aimed

towards the academics, and hopefully a prestigious scientific journal will take it. And thus enable wider academic outreach and possible more funding to expand the research, that's all very important. But at the same time there will be a guy fighting environmental degradation of a forest in Africa who is scrolling through 420 cases of creative activism listed on Tactics4Change and thinking "Wow, I may actually TRY some of these". This "forked" approach, if you want, is where you really want to look in a long term. And where I see the future of initiatives like this research, such as our Democracy Futures Project or our annual People Power Academy, which brings activists to UVA. Whatever kind of academic research on democracy or social change you are doing, start thinking about how to make it relevant to advocates, how to make it accessible and cool and readable and appealing, so that activists will read or get inspired.

Parks: As you just said, we are testing out a similar idea at the University of Virginia, through the Democratic Futures Project. We have two students who have built a web portal where advocates can request a particular type of support—research, webpage development, social media support, etc. UVA students can then volunteer their time to meet this need. In a sense, we are indirectly demonstrating that their "academic intellect" can be used in support of "organic intellectuals" working for their community. Which is to say that there are amazing projects that help activists at the same time as they are building interesting opportunities for academia to expand their students' education. And to be honest, I think students are getting bored with just theory classes. They love the opportunity to do real advocacy.

Popović: This is really the model of our Democratic Futures Project courses as well as my own courses in Colorado College. (We also hope that People Power Academy, the CANVAS/UVA joint venture which brings fifty advocates for weekend of learning and sharing *at* the academic institutions may be the right path forward.) In these courses (and events), students study the theory and the history of a democratic movement. But then they have an advocate from Burma, an advocate from Zimbabwe, an advocate from Poland, an advocate from Black Lives Matter taking part in the class through Zoom. So, they were looking at the case study, they were looking at the theory, but here, there is the live person in front of them. For two hours, this live person is their resource. The level of engagement skyrocketed not because I'm a good teacher, but because these guest advocates bring new quality to class process and students end up working on something very unusual for them. Students are like, "I have this opportunity to work for real change and interact with people who are doing it every day. Of course, I'm going to get engaged."

Parks: It's true. I'm often seen as a very cool political professor because all I do is say, "Here's Felix Maradiaga. Here's Evan Mawarire. Here's Evgeniya Chirikova." The advocates then change the room from a classroom to a being a space to do real public work. But there is a related issue to a classroom with an advocate attending our classes. There is a lot of angst right now about faculty being political

and ideological. There's a blowback to advocacy in the academy. But what my students soon notice is that when we have the advocates come in, the advocates are all about rebuilding "the middle." They talk about building coalitions which can pull down oppressive pillars of power and reconstitute them in the interests of those on the wrong side of privilege. The advocate's very presence critiques a certain form of purist radical rhetoric that can inhabit a classroom or a university.

I think my students find it interesting that activism is coalition building. It's not just like, "I'm going to protest on a corner or ask folks to sign a petition." It's like, no, you have to work with other people to get the change you want. And I don't think that's something that they learn. My students don't have a roadmap to connect their education and their ethics to activism. Then these advocates come and tell how they did it. It almost bridges the gap for them. They see that they could become an Evan Mawarire or Evgenia Chirikova or a neighborhood advocate. It takes the mystery out of the process. It shows that it is a process of small tactical steps within a larger strategy. And, importantly, anyone can take those steps.

Popović: In order to be successful, you need to build coalitions and you need to figure out what constitutes "the middle." You need to figure out the pillars that are supporting corruption or injustice, and how shifting the pillars is related to changing an institution's behavior. So yes, we can make a protest. But does that change anything by itself? What other strategies are possible? Consider Ukraine. Putin invaded Ukraine. People are dying. Kids are studying in a subway stations. It's like no doubt "What the hell is happening." Students can go out and wave the flag. They can put it on social media. But if they are a class where they study their local terrain, they can develop more effective local responses within that terrain to the conflict. We had this class in digital campaigning here where we just outlined the spectrum of allies near Colorado College. They were looking at the community of Colorado Springs and identified a bakery owned by a Ukrainian. Then they identified somebody in the local media who is of Ukrainian origin. They also identify the person who is working in a generator factory. Then the students connected all three in a campaign where they're bringing the person who has a bakery to the college and they're selling the bakery goods on campus. They are then using this money to buy generators.

Parks: I think the power of that example is how what seems to be an immense global issue was transformed into an action that gave students agency. The project allowed them to intervene in the conflict in a way that demonstrated actual material support was possible; that creating a strategy based on the real needs of Ukrainians based on the real resources available could produce real results. In my own classes, I have seen how students deeply felt sense that U.S. democracy is failing can be addressed by having them develop local interventions in terms of voting access or to support specific legislation around voting rights. It provides them a sense that well thought out actions can have results. And in the process, they learn again that change is the result of meshing your particular political

viewpoint with those of others to create a coalition that has the strength to ac-tually protect democracy. In this way, they learn the limits of a purity that might provide personal comfort but does not produce actual change.

Popović: This is a very good point, especially when we are talking about de-mocracy, which is something very dear to my heart. But it is also important when looking at other topics which are very big on academia, such as the environment, sustainability, or climate change. People who don't live in certain environments can have a very vague idea about how it is to live, to operate, in a certain envi-ronment. And from there, all kind of different assumptions come to the place. Of course, assumptions are not replacement for the facts, but bring somebody who is really passionate about women's rights to speak about Iran. Here comes this person who tells you the story that if you're jogging in Iran on the street and you are a woman, and even a scarfed, woman, you'll be easily stopped and frisked by the police because jogging looks suspicious. It looks like you just have escaped from your husband once again. So here you are with your very clear commitment to the woman's rights being exposed to the very different world. And here we are start focusing on if you want to change things, here is the strategic approach. We are no longer talking about equal pay for equal work on the whatever is the big issue at a college. Now you are talking about the basic right of women to exercise.

So, the reason why I think you're right about building the middle is if you are passionate about the issue and you are living into your own bubble, then you are very likely to sharpen your point of view or radicalize it. But if you're in constant touch with the people who are having actual human rights issues on the ground, then you're more likely to be grounded yourself in looking for real solutions. And the more you see it from the perspective of this person, the more you realize many elements of a nation need to join together to fix this issue. Your small group of true believers will never have the power of their own to correct this situation. This insight is, of course, impossible to gain by reading books. You need to be exposed to this person.

All the knowledge on UVA about historic cases of fighting for rights of women may actually be a very decent pile of useful things. But before you bring the per-son there, before a professor, academic postdoc or grad student gets in touch and really starts interacting with the person, then the person interacts with the group, you cannot understand the need and the real work of addressing that need. So once again, it's about more exposure, more practice, more human contact, which can't be replaced by quoting popular journals or looking at the data sets. Again, academic can help. Universities possess a tremendous level of knowledge. But if this knowledge stays in the library, then it is just a book on the library shelf. For most of real life advocates this knowledge is like there are bottles of water behind the closed doors, but here you are dying thirsty because you don't have a key.

Parks: I think that is a very powerful place to end our discussion. I want to add one final thought, though. One of the consistent themes in my work is how to navigate my own positionality in relationship to differing institutions and

communities. Your comment also reminds me that "positionality" is also a term that circulates in terms of national identity, either possessing or lacking such an affiliation and consequent set of rights. In your story, a student's national context and understanding of political struggle is juxtaposed to that of an Iranian woman attempting to simply jog in public. You suggest that through interaction between these two individuals, a greater sense of what it means to work for human rights can be gained. That the necessity of coalitions to produce change will become evident to the U.S.-based student.

Moving to a larger framework, I also think that an international framework is necessary for many U.S.-based/born faculty to adopt as well. At different moments, I have spoken about how the university works to provide those with power, tenured professors, enough security so there appears to be no need to disrupt how power works. Often those comments have been focused on the need to reject such a framing when developing local community-based projects. There is perhaps a more urgent need to consider how our actions as professors, within our institutions, intersect with global atrocities that are occurring daily to populations on the wrong side of Western privilege. We need to consistently ask ourselves if our research and partnerships might address a local moment, but cause damage internationally. Sometimes this can be as immediate as our students understanding the personal risks their international student partners are facing, not asking them to talk about certain issues that can result in their expulsion from their university. We need to recognize our comfort with free speech might be irresponsible speech in another context. And certainly, when working with global advocates, we need to consider the full context of their work—how do their democratic beliefs intersect with issues such as LBGTQ or women's rights.

But more broadly, I have come to understand that the initial work I did creating the Institute for Literacy, Literature, and Culture to transform the possibilities in my college was only half the work. In many ways, there should have been equal effort to build the coalitions of faculty, administration, and local community members to shift university funds, endowments, and investment policies that contradict the local claims to democracy, human rights, and justice. In many ways, to ultimately push against the comfort of being a traditional intellectual, you must understand your identity as global, as necessarily intersecting with communities that while distant, you still hold a responsibility to them. You must still challenge your university, your nation, to dismantle the structures of oppression. It's only by operating at all these levels at one that you can be said to fighting for a democratic future.

And as I think is evident, I still have much to learn, and much work to do with others, such as yourself, to achieve that goal.

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"The Wrong Side of Privilege"

"The Wrong Side of Privilege" explores the historical development of community partnership frameworks in composition and rhetoric. It begins by situating partnership work within the political and cultural frameworks of the late 20th and early 21st century, including the rise of the conservative right and neoliberal economic policies. Following this introduction, Stephen J. Parks presents a series of essays which provides case studies of what "political work" implied during this period. The essays move in focus from local community contexts, such a neighborhood struggle against gentrification, to global contexts, such as the Syrian conflict and the larger Arab Spring. These essays engage with the leading scholars of community partnership work, such as Eli Goldblatt, Ellen Cushman, Linda Flower, and Paula Mathieu. The book concludes with a dialogue between the author, global democratic advocate, Srdja Popović, as well as composition and rhetoric scholar, Eli Goldblatt, on the necessity of public work in the face of declining global governance.

"Steve Parks is an advocate in the body of an academic."
– *Srdja Popović, Center for NonViolent Actions and Strategies*

Stephen J. Parks is Professor of English at the University of Virginia. He has published widely in scholarly journals and edited collections and is the author or co-author of five books, including *Gravyland: Writing Beyond the Curriculum in the City of Brotherly Love* (Syracuse UP) and *Class Politics: The Movement for "The Students' Right to Their Own Language"* (NCTE). He has served as editor or co-editor of four book series, including NCTE/CCCC's Studies in Writing and Rhetoric. His current research focuses on the ways in which community partnership work has been embedded within a pragmatism that fails to address the educational and political needs of resource-poor communities.

Practices & Possibilities
Series Editors: Aimee McClure, Kelly Ritter, Aleashia Walton, and Jagadish Paudel