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INVESTIGATING OUR DISCURSIVE HISTORY: *JBW* AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE "BASIC WRITER'S" IDENTITY

ABSTRACT: This paper offers a brief Foucauldian archaeological and discursive history of the Journal of Basic Writing *because of its central place in the history of our scholarship. In doing so, this paper attempts to accomplish the following: 1) describe some of the broad historical features of the construction of Basic Writers' identities, 2) examine instances that appear within the journal in which critical disruptions and overlaps of such constructions occur in unexpected, telling ways, and 3) explore what such discursive moments reveal about trends and tendencies within the scholarship and history of Basic Writing itself. Thus the paper attempts to provide an alternative, metanarrative-resisting history of the journal itself, suggesting the values as well as problems within the current state of the construction of Basic Writers' identities in our scholarship, and presenting some speculations about future constructions of Basic Writers' identities.*

Drawing upon Michel Foucault's view that the formation of identities and practices are themselves a function of historically specific discourses, this paper charts a history of constructions of "Basic Writer" student identities in *Basic Writing* and the *Journal of Basic Writing* from 1975 to the present. For Foucault, such history writing is archaeological, bringing "to light the epistemological field, the episteme in which knowledge, envisaged apart from all criteria having reference to its rational value or to its objective forms, grounds its positivity and thereby manifests a history which is not that of its growing perfection, but rather that of its conditions of possibility" (1970, xxii). Such historical research aims to advance critiques of the present era, to show the historical constitution of present modes of social domination, to identify historical continuities and discontinuities, progressive and

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regressive features of history, and the forces of domination and liberation therein. In doing so, it attempts to resist the construction of history as a metanarrative, instead offering readings of specific historical texts and their disruptive effects. As Foucault argues, some discourses have shaped and created meaning systems that have gained the status and currency of "truth," dominating how we define and organize both ourselves and our social world. In Foucault's definition, normative conditions and truths "are established between institutions, economic and social processes, behavioral patterns, systems of norms, techniques, types of classification, modes of characterization" (1972, 45) such that other alternative discourses can become marginalized and subjugated. Yet these discourses also potentially offer sites where hegemonic practices can be contested, challenged, and even resisted.

Utilizing Joseph Harris's[1] discussion of the main metaphors that have dominated Basic Writing scholarship, growth, initiation and conflict, this paper investigates Basic Writing scholarship's tendency to form discursive relationships that have shaped student identity along those particular lines. In keeping with this kind of historical inquiry, I look not only to those texts which adhere to these metaphors, constituting the Basic Writer student identity as fixed or stable, but also to texts which fail to settle the Basic Writer student identity in this way and have therefore sometimes remained the "unread" of Basic Writing scholarship. I have decided to turn to this particular journal as the source for this disciplinary history for two reasons: 1) *Basic Writing* or the *Journal of Basic Writing* has historically been the main organ of the Basic Writing movement, and therefore it provides by and large a sustained view of such changes, and 2) placed within this journal this history may offer the opportunity for self-reflection, a recognition of where we've come from, the paths we've taken, and the adventures upon which we have yet to embark. While there are many texts which one might select, I point specifically to three: a 1978 text by Louise Yelin, the Myra Kogen/Janice Hays debate of the 1980s, and a series of texts that utilize the conflict model. All histories are invested with ideological, cultural, and social interests, and this one is no different. However, this history does attempt to provide an examination of these texts so as to reveal how previous conceptions of Basic Writer student identity may be contested and new conceptions might be formed.

The "Growing" Basic Writing Student Identity

> *Error may seem to be an old place to begin a new discussion about teaching writing. It is, after all, a subject English teachers already know about. Some people would claim that it is the English teacher's obsession with error that has killed writing for generations of stu-*

dents. Yet error- the unintentional deviation from expected patterns- dominates the writing of many of the new students, inhibiting them and their readers from concentrating on what is being said.

Mina Shaughnessy, 1975
"Introduction" to the inaugural issue of *Basic Writing*

Certainly illustrations adhering to what Harris terms the "growth" metaphor (and its related metaphoric incarnations such as "developmental"[2] and "maturing") can be detected throughout many of the articles within the early printings of *Basic Writing*. In its most fundamental form, this construction of the Basic Writer's student identity relied in part upon these respective hypotheses: 1) the Basic Writer was perceived as incapable of propelling her/himself to the next "cognitive" or neurological level alone, requiring instead the teacher/scholar's aid in order to accomplish this feat, 2) the Basic Writer was helpless to move to generalizations and abstractions "naturally" like other students, and therefore had to be led through a series of steps in order to arrive there, and 3) the Basic Writer's writing, while logical in its errors, needed to be purged of such errors. Relatively disconnected from the context within which the Basic Writer was actually writing, the Basic Writer's student identity was inscribed first and foremost by the necessity to become more cognitively advanced and more developmentally mature. Equally importantly, however, there have been attempts historically to challenge the predominance of this metaphoric allegiance that eventually led to its loss of power. After tracing a few representative examples of how and to what ends this metaphor has been deployed, I will then expose how one oft neglected text within Basic Writing history offered contradictory conceptions of this metaphor's utility, undermining and finally working to disrupt it.

When one turns to the first years of *Basic Writing* (1975 to the present),[3] this focus on developmental concerns seems to pervade the journal. The first issue, "Error" (1975), was concerned with sustaining Shaughnessy's project of looking at the logic of students' errors developmentally.[4] Shaughnessy's introduction to the first issue, directed to an audience of English teachers, relayed the predicament of the new teacher encountering students who were struggling in their writing, and indicated that no one "way" or "formula" could be found in books which would resolve the dilemma of how best to teach them. Rather, the journal was designed to be a location for teachers to "confront more questions than they will ever be able to answer and to abandon more strategies than they will ever finally accept" (3). In this introduction, Shaughnessy implied that the focus on the subject of error as the first topic in the journal was not a result of a need to center on that issue alone, but as a result of the need to uncover additional ways to inves-

tigate the matter of error which may be more socially and pedagogically feasible. Contributors to this issue centered mainly upon this developmental or growth model.

The second issue, Fall/Winter 1976, took a slightly different approach than the first edition, complicating the developmental model a bit while it also continued to reproduce a rather comparable Basic Writing student identity, shaped as it was by many of the same scholarly forces. In this issue Shaughnessy claimed that "as yet, the teaching of writing to underprepared college freshmen is too loose and unstudied an experience to allow for uniformity within programs, let alone among them" (1). She pointed out the varying ways in which "basic" itself was defined institutionally and the diversities within budgets for programs and teacher-training. In this volume she invited "teachers to submit course descriptions" in order to "document the diversity of outlook and design that seems to characterize basic writing teaching" and to "find individual accounts of courses that would themselves be useful to all teachers" (1). Importantly, Shaughnessy recommended that "while the remedial situation dictates that we reduce the universe of writing to 'basic' subskills, the skill of writing seems to defy such reduction, impressing us again and again with its subtle involvement of various faculties and skills" (3). Urging teachers not to elaborate a "uniform system of teaching basic writing," this volume was entirely devoted to very different course designs within Basic Writing programs, while it was also calculated to bestow issues of reasoning and logic upon Basic Writing curricula and developmentally designed courses. This signaled a complication in the developmental model as well as a slight move away from it.

Disruptions Within the Developmentalist Metaphor

During this time period (1975 to 1979), however, there were a number of important scholarly attempts to alter this construction. These contributions, many of which appeared in the Fall/Winter 1978 issue titled "Applications: Theory Into Practice," disrupted and challenged the allegiance to the "growth" metaphor, suggesting that there were other possibilities for understanding how to construct the Basic Writer's identity. As then editor Marylea Meyersohn suggested in the prefatory note, "this issue is something of a departure from our earlier, more 'concrete' issues, and some readers may be surprised at its ideological intention: To demonstrate the uses of so-called 'high brow' literary criticism in the teaching of Basic Writing." Meyersohn explained that while readers might balk at this new strategy, the "diversity will stimulate instructors of writing to suspend disbelief about what helps students and to look more widely for sources of aid" (1). Such early attempts,

though suppressed, signaled future directions for Basic Writing scholarship. A new, radical, construction of Basic Writer's student identity as not outside philosophical or theoretical issues but integral to them, however, could not be readily sustained at this historical point since there was little support for it within the larger sets of theories then operational within Composition Studies.

This issue included texts by Andrea Lunsford[5] on Aristotelian rhetoric, Thomas Farrell on literacy and writing, and Marilyn Schauer Samuels on Norman Holland's theoretical models for the teaching of writing. While all of these texts contested the trajectory of Basic Writing scholarship thus far in particular ways, I will look at only one such text in detail here which pushes this disruption farthest. Louise Yelin's "Deciphering the Academic Hieroglyph: Marxist Literary Theory and the Practice of Basic Writing" stands out among the texts within this 1978 issue. Hers was perhaps the earliest attempt within the journal to bring a sustained understanding of social criticism to bear upon the Basic Writer's situation. Moreover, this was the first piece of meta-theoretical criticism published on Basic Writing scholarship itself. Finally, it was among the first texts to interweave conceptions of the Basic Writer identity as developmental, initiated into academic discourse, as well as socially constituted, three perspectives which would later come to be seen as somewhat incompatible.

Yelin's Text

Beginning with the question "What does a Marxist theory of literature and culture have to offer the teacher of Basic Writing?," Yelin argued that the practice of Basic Writing simply cannot be isolated from broader questions of literacy. In this piece she was quick to call attention to the fact that Marxist theory should not simply be applied to the Basic Writer's situation. Rather, the two should mutually inform each other. As she made her argument, Yelin's rhetorical tactics were as groundbreaking for her own day as much as they might be for an audience of today. Yelin began by judiciously crediting Shaughnessy with a "respect for Basic Writing students" and giving her a sense of both what she could reasonably expect from her students and from herself. Yelin turned away from *Errors and Expectations* not because of any kind of conservatism she saw in its political perspective but because "when I attempted to put Shaughnessy's suggestions into practice, the results were rarely as I would have wished" (14). Once she realized that this was the case, Yelin looked for a rationale. What she found was that Basic Writing's "respect for the individual" is premised upon a kind of liberalism which fosters a problematic "concomitant optimism about what can be accomplished." As such Shaughnessy's work and much Basic Writing scholarship could not canvass Basic

Writing Programs as "part of a web of cultural, political, and economic structures, and institutions" (15). Despite its democratic focus, Yelin indicated, Basic Writing programs were in danger of fostering a vocational education which, often despite its own assertions, reinforced social stratification. As such, Yelin argued that Basic Writing embodied a contradiction "between the liberal ideal of equal opportunity and the economic realities of American capitalism" (16). Not willing to toss the growth model away, however, Yelin claimed that we might usefully employ the developmental model in conjunction with presenting Standard English as a "social and historical phenomenon and as a system of linguistic forms and structures" (23).

In taking up a variety of metaphoric investments, Yelin was understandably cautious throughout her discussion. The topic of Basic Writers' social situations, to her mind, should not overshadow the overarching goal, that they become fluent in the conventions of Standard English. However, Yelin did assert that the "activity of writing (and therefore the practice of Basic Writing) cannot be isolated from broader questions of literacy" (26). Also indicating her fears about initiating Basic Writers into an academic community, Yelin elucidated that Basic Writing could not and should not skirt the issue of the extent to which there is an institutional separation between "insiders" (academic experts) and "outsiders" (Basic Writers) and the extent to which it is both problematic and yet necessary to introduce Basic Writers to the codes and dominant values of American public life. However, Yelin did not leave the question of "initiation" there. She argued that these categories of "insiders" and "outsiders" are themselves myths which obscure real relations of domination. This led Yelin to assert firmly that we could no longer endeavor to exploit Basic Writing programs in order to conceal the relations of domination and subordination which existed within them. The sometimes expressivist and oftentimes politically-motivated call for students to "find their own voices" can in fact "patronize students in the name of 'creativity'" (24). In doing so, however, Yelin also importantly referenced the dangers of social theories which "romanticize" Basic Writers as a "'culture of the oppressed'" and sought to undermine this. Instead, Yelin called for a dialectical approach to Basic Writing as itself a cultural project worthy of critical investigation.

In making such claims, Yelin's composition strategically exposed some potential problems within the developmental, initiation, and conflict models themselves. In the case of the developmental allegiance, though its intentions were good, Yelin suggested that it ended up at moments being internally conflicted and contradictory. While desiring to help the Basic Writer, Yelin indicated, it too often took focus away from Basic Writers' social and rhetorical situations, resting attention almost exclusively upon their cognitive development. In the

case of the initiation model, while it recognized the institutional construction of "insiders" and "outsiders" and debated how to supply the necessary academic codes to Basic Writers so that they might tip the scales, Yelin implied it did not call attention to the construction of these categories themselves or what oppressive social relations they helped to maintain. Lastly, and most curiously, while citing thinkers such as Karl Marx and Raymond Williams throughout her text, Yelin also offered an implicit criticism of what have come to be understood as "conflict" approaches which celebrate difference and diversity. In doing so, Yelin warned scholars and teachers about the potentials of romanticizing the position of the "oppressed" student, or focusing on issues of victimization to the exclusion of other issues. In doing so, Yelin's text defied easy categorization and exposed all of the main metaphoric attempts made to construct Basic Writing student identity as potentially problematic.

Initiating the Basic Writer

> *The student has to appropriate (or be appropriated by) a specialized discourse, and he has to do this as though he were easily and comfortably one with his audience, as though he were a member of the academy or an historian or an anthropologist or an economist, he has to invent the university by assembling and mimicking its language . . .*
>
> David Bartholomae, 1986
> "Inventing the University"

By 1979, the journal moved closer to its previous format, this time with a convergence upon concerns related to the daily issues of teaching Basic Writing, "Programs." Nevertheless, this preliminary disruptive shift in 1978 to theoretical frameworks over pragmatic ones unquestionably signaled a scholarly change which was beginning to transpire within the journal itself, within the field of Basic Writing, and within the fabrication of Basic Writing student identities altogether. Developmental or cognitive constructions of Basic Writers' identities did not diminish entirely, of course, but gradually commenced to have less prominence within the journal, signaling what was a paradigm shift in how Basic Writing students' identities would be constructed. Basic Writers came to be seen not purely in developmentalist terms. Instead, they were perceived as more in line with the argument Yelin articulated, as social beings, impacted acutely by academic discourses and their rhetorical effects. This launched the gradual shift to "initiation" models (and related, patterned metaphors of "invention" and phrases such as "entering a discourse community") over and against concerns of "growth." This new Basic Writing student identity was

predicated upon the following presumptions: 1) the Basic Writer was not immature, powerless to clear cognitive hurdles and make generalizations, but instead a novice to the conventions of academic discourse and the codes of academic life, 2) the Basic Writer's writing did not only divulge a logic of errors, but meaningful rhetorical attempts to "invent" a language s/he thought approximated academic discourse, and 3) the role of scholars and teachers within Basic Writing classes should be to "initiate" Basic Writers into the mainstream of academic discourse.

In this section I will first trace the new construction of the "Basic Writer" as "initiated." Then I will point to a text which revealed this construction's internal disruptions, finally helping to dismantle it. Now the Basic Writer's student identity involved an amateur status much like the beginner who had emerged before. This new framework, however, afforded a value to academic discourse and rhetorical thinking as discrete entities in themselves which might transfigure the Basic Writer.

The 1979 volume included David Bartholomae's "Teaching Basic Writing: An Alternative to Teaching Basic Skills." On its surface this text produced a self-study of the University of Pittsburgh Program. However, Bartholomae's text was radically distinct in the Basic Writing student identity it assembled. Bartholomae indicated further that the intent of his program was "to produce writers" who "gather new information, attempt new perspectives, re-formulate, re-see, and, in general, develop a command of a subject" (85). Taking issue with the developmentalist paradigm directly, Bartholomae argued in favor of a "responsible pedagogy," which, he contended, "begins by making the soundest possible speculation about the syllabus built into the learner, rather than imposing upon a learner a sequence serving the convenience of teachers or administrators" (89). Bartholomae finally took direct issue with the cognitive psychological assumptions which had driven this previous methodology as well as its metaphoric allegiances and its construction of Basic Writer identity, arguing instead on behalf of a more rhetorically-based approach:

> much attention is being paid to research in cognitive psychology, presumably in hopes of finding a key to the mechanism that triggers generalization. A response more in keeping with our own training, however, is to acknowledge the motive in such an utterance and to redirect the writer by asking him to re-imagine both his audience and his reason for writing. (93)

Bartholomae's text gestured towards the fading power of the developmentalist construction of Basic Writer student identity. After the publication of this article, developmentalist paradigms would still

surely be debated heatedly within the journal, but the model itself began waning distinctly in its influences. In its place, the initiation model, gained more control in the attempt to fix the Basic Writer's identity. The Spring/Summer 1981 issue took up the task of training teachers in Basic Writing theory and practice with pieces such as Harvey Wiener's "Preparing the Teacher of Writing," John Brereton's "The Doctorate Program in Composition at Wayne State," and Charles Moran's "A Model for Teacher Training Programs in the Field of Writing." Many of these texts broadened out into concerns about the profession of rhetoric and composition, discussing appropriate reading lists, dissertation topics, and qualifying examinations in the discipline, and in Basic Writing specifically. The Fall/Winter 1981 issue centered on revision, including pieces such as Ann Berthoff's "Recognition, Representation, and Revision," Donald Murray's "Making Meaning Clear: The Logic of Revision," Nancy Sommers' "Intentions and Revisions," and Linda Flower's "Revising Reader-based Prose." In her introduction to this issue, Sarah D'Eloia Fortune details the ways in which revision is being redefined no longer in terms of clarity and correctness, the province of style and arrangement, but "as the means and sometimes the substance of invention" (1). Moving between philosophies of revision, teaching strategies for revision, and students' own revising techniques, the texts in this issue took revision out of the realm of the fixed and static, seeing it as part of the rhetorical situation which was constantly changing and evolving.

The journal was not published from 1981 to 1985. As a result, there is much about the initiation metaphor's predominance in the journal that is difficult to fully understand. Clearly, though, as is demonstrated in the 1981 issues of the journal, rhetorical situation and context were shaping both how scholars viewed the profession as well as the site of revision. It would not be long before such views came to be applied to the construction of the Basic Writer's student identity itself. The 1985 issue signaled a brief recursive return to cognitive psychology and social science research which would shortly be dominated by more rhetorically-based, initiation models. As Fortune suggested in her introduction to the Spring issue, this was meant a return to the journal's inaugural issue, the "problem of persistent error in writing: its sources, its effects on readers and writers, and strategies for addressing it" (1). Part One of these two theme-driven issues would offer a return to issues of developmentalism and cognition, including Mary Epes' "Tracing Errors to Their Sources: A Study of the Encoding Processes of Adult Basic Writers," Marilyn Goldberg's "Overfamiliarity: A Cognitive Barrier in Teaching Composition," and Irvin Hashimoto's "Adult Learning and Composition Instruction." The Fall 1985 issue, while it also worked to address social science research, inaugurated other sorts of changes which forecasted what was to come. In this is-

sue new editor Lynn Quitman Trokya offered a preview for 1986 which would involve two new policies: all articles would be refereed and there would be a move away from single-themed issues so as to publish material in a more timely fashion. Responses to previously published essays were also welcomed, indicating that the growing sense of rhetoric and composition as a profession was impacting the journal's structure and practices.

The Kogen/Hays Debate

By 1986 Troyka, drawing attention to the professionalization of Composition Studies altogether and Basic Writing scholarship specifically, had renamed the periodical the *Journal of Basic Writing*, and instated the changes she had forecasted within the preceding issue. Now funded by a short term grant from Exxon, the Spring issue included works by those who criticized the developmentalist/cognitivist strain within previous research much more overtly in favor of the "initiation" strain. This issue contained essays such as David Bartholomae's "Inventing the University," Andrea Lunsford's "Assignments for Basic Writers: Unresolved Issues and Needed Research," Myra Kogen's "The Conventions of Expository Writing" as well as George Jensen's "The Reification of the Basic Writer," the last of which specifically utilized the Myers-Briggs personality indicator tests to suggest that the conception of the homogeneous Basic Writing student was flawed.

Here I will focus upon the Kogen/Hays debate, not only because it galvanized a position against developmentalism as the governing metaphor, but because of the resistances and disruptions that developed within their discussion and within the field as a result. In this particular volume, Kogen's essay, "The Conventions of Expository Writing," provided the most sustained blow to the prominence of the growth metaphor within Basic Writing scholarship that any scholar had yet waged in the journal's history. In this article, Kogen argued convincingly that cognitive and developmentalist models failed to acknowledge that students already had the ability to think and reason logically but simply weren't familiar with academic discourse's conventions. She overtly denounced the previous work of developmentalist theorist Janice Hays which accepted and supported the "growth" metaphor, saying, "Hays is asserting that poor writers have not developed the ability to think abstractly" (34). She combated Hays' assumed claim, remarking that "freshmen writers certainly can think abstractly but they have not yet learned to present their ideas in accordance with conventional expectations" (34), pushing the notion of the Basic Writer student identity as "initiated" that much further. While this seemed an only slight deviation from earlier developmentalist approaches, this slight difference would indeed make all the difference. Kogen went on

to advise that this propensity to emphasize the student's lack of cognitive maturity constructed a rendition of Basic Writing student identity which was itself fundamentally "demeaning" (36), calling instead for a rejection of this model and an acceptance of the student's introduction into academic discourse as the new model.

The publication of this piece resulted understandably in a significant and historic "dialogue" which tackled these concerns. At the center of this controversy was the new definition of the Basic Writer's student identity and the attempt to solidify or fix it finally as either thoroughly developmental or entirely initiated. The first rejoinder to Kogen's article came from Hays in a Spring 1987 article titled "Models of Intellectual Development and Writing: A Response to Myra Kogen et al.." Here Hays argued very specifically against Kogen in favor of William Perry's developmental model for the purposes of teaching Basic Writers, announcing that adult development was widely demonstrated as accurate, developmentalists were not maturationists, and developmentalists were not anti-context in focus as Kogen's argument had indeed implied. Hays made clear that the metaphoric investments Kogen herself ("academic discourse" and "initiation") held had opened Hays to criticism that may not have been warranted:

> It is ironic that such charges are being leveled against developmentalists when they are the very ones who have championed student-centered learning, individualized teaching, respect for differences between students, the use of small-group work, and constructionist activity in the classroom. (17)

Hays, like Kogen, saw one of the Basic Writer's primary problems to be "awareness of the reader's perspective" but attributed this less to academic conventions alone and more to an inability to imagine multiple viewpoints due to a lack of the cognitive prerequisite— "mature thought." The second overt response to Kogen's essay then came from Joseph G.R. and Nancy C. Martinez during Fall 1987 in "Reconsidering Cognition and the Basic Writer: A Response to Myra Kogen." In this essay, waged against Hays' assertions, the authors maintained that Kogen's claims could even be defended from the perspective of cognitive psychology itself, suggesting that there were "qualitative differences between children's and adult's cognition" which Hays' application of this theory indeed overlooked. They also criticized Hays' use of Perry's scheme, proposing it was too "culture bound" (80). Lastly, they contended that Hays' examination of student essays alone was not enough in order to assess students' thought processes fully. According to their logic, the writers argued, one must also look at "affective and situational factors such as motivation and familiarity with a task" (80), or other social concerns which might impact Basic Writers' stu-

dent learning.

Due in large part to the way in which her work was received, Hays wrote a later piece which took up many of the questions and issues her disputants had raised. Hays in fact heeded this call to the social and to the current developments within Basic Writing students' identities quite plainly. Hays' own Fall 1988 answer to Kogen's and the Martinez' essays, "Socio-Cognitive Development and Argumentative Writing: Issues and Implications From One Research Project" indeed reflected her willingness to recognize that academic socialization and other cultural forces also modified Basic Writers' writing behavior in substantial ways. Hays' willingness to concede the possibilities of initiation into academic discourse and rhetoricality also demarcated how the battle to solidify the Basic Writing student identity was being temporarily won. The Basic Writer student identity within our scholarship could no longer be seen outside of social and historical forces without raising criticisms about whether its premises rested upon the developmentalist models which reigned previously, or conceptions of student identity which treated the Basic Writer as a "child" who lacked adequate cognitive development. What we see when we look at this debate is the final dismantling of one conception of student identity and the need to delimit a new conception of student identity that would be followed in the journal's subsequent pages— despite the obvious commonalties and overlaps of the values and arguments within the two perspectives. This debate echoed larger concerns within the discipline of rhetoric and composition, particularly the ways in which growth in WAC and WID as well as rhetoric of inquiry models were impacting and changing the predominance of cognitive research. As Hays suggests, developmentalist did not necessarily mean "anti-context" but it did suggest a primary focus on cognition, neurology, and development. In doing so, it was not giving context primacy, primacy that those who held to the "academic discourse" notion felt it deserved. Disrupting the very notions of what developmentalist and initiation models encompassed, these texts destabilized the terms and their meanings themselves. No longer was the question of "Who is the Basic Writer?" paramount but rather how she or he was described (one's metaphoric investments) and what that description suggested. It was in part because of this debate and its concentration on social and cultural context that the very possibility of a construction based upon the "conflict" model was born.

The Basic Writing Student Identity In and Out of Conflict

> *The aim of this paper is to critique an essentialist assumption about language that is dominant in the teaching of basic writing. This assumption holds that the essence of meaning precedes and is indepen-*

dent of language, which serves merely as a vehicle to communicate that essence. According to this assumption, differences in discourse conventions have no effect on the essential meaning communicated. . . My critique is motivated by my alignment with various Marxist and poststructuralist theories of language. In one way or another, these theories have argued that language is best understood not as a neutral vehicle of communication but as a site of struggle among competing discourses.

Min- Zhan Lu, 1991
"Redefining the Legacy of Mina Shaughnessy: A Critique of the Politics of Linguistic Innocence"

Just as was the case for the metaphors of "developmentalism" and "initiation," the "conflict" model of the Basic Writer's student identity appears to have had no one birth, no one originary moment. Instead, perhaps even more than in the case of past metaphorical investments, the conflict metaphor seems to have occurred with slight differences and alterations in a wide number of texts at different historical moments. This metaphoric investment emerged concurrently within rhetoric and composition studies as poststructuralist, marxist, feminist, and postcolonial theory gained increased attention. I hope to trace some of the conflict model's construction of the Basic Writer's identity changes and alterations in this section, not by pointing to one specific debate as I have with previous metaphors but rather a series of texts which responded to the destabilization of the "developmentalist" and "initiation" metaphors. In the Spring of 1990, Kathleen Dixon's "Intellectual Development and the Place of Narrative in 'Basic' and Freshman Composition," appeared in the *Journal of Basic Writing*. It effectively recast the developmentalist constructions as well as the initiation constructions of Basic Writer student identities. Dixon used Luce Irigaray's *Speculum of the Other Woman* to argue that models of cognitive development constructed Basic Writers as 'others,' incapable of writing anything but narrative, and incapable of thinking that was not dualistic in its focus. She asserted importantly not that we should discount the critical research of Piaget, but that we must read Piaget "mythically," taking up Vygotsky additionally because of his social constructivist stance. Dixon's article also indicated what was to become a larger shift within Basic Writing scholarship, a shift which, we recall, had resulted earlier in the disruption of the predominance of the "growth" model: the application of high theory to the Basic Writer's situation. Importantly, also, this theoretical application was one that had long-lasting effects because of its social, psychological, and gender implications.

After what was a sustained period during which criticism of the

"growth" model by the "initiation" model was in vogue, increasingly, as we have just witnessed, questions were raised about the initiation model's assimilationist, and even "paternalistic," tendencies. A new metaphor for Basic Writing student identities began to arise in Basic Writing scholarship within the *Journal of Basic Writing* around the Spring of 1991. This edition contained texts such as Rexford Brown's "Schooling and Thoughtfulness," Peter Rondinone's "Teacher Background and Student Needs," Rose Marie Kinder's "A Piece of the Streets," Pat Belanoff's "The Myth of Assessment," and Min-Zhan Lu's "Redefining the Legacy of Mina Shaughnessy: A Critique of the Politics of Linguistic Innocence." As previously mentioned, Harris significantly references this shift as the beginning of a "contact zone" or "conflict" metaphor, a phrase he adopts from Mary Louise Pratt's 1991 *Profession* article, "Arts of the Contact Zone." As I mentioned earlier, in that article Pratt claimed that classrooms ought to be places where conflicts between discourses were heightened and examined. Pratt discussed this thesis subsequently within her 1993 chapter "Criticism in the Contact Zone: Decentering Community and Nation" in Steven Bell, Albert LeMay, and Leonard Orr's *Critical Theory, Cultural Politics, and Latin American Narrative.* In this text she called for an even greater "focus on how social bonds operate across lines of difference, hierarchy, and unshared or conflicting assumptions . . . such a 'contact perspective' would assume the heterogeneity of a social group and would place in the foreground the relationality of meaning" (88). Pratt also newly advocated the presence of "permeable borderlands" that were not anticipated to replace constructs of authenticity, autonomy, and community which often legitimate minority discourse, but rather relied upon a "transgressive, interruptive engagement with official categories" (101).

The Basic Writer student identity, previously carefully constructed in covert ways, often operating as a set of distinct composing traits, was now overtly perceived to itself be a construction: instead it was freshly conceived as an identity in flux, subject *to* and a subject *of* many historical and social forces which, scholars affirmed, had problematically created it. The stability of this new construction of the Basic Writing student identity as uncertain and flexible would both enable a new species of important, innovative pedagogical potentials as well as continue to dictate, in new terms, the kinds of constructions of Basic Writing student identity deemed allowable or conceivable within Basic Writing scholarship.

Lu and Others

Perhaps the first of the journal's articles to fully define this new

Basic Writing student identity was Min- Zhan Lu's 1991 "Redefining the Legacy of Mina Shaughnessy: A Critique of the Politics of Linguistic Innocence."[6] Here Lu argued that Shaughnessy's essentialist view of language denied the critical political dimensions of the linguistic choices that Basic Writing students made. In addition, she contended that Shaughnessy's research had ignored the privileged characteristics of academic discourse and the certainty that such discourse itself was not free from specific social and historical circumstances.

Such drastic shifts within the scholarly preoccupations of the journal understandably resulted also in a more fundamental change within how the Basic Writer's student identity was and persists for the most part, notwithstanding its internal contradictions, to be constructed. In some quarters, scholars now assert that the Basic Writer can be oppressed by the language of the classroom and, the role of the Basic Writing classroom and teacher, at times, has been to radicalize and call attention to the conflicting discourses operational within the language of the classroom. The Basic Writing student identity, then, has lately come to be constructed primarily as an array of larger institutional, cultural, and social forces which are in contestation with each other as well as the situation to which such theories might be applied.

This prevailing shift to a metaphor of "conflict" (and its related entitling metaphors, including terms such as "struggle," "diversity," and "shifting privilege"), despite internal disparities and variations, customarily constructs the Basic Writer's student identity according to the following precepts: 1) the Basic Writing student identity is generally presupposed to embrace and even embody conflict, 2) the Basic Writing student is presumed to appreciate and instantiate issues of race, class, and gender, as well as to benefit directly from the turn to social and political considerations over and against issues of "growth" or "initiation," 3) the Basic Writer's student identity is assumed to often be self-conceived as involving marginality, border residency, and sometimes not-so-subtle institutional oppression, and 4) the roles of the Basic Writing scholar and teacher often can entail politicizing or calling attention to the Basic Writer's problematic marginal position within the academy.[7]

After the publication of Lu's text within the journal, this construction of the Basic Writer's student identity gained more prominence. By Spring 1992, the *Journal of Basic Writing* contained numerous articles which granted variations on this new Basic Writing student identity, taking up topics of multiculturalism, dialogic teaching, and multiethnic classrooms. The Basic Writing student identity was no longer binaristic in its construction (developmental/matured, novice/initiated) but already always plural or multiple. For instance, Carol Severino's "Where the Cultures of Basic Writers and Academia Intersect: Cultivating a Common Ground" maintained that the figurative language used to

describe both cultural literacy and academic literacy (e.g., "melting pot," "salad bowl, "bridge," and "gap") didn't concede commonalties between the two. Rather she called for generating such a common ground, and helping Basic Writers to exercise it, thus constructing Basic Writing student identity not as a bifurcated entity but as multiple or plural. G. Genevieve Patthey-Chavez and Constance Gergen's "Culture as an Instructional Resource in the Multiethnic Composition Classroom" also maintained that Basic Writing students' diverse backgrounds and preparations enhanced instruction. Such students, they contended, often facilitated their own instruction by bringing up issues of social origin that were relevant to themselves and to each other.

Despite a commonality in the sets of issues which were raised cyclically within the journal and the types of Basic Writing student identities they rendered possible, the Fall 1992's inner workings were equally eclectic, ranging from Basic Writers' workplace writing concerns (Eleanor Agnew's "Basic Writers in the Workplace: Writing Adequately for Careers after College") to their ability to achieve "empowerment" through recognizing how they could evaluate their own writing (Brenda Greene's "Empowerment and the Problem Identification and Resolution Strategies of Basic Writers"). Basic Writers' abilities to enter and alter the workplace as well as make their own assessments about their writing were foregrounded. Still other essays seemed to stray far afield from the earlier concerns of Basic Writing and its students, even from those scholars who had been very involved in the earliest issues of the journal and the very first constructions of the Basic Writer's identities. Andrea Lunsford's "Intellectual Property, Concepts of Selfhood, and the Teaching of Writing," for instance, spoke little about Basic Writing or its students, instead suggesting that if "social epistemic rhetoric" was to have a useful impact, it must forge a new pedagogy which resists masculinist assumptions, disempowering constructions of intellectual property and selfhood, and debilitating administrative networks. Given the burgeoning realization that the task of defining Basic Writing or the Basic Writer student identity unequivocally was perhaps itself problematic, scholars understandably began to construct the Basic Writer's identity according to other matters which impacted the Basic Writer's situation (i.e., workplace literacies, multiethnic literatures, and social epistemic rhetorics).

By Spring 1993 many of the same issues of defining Basic Writing and constructing student identity started to emerge within the *Journal of Basic Writing*. This time the definitions of the Basic Writer's identity dealt with issues of how politics, ideology, society, and culture construct that very identity. As a result, there was a lasting concern with the "political" difficulties of teaching Basic Writers and running Basic Writing programs (Karen Greenberg's "The Politics of Basic Writers"), the problematic way that Basic Writing programs sustained rac-

ism by assisting a hierarchy of intelligence amongst races (William Jones' "Basic Writing: Pushing Against Racism"), as well as whether it made sense to separate Basic Writers into homogeneous classes (Peter Dow Adams' "Basic Writing Reconsidered"). The Basic Writer's student identity, though it varied from article to article, was describable as a constellation of societal forces which impacted it and shaped it, as gendered, raced, or classed.

Fall of 1993 in the *Journal of Basic Writing* brought a set of new texts which involved comparable attempts at a new construction of the Basic Writer's student identity. Increasingly the Basic Writer's student identity was constructed by scholars in conjunction with theoretical frameworks such as poststructuralism and postcoloniality aimed as de-marginalizing such students. For instance, Jane E. Hindman's "Re-inventing the University: Finding the Place for Basic Writers" offered a poststructuralist critique of basic writing placement and pedagogy, proposing that students learn to create their own discourse communities and to critique their own practices. The rather broadly-defined Basic Writer student identity was placed at the center of curricular development, her/his needs made to seem paramount in curricular and assignment design, but primarily in terms of a theoretical framework brought to bear upon her/his situation, in this case poststructuralism. Advocating an "empowering basic writing pedagogy," Hindman claimed, would involve uncovering the hidden positionality of academic discourse as well as helping students to more effectively develop a critical consciousness so that they might move from a "'marginalized' position at the center of an obscure, enigmatic system *to* an autonomous position on the 'margins'" (64/65), thereby fostering a deconstruction of authority within the Basic Writing composition classroom. Pamela Gay's "Reading Shaughnessy from a Postcolonial Perspective" in this issue, like Lu's text, criticized Shaughnessy's work, instead calling for a decolonizing of pedagogical practices and the need to foster a dialogic classroom. Rather she suggested that since social construction of student identities itself is inevitable, we must begin "constructing and reconstructing together from our different locations (a nexus of identities: gender, race, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and so on)" (35), in essence calling for a self-conscious self-construction of one's own identities. In contrast, Patricia Laurence's "The Vanishing Site of Mina Shaughnessy's *Errors and Expectations*" provided criticisms of both Lu's and Stephen North's characterizations of Shaughnessy's *Errors and Expectations*, instead historicizing the various political forces which shaped the text's methodologies and rhetorics. Not only was the construction of Basic Writing student identity becoming a territory of increasing debate and dispute alone, it would seem. The construction of previous scholars' research insofar as they reflected previous metaphoric investments of

"growth or "initiation" itself became at least part of the rationale for contesting arguments' validities.

By 1994 and 1995, there was a continued and more entrenched undertaking within the *Journal of Basic Writing* to criticize erstwhile approaches to Basic Writing scholarship using the metaphor of conflict and other related figural language. The 1994 issues contained works such as Kathyrn R. Fitzgerald's "Computerized Scoring? A Question of Theory and Practice," Akua Duku Anokye's "Oral Connections to Literacy: The Narrative," and Kelly Belanger's "Gender and Teaching Academic Discourse: How Teachers Talk About *Facts, Artifacts, and Counterfacts*." Once more, however, despite wide variances in the topics taken up by these scholars, the Basic Writer's student identity was constructed and represented in terms of the class, ethnicity, or racial issues that impacted them, the kinds of assignments they accomplished as a result, or how such sociocultural traits impacted how they approached learning. The Fall 1995 issue contained Mary T. Segall's "Embracing a Porcupine: Redesigning a Writing Program" which claimed that students' writing skills can be improved with the help of a precollege composition class. While the identity of the Basic Writer constructed within these pages was becoming, in its rhetoric, increasingly diverse and conflictual, it was an identity which, though scholars who discussed it made specific efforts not to "construct" it in incapacitating manners, was predominantly understood as politicized, socialized, and culturally constituted. As such, the Basic Writer was understood as marginalized and ghettoized, but the outsider position could potentially be used as a position of empowerment and political agency. Within the scholarship just reviewed, then, very strong and very specific kinds of attempts to construct the Basic Writing student identity as constructed were made at the very moments when the history of the construction of student identity itself was being radically called into question.

The 1996 and 1997 issues preserved a focus on such concerns, beginning to extend them to questions of how students conceive of their own identities as well. While the conflict model still held sway in which the Basic Writer's identity was constructed, slowly a new metaphor seems to be emerging about students' own self-constructions of their identities. Such texts included Carol Severino's "An Urban University and Its Academic Support System Program: Teaching Basic Writing in the Context of an 'Urban Mission,'" which exposes some of the political machinations involved in students being selected for such programs. Likewise, Rebecca Williams Mlynarczyk's "Finding Grandma's Words: A Case Study in the Art of Revising" offers criticism on the available research on revising and proposes some suggestions for Basic Writing teachers and their students. Likewise, Morris Young's "Narratives of Identity: Theorizing the Writer and the Na-

tion" provides work which begins to look at how students themselves conceive of the tasks of writing and identity formation. Finally, Martha Marinara's Fall 1997 piece, "When Working Class Students 'Do' the Academy: How We Negotiate With Alternative Literacies" suggests that we need to view student identity in more complex., multifaceted ways since the very student who may be oppressed in one scenario can oppress another in a different one. Growing out of the conflict metaphor's predominance and existing alongside it, then, seems to be the emergence of a new metaphor which views the Basic Writer's identity as highly contextualized, only describable in terms of specific situations, specific activities, specific institutions, or specific moments.

Commonalties in Previous Constructions of Basic Writing Student Identity: Envisioning Beyond Existing Metaphors

A brief look back upon this cursory archaeological history of the representation of the Basic Writing student identities within the *Journal of Basic Writing* exhibits that, though many readings within Basic Writing scholarship have attempted to fix the identity of the Basic Writing student, inevitably many of these constructions have been more complicated than they appeared to be on the surface. Rather, many such apparently fixed identity constructions for the Basic Writer were themselves internally conflicted at various historical junctures, inevitably utilizing overlapping metaphors and models. As we have encountered it thus far, the history of the construction of the Basic Writing student identity is more than somewhat jagged, and far from completely consistent. However, as is clear, it has involved various inclinations, sometimes existing alongside each other within one scholarly text simultaneously.

Despite the critical value of this scholarship and its efforts to answer the question "Who is the Basic Writer?," as well as the fastidious attention it has paid to students' developmental, linguistic, and social environments, these three dominant constructions of the Basic Writer's student identity as a fixed, unified entity within the *Journal of Basic Writing* have held a great deal of power in the field. Additionally, at times they have also held several disconcerting traits in common, traits that are perhaps inevitable to some extent. Such characteristics are locatable not only within this journal, of course, but appear to be endemic to much of Basic Writing scholarship outside the journal as well. First, notwithstanding sometimes extremely different rhetorical approaches, the arguments we examined which utilize these metaphors seem to delimit the Basic Writer according to a deficit theory model, an etiological "problem" that the Basic Writer endures, be it cognitive, discursive, or social, in spite of professed efforts to work outside a di-

agnosis/cure model. This seems to be the case in many instances, aside from whether the texts primarily utilize "growth" metaphors, "initiation" metaphors, or "conflict" metaphors. Not only, then, has the preoccupation with the question of "Who is the Basic Writer?" been somewhat crippling to Basic Writers, it would appear, but our metaphoric investments in growth, initiation, and conflict have not negated this tendency.

In her 1995 text *It's Not Like That Here: Teaching Academic Writing and Reading to Novice Writers*, Marcia Dickson points to this phenomenon, suggesting that the history of Basic Writing scholarship and our conceptions of Basic Writers have caused innumerable problems: "Such a positioning of writers/problems on a continuous line implies not only that students' abilities are easily identifiable, do not overlap in substantial ways, and can be measured adequately, but also that good teaching is merely a matter of applying the proper theory at the proper time" (viii). Dickson appropriately points to the fact that not only has Basic Writing scholarship been preoccupied with constructing Basic Writers' identities according to certain fixed, metaphoric allegiances, but that these metaphoric obligations themselves have resulted, at least in some significant part, from scholars' own theoretical investments.

Second, even when the scholarship (using any of these aforementioned metaphors) within the *Journal of Basic Writing* purports to be motivated by a desire to decenter the classroom or to shift privilege, the teacher's expertise and pedagogy are frequently suspiciously central to the answer provided to this "problem." Given the historical construction of Basic Writers' student identities according to scholars' own theoretical proclivities which we have witnessed, this phenomenon is perhaps not surprising. What is perhaps even more disturbing, though, is that these theoretical and metaphoric investments are not only instrumental in constructing Basic Writers' student identities, but also in suggesting the solutions to the "problems" these identity constructions occasion in the first place, a situation which, when considered in the faintest of light, does not emerge as incomparable to computer software hackers who create computer viruses and then later market antidotes. It is, of course, somewhat inevitable that scholars do produce constructions of student identities which their preferred theoretical models are likely to solve. However, the ways in which such metaphoric incarnations have acted as defining forces for Basic Writing student identities may have obscured other issues, particularly how students themselves deploy their own constructions of their identities through their composing processes.

The situation of the Composition teacher as hacker/expert and the Basic Writing student identity as virus/cure is unsettling for two reasons which transcend the momentary discomfort we may feel in the face of the analogy itself. First, at least one of these positions (spe-

cifically the "conflict" model) holds that teacherly authority does indeed play a secondary role in its pedagogy, something which the evidence offered in this chapter indicates may not bear out. Indeed, first we may have to grant that teacherly authority, institutionally and societally produced, may be an inevitable part of the classroom environment, even the classroom environment which promotes "critical consciousness" which might help students battle oppressions. As Xin Liu Gale argues in her 1996 *Teachers, Discourses, and Authority in the Postmodern Classroom*, "Given the power relations between the teacher and the student in pedagogic communication, certain discourses privileged by various theorists and educationists can be used to secure the teacher's authority and to limit, exclude, and oppress students" (57). If this is indeed the case, this particular form of teacher authority newly comes in the guise of authorizing students to speak for themselves, implying that speech is relatively unmediated, and overlooking the power of authorization that the role of even the facilitative teacher itself still brings. Second, as mentioned above, perhaps more troubling still, our scholarship can operate to fill the vacuum in Basic Writers' identities in two ways: both by acting as creators of the viruses, principally in how our representations of our students *construct* their competencies and incompetencies, and as those who dispense its cures, including developmental curricula, discipline-specific writing classes, or multiethnic courses.

This means, in other words, that it is not impossible that Basic Writing student identity may have been heretofore at least partially constructed within Basic Writing scholarship according to what is *lacking* in the student, including grammatical prowess, facility with academic discourse, or an empowering societal position, as opposed to what positively *is* present or what our Basic Writers actually do accomplish within their verbal and written communications. These moments of disruption in the Basic Writer's student identity in early texts such as Yelin's offer us alternative approaches to how we conceive of students' identities and expose the ideologically invested and constructed nature of the Basic Writer's student identity. We must be constantly alert to the fact that despite our acute attempts to offer Basic Writing students empowerment and agency, our scholarship, even our socially and politically informed scholarship, oftentimes seems to effectively strip them of it, impacting our future scholarship as well as our teaching in potentially damaging ways.

This leaves an important question dangling, one for which there are no easy answers: What are some other ways of framing what our Basic Writing students are actually accomplishing within our classrooms *as they themselves accomplish it*? A version of this question may indeed be the next metaphoric investment or question that begins to hold sway in the journal. Such things are hard to fully understand when

we are in the middle of them, as we all know. However, one might describe this new trend as involving a concentration upon Basic Writing students' various own identifications through interactions, as we have begun to see occurring to a much greater degree within the journal as well as outside it (Fox 1999; Gay 1998; Gray-Rosendale 1996, 1999, 2000; Gruber 1999; Harrington and Adler-Kassner 1998; Mutnick 1996) rather than attempts to describe their identity constructions according to various sets of critical values. These too will inevitably hold some of the same problematic aspects of previous constructions of the Basic Writer's identity in play as well, even as they struggle overtly to work against them. Challenges to the predominance of the conflict metaphoric investment, then, come in small forms — through contesting and disputing how oppositional politics function, through suggesting the contextual nature of politics' functions, and through students' own constructions of their politics. These challenges, too, hold pieces of the other metaphoric investments in play, themselves utilizing the metaphoric investments of developmentalism, initiation, and conflict. Should this new metaphoric allegiance come to gain prominence in the journal's Basic Writing scholarship, it too will likely be supplanted shortly by other, more immediately compelling metaphoric investments which utilize those that have come before in constructing their arguments. For this reason it makes sense that we should all work as much as possible to construct disruptive perspectives that operate to challenge the predominance of these metaphors as well as admit and continue to unearth the history of such metaphors' conversations with each other. We also may continue to improve our scholarship if we remind ourselves of this history, its disruptions and contradictions, and the fact that while the metaphors have changed, the issues and even the approaches to them are perhaps surprisingly consistent. Increasingly, this is a path our research must explore, and the *Journal of Basic Writing*, given its complex and interesting history as well as its proclivity for self-reflection and self-historicizing, is precisely the territory within which this will continue to productively occur.

Notes

1. I am greatly indebted to Harris' research (1995; 1997) which established a critical foundation for viewing the history of Basic Writing. Harris indicated that the "growth" metaphor has involved a displacement of attention away from academic discourse specifically, encouraging a centralized focus on teachers learning to honor the skills students themselves bring to the classroom. This "growth" perspective

emphasized mental conceptions rather than behavioral ones, and sequential stages rather than external, environmental concerns. Basic Writers were believed to remain in an early stage of language development. According to Harris, the "initiation" metaphor has implied that the academy formed a kind of 'discourse community' with its own distinctive ways of utilizing language with which many Basic Writers are not well-acquainted, suggesting that assimilation, acculturation or conversion to a discourse community outside oneself is an event Basic Writers often must undergo. Criticisms of both of these antecedent stages, Harris implies, finally gave rise to the predominance of the "conflict" model. This new approach emerged when it became clear that such "initiation" inevitably entailed "leaving behind old ways of interpreting in order to take on new forms of organizing experience" (30), and therefore assimilation, acculturation, and conversion to new, dominant, perhaps oppressive and self-negating, perspectives. As Harris suggests, this metaphor implies a need to value differences as well as cultural and social conflicts as they emerge within Basic Writing classes.

2. My use of the term "developmental" throughout this section is meant to refer more to scholars' terminological investments than it does one particular meaning attributed to the term. However, characteristically, many of those scholars who used the term in conjunction with the larger metaphor of "growth" drew largely from cognitive psychology, Piaget and Perry in particular, to make their claims.

3. Note that the journal's name change from *Basic Writing* to the *Journal of Basic Writing* would occur in 1986 with the growing professionalization of rhetoric and composition studies as a discipline as well as with Lynn Troyka's accession to the role of editor.

4. Clearly editorship impacted many of these shifts within the journal as well. While I cannot take this up in detail within this paper, several things should be said about the influence of editorship on the journal: 1) it impacted which texts were published and how they were arranged, especially in the early days before the journal became peer reviewed, 2) it shaped the ways in which special issues were put together and framed, and 3) it influenced how certain models came to hold sway as well as lost power. This is a very interesting aspect of the journal and one that deserves more attention than I can give it here.

5. Andrea Lunsford is among the few scholars whose work has been present throughout and drawn upon all three of the metaphoric investments of Basic Writing history that Harris delineates. As such, a study of her scholarship in the journal might prove a useful project, revealing the ways in which one scholar has taken up different rhe-

torical tactics as she negotiated markedly divergent historical and disciplinary contexts.

6. For further developments in this line of thinking, see Horner and Lu 1999.

7. Nicholas Coles and Susan Wall in their 1991 "Reading Basic Writing: Alternatives To a Pedagogy of Accommodation" articulate the tenets of this new position rather well: "As long as academic discourse presents itself as the language of powerful 'insiders' who require that the students abandon their culture to join the 'club,' students will perceive academic culture as impersonal and alienating" (243). They urge that the language of the academy itself finally needs to be considered more fully as multiple and changeable rather than as one monolithic entity to which Basic Writers must adapt.

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