Neoliberal Composition:
Economic Inequality in the History, Theory, and Practice of Composition Studies

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THESIS

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To my students past, present, and future.

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Introduction

       "Inequality is in." Whether it's columnists like Bill Keller and David Brooks in *The New York Times* or economists like Tyler Cowen and Thomas Picketty or even President Obama in his State of the Union Address, "nearly everyone," Keller rightly observes, "seems to be talking about inequality these days." Why? Because starting in 1968, when it was at a record low (the top 10% of the population earned around 33% of the country's total income), it has risen almost every year, reaching a record high in 2013 (the top 10% earned half of the country's total income and holds 75% of the country's overall wealth) and is likely to exceed that when the figures for 2014 become available. So although it took a long time and a massive upward redistribution for most of us to notice, economic inequality is finally, as Keller says, "in."

       For some people, however, inequality has always been in. "For good or for ill," the late compositionist James Slevin wrote in 2001 (when the top decile earned just 44% of country's total income), "composition has always been at the center of the reproduction of social inequality or of the resistance to that process" (6). In fact, what is sometimes described as the originary moment of modern Composition Studies–the introduction of Open Admissions at the City University of New York from 1970 to 1976– was understood by Mina Shaughnessy, the Director of Basic Writing at CUNY's flagship institution, as a call for democratic higher education to address what she called "the fact of inequity–in our schools and in the society that is served by these schools" ("Introduction" 1). And from at least then until today, everybody in composition has

always thought about the role of the discipline in dealing with the presumed victims of that "social inequity": poor and minority students.

My dissertation is a history of Composition Studies in terms of what its practitioners have thought about the politics of writing instruction, in terms of inequality and the goals of higher education, and in terms of the material conditions (political economy) in which writing instruction takes place. My goal in offering this history (a periodization of sorts) is to better understand the discipline in terms of its pedagogical commitments–what we are trying to accomplish in our teaching–its ideological commitments–what we are trying to accomplish politically, sometimes through our teaching, sometimes through our research, sometimes through other workplace forms of political activity–and the changing material conditions under which these have developed and what the relation is between our commitments and those conditions.

I will argue that even though composition has, at least since the late 1960s, concerned itself with the "process of the reproduction of social inequality," it has also been divided over what that process is and, hence, how to resist it. So along with its historical focus, this dissertation is also a critique of the social justice commitments of Composition Studies (which I argue have not been to the benefit of the students or the teachers) and, ultimately, a larger critique of the educational imagination, the continued faith in education as the solution to inequality in the United States.

Chapter 1. How Composition Studies Has Understood Inequality

In this chapter, I want to trace a historical line through what we can call the modern history of Composition Studies–from the beginning of Open Admissions at the City University of New York in 1970 to now. This period has seen the strong emergence of Composition as a discipline with its own body of scholarship, research methods, tenured Professors, conferences, and the like. Furthermore, for reasons that may already begin to be apparent, it has developed not exactly a unique but distinctive interest in inequality. That anxiety would materialize in debates around "the politics of composition," debates which themselves would center around the work of Mina Shaughnessy, in particular, and social justice education movements, in general. The opening of higher education that occurred in the 1960s and 1970s brought many new students into academia–students who because of their poverty or because of their backgrounds had previously been unable to attend college. The influx of these students spurred a demand for remediation–particularly when it came to academic writing. Many felt the new students entering higher education threatened standards, some even declaring "the end of the University." Yet others, like Shaughnessy herself, began to change the composition of composition itself.

As I will suggest, there seemed to be a divide over how the "new students" who entered academia under mass democratic education movements like open admissions were understood, and such a divide would provide pedagogies that were at times compatible, at times incompatible but sympathetic to each other, and at other times contradictory and even hostile to each other. And the divide between what I will suggest

to be pedagogies of deficit and pedagogies of difference is still with us today. In historicizing this divide, I hope to offer a way of understanding how Composition Studies has conceptualized inequality.

Part One will thus begin with Mina Shaughnessy, who was at first seen as revolutionary but later came to be seen in many composition circles as "conservative," particularly when it came to her "method for basic writing." Her understanding of those students who entered CUNY for the first time–particularly, those students who entered CUNY's flagship institution, City College–was that whether they belonged to ethnic minorities or whether they were white students, they were educationally deficient, and the job of the new educational horizon was to teach these students to write just like their middle- and upper-class peers at prestigious four-year institutions, so that they could make their lives better than their parents–so that they could compete successfully in what was seen as the new economy requiring college degrees for entrance to white-collar work. In short Shaughnessy, as I explain in Part One, saw inequality as the result of *educational deficiencies*–a problem of unequal social distribution–and thus reconfigured writing pedagogy to address what she and others like her saw as a social ill. But this understanding would come to be challenged by others who didn't see those "new students" entering colleges and universities for the first time as deficient or even underprepared but rather as culturally different from majority students. Shaughnessy's approach would come to be seen, by many, as merely the reinstatement of a status quo by demanding that students learn to write standard edited English.

Indeed, as I will argue, understanding inequality as a lack of recognition for cultural differences would emerge as dominant in the 1980s and 1990s and would be

expressed in popular pedagogies of that time. What differentiated cultural pedagogy from what came before would be an interest in resisting seeing students as deficient, and this, I will suggest in Part Two of this chapter, can be seen not only as a political difference but as a pedagogical one. Thus, in Part Two, I want to look at epistemological questions, both within Composition Studies itself and outside it, over the value of asserting universal truth (which I will describe as a value of argumentation) versus the value of asserting a plural version of truth (which I will describe as a value of narrative). For to privilege one over the other, I will argue, reflects an understanding of social inequality that sees inequality as, on one hand, the result of a deficient structure of distribution in American society or, on the other hand, as the result of a majority culture failing to recognize the claims of minority ones.

Part Two will thus examine what we can call the epistemology underpinning Composition Studies' different understandings of inequality. Increasing resistance to deficit models of education and the triumph of models aimed at recognizing diversity and multiculturalism (what is known as the "narrative turn" in higher education) has underscored a commitment to pluralism as the dominant political philosophy in American education. And this commitment itself has produced a "counter-revolution" within Composition Studies, what I want to call the return of argument. The dialectic between argument and narrative is still very much alive in current questions over how to teach students to write in higher education. Part Two will thus trace the shift of Composition Studies and other academic disciplines like history and literary studies toward narrative and its epistemological expression, pluralism–a shift that itself has required the subordination of argument. The goal of this Chapter is to uncover, both historically and

conceptually, something like the contemporary structure of Composition Studies in its theory, epistemology, practice, and politics.

Part One: Shaughnessy, More Shaughnessy, and Critiques of Shaughnessy

"For the English teacher," Mina Shaughnessy wrote in the inaugural edition of the *Journal of Basic Writing* (1976), a publication devoted to teaching the mostly poor and minority students who were entering colleges and universities for the first time under policies like Open Admissions at CUNY, "the shock and challenge of diversity is experienced first through the written words and sentences of the new students, for here, spelled out in words, woven into syntax, is the fact of inequity–in our schools and in the society that is served by these schools" (1). To experience "the shock and challenge of diversity" was to read sentences, as Shaughnessy catalogued in the classic *Errors and Expectations* (1977), like,

–Life is fill of up and down.

–Every day man is come up with new materials.

–Surrounded the playgrounds were wire fence.

–A person who is more knowledge or had some degree of higher education sometimes don't make it.

–Then again there are more jobs of which I'm sure of that are going down in demand that you can choose of.

"Diversity" of this kind–the inability of students to write anything close to academic English–both "stunned" the teachers (for whom "nothing short of a miracle was going to turn such students into writers") and challenged the entire edifice of what was "once

called English composition." But more importantly for Shaughnessy, "the shock and challenge of diversity" was higher education's confrontation with "the fact of inequity," for what diversity represented was not some kind of multicultural celebration but, rather, was an index of a serious social ill: poorly educated populations.

Exposing "the academic deficiencies of students who supposedly went to school for twelve years," Open Admissions revealed deficiencies in the structural distribution of American education. And it was addressing educational deficits, closing "the shocking gaps in training between the poor and the affluent, the minority and the majority," that Shaughnessy and those like her saw as the goal of education in the transformative Open Admissions period (291). For the Director of Basic Writing at CUNY, this conceptualization of diversity (seen not as different individual identities but rather as different educational abilities) posed a pedagogical problem–namely, the problem of where to begin. On the one hand, the new students were so far behind the curve that it seemed impossible to assume they could meet previous standards, with some educators going so far as to label them "unteachable." On the other hand, the promise of Open Admissions was that the new students–the victims of inequality–could be taught to write like, say, their Ivy League peers–the beneficiaries of inequality.

Indeed Shaughnessy did not blame individual students for their writing deficiencies; instead, she blamed the structures that had failed them–"our schools and the society served by those schools." Seeing the "new students" in this way, Shaughnessy changed the conversation and at the same time "changed the pedagogy and, by extension, the politics of basic writing classrooms, by classifying the basic writer not as *deficient* but as *underprepared*" (Ritter 29). What seeing students as "underprepared" rather than

"deficient" meant was that "the origins of the teaching problem [shifted] from the students themselves […] to the cultures and communities in which they were schooled" (*ibid*). Remedial writers were deficient not because they had some innate flaw or *lack*; remedial writers were deficient because they were underprepared–their schooling had not given them adequate preparation. Thus Shaughnessy reconfigured the very idea of deficit, transferring it from the students themselves to the social structure within which they had grown up. Students who wrote sentences like "Life is fill of up and down" were not cognitively deficient but were instead victims of structural inequality.

This understanding of the students, furthermore, was supplemented with an innovative pedagogy, "a method for basic writers." Of course, the kind of writing instruction Shaughnessy was out to change was a traditional, surface-error version, in which instructors simply marked and counted errors. The degree to which she avoided the question of grammar is a matter of some debate, as a grammar-based method makes up the bulk of *Errors and Expectations*, but she was innovative insofar as she took into account and sought to understand the skills students already brought with them to class. In short, the Basic Writing pedagogy she proposed would displace the correction of error from its traditional position at the beginning of instruction to a point further back in the process.

In the famous discussion of "error" at the beginning of *Errors and Expectations* (1977), Shaughnessy noted that, for the teacher of Basic Writing, errors should not be interpreted as a cognitive lack; errors should be interpreted as the use of "different codes." "All codes become codes by doing some things regularly and not others," she wrote, "and it is not so much the ultimate logic of these regularities that makes them

obligatory but rather the fact that, logical or no, they have become habitual to those who communicate within that code" (*Errors* 12). Upon encountering such alternate "codes," Basic Writing teachers should start by trying to discern the "different logics" at work beneath them and then move on "to determine at what point or points along the developmental path error should or can become a subject for instruction" (13). The student, then, who writes "Life is fill of up and down" has learned through repetition a particular code with its own particular logic; it is this logic that Basic Writing teachers should seek to understand by allowing, at the beginning of the process, the student to use the code so that it might be analyzed. In doing so, "[Basic Writing teachers] will slowly begin to discern a 'logic' to their students' difficulties with writing, a path that leads inexorably back through all the schoolrooms where these students did not learn to write but learned instead to believe that they could not write" ("Introduction" 3). In this way, her pedagogy outlined, teachers might understand the code (and its underlying logic), note the difference between the code and the logic of academic English, and then teach students (give them access to) the standard code, what she called "the language of public transaction."

In Shaughnessy, then, we see a primary commitment to understanding the writing skills of her students as significantly inadequate, accompanied by a sense that the only way to remedy that inadequacy was by understanding the internal logic of their procedures. The idea was basically that if you understood the internal logic of their mistakes, you could get them to stop making those mistakes. Thus students, who because of their poverty had been denied the opportunity to learn to write like their more fortunate middle class peers, could be taught to do so. But Shaughnessy's interest in different

logics held open the possibility–and would indeed suggest to later teachers of writing–

that teaching the "new students" shouldn't entail alleviation of differences but should,

instead, entail the protection of differences and thus would point toward a different

pedagogy altogether. For insofar as what the students were doing already had a logic–a

set of rules and practices of its own–why should teachers understand their own task as

one of correction? One way of thinking of this difference in understanding Shaughnessy

is the difference between seeing poor writing as a register of class (not just educational

deficiency but poverty) or seeing poor writing as a register of cultural difference (the

poor come from a different culture, which itself should be protected).

    For Composition Studies, these two ways of understanding Shaughnessy–seeing

error as the result of poor education (underpreparedness) or seeing it as the result of

alternate codes (difference)–have produced both a pedagogical and a theoretical tension.

Joseph Harris, for instance, describes this tension as one between "growth" and

"initiation." "In *Errors and Expectations,*" Harris argues, "Shaughnessy wavers between

a respect for the diverse ways with words students bring with them to the university, and

an insistence that, once there, they put them aside in order to take on a supposedly neutral

and 'adult language' ("Negotiating" 160). "Growth" implies that the language skills

students bring with them to college are somehow less complex than academic language

skills–in this sense, students are mere children in an adult world. "Initiation" implies that

students aren't children (they are adults already equipped with linguistic skills) and thus

what they need is *exposure* to academic discourse, which in this case isn't seen as better–

academic discourse is merely different. We can put this another way by saying that while

the growth model–a vertical model–implies a lack of complexity, the initiation model–a

horizontal model–implies that there are simply different discourse communities. And for Harris, although Shaughnessy "succeeded in bringing questions of social context" back into the discipline of Composition Studies, she ultimately "was unable to resolve" the tension between making room for language differences–what she (unfortunately) called "native languages" or even "native intelligences"–and then wanting to correct those differences (29).

The tension Harris outlines in Shaughnessy, however, (as I will explain in more detail in Chapter Two) expresses the particular material conditions of open admissions itself. While one version of how the "new students" were to be taught saw them as products of poor public schools and thus lacking in education, another version saw the "new poor" not just as products of poverty but as participants in different cultures and, thus, different discourse communities. From this standpoint, we can see a difference not simply between how the new students were to be understood but *a fortiori* how inequality was to be understood. We can return here to Shaughnessy's comment that the goal of higher education was to close "the shocking gaps in training between the poor and the affluent, the minority and the majority." For her, poor students and minority students were one and the same insofar as poverty, race, ethnicity, and poor schooling had resulted, for them, in inadequate education and, thus, inadequate writing skills; as such, it made sense to say that students, who because of their poverty had been denied access to education, hadn't yet learned to be good writers. But if one saw inequality as a gap between minority cultures and a majority one, it wouldn't make sense to say that majority discourse is somehow better (or even more complex) than any other kind of discourse; it didn't make sense to say that one culture or one discourse community was better than

another, that a poor culture was subordinate to an affluent one. Shaughnessy gestures toward the latter (cultural difference) only to account for the former (educational deficiency)–to discern a logic of error, as already noted, is to uncover "a path that leads inexorably back through all the schoolrooms where these students did not learn to write." Indeed Shaughnessy only rarely addressed cultural difference in her writing and, when she did, remains quite guarded. Here, for instance, is a passage from *Errors and Expectations*:

> When one considers the damage that has been done to students in the name of correct writing, this effort to redefine error so as to exclude most of the forms that give students trouble in school and to assert the legitimacy of other kinds of English is understandable. Doubtless it is part of a must vaster thrust within this society not only to reduce the penalties for being culturally different but to be enriched by that diversity. (9)

The passage is set up as if to include a "yet…" but none comes; Shaughnessy simply moves on.

But several writing scholars would read Shaughnessy not as a theorist of class difference but instead as a theorist of cultural difference. The late James Slevin, for example, wrote in *Introducing English*: *Essays in the Intellectual Work of Composition* (2001), that the writing teacher, in order to "join" students in "doing the work of composition,"

> must become more adept at interpreting their work, looking (in Shaughnessy's famous phrase) for the logic at work in their writing and

for the intelligence of what might seem like error. In other words, we need

to interpret the difficulty of their texts as difference, not lack. (162)

And while it would seem that Slevin is simply reiterating that first step from *Errors and Expectations*, pushing concern for error back in the teaching process, he goes still further, resisting Shaughnessy's desire to teach students to write like their upper-class peers, upholding difference as the standard for the discipline itself, arguing that "the *work* of composition is to *make something* of difference" (17). There is, of course, a difference between "making something" of difference and seeing that difference as in need of correction. Slevin's reading underscores "Shaughnessy's [attention] to the cultural grammar of discursive features" as a move in the direction of what he calls an "interpretive" pedagogy, in which interpretation (of difficulty) should be a question of which *genres* students think they are using rather than a question of which errors students are making (53, my emphasis). This genre-based approach seeks to understand the genres students already use (versus those they are asked to produce in college); Slevin's approach is an extension of Shaughnessy's interest in different logics–skills students already have–to genre itself. As he writes,

The forms within which a writer makes meaning–the genres and

conventions within which he or she feels most at home as a writer and

speaker, […] need to be brought into any inquiry into academic genres;

otherwise, student work (their work with composition, what they bring

from their previous schooling and families and communities) is placed

outside the domain of inquiry. Their generic repertoire, because it

represents difficulty, is thereby rendered invisible, interpreted in terms of

what is *lacking* rather than in terms of what is, in all its complexity,

different. (161)

On the one hand, Slevin's genre extension is an alignment with what we have already

seen as the "initiation" model–students are already equipped with linguistic complexity.

Indeed *Introducing English* is explicit in its critique of a "narrative of improvement"–*i.e.*

the "growth" model–a narrative that, for Slevin, actually produces lack in the first place

(for him, there's no such thing as "lack" at all). On the other hand, if we return to the

structure just outlined above–viewing inequality as a difference between minorities and

majorities or viewing it as a difference between the rich and the poor–we can say that in

privileging the difference model (in thinking that there really is no such thing as lack),

Slevin's approach rewrites Shaughnessy to make inequality an issue of the recognition of

cultural difference, for again, different cultures (and their genres of communication)

aren't seen as lacking complexity but are seen as having different conventions. To put

this another way, while it is one thing to seek to understand differing logics (or genres) in

order to correct those differences, it is for Slevin entirely another (and better) thing to

instead "interpret" difference in such a way as to resist viewing it as something to be

fixed.

Patricia Bizzell (perhaps an earlier version of Slevin) argues in "What Happens

When Basic Writers Come to College" that, for the great majority of college students,

"acquiring the academic worldview means becoming bicultural" (298). It is precisely

basic writers who tend to have a home culture most distanced from academic culture;

thus to teach academic writing (to basic writers in particular) is, on this account, to teach

culture. Her (bi)cultural approach ultimately posits three hypotheses for what happens to

basic writers when they come to college. First, basic writers "face a clash among dialects"; second, basic writers face a clash of "discourse forms"; and third, basic writers face "a clash in ways of thinking." For Bizzell, all these initial "clashes" create "distance between students' world views and the academic world view" (297). It follows that the further one's home culture is from academic culture, the more difficulties one would be expected to have in college. While this is intuitive in itself, Bizzell brings "culture" itself to the foreground, turning what educators like Shaughnessy saw as a set of marketable skills into a set of conventions and habits. Furthermore, writing courses and curriculums that place too much emphasis on academic culture at the expense of the student's own culture, despite their best intentions, are politically undesirable as they merely perpetuate a status quo and reassert hierarchical relations. As Deborah Mutnick puts it in *Basic Writing and the Struggle for Equality in Higher Education* (1996),

> Although basic writing is obviously not synonomous with racial and class subordination, it arises from the same structural and historical inequalities, and its position in the academy reproduces the same hierarchical arrangements of insider/outsider, marginal and mainstream status. (45)

And for compositionists like Slevin, Bizzell, and Mutnick, in order for Basic Writing courses to be politically effective, writing teachers need to adopt a "worldview"–either a narrative of initiation or a bi-cultural approach–that flattens vertical relations (hierarchical relations) into horizontal relations (relations of mere difference).

These positions on cultural difference–that the work of Composition Studies is to "make something" of difference rather than correct it–find perhaps their biggest proponent in the work of Mary Louise Pratt and her redefinition of the Basic Writing

classroom as a "contact zone." For her, in such "contact zones"–by which she means places where diverse groups of people (including teachers) come together–difference was not only the subject but also the environment itself. Pratt's Basic Writing courses, as David Bartholomae puts it in "The Tidy House," would be courses in "multiculturalism" that wouldn't need anthologies or essays but instead would make differences between students the very subject matter of the course. For Bartholomae, however, instead of an effort to help poor and minority students develop their writing skills–Basic Writing courses are the "necessary institutional response to the overwhelming politics and specifics of difference" (12). Registering new movements for multiculturalism in the university (about which I will have much more to say in Chapter Two), he argued that the institutionalization of difference within academia itself actually works against its "political efficacy" because higher education can then control *which* differences exist, which differences get taught. What this means is that because (institutionalized) Basic Writing courses only embrace "superficial" cultural differences–those differences that are "easy" to embrace–in the end they merely re-assert liberal values without changing anything; "basic writers are produced by our desire to become liberals," he argues, "to enforce a commonness among our students by making the differences superficial, surface-level, and by designing a curriculum to ensure them and to erase them in 14 weeks" (12). While Bartholomae remains mute on what those "superficial" differences might be, it is clear that he sees the project of Basic Writing as having outlived its "political efficacy." And so while Bartholomae begins by confessing his loyalty to teaching the poor and minority students who make up these courses, he ends with a critique of that project (Basic Writing) which was the culmination of the efforts of Mina

Shaughnessy and those like her. Shaughnessy's pedagogy (and open admissions as a whole), far from being a progressive pedagogy that helps poor students address an educational lack, becomes a means of *institutionalizing* (and thus controlling) individual differences. Why? Because Shaughnessy begins from the ("Liberal") position in which there are no differences at all– "we're all the same deep down." She thus, despite her best interests, never takes real differences–the differences between majority and minority students–seriously.

What should now have become clear is that, though widely popular in Composition Studies since the 1970s, the pedagogy of *Errors and Expectations* has at least been as widely criticized, with the focus of the criticism on what a writer like Joseph Harris describes as Shaughnessy's relation to "difference"–her understanding of the different logics students brought to the classroom. Specifically, Shaughnessy's critics began to see her approach as "conservative," and such conservatism was due, as Harris puts it, to her tendency to "pose difference as a problem to be solved" (*Teaching* 123). "After everything else is said about it," he wrote of *Errors and Expectations*, it is above all "a book on teaching grammar"–"not all moments of difference in a text need to be corrected or erased" (*Teaching* 105; 124). So if earlier compositionists saw Shaughnessy as opening the way for a pedagogy of difference, later ones saw her as closing down possibilities for it.

From this standpoint, the emphasis on teaching poorer students to write like their middle- and upper-class peers appears as the reproduction of a set of hierarchical relations of inequality–where hierarchy consists of individual differences between cultures and identities. And this was precisely the point of John Rouse's famous critique

from the pages of *College English*, "The Politics of Composition," where the central

focus wasn't just disagreements over process but explicit disagreements over pedagogical

politics. Shaughnessy's "analytic method" makes the mistake, in its Liberal desire to see

everyone as essentially the same "deep down," of disavowing the student's "self." This

position manifests itself in Rouse's critique of Shaughnessy's use of *Black Boy* in her

writing courses; on Rouse's reading,

> Much of the pain [Richard Wright] felt, and makes us feel, came from his
>
> willful struggle to move on from a life dominated by authority and
>
> tradition toward an individual life, his own identity–the same move that
>
> many [basic writing students] are making, perhaps without being aware of
>
> it. […] But Shaughnessy has not heard him. She is too busy with the
>
> book's structure, with how one part links to another, with what she calls a
>
> 'grammar of passages.' (9)

Put a little differently, the problem is "authority," in general, the closing down of paths to

identity. Pedagogies like Shaughnessy's that began by seeing a need to "socialize"

students (to teach them to write like their upper-class peers) end up "produc[ing]

personality types acceptable to those who would maintain things as they are, who already

have power," whereas Rouse felt students need to be able to "express themselves," to

engage their own "feeling and thought," rather than to be "subdued" and "socialized." At

the heart of Rouse's critique (and something about which I will have much more to say in

Part Two of this chapter) is a move from analysis to experience or, to put it another way,

the movement from argument to narrative. Indeed Rouse thinks that literacy education as

such should be "a move toward identity as an organizing concept within experience,"

which is to say that learning a language is not a matter of developing new skills but a matter of developing an identity.

This is of course a critique of higher education itself–namely, that schooling is simply a form of reification, of reproducing hierarchies of inequality. What Rouse is most concerned with is the distribution of power, the conformity of individuals to authoritative rules and conventions. Rouse critiques Shaughnessy's politics as ultimately a desire for conformity, as a difference between teaching "professional responsibility" and, what is his preference, "a program stressing the making of personal judgments so that students move through a sequence of their own created meanings, requiring a context in which feeling is so aroused by an issue that it demands expression" (11). Besides being a term for diversity as such, "difference" in this case is a question of political subjectivity, between a subject who is urged to action through affective feelings and one who is urged to action through "objective analysis," with the former being more politically authentic while the latter is not seen as "political" at all. There is no talk here (and this is something for which Rouse himself was critiqued) of moving students from a lower-class position to a middle- or upper-class position through education. Rouse does rely on the class-based analysis of linguist Basil Bernstein–the difference between the "restricted code" used by the poor and the "elaborated code" used by the affluent–yet his own program drops class-based issues altogether, for the political problem is not poverty but the impoverishment of identity and experience too often oppressed by authority.

Still other critiques of Shaughnessy would add to Rouse's own and would emphasize the political potential of difference by critiquing Shaughnessy's "politics of linguistic innocence"–what many saw as her direct denial of "known facts about language

learning." Min-Zhan Lu's canonical "Redefining the Legacy of Mina Shaughnessy"

argued that, while "Shaughnessy sought to counter unequal social conditions through

education," Lu maintains that Shaughnessy's own "essentialist" theory of language led

her to believe that "differences in discourse conventions have no effect on the essential

meaning communicated" (26). And for Lu, these differences matter. As she writes at

length,

> Shaughnessy's desire to propose a pedagogy which inculcates respect for
>
> discursive diversity and freedom of discursive choice articulates her
>
> dissatisfaction with and reaction to the unequal social power and prestige
>
> of diverse discourses in current day America. It also demonstrates her
>
> belief that education can and should attempt to change these prevailing
>
> unequal conditions. However, the essentialist view of language which
>
> underlies her pedagogy seems also to have led her to believe that a vision
>
> of language which insists on the equality and nonsubstitutive nature of
>
> linguistic variety, and an ideal writing classroom which promotes such a
>
> view, can stand in pure opposition to society, adjusting existing social
>
> inequality and the human costs of such inequality from somewhere
>
> 'outside' the socio-historical space which it is trying to transform. (37)

In a large sense, Lu argues for the materiality of language, that "diverse discourses" are

not merely containers for meaning but actually affect meaning. Changes in the way one

writes, says Lu, "can be accompanied by a change in thinking–in the way one perceives

the world around one and relates to it," and Shaughnessy's method (her tendency "to pose

difference as a problem to be solved") "overlook[s] this potential change in thinking

because she believes that language will only help the writers 'reach' but not change how they think and feel about a certain subject or experience" (33). Furthermore, for a student seeking "to align himself or herself with minority economic and ethnic groups in the very act of learning academic discourse," different languages carry their own weight; minority students may feel they are turning their back on family and community and, thus, the Basic Writing course is not a mere fact of understanding patterns but dealing with, as Lu says, "the dissonance" of experience itself.

Min-Zhan Lu's critique is similar to what we have seen before insofar as it is ultimately a critique of seeing students as in any way deficient. As she wrote in a later article, "[Shaughnessy] treat[s] the students' fear of acculturation and the accompanying sense of contradiction and ambiguity as a deficit" ("Conflict" 889). Why? For Shaughnessy differences appear as deficits–underpreparedness–that can and should be remedied; educational deficits must not be allowed to exist in American society. Literacy instruction, the learning of academic discourse, was seen for teachers like Shaughnessy as a way of redressing that deficit, for college was increasingly seen as a necessity for entering the middle class. And this was true not only for Shaughnessy but for her students themselves: "[Open Admissions students] were in college now for one reason," she wrote, "that their lives might be better than their parents' […] Just how college was to accomplish these changes was not at all clear, but the faith that education was the one available route to change empowered large numbers of students […] to *choose* to go" (*Errors* 3). And while those like Min-Zhan Lu sought (like Shaughnessy and nearly every other compositionist) "to address unequal social conditions through education," she disagreed with her about what that process might entail. For critics like Lu, to tell any

student that they are deficient, or even underprepared, was to impose a majority view upon a minority one and thus to condemn actually existing differences between diverse students (and diverse cultures and languages). And it was in this sense that a pedagogy like Shaughnessy's was increasingly seen not as anathema but as *contradictory* to the commitment to difference.

This contradiction materialized, most strongly, in the "Students' Right to their Own Language" (SROL), a movement contemporaneous with Shaughnessy herself and from which she was "conspicuously absent" (Harris *Teaching* 109). The SROL movement argued that "the claim that any one dialect is unacceptable amounts to an attempt of one social group to assert its dominance over another" (1). In the famous 1974 manifesto, published by the *CCC*, they charged mainstream writing teachers with "hav[ing] taught as though the function of schools and colleges were to erase differences," and furthermore, having done so with instructional materials "based on a 'difference-equals-deficit' model that implies that the students' own dialects are inferior and somehow 'wrong'" (3; 15). To understand inequality in this sense was to understand it through a model of language, for just as no language might be said to be deficient, no culture could be said to be deficient. "Since dialect is not separate from culture but an intrinsic part of it," they argued, "accepting a new dialect means accepting a new culture; rejecting one's native dialect is to some extent a rejection of one's culture" (8). To see difference as a marker of deficiency, from this point of view, was thus to participate in an act of oppression.

Why shouldn't what the students were doing be understood as different rather than worse? And, along these lines, what was on one understanding poor students in need of

remediation in order to become more like middle class students was redescribed on another understanding as students belonging not to an inferior culture but to a different one. Which is to say that here we see in the teaching of writing a vision of Composition Studies in which the goal of making working class students more like middle class students was redescribed as the goal of making students of color more like white students and, for that very reason, rejected. The point of open admissions from this standpoint was to open the university to different races and cultures, to make sure that every culture was represented. Another way of putting this would be to say that deficit-based pedagogies should be replaced by culture-based pedagogies that address and seek to retain difference. And still another way of saying this is that composition theory, by and large, should adopt Shaughnessy's attention to difference while eschewing her attention to deficit.

So how has Composition Studies understood inequality? Two competing theories emerge in this debate between Shaughnessy and her critics. On the one hand, difference for Shaughnessy was produced by social deficiencies that create gaps between the majority and the minority, particularly when it came to education. Because she conceptualized the minority and the majority as simply another way of talking about the poor and the affluent, the difference between them was indeed a problem to be solved. On the other hand, difference for Shaughnessy's critics, far from being a problem to be solved, was something to be encouraged and protected. Because they conceptualized the minority and the majority as a difference between cultures, races, and languages, the difference between them was one that added to the unique social diversity of America. So while the goal of both Shaughnessy and her critics began as an intention to address inequality in American society, the two positions drifted apart and indeed emerged as

contradictory, with one side arguing that poor and minority students have educational deficiencies that are the result of social inequity and the other side arguing that poor and minority students don't have any deficiencies but just come from different communities. So if inequality has always been central to Composition Studies' understanding of its goals, these debates show significant disagreements over how inequality has been understood.

However, at least by 1997, a kind of consensus began to appear. Though Shaughnessy's view remained influential, Joseph Harris recognized that "something like [the Students'-Right-to-Their-Own-Language position] has become in recent years the consensus view of the profession" (*Teaching* 111). Alternately, Jeff Smith in that same year recognized a consensus for, as he put it, "counter-hegemonic" pedagogy, a framework in which "Students come to [college] as bearers of something already [and] it's our job not to give them something […] but to draw something out of them" ("Against" 215). Tony Scott writes in *Dangerous Writing* (2009) that "a multiple-literacies perspective that values the languages of diverse peoples […] arguably defines the mainstream of rhetoric and Composition Studies" (113). All of these characterizations point to what amounts to the same thing: a preference for the difference approach over the deficit one. The majority now thought of students as already coming to college with the innate ability to write, and recognizing this, a good writing teacher took a more student-centered approach, serving as a guide for students along their own path. And most importantly for this approach, no hierarchy was "valid" because, as Smith further noted, "one of the goals of this approach is a world without hierarchies" ("Gatekeepers" 310). Thus if Shaughnessy's model was previously taken as orthodox, by at least 1997,

her position had been absorbed within and overtaken by a mainstream approach that argued against seeing difference as a problem to be solved.

But Smith himself was skeptical about this "counter-hegemonic" model. "The fact is," Smith explained, "most students don't come to college, let alone to comp courses, for therapy or spiritual guidance […] Students come to college mainly to qualify themselves for certain professions" ("Jeff" 950). What Smith thought was that most students came to college not to assert their cultural or sexual identities or to contest authority but to develop professional identities and become authorities. In short, from his point of view, the goal of college isn't to help students develop more authentic identities–to be more "gay, female, ethnic, or working-class"–but, rather, to become middle-class professionals. Smith thus argued that college students need and want a pedagogy that gives them *access* to hierarchies rather than a pedagogy that seeks to undermine hierarchies. Smith's view represents a dialectical shift for Composition Studies, for while previously his view might have been received as mainstream, it was, by the late 1990s, seen as contrarian and even conservative and can historically be seen as a backlash against pedagogies of difference.

Writing programs today have been asked to choose between these two models, or, as is more often the case, to integrate them. To those who understood inequality in essentially economic terms, the task of the writing instructor was to give the hitherto educationally and culturally deprived poor the tools to escape their poverty, escape their deprivation. (This model imagines writing classrooms to be full of students with substandard educations, and this model finds itself most commonly applied in the community college.) To those who understood inequality as fundamentally a function of

racism, and understood poverty itself as a consequence of the failure of the white majority to acknowledge and enforce the equality of people of color, the idea of seeing difference as deficit was an extension and even intensification of this failure, itself a form of racism. (This model imagines writing classrooms to be full of a wide-range of ethnic, racial, religious, and sexual identities, and this model finds itself most commonly applied in the "multicultural" university.) And if the views of most people no doubt combined elements of both these positions, the tension between them could not help but be experienced every time an instructor was asked to decide if students in her classroom should be taught standard edited English or, for that matter, any standardized writing at all.

Part Two: Epistemologies of Narrative, Epistemologies of Argument

In Part Two of this chapter, I want to deepen the analysis of Part One–the analysis of how Composition Studies' dual understanding of inequality–by turning to epistemology (*i.e.*, the conceptualization of what is true), I want to suggest another way of describing what I have tried to outline as two central ways composition has understood inequality–the difference between a model that sees students as poor or affluent versus one that seems them as members of a minority or a majority–as a difference between valuing argument or valuing narrative. To offer this suggestion will require both a looking back and a looking forward from what I offered in Part One of this chapter. First, I will offer an analysis of the critique of argument in composition theory–an analysis that will center around narrative and pluralism as a plausible alternative to universalism and argumentation in the work of, most notably, Peter Elbow. Second, I will offer an account

of the work of narrative historian Hayden White as representative of what it might mean to reject argument in favor of pluralism, aligning White with compositionists like Peter Elbow and using both as an example of the "narrative turn" in composition and outside it. Finally, looking forward from Part One, I want to trace the re-emergence of argument as a backlash against what I will refer to as composition's narrative turn.

The Critique of Argument

The 2011 edited volume *Narrative Acts: Rhetoric, Race and Identity, Knowledge* notes that "scholars across the disciplines are increasingly considering how narrative functions more broadly as a way of representing reality, organizing experience, and constructing knowledge. This growing interest in narrative has created what is sometimes called 'a narrative turn' in both the academy and in popular culture" (1). The book itself provides several multi-disciplinary examples of scholars participating in the "narrative turn," and each provides a kind of explanation of what a preference for narrative might mean. Dixson and Rousseau explain, for instance, that to value narrative is to

> believe and utilize personal narratives and stories as valid forms of
>
> 'evidence' and thereby challenge a 'numbers only' approach to
>
> documenting inequity or discrimination that tends to certify discrimination
>
> from a quantitative rather than a qualitative perspective. (100)

"This notion of difference," as they put it, challenges an approach to inequality that would see it in terms of quantities rather than qualities. We can put this another way by saying that the "narrative turn" can be described, for these authors, as an attempt to understand "inequity and discrimination" not through, say, poverty statistics but, rather,

through the stories of those who come from poverty in which "each individual has a distinct story to tell."

Within Composition Studies itself, the "narrative turn" is exemplified in the strong emergence of assignments like the literacy autobiography, an assignment in which students are asked to tell stories about their own experiences with literacy education. Indeed in recent years, this genre has enjoyed immense popularity in college writing courses–in large part due to its difference from more "abstract" assignments like argumentative essays. Anne Beaufort, for example, in *College Writing and Beyond: A New Framework for University Writing Instruction*, makes the literacy autobiography the lynchpin of her pedagogy, asking students to locate key experiences with reading and writing and then compose a 4-5 page narrative explaining how those experiences shaped her students' current authorial "identity." Beaufort assigns, as models, what have become standard cultural narratives in composition courses: Amy Tan's "Mother Tongue," Richard Rodriguez's "Aria: Memoir of a Bilingual Childhood," and Malcolm X's "Prison Studies." And the focus of these standard narratives is cultural identity. While some teachers do emphasize the "arguments" pieces such as these might make, for the most part, the emphasis is on the development of minority identity against majority (American) culture.

It was in the same period that Shaughnessy was doing her work at CUNY that the dominance of argument in composition fell under scrutiny with the focus of such scrutiny being the absence of a focus on the writing process. Histories of composition describe what took place in the late 1960s as a "paradigm shift," a shift from the current-traditional approach, centered around formal instruction (purpose pedagogy), to the

writing-as-process approach, centered around student experience. If compositionist Margaret McDowell could note in the early 1970s that "the rhetorically-oriented freshman course has acquired predictable characteristics […] it emphasizes argumentation more than the other forms of discourse" and that argument as the central form of discourse in the era of "current-traditional rhetoric" was the *de facto* pedagogy, it was soon the case that current-traditional rhetoric (CTR), which emphasized "the composed product rather than the composing process," was being pushed aside by the writing-as-process movement, which held that writing courses should reach out to the concrete experiences of students rather than emphasize "abstract," formal argumentation (678; Young 398). Against "current-traditional" pedagogy, writing-as-process focused on "pre-writing" stages rather than beginning with a final written product; free-writing and narrative, for example, were emphasized over current-traditional material like the syllogism, logical fallacies, analysis, and argument.

Robert Kraft, in his "The Death of Argument" (1976), published in *College English,* wrote that textbooks (like the disciplinary standard *Writing with a Purpose*) with a focus on the products of student writing were ineffective due to their emphasis on abstract argumentation and "formal" analysis–both of which Kraft saw as irrelevant to students' experience and entirely absent from political debates, popular advertising, and contemporary journalism. Instead, Kraft admitted to adopting the "What-I-Did-Last-Summer Essay," which emphasized "description and narration of personal experience" (550). In short, Kraft's reaction against argument led him to narrative. Why? What was the problem with argument, and why did narrative offer a plausible alternative? As Harvey S. Wiener wrote in his critique of the current-traditional approach, "narrative

allows the student to employ information rooted in his own physical, emotional, and intellectual fiber. The obvious advantage here is that details, because of their indelibility, surface easily as the students write" (662). Wiener adds: "with their own experiential reality as the core of the composition the youngsters need recall nothing remote from their own worlds" (662). To put this another way, students had become skeptical of both argument and the textbooks assigned to teach it; they saw the abstract nature of formal argumentation as divorced from everyday reality, which led to a lack of serious engagement in the writing classroom. (And the flip side of that was that their teachers were getting tired of reading that boredom in their papers.) Teachers, as I pointed out in the last section, were beginning to question traditional writing pedagogy, in general, as ill-suited to the needs of newer students now attending through programs like open admissions. The critique of argument could thus be seen as an extension of that process.

Explicitly reaching out to the "concrete" experiences of students, champions of writing-as-process like Kraft and Wiener strongly rejected a "form of thinking" grounded in "abstract" argumentation, and compositionists in this vein sought pathways into the "pre-argument" stages of personal experience, for which narrative was seen as a privileged form. In a paper entitled "Pre-Writing: The Stage of Discovery in the Writing Process" (1965), D. Gordon Rohman had opposed the formalism of traditional writing pedagogy with a pedagogy of writing as a process, and he reconfigured writing into the stages of "Pre-writing," "Writing," and "Re-writing." In particular, what made his process so non-traditional was the emphasis placed on the "Pre-writing" stage itself, which he outlined as a stage of "discovery, […] when a person assimilates his subject to himself" (106). In other words, what Rohman meant by a writer assimilating his "subject

to himself" was that the writing process should begin by drawing on personal

experiences, for "without a person at the center, the process is meaningless; prose without

a person *in*forming it could better be written by a computer programmed with all the

stereotyped responses of our culture" (108). The process Rohman put forth would thus

not start by giving students certain forms to "imitate" but, rather, would start with the

"discovery" of a given writer's "uniqueness." The payoff of such an emphasis would then

manifest itself in the "special *combination* of words which makes an essay his and not

yours or mine" (108). In short, Rohman turned to a kind of particularism that reached

towards the content of experience from which students could "discover" their own

"special combinations" of words and thus express their "uniqueness."

Rohman proclaimed that an emphasis on "personal context" should be the new

grounds of *all* composition pedagogy: "writing grounded in the principle of personal

transformation ought to be the *basic* writing experience for all students at all levels, the

propaedeutic to all subsequent and more specialized forms of writing" (112). Here,

Rohman spells out a position in which we can see at work two opposing claims that

would be the subject of subsequent debates over writing-as-process. On one hand,

Rohman claims that "discovery" is good insofar as it produces varying results from

student to student, foregrounding difference itself; on the other hand, he claims that to

begin with "discovery" is good for everyone and should be "the *basic* writing experience

for all students at all levels." Another way of putting this is to say that Rohman ends up

making a universalist claim (it's good for *everyone*) in the function of particularism (each

outcome will vary and that's what we want; we want every piece of writing to reveal

"uniqueness"). The universalism of Rohman's claim–while, in some sense, energizing the

process movement from the very beginning–would become more and more problematic for process theorists who, one after the other, sought to deflate the universalism of claims like his in favor of amplifying the particularism bound up within it.

The logical first target of any pedagogy seeking to deflate universalism is the authority of the instructor and, indeed, as early as 1968, Peter Elbow began working towards what he called "teacherless" writing classes. In "A Method for Teaching Writing," Elbow argued that the teacher's authority to judge whether writing is good or bad should be attenuated and placed on par with the students' own judgment; the apparatus by which Elbow sought to deflate authority was an apparatus that located good writing as writing that achieved its "desired effects." Put succinctly, Elbow subordinated a subjective criterion of correctness (implemented by the teacher) to a more "neutral criterion" of whether a piece of writing achieves its intended effect. Elbow thus put in place a rubric that didn't judge writing vis-à-vis a criterion of "right and wrong"; instead, Elbow put in place a rubric that judged only "whether something works," whether the "desired effects" were reached (117). In eschewing a rubric of "right and wrong," Elbow's "neutral rubric" deflated the position of authority from which one could proclaim one piece of writing better than another on anything like universal grounds; one piece of writing could be better than another only if it reached its desired ends for particular contexts, for which each audience would vary.

To achieve his goal in the classroom, Elbow privileged "sincerity"–namely, writing that carries within it a certain "force or guts" that revealed an "authentic" voice. The best way of instilling writing with "force or guts" is not to begin by imitating conventional forms, he argued, but to begin by focusing on concrete experience. Thus, in

Elbow's proposed writing course, "Students will be asked to write pieces for which the test is *not* whether the assertions make sense or are consistent but whether the reader feels the writer in the words–whether the reader believes that the writer believes it" ("Method" 122). In short, for Elbow, the writer's purpose (if we can use that term in this case) is to produce the "effect" of belief. (Elbow even stresses that the authentic voice need not be the voice of the subject–the actual persona behind the writing–but need only be the production of an authentic voice, in general.) In drawing attention to belief merely as an "effect," Elbow's theoretical position is one in which the beliefs themselves, whether one actually held the beliefs, didn't matter; beliefs were merely authentic or inauthentic, believable or unbelievable vis-à-vis some audience–*i.e.* beliefs were rhetorical. The question of whether beliefs were *actually held* became secondary.

To emphasize his position, Elbow turns to the example of the Vietnam draft board to illustrate the importance of producing the "effect" of belief. The draft board was, in particular cases, given the task of evaluating those persons whose religious beliefs would not allow them to go to war. As Elbow recounts,

> draft boards now rule more and more frequently on the question of
>
> sincerity–whether the person really does believe the things he says he
>
> believes. And so questions which look as though they are meant to reveal
>
> whether the man has the right belief are in fact crucially used to reveal
>
> whether he has the belief he says he has […] The draft counselor [is] faced
>
> every day with the difference between an answer that makes him respond
>
> 'I'm not at all convinced this guy believes this stuff,' and one which makes
>
> him respond 'Yes. It is clear he believes these things.' And it has nothing

to do with the content of the belief: sometimes the sincerity of the most

outlandish belief is beyond question, while the statement of a 'tame,'

almost universal, belief carries no conviction; sometimes vice versa.

("Method" 121-2)

We might label Elbow's position here (in terms we already saw in Part One) as a move in

the direction of "situated writing," in which what matters is the constraints of particular

situations and not some universal criterion of, say, truth. Elbow generates here a paradox

in which he proposes a "Method for Teaching Writing" that will be different for

everyone. Perhaps recognizing the sophistic premises behind such an emphasis on effect–

a disregard for what is true in favor of what an audience will believe to be true–Elbow

later re-vamped his position on belief into an entire epistemology that served as the

theoretical apparatus behind *Writing Without Teachers*.

Although appearing only in the appendix addressed to academics, epistemology is

in fact central to Elbow's classic book; as he noted later, "[In *Writing Without Teachers*],

I was being enormously ambitious and expanding the scope of my enquiry from the realm

of writing to epistemology itself–the foundations of knowing" (xxi). Essentially a self-

help book for writers, *Writing Without Teachers* (1973) contained two main sections: the

first, "practical" section offers advice for writers and emphasizes the practice of

"freewriting"; the second offers advice for "teachers" in setting up the "teacherless

writing course." Throughout the work, Elbow turns his attention to the dominance of

argument and his skepticism about this mode of writing; indeed, as Elbow later wrote, in

Writing Without Teachers, "nonargument was my whole point" (Second Edition, xxi).

Whether the book is indeed an "attack" on argument is a matter of some debate; Elbow

contends that "nonargument" is not anti-argument, and he offers the epistemology of the "believing game" as an alternative to argument, not a refusal of it. Yet, the tone of the book, in regards to argument, is considerably pejorative, from which I take license–along with the claim that "nonargument" was his whole point–to call *Writing Without Teachers* a refusal.

Elbow's refusal of argument (which paradoxically takes the form of an argument itself) stems from three main premises: 1) argument is hegemonic; 2) argument is mistakenly thought of as a demand for truth when it is really a demand for "certainty"; and 3) argument is only a game and, as such, merely "one game among many." The first premise against argument–what Elbow dubs "the doubting game"–is that argument is hegemonic, especially in academia. Given his commitment to anti-authoritarianism, what this means for Elbow is that the monopoly of argument is *de facto* oppressive. There is no interest here in refining traditional approaches, nor is there an interest in historicizing or synthesizing his own approach with any pedagogical canon; rather, Elbow draws exclusively from his own experiences as a writing teacher. For Elbow, the process of "freewriting" is a resistance to more "formal" approaches, for, although one could say that freewriting is itself a form, Elbow himself sees it more as a "mixed and ambiguous form." In short, the "form" of freewriting is similar to what Rohman called "uniqueness": the "special *combination* of words that makes an essay his or yours and not mine." Freewriting allows room for expression and play, both of which give writing a particular "sincerity"–what replaces form is an emphasis on the trials and errors of experience. But, as I hope will become clear, Elbow's resistance to form doesn't turn out to be a complete disavowal of form itself, for he ultimately locates "formal" constraints in particular

"speech communities." For now, however, we can say that Elbow's rejection of tradition leads him to reject both formal pedagogies and the authority of teachers, and his ultimate target is the epistemology of the "doubting game"–argument– which he sees as underpinning formal pedagogy and academia itself.

His second premise against argument is that, as a "form of thinking," it preempts individual "growth" by shutting down "reorderings of thought or experience." As Elbow sees it, "The cause of argument is an impulse to settle things, decide things," and argument too hastily wants "closure" (110). Indeed one of the problems with argument is that it "tends to confuse certainty with truth," two terms that Elbow explicitly wants to keep separate. For him, truth is "messy." Because he opts for a "messier truth," in which one can *never* be certain about holding the truth, Elbow locates the epistemology of argument as merely an impulse against changing one's beliefs. To put the matter a little differently, Elbow thinks people don't tend to argue in order to change their beliefs; people argue in order to *keep* them. Argument is thus opposed to truth because it is blinded by certainty.

For Elbow this second premise turns out to be an argument for quantity: if one is able to believe a great many things, the odds that one of them is "true" are better than they would be if one has held stubbornly to a single belief. Tied up in Elbow's distinction between certainty and truth, to be sure, is an attack on intellectual dogmatism for which argument, seeking "to fight things out or try to settle the truth," has become "habitual." The "best" intellectuals are those who have mastered the *believing* game, for "they can believe more things than most of us can. And believe them *better–really* believe them" (164). The "cornerstone" of the believing game is thus to resist arguing, for "whatever

your mistake may be, your only chance of correcting it is by affirming, believing, not-arguing" (165). From this point of view, arguing for something and believing something are two very different things. Another way of putting this is to say that, in Elbow's epistemology, the "doubting game" wants certainty over truth; the 'believing game," on the other hand, requires that we suspend any certainty that our beliefs are true in favor of "experiencing" the beliefs of others. As such the process of getting to the truth is necessarily a process that requires the experience of believing–"*really* believing"–as many varying beliefs as possible.

Still, as Elbow's third premise makes clear, his "messy truth" is not unconstrained; the constraints on truth for Elbow's epistemology are not to be located in any claims that are *true for everyone*, in any universal sense, but instead in what he calls (anticipating Stanley Fish's work) "speech communities." As he notes, "there is real truth about the meaning of an utterance or a text–a hard, commonsense, empirical truth: that reading is correct which the speech community builds in or *could build in* without violating its rules" (159). Different speech communities have different rules for truth; argument is merely a *game*–"the doubting game"–and, as such, "is only a game and it's not the only game in town" (174). Since there are different games that can be played–e.g. the doubting game, the believing game, etc.–one cannot be certain of any "truth" outside the rules of any particular game. Thus it is the speech communities that provide formal constraints (rules), for it is ultimately the speech community that determines whether the meaning of any utterances within it will be accepted as true. In configuring argument as merely "one game among others," Elbow can then opt to play a different game whose

rules allow for "maximum differences," a game whose rules allow for listening, creativity, dialogue, and "openness"–i.e. the "believing game."

These three premises combine to underpin Elbow's particular epistemology, which served as the theoretical apparatus justifying his "believing game." We can note the appearance of "theory" in what would otherwise be a thoroughly "practical" text– compositionists typically used examples from student writing to justify their methods, not epistemology–instead Elbow used theory to "justify many of the practices and ways of thinking [he] has come to" (147). Indeed *theory*, as we will see, is the means by which Elbow is able to stand outside "practical" method in order to justify his attack on argument. Elbow's epistemology in *Writing Without Teachers* thus steers a course between relativism and universalism by way of pluralism. The justification for his pluralism is a theory that locates truths in the rules adopted by particular groups, not the individual believing what he says is true. In other words, for Elbow there are different truths for different groups because different groups will always have different rules for what will count as truth. Whereas Rohman made a universalist claim for the privileging of experience, Elbow explicitly deflates such universalism by locating constraints at the level of different games played by different speech communities. The "believing game" is thus a different game than the "doubting game" because it has different rules, and the rules of the "believing game" offer greater flexibility and possibility for tolerance, listening, openness, etc. than do the rules of the argument game.

Narrative and Pluralism in the Work of Hayden White

"The connection between narrative and human understanding," write the authors of *Narrative Acts*, "has been frequently invoked in the academy as voices from widely divergent disciplines have commented on how stories are intertwined with the human experience. For instance […] Hayden White in history has elaborated on how people give primacy to narrative in organizing their understandings of the world." (99). Indeed in the same year (1973) that Peter Elbow published his refusal of argument, *Writing Without Teachers*, Hayden White published *Metahistory*, which itself subordinated argument to narrative and thus demonstrated the irrelevance of argument to historiography. My own purpose in moving outside Composition Studies by turning to a historian is to help draw out what it might mean to reject argument in favor of narrative. What it means, as I hope will become clear, is pluralism–the belief that there are only varying accounts (narratives) of historical processes, none of which can make a claim to be *the* true account. In offering White's account of narrative (and by extension, his commitment to pluralism), I hope to provide a bridge from Composition Studies to the epistemology underpinning the commitment to narrative, providing an example of how valuing narrative was not specific to composition but was rather part of a larger shift in academic disciplines (and in the philosophy of higher education), as well as adding to Peter Elbow's own account of "the believing game" a political extension.

White's meta-historical project demonstrated to historians the implications involved in privileging narrative as the ideal form of historical representation, a project that continues up to the present. For White,

> one cannot historicize without narrativizing because it is only through
>
> narrative that a series of events can be transformed into a meaningful

sequence, divided into periods, and represented as a process in which the

substances of things can be said to change while their identities remain the

same. (qtd. in Doran xxiii)

In other words, the essence of argument is its claim to be true or false; historical

narratives, however, are always "emplotments"–stories of one kind or another–and thus

always retain a fictional "content." In *Metahistory* the "level" of historical narrativity is

separated from other historical "levels" concerned with "facts." Narrative is concerned

with the *meaning* of events; as such, argument is on a different level than narrative

emplotment, for, although a particular narrative will "explain" a set of historical events

and, in the process, will indeed present an argument of some kind, there is no reason that

one mode of explanation (argument) should be favored over another. In passing, we can

note that, in this particular epistemology, beliefs don't count. All the levels of the

historiographical narrative provided in *Metahistory* (explanation by emplotment,

argument, and ideological implication) are contingent upon the "pre-figuring" of the

historical "field" in one tropological "figure" over another. As such, the entire process of

historiography is for White contingent upon a "poetics" of figuration that is almost

anthropological–that is, a very function of the human mind–and we might add that White

implies throughout that different "peoples" (cultures) tend to privilege varying "modes"

of figuration. As such, White's move in the *Metahistory* is to relegate argument to merely

one "mode" of explanation among many, which is determined not by ideological beliefs

but by a "pre-figuring" of the historical field in one trope over another.

What this means for historiography is that, in privileging narrative for the

representation of real events, it can never (and should never) aspire to the kind of

"positive" truth that is the realm of the physical sciences. To be sure, White's project is a critique of history's aspirations to be a "science," for it is history's inability to get away from narrative that prevents it from reaching such a "scientific" status. As White notes, "stories are not true or false, but rather more or less intelligible, coherent, consistent, persuasive, and so on" ("Historical Pluralism" 236). In the same way that two stories about the same set of historical events cannot be said to contradict one another, so also for two narratives about the same set of historical events. This is precisely because the *meaning* of some set of historical events cannot "adjudicate" between varying narratives, for the meaning of some set of events is in fact the result of narrative itself. In other words, "Establishing facts is not tantamount to conferring meaning in the strong sense of the term; though any articulation of the facts–their elaboration in a discourse–would necessarily imply interpretation" (Doran xxvii). Thus facts are to be assessed via a different criterion than interpretations. Facts are either true or false while interpretations deal with meanings. Meanings, which are products of some narrative and can be only "more or less intelligible, coherent, consistent, persuasive, and so on," are always mediations in some way, and interpretation thus changes the truth status of events insofar as "facts cease to be mere facts once they are interpreted" (Doran xxvi). As White puts the matter, "Neither the reality nor the meaning of history is 'out there' in the form of a story awaiting only a historian to discern its outline and identify the plot that comprises its meaning" ("Historical Pluralism" 230). Thus White's theory goes decidedly against the grain of orthodox historiography, which presumes that, once the historian gets the facts right, the facts "speak for themselves." There is, no "plot" to be found in historical events, and "One must face the fact that when it comes to the historical record, there are

no grounds to be found in the historical record itself for preferring one way of construing its meaning rather than another" ("The Politics" 130). The historical record itself cannot plausibly offer definitive constraints upon the kinds of narratives that can be written about it, and this means that the kinds of narratives that can be told about history are as various as the modes of emplotment available to a specific culture at a specific time.

The claim that "there are no grounds to be found in the historical record itself for preferring" one historical narrative over another has run up against persistent objections. Such objections claim that White opens the door for revisionist accounts of widely accepted historical events–for example, Robert Faurisson's infamous claim that gas chambers never existed at Auschwitz. From such a claim, Faurisson derives an entire revisionist history of the meaning of the holocaust. White's theory seems to offer and indeed did offer justification for making such revisionist claims. It's not true, however, that Faurisson could underpin his own revisionist history with White's pluralism. This is because, first, White is talking about *narratives*, which he places on a different "level" than historical fact-finding. The narrative production of the meaning of historical events is always an interpretation, and, for White, interpretations are never true or false but can only be adjudicated via aesthetic or moral criteria. Thus Faurisson's narrative, which stems from the claim that there were no gas chambers at Auschwitz, can be condemned as "immoral," or, as White himself calls it, "repugnant." Second, White's theory would be as inadmissible to Faurisson as it has been to traditional historians–those historians who claim that there are only the facts of history and those facts tell their own stories. White's theory is inadmissible for Faurisson precisely because Faurisson doesn't assert his history as being an alternative to other histories but, *a fortiori*, asserts that his history

is in fact *true*. As Faurisson himself says, "There was not a single 'gas chamber' in even one of the German concentration camps; that is the truth" ("The Problem"). Although White's theory cannot condemn Faurisson's account as being one story among many, one *possible* interpretation, White's theory can condemn Faurisson's account by deflating its claim to being unassailably true.

On the narrative level, Faurisson's assertion of a true meaning of the holocaust cannot be judged on the level of a "revisionist lie," for, even when based on questionable fact-finding, narrative accounts for White cannot claim to be the one true *history* of a set of events; there is no one true *history* of a set of events; there is only a number of varying narratives. Narratives are indeed indebted to the facts, but there is a qualitative shift between the level of fact-finding and the level of narrativizing, a slippage between the historical facts themselves and the circumscription of those facts into narratives. For White, everything is in the slippage. White's theory does not allow us to judge which historical narratives provide a true meaning of events and which do not; rather the payoff of White's theory is that we can challenge any dominant, authoritative meaning of history on the grounds that, as one possible story (narrative) among many, such a dominant account cannot be taken as the one *true* meaning of history.

In adopting narrative representation as the meaning-making form for historical events, historians are thus committed to a plurality of interpretations. This is because, once one has emplotted any set of historical events in the form of a story, then the same set of events can be emplotted as any other type of story without contradiction; to emplot events as a tragedy means that events can also be emplotted as a comedy, romance, etc. More fundamentally what this means for White is that "stories are made, not found," by

which he means that real events only have meaning *for us*–as language constructions. Because events only have meaning *for us*, White merely points out that we thus cannot rule out the possibility that those same events, *in themselves*, are meaningless. White shies away here from saying events are *indeed* meaningless in themselves. His point is, again, that we cannot and should not rule out the possibility that history is meaningless in itself. In other words, to say that when narratives are properly seen as "emplotted"–"made" rather than "found"–there can no longer be any hand-wringing over questions of truth. In privileging narrative, historians are thus committed to a certain epistemological pluralism that evades questions of truth in favor of more properly aesthetic questions in which the question of truth is made secondary to questions of taste, convention, or intelligibility.

White himself has said that he is "a genuine pluralist and one who is even prepared to bear the label of radical relativist in matters having to do with *historical knowledge*" ("Historical Pluralism" 229). The targets of White's pluralism are historians who dogmatically see history as a "science," those "objective" historians who view history as something that can be "explained" in the way science explains cloud formations or volcanic eruptions. But White's pluralism also keeps him from asserting one ideological position over and against another; instead the thrust of his body of work is to offer alternatives to and subversions against authoritative historiography. In other words, White's own "politics" is one in which groups are free to choose their own histories, their own stories. In short, no group is relegated to any particular history *a priori*; rather White posits the plausibility of a "meaningless" history in order to underscore his point that groups and individuals are "free" to choose those emplotments

that *express* their own set of moral and political views. Such histories can then exist in tandem and without contradiction amongst various groups. Nobody is bound to any meaning of history, for historical events do not express themselves, it is only humans that give meaning to history by writing it.

In this respect, White's pluralism and Elbow's pluralism have the same effect; both turn writing itself into a form of self-expression (be it group or individual) and thus reject argument as merely one mode among many. For White, such a pluralism centers on narratives, which are never true or false; for Elbow, such a pluralism centers on the playing of different "games," none of which can claim to be "the only game in town." Whereas Elbow rejects argument and opts for the rules of the "believing game," which privilege "sincere" writing and self-expression, White rejects argument and opts for the rules of an alternate historiography, which privileges a "free choice" for the expression and interpretation of history. In both cases, what pluralism offers is a critique of universalism, a critique that doesn't claim to be true for everyone but seeks to undercut assertions of truth altogether, positing alternate frameworks in which no one can claim authority based on some universal notion of truth. Nonetheless, as both Elbow & White understand it, this position does indeed involve a politics of its own.

Argument Strikes Back

Let me conclude this chapter by returning to the politics of composition. If in this period we can see the establishment of both difference rather than deficit and narrative rather than argument, we have also seen a renewed emergence of the critique of those positions. In the years since 1997, while what Jeff Smith described as the "counter-

hegemonic" model has remained central (particularly in composition scholarship) it has at the very least been supplemented by what we might describe as a re-emergence of its enemy twin: the "hegemonic" model. Gerald Graff, perhaps the standard-bearer here, has echoed Smith in arguing that the challenging of hierarchies is not only damaging to education but is likely to be resisted "by the students themselves." Graff argues that teachers should give their students marketable skills by teaching "the conventions we ourselves do not hesitate to use […] for without command of these conventions students are likely to be ineffectual in [any] sphere" ("Politics" 856). Thus what should be taught isn't something the students already possess, something that needs to be "drawn out of them" but, rather, what should be taught is something students don't already possess– namely, skills that enable them to become doctors, lawyers, etc. Graff, in other words, believes that the goal of college (and college writing) is to give students skills they do not have.

The skills students don't have, Graff says, are argumentative ones: "All academic writing is argumentative writing," he says, for "the name of the game in academia is argument" (*Clueless* 3). This is not really to say, however, that Graff brings argument back from the abyss, for as Richard Fulkerson says in his "Composition at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century" (2005), "Despite the shortage of composition scholarship on argumentation, evidence indicates that treating writing as argument for a reader is widespread" (672). So we might say that though composition has, in its scholarship and theory, moved away from argument and toward questions of the productivity of difference, it has in practice continued to work with argument. But Graff, with his co-writer Cathy Birkenstein, are not just trying to convince teachers that they should assign

more argument papers; they are trying to save argument itself from being pulled under by the misconception that to argue means "to assert one's view at all costs, winning the argument battle." (In short, we can say that they are trying to save argument from skeptics like Elbow.) For them good argumentation is always entering a conversation (thus first listening to others–understanding what is called a "They Say") and then "putting in your own oar" by responding with an "I Say."

This is precisely the premise behind their slim, bestselling textbook *They Say/I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*, which has sold over 1.5 million copies–a number sure to grow–a book that seeks to "lay bare" and "demystify" the key "moves" in academic writing. Indeed it could be said that today *They Say/I Say* is itself in competition as the standard for Composition Studies across colleges and universities. Still, in one sense, the turn toward difference in Composition Studies that I have outlined throughout the chapter is responsible for the success of *They Say/I Say*. For if the move against deficit was also a move away from standardization, Graff and Birkenstein are attempting to bring standardization back into the discipline. Their own reasons for doing so are thoroughly grounded in what they note as "student confusion"; "teachers need to identify and isolate the features" that make up academic discourse and make such features clear to students. Indeed this is precisely the point of their textbook, which supplements lessons about argumentation with templates, such as "In recent discussions of ----, a controversial issue has been whether-----or-----; Though I concede that----, I still insist that-----. At the same time that I believe----, I also believe-----" (xviii). It is moves like this that Graff and Birkenstein see as primary to academic discourse communities, and they see them as the DNA of academic discourse.

Critics of *They Say/I Say* have mostly taken aim at these templates. Compositionist Amy Lynch-Biniek, for instance, argues in "Filling in the Blanks: They Say, I Say, and The Persistence of Formalism" that the templates are merely another iteration of the kind of formalism represented by older writing textbooks, such as James McCrimmon's *Writing With a Purpose*, in which "complex ideas suffer in favor of reproducing conventions," even going so far as to label the templates "academic madlibs." As Patricia Bizzell puts the matter a little differently in "The Intellectual Work of 'Mixed Forms' of Academic Discourses":

> I think it is possible so speak of an academic discourse community's language-using practices as conventionalized […] But because academic discourse is the language of a human community, it can never be absolutely fixed in form […] at any given time, its most standard and widely accepted features reflect the cultural preferences of the most powerful people in the community. (1)

(And it should be added that Gerald Graff himself was the President of the MLA from 2006-8). Composition in the last twenty years has had a deep commitment to understanding genre and asking students to compose in different genres–particularly those now called "multi-modal" and digital genres. Says Bartholomae summarizing Mary-Louise Pratt, these include, among others, "autoethnogoraphy (representing one's identity and experience in the terms of the dominant other, with the purpose of engaging the other); transculturation [Remix] (the selection of and improvisation on the materials derived from the dominant culture) […] and exercises in storytelling" (13). What "mixed genres" like these tend to have in common is a privileging of student experience over

analysis. As compositionist Karen Surman Paley puts it, "Students feel most connected with the culture of the academy when they are invited to use personal experience in their writing and when the narratives they produce are treated responsibly and valued by their teachers" (54).

Graff and Birkenstein, however, are not interested in assigning particular genres but instead are interested in finding a commonality amongst all academic genres: a structure of "They Say/I Say." *They Say/I Say* addresses its critics, however, from the very beginning, where Graff and Birkenstein note that "telling a story and making an argument are more compatible activities than many think" (xxiii). Indeed in an article from 2009, they explain that "Argument is inclusive in that it involves a broad range of other academic skills such as statistical reasoning, factual knowledge, interpretive and narrative abilities, and the ethical sensitivity to fairly represent the views of others, especially with whom we disagree" ("Immodest" 410). So if on one hand, Graff and Birkenstein are claiming that all academic discourse uses the "moves" of the "They Say/I Say" argumentative templates–about which students are "clueless" and with which students can bring their ideas into existence in the first place–and if, on the other hand, such conventions are seen by those like Bizzell as representing "the cultural preferences of the most powerful people in the community"–we can see again another instance of what we have already seen as the difference between deficit and cultural difference–in this case, reformulated as a difference between Graff's universal design, "the name of the academic game is argument," and something like Elbow's position that argument is only a game "and as such is not the only game in town."

The interest in narrative and history that became a kind of Composition Studies standard was not unique to it but was also expressed in the commitment to pluralism in the overall tenor of American colleges and universities of this period. This would appear in mission statements (and public policy decisions) around the question of diversity and multiculturalism. In the next chapter, I want to look historically at the rise of the cultural model of education in American higher education, thus expanding the focus of Chapter One by looking outward from the discipline of composition to the university itself.

Chapter 2. A Political Economy of Higher Education Since 1968

What I have described in the last section might be called something like the competing politics of Composition Studies, seeing the victims of inequality in terms of class difference or seeing the victims of inequality in terms of cultural difference. This contradiction is by no means unique to Composition Studies. Indeed it is in a certain sense central to the very idea of mass education policy. While competing understandings of inequality have been central to developments in the theory, research, and pedagogy of the discipline, they have also been central to mass education policies in a period that itself lines up with the modern history of Composition Studies, 1968 to the present. As we have already seen from looking at Shaughnessy's work, New York City was a flashpoint for mass democratic education in the late 1960s and early 1970s. At the center of it was a concern over both who controlled public education and who was allowed to attend higher education. Both, however, were part of the same phenomenon: a sense of the increasing importance of education.

In this chapter, I want to go back and look at the material conditions that helped precipitate that debate. As I hope to show, debates around the teaching of writing didn't emerge simply out of a set of intellectual arguments over how to teach but emerged through the commitment to education and the role it could play in constructing a more equal American society. In Part One of this chapter, I want to look at Open Admissions at CUNY from 1970-76, in which the institution offered both free tuition and a seat in college for all graduates of NYC high schools. To begin the section, however, I will describe the situation in New York City prior to Open Admissions–particularly, the

controversy over community schools in the Ocean Hill/Brownsville district of Brooklyn, which pitted a coalition of parents, city government, and corporate philanthropy against the United Federation of Teachers. This controversy was noteworthy for shutting down the public schools of NYC three separate times during teachers' strikes and bringing the issue of decentralization into the public eye; decentralization in this context was linked to the question of minorities–not in the sense of *Brown vs. the Board of Education* (to desegregate public schools) but rather an attempt to address particular needs of individual groups by handing schools over to the communities. What I hope to show is that debates we have already seen in Composition Studies can be located as extensions of positions taken in concrete battles over education in the late 1960s and early 1970s. And I will suggest that, in grounding what were mostly theoretical debates in composition within the material context of policy battles, we can uncover something like the history of the political commitments of a pedagogy of deficit versus a pedagogy of difference as they played out both in New York City public education and within CUNY's Open Admissions movement.

Part One: The Material Conditions of Open Admissions at CUNY (1968-1976)

"Education beyond high school," CUNY president Albert Bowker wrote in 1965, "was becoming a necessity rather than a luxury for young people, not only in terms of personal enrichment but for economic survival" (qtd. in Roff 119). Similarly, Jerome Karabel noted that "The higher education system virtually determines entry into middle- and upper-level positions in the occupational hierarchy and is thus a key distributor of privilege in contemporary America" (38). And during the period from the 1960s-1970s,

which saw increased efforts toward the democratization of colleges and Universities, education began to focus on helping those–poor and minorities–who had been victimized by American inequality. As one educational policy maker wrote, "Increasingly, educational theories and practices are being judged on whether they succeed with the urban poor and others who are accounted educational failures" (Fantini *Toward* 3). This was true not just for educational theories and practices but for policy issues, as well, like college admissions and decentralization of public schools.

The Ocean Hill-Brownsville Controversy

In New York City, the focus on progressive policy and curricular innovation involved not just teachers but also city and state government, unions, corporations, and private philanthropy. In 1967 the Ford Foundation, then the largest philanthropic organization in the world, became deeply involved in public education in the city, backing three experimental school districts in Harlem, lower Manhattan, and Brooklyn. As one educational consultant for the Ford Foundation remembered, these experimental districts were chosen because of their poverty and because of "pressure by black parents and school activists desiring a voice in school matters to change the tide of educational failure" (Gittell *Local* 6). And with the backing of the Mayor, the Board of Education, the Ford Foundation, and the communities themselves, "for the first time in modern educational history, some New York City schools would be managed by elected community school boards" (*ibid.* 7).

Behind the creation of the three experimental districts in 1967 was an overall interest in decentralization of public education, for many saw that public education in

NYC–particularly in the poorer neighborhoods–was failing. Leading the issue of decentralization were two consultants hired by the Ford Foundation to both study and promote school decentralization, Marilyn Gittell and Mario Fantini. Both believed that "public education is failing generally" and "the most visible failure is in the urban, low-income, racial ghettoes"; the "growing despair" of "low-income racial minorities […] is inextricably linked to the crisis of urban education," they noted, and "The black poor demand equality of opportunity" ("Alternatives" 2; *Activist* 18). Fantini argued that school failure was generally explained in two different ways, one of which he thought was profoundly mistaken. The first explanation was that the "failure of any child to learn lies primarily with the learner–in his physical, economic, cultural, or environmental deficits." The second explanation saw that "if pupils are failing the school system itself is in need of fundamental rehabilitation" ("Alternatives" 2-3). Fantini believed the first explanation–what he labeled the "compensatory intervention" approach–to be deeply flawed, seeing compensatory education simply to be a way of dealing with the "symptoms" of an ineffective educational system rather than its "wholesale re-examination." There was little evidence, Fantini noted, that compensatory education was working. As Fantini framed the issue,

> The proponents of continued compensatory intervention argue either that not enough effort and resources have yet been applied or that greater attacks must be made on factors external to the schools (typically, family stability, housing, and income) or both. But the compensatory approach is viewed with increasing distrust by the parents of academic failures both because the techniques are not achieving their goals and because these

parents are rejecting the premise that the fault lies in their children.

("Alternatives" 5)

We might recognize Fantini's critique in terms of what we have already called (in Chapter One) the debate between seeing students as deficient versus seeing them as different. The words, however, are not Fantini's but stem from the parents themselves, who reject any claims that their children (and by extension, their communities) are deficient. Echoing Fantini, Marilyn Gittell wrote, "Predictably, most educators have claimed that socio-economic background determines achievement; failure is not so much the fault of the school as of the society, which neglects to provide for its poor"; "In effect," she concludes," this line of reasoning blames the child" (*Activist* 19). Indeed this position represented the central complaint of parents in what would be the most explosive of the experimental districts, Ocean Hill-Brownsville.

The core of Fantini's and Gittell's position is remarkably similar to what we have already seen to be the later position of the Students' Right to Their Own Language; for as Fantini wrote, "Differences in black children (and in others, for that matter) are not deficiencies, and the schools should capitalize on the differences instead of bemoaning them as deterrents to learning" (*Community* 29). Or again, as he wrote in an article from the *Harvard Educational Review,* "We must recognize that viewing differences and diversity as assets rather than unfortunate barriers to homogeneity has as positive an effect on human growth and development as the teaching of academic skills" ("Alternatives" 6). Building on this understanding of difference, Fantini proposed what he called a "curriculum of affect," and this curriculum envisioned schools "as an acculturation tool, an educational instrument, and a community center attempting to make

viable connections between different homes and different cultures in a climate that respects and cherishes creative differences" (*Community* 81). At the same time, we might add, the position of Fantini and Gittell contained similar elements to what we have already seen to be one of the mantras of Mina Shaughnessy–namely, that teachers should not hold prior expectations of the capabilities of the "new students." (This position on expectations would later emerge over questions of standards and find expression in "No Child Left Behind," which would discard questions of background or material conditions and place the impetus for standardization solely on the schools.)

Karen Ferguson points out, in her book on the Ford Foundation, that "Notably absent from [Fantini & Gittell's] therapeutic prescriptions were any promises of material power. In fact, the school reformers implicitly admitted that economics did not figure into their definition of power, which was confined to the formal political realm" (113). As Fantini and Gittell put it, "in the United States today […] there is a strong, open conflict between ethnic groups and the dominant society, between the affluent and the poor […] The conflict concerns wealth and other material resources, but the basic issue is the division of political power" (*Community* 216-7). In other words–and here we can turn to Nancy Fraser's useful conceptualization–Fantini and Gittell saw the problem of school reform as one of recognition, a problem of the majority not valuing the minority. The answer, as Gittell and Fantini saw it–was the "redistribution of power" through initiatives to decentralize public education, increasing the participation of local communities in their children's education.

Of all the students in the public school system in New York City in 1968, 29 percent were black and 21 percent were Puerto Rican; their teachers, however, were 9

percent black and only .2 percent Puerto Rican (Kahlenberg *Tough* 83). Indeed in 1968,

in New York City as a whole, less than 2 percent of all school supervisors (including

principals) were black or Puerto Rican (*Local*). In Ocean Hill-Brownsville (OH-B) in

1968, a ghetto in Brooklyn and one of the experimental districts chosen by the Ford

Foundation for its decentralization project, the schools served a population of students

who were 73 percent black, 24 percent Puerto Rican, and 3 percent white, while the

teachers were over 70 percent white (*Local* 44; *Confrontation* 126). The OH-B school

district became the locus for the controversy over control of public education when it was

given over to local community leaders. Upon appointment, the local OH-B school board

promptly transferred (the teachers' union would claim "fired") several white teachers,

insisting that those who were racially or culturally different from them should not teach

black and Puerto Rican children. The controversy in OH-B was framed around the

question of what makes a quality education, and for the OH-B community, the answer

was clear: their schools needed community participation and autonomy in which the

curriculum and the teachers who delivered that curriculum were racially and culturally

matched. Against the belief in cultural separatism and local control, the President of the

United Federation of Teachers, Albert Shanker, declared,

> The major difference in educational achievement between the [rich]
>
> children of Scarsdale and the [poor] children of Harlem is not due, as some
>
> have suggested, to local control of schools but rather to the creative effects
>
> of wealth and poverty on the lives of children…educational advantages
>
> claimed for local control are illusory–specifically, the prediction that local
>
> control leads to creative innovation. (qtd. in Fantini, *Community* 226)

The United Federation of Teachers, in support of the dismissed white teachers, promptly countered, first, with a district strike and, later, with a citywide strike that lasted seven weeks, paralyzing the NYC public school system. In response to the UFT's position against community control of schools, Mario Fantini (backing the OH-B community) argued that "Shanker [in his direct equation of quality with resources] overlooks the role of education as a means to understanding the self, and concentrates instead on the environmental handicaps traditionally invoked to account for the academic failure of ghetto children" (*Community* 226). Indeed Shanker was an extremely polarizing figure in this conflict. His rhetoric alienated many both outside and inside the union. Here, for instance, is Shanker explaining his position in a printed interview from *Why Teachers Strike*:

> I want decentralized school systems with a high degree of local power, but that local power has to be used to teach children to read and to write and *to make it* within our society. I do not want to give the right to a local community to decide that our children shouldn't learn to speak English, or that our children should learn how to make Molotov cocktails, or to hate other people on the basis of race or color; in other words, there are certain options I do not give. I am therefore very much against community control. (181)

Shanker's equation of community control with handing over the schools to "extremists" eventually led almost all black members to leave the UFT altogether, creating a deep rift between the union and the poor communities of NYC. As Joshua Freeman explains,

Not all teachers backed Shanker or the walkout[s]. By the fall of 1967,

almost all of the members of the small African-American Teachers

Association […] had left the union. Its leaders became vehement

supporters of community control and bitter antagonists of the UFT […]

Many white teachers, particularly Teachers Union veterans and New

Leftists, felt torn apart between support for the union and for black

advancement. (224)

Furthermore, when anti-semitic leaflets began to appear in the OH-B area (presumed to

be written by members of that community), Shanker turned the debate over

decentralization into a debate about anti-semitism, a move that proved to be a turning

point in the battle for public opinion.

In the OH-B controversy, we can see two understandings of inequality at odds

with each other: one side believed inequality was the result of "creative effects of wealth

and poverty on the lives of children"; the other side believed inequality was the result of

seeing differences of minority students as deficits, thus making those in the minority feel

"in effect that [they are] worthless" (*Toward* 28). For our purposes here, the OH-B

conflict has the benefit of making these positions explicit, but while the OH-B conflict

eventually ended in 1969 with the city implementing a "Decentralization Plan" that

assigned managerial roles to community members while giving ultimate control back to

the centralized Board of Education, the movement for school decentralization had made

strong inroads into the educational unconscious of NYC. Indeed the legacy of the

proponents for local control–Fantini, Gittell, and the Ford Foundation–was one that

established "diversity as a value, not as an obstacle to learning" in New York City's

schools (Ferguson 166). As Karen Ferguson further notes,

> the Ford Foundation's direct involvement in New York's public education
>
> system was central to the city's schools crisis of the late 1960s, which
>
> resulted in student boycotts, sit-ins at the Board of Education, three
>
> citywide teachers' strikes, and, many argue, the permanent realignment of
>
> the city's politics along racial lines. (89)

As Gittell explains, "city-wide decentralization was initially supported by the Mayor, the

Governor, civil rights and grass-roots minority organizations, the PEA, and the Ford

Foundation. The Superintendant of Schools was also mildly supportive of the movement"

(*Activist* 58-9). Furthermore,

> the decentralization alliance united the city's upper class, who had long
>
> despaired of the school system and long been leaders in school reform
>
> movements, with the city's underclass, who had, as clients, little faith in
>
> the schools [whereas] the anti-decentralization forces largely reflected a
>
> coalition between the newly emergent middle-class white civil servant and
>
> the labor unions. (*Activist* 46)

The battle over decentralization was a controversy that could thus be seen in two ways: as

a racial and ethnic issue or as a class issue. On one hand, many saw the poverty of urban

education as the result of broken promises of de-segregation; many parents were simply

fed up with the state of their schools and sought "community control" to control the

education of their children. Because the communities themselves were mostly black and

Puerto Rican, and because race in this sense was readily visible, the controversy was seen

as a battle for civil rights. On the other hand, the alignment of the poor and the upper

classes against the middle classes was an effect of the battle. Indeed many, including

Gittell, argued that the controversy showed that "middle-class professionals" and

members of the unions simply had too much power, and as she saw it, "In public

education, the insulation of professionals [via unionization] effectively closes off new

power sources" (*Activist* 59). As we have already seen, it was UFT rhetoric, and not the

pro-decentralization coalition, that ultimately made the battle about race and ethnicity

through the circulation of the anti-semitic propaganda that was, in the end, only arguably

a part of OH-B community thinking. Nonetheless, the controversy by no means resolved

the contradiction over public education in New York City, and this conflict would then

shift from public education to higher education.

Open Admissions at the City University of New York

In the 1960s, New York City saw a shift away from manufacturing jobs as "well-

paying unskilled jobs began to leave the city, replaced by those requiring a liberal arts or

technical education" (Roff 53). Increasingly, in the new economic situation, people began

to see access to the labor market as mediated by a college education, and the public began

to call for increased city, state, and federal attention to what was seen as an educational

deficit, which culminated in calls for increased access to higher education. The

population of the city was changing; in the early 1960s, "about 700,000 whites left for the

suburbs, many lured by low-cost G.I. mortgages. An almost equal number of African

Americans from the south and residents from Puerto Rico arrived in the city" (Roff 119).

Yet, while from 1950-1960 the population of New York City had declined from

7,891,957 to 7,781,984, "The number of high school students wanting to attend college increased. Puerto Ricans and African Americans from the south came in sizeable numbers, augmenting their long-established communities in New York" (Roff 50). The diversity of the population entering NYC, coupled with the flight of its white population, created a unique situation for the City University of New York.

CUNY had long considered its mission as providing free higher education to the citizens of New York City. In 1963, newly elected president Albert H. Bowker recognized that The City University of New York (CUNY) needed to meet "the needs of the projected increase in applicants and [take] into account their ethnic diversity" (Roff 113). CUNY began to acknowledge and respond to the fact that for many African American and Hispanic high school students in New York City, "economic and social adversity was linked to educational deprivation more than it had been for poor immigrant students in the early part of the century" (Roff 113). To address the growing demand for higher education, 1964-1972 saw CUNY expand into a tiered system of two four-year colleges, four new community colleges, and three new four-year colleges. While CUNY had historically offered free tuition to students, now it wanted to move toward increased access. The community colleges themselves now eliminated tuition and

> began to develop curricula in distinctive technical and business fields while providing a general education or liberal arts major [...] initiating adult and continuing education programs and General Educational Development work, in addition to offering exhibits and performing events for the enrichment of their communities. (Roff 115)

In 1968 Bowker's resolution to accept the top 100 students from each of the 60 public high schools was accepted, thus making CUNY the most "integrated institution of higher education in the United States." And this movement represented the "opening" of higher education, in which "all the activity was focused on expanding educational opportunity in New York City" (Roff 117).

Located on a hill overlooking Harlem, City College–the oldest of CUNY's four-year universities–enrolled a 1969 class that was 81 percent white, 8.5 percent black, and 4.9 percent Puerto Rican (Marshak 49). In New York's public schools, however, only 45 percent of the students were white–the other 55 percent were mostly black and Puerto Rican (Lavin *Right* 9). In 1969 several black and Puerto Rican student-activists took control of a number of the buildings at City College, issuing a list of demands. Echoing what we have already seen as the earlier calls of the Ocean Hill-Brownsville community, the activists adopted slogans like "Black Children Need Black Culture," calling for the end of "conditions that deny the very existence of the Black and Puerto Rican community" at CUNY and at City College in particular (Kahlenberg *Tough* 85). These organized protests demanded that "the racial composition of all entering classes reflect the black and Puerto Rican population of the New York City public schools" (Lavin *Right* 10). Lack of response from City College, however, provoked a student-led strike, and, on April 21, 1969, over 1000 students and teachers marched against City College. The following day members of the Black and Puerto Rican Student Coalition effectively took over eight of City College's twenty-two buildings, declaring it the "University of Harlem" (*ibid.* 11).

That July, the New York Board of Higher Education voted to instate Open Admissions. In the following fall of 1970, almost 35,000 students entered CUNY for the first time under CUNY's new Open Admissions policy–over 24,000 more than had entered in the fall of 1969 (Roff 122). In 1965, the Board of Higher Education had adopted a plan to achieve 100 percent admission (everyone with a high school diploma would have a seat in one of the colleges) by 1975; however, in reaction to community, civil rights, and public pressure, the Board was forced in the summer of 1969 to move up its Open Admissions goal to the fall of 1970 (Roff 122). Indeed CUNY president Bowker famously noted that the only answer to the furor over public education in NYC in 1969 was: "hell, let everyone in."

As Mario Fantini said later, "Stimulated in part by the community-control dispute, demands arose for liberalized admission policies to the City University system" (*Community* 235). The call for Open Admissions at CUNY was thus an attempt to resolve the contradictions at work in the debate over local control of the public schools. Open Admissions, which originally had been planned and scheduled for 1975, was moved up in 1970, in part to resolve the tension surrounding education in New York in the late 1960s. On one hand, Open Admissions was indeed a response to, as Irving Kristol put it in 1973, "the ethnic and racial politics of the time" (19). On the other hand, a point lost in many re-tellings of the story, Open Admissions was also a direct policy of CUNY's mission to provide higher education for the poor. What was to be immediately instated by CUNY, were it not for the influence of Harry Van Arsdale and the NYC unions, was not Open Admissions but a "dual admissions" system designed to get CUNY in line with "the

racial composition of NY's public schools." In his book *Working-Class New York*, Joshua

Freeman explains that

> [in response to the continued occupations of City College], the faculty
> endorsed a 'dual admissions' system: half of an enlarged freshman class
> would be chosen using existing, grade-based criteria, while the other half
> would be filled with students from designated high schools in poverty
> areas, who would not have to meet any grade standard […] Few voiced
> opposition to increasing opportunities for blacks and Puerto Ricans […]
> But the possible restriction of opportunity for whites as a consequence of
> dual admissions generated extensive criticism. (231)

Organized labor was foremost among those who opposed the dual system. They feared

that dual admissions "would block the sons and daughters of the labor movement from an

education merely because they did not come from the ghetto" (qtd. in Freeman 231-2).

And "as an alternative, Harry Van Arsdale suggested 'enactment of a master plan

[guaranteeing higher education for all high school graduates] not in 1975 but in 1970"

(232). Implementation of the policy was thus a dual response to a double set of pressures

from minorities and from working class white students. Additionally, the racial and

ethnic protests against City College, which were in line with the cultural-autonomy

position, were themselves in line with earlier debates in New York City over community

control of public education.

In the wake of Open Admissions, CUNY, as James Traub notes, "changed

overnight, not by design but by sheer force of circumstance." At City College, for

example, "Seventy percent of English courses had traditionally been given in literature,

and 30 percent in writing; Open Admissions reversed the ratio. Electives in English and some of the other humanities fields rapidly became vestigial, because the new students viewed education in almost exclusively instrumental, vocational terms" (71). As Richard Marshak explains, Open Admissions was not truly open because the policy

> did not guarantee a place at City College (or any other senior college of the City University) to every graduate of a New York City public high school. Under Open Admissions policy, students who maintained an 80 percent high school average or better, or who finished in the top half of their graduating class, could enter a CUNY senior college. (45)

Though there was certainly "tracking," which placed some students in community colleges while others were placed in 4-year colleges, in terms of access, Open Admissions provided more minorities and low-income students with a college education. As William K. Tabb writes,

> Enrollment at CUNY rose dramatically during over [the Open Admissions] period–from 162,640 in the fall of 1969 to 253,237 in the fall of 1974 […] Only one-fourth of CUNY undergraduates came from families with incomes over $15,000, and about half came from families earning less than $10,000; two-thirds of black and Oriental students, and three-quarters of Puerto Ricans, came from families with incomes below $10,000. (49)

From this standpoint, Open Admissions represented a liberal high point for public education.

Open Admissions did grant admission to an increasingly sizeable portion of poor

students, not all or even the majority of whom were minorities. And the policy achieved a

good part of its intended effect, both in terms of admitting more minorities and admitting

more low-income students. While in 1969, the composition of CUNY undergraduates had

been 14.8% black, 4% Puerto Rican, and 77.4% white; in 1970, 16.9% were black, 4.9%

were Puerto Rican, and 74% were white. By 1975, City College, which had a 1969

freshman class that was 78 percent white, had a freshman class that was only 30 percent

white (Lavin *Right* 73). CUNY thus "opened" its doors to the poor by opening its doors

to an increasing amount of minorities.

But there were disagreements over how the new students could best be helped

once they entered higher education, what a triumph of Open Admissions would look like.

The idea was that the university would help these students, give them something, but

there were competing ways of understanding what that was, both for teachers and

administrators and for students. On one view, Open Admissions was above all an effort to

offer an opportunity to people who had been deprived of the advantages of higher

education. The idea here was to close the gap between the middle class and the poor by

giving the poor the chance to overcome the educational differences that separated them

from the middle class. As long-time City College professor Jim Watts remembered, "We

[were] charged with creating the middle class of NYC: that's our mission. And I don't

think anything's more important than that" (qtd. in Traub 4). Indeed the majority of the

new students who entered were from lower or lower middle-class backgrounds. This

position was expressed in remediation, for these students needed to catch up with their

peers in order to succeed in colleges. Such students often required several remedial

programs, "especially in math, writing, and study skills"; the remedial work, however, slowed many students down, and made the traditional graduation in four years unattainable for many.

On another, and increasingly prominent view, the distinctive thing about the new students at CUNY was not so much that they were poor as it was that they were black and Puerto Rican, not so much their poverty as their race and their culture. As one Dean of City College wrote, "Clouding the issues of literacy and of Open Admissions, and every consequent question of how to give a liberal arts education in an urban setting, was the sudden primacy of ethnicity and race. It conditioned everyone's response because it was central to the purpose of Open Admissions" (qtd. in Marshak 88). From this standpoint, the challenge was not for the university to make poor students more like the predominantly middle class (or, again from this standpoint, predominantly white) students who were already attending; it was instead to make the university more receptive to and in the end respectful of the differences represented by the new students. It was this view that was articulated in the schools in slogans, as already mentioned, like "Black Children Need Black Culture" (not Poor Children need Middle Class Skills), and that found expression at the university level in the emergence of programs like Ethnic and Black Studies.

Educationally at least, although it was obviously a controversial and bold experiment, with the limited information we have, it seemed to work. Indeed, the students who entered the CUNY system received excellent educations. William K. Tabb noted in his book on the New York City fiscal crisis of the 1970s that "CUNY'S graduates were in fact competing quite successfully in the job market with private college degree-holders"

(52). In other words, Open Admissions worked; more students attained college degrees than ever before in New York. But the limits of this liberal vision–to get every high school graduate in New York City a college degree and thus create a new "middle class"– appeared so quickly that the program itself couldn't survive. "CUNY's problems," writes Tabb, "were not so much the result of the weak preparation of its students as the weakness of the receiving economy: there were simply not enough places for more college graduates" (52). The primary limit was thus not the education students received; rather it was the state of the NYC economy.

While in 1970 NYC unemployment was at a mere 4.8 percent, by July 1975 it had risen as high as 12 percent (Levitan). The number of people receiving welfare assistance had risen despite a drop in population from 7.9 million to 7.5 million during that time (*ibid.*). Indeed the NYC economy was so bad by 1976 that the city was on the verge of bankruptcy, and it became clear that policies such as CUNY's Open Admissions, which were declared by many as "profligate," could not continue. William K. Tabb writes of CUNY in 1975, "free tuition in higher education was a crowning jewel in the city's cap, a unique commitment to new arrivals. Suddenly it 'no longer made sense'" (50). Tabb notes further that

> The imposition of tuition and the attack on Open Admissions was
> motivated not by narrow economic considerations of cost efficiency, but
> rather because the idea of getting 'something for nothing' (getting public
> services regardless of ability to pay) was anathema to the business
> community, and because in a slack economy higher education for such a
> large proportion of the city's working class was considered wasteful. (52)

Open Admissions effectively ended in 1976, when tuition was imposed and CUNY was absorbed into the state university system and thus subject to its tuition and fees policies. By effectively ending Open Admissions at CUNY by instating tuition, both minorities and the poor began to be turned away from admission to NYC's public colleges and universities. The returns promised by the supporters of Open Admissions simply did not (or would not) be given the chance to pan out. Clark Kerr wrote of the period,

> After the labor market had for so long eagerly sought its graduates, it began around 1968 to declare them in oversupply. After a century of steady growth, doubling enrollments every ten or fifteen years, higher education now faces much slower growth and then at least a decade of enrollment decline in the 1980s. (131)

"However measured," as Richard Freeman succinctly put it in *The Overeducated American*, "the job situation for graduates by the mid-1970s was bad" (21).

Indeed poverty kept increasing in the city throughout the 1970s, going from 14.5 percent in 1969 to 20.5 percent in 1979, and this increase was in spite of a rise in college degree holders, the number of which had risen from 11.3 percent of the population in 1970 to 16.4 percent in 1980. And during that time, the poverty rate for bachelor's degree holders jumped from 4.4 to 8.4 percent, with the poverty rate for those with some college rising from 7.1 to 17.4 percent (Levitan). Open Admissions had thus not only failed to reduce economic difference with any significance, but in fact inequality in NYC had actually increased, and the city was forced to adopt stronger measures in the name of austerity. As William Tabb points out, "New York City illustrates the process by which, across the nation, the liberal 1960s turned into the neoconservative 1970s" (15). By 1984,

inequality had climbed in the wake of decentralization policies; writing in the early 1980s, Tabb notes further that

> the long default–the effort to bring back the world of laissez-faire, in
> which social responsibility is reduced to private charity […] is not unique
> to New York City: on the contrary, the shift to neoconservative
> reprivatization that is proceeding rapidly under the Reagan administration
> is […] merely the New York scenario writ large. (15)

The community schools experiment in NYC represents, precisely, what Tabb means when he says that "social responsibility is reduced to private charity"; if we can say that public education is a social responsibility, then we can say that the effort to shift support for such a public good to private philanthropy–*i.e.* The Ford Foundation–and to communities and parents (without added resources from the city, state, or federal governments) is emblematic of decentralization policy.

1968, the year of the OH-Brownsville confrontations, saw the lowest inequality the United States had ever seen (Babones). The years since 1968, however, have seen the polarization of wealth in the United States deepen extensively. As inequality began its upward climb in the 1970s, we might now see that although neoconservatism was clearly a foundational ideology for decentralization, decentralization is itself the result of what is more properly called neoliberalism. From David Harvey's perspective, as he writes in *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, "The management of the New York fiscal crisis pioneered the way for neoliberal practices both domestically under Reagan and internationally through the IMF in the 1980s" (48). Yet as Harvey points out, what Tabb called "neoconservatism" is not the same as neoliberalism; the movements for

multiculturalism and for diversity (some of which I have already traced above) did not defend "neoconservatism" and were indeed quite against it. In this sense, movements for decentralization of public education and for Open Admissions in higher education were antithetic to neoconservatism and were rather emblematic of neoliberalism. Not simply the result of temporary economic fluctuations, the end of tuition-free Open Admissions can be said to mark both the beginning of neoliberal economic policy and the rise of economic inequality in the United States, for it was the economics of neoliberalism that made public support for free higher education impossible.

Part Two: Who are the Students in Higher Education?

In this section, I want to continue telling the story of higher education in what we might now see as the neoliberal period, from post-Open Admissions at CUNY to today. If Open Admissions represented an attempt to democratize higher education to include both the poor and minorities through open access movements, what followed would see higher education adopt a different admissions policy in which the question wouldn't be "how do we get everyone into college?" but, rather, "how do we give everyone equal opportunity to get into colleges?" This was in large part due to neoliberal economics that sought to privatize what were seen, indeed what we have already seen in the case of community control of public schools in NYC, as public goods. Yet it was complemented by attempts to dismantle civil services (like welfare) and to curb the power of labor unions. What we have also seen since that time, as I have already pointed out, is the unabated rise in economic inequality in the United States, with poverty numbers increasing (12% in 1975; 15% in 2012) and the income of the working class remaining relatively fixed (the annual

income for the middle quintile of Americans in 1979 was $42,000, in 2012 it was

$57,000; average income for the top quintile in 1979 was $98,100, in 2012 it was

$181,600) while the income of the richest Americans has exploded (in 1976 the top one

percent claimed around 10%; in 2014 the top one percent claimed 22.5%) (Saez).

In this section, then, I want to talk about the ambitions of the university after the

defeat of CUNY's tuition-free Open Admissions and, within that, the role of composition

programs in those universities. First I will outline the triumph of the difference model as

the *de facto* philosophy of social justice within the university and at the same time the

irrelevancy (due to that triumph) of the deficit model. What we saw by looking at the

local history of higher education in New York City–the move away from programs like

CUNY's–was conjoined with the move toward proportionate admissions in what we will

see as affirmative action. At the same time, in the post-Open Admissions model of the

university, anti-discrimination becomes the mode of social justice and thus class origins

become irrelevant. Second, I want to offer a kind of history of the university from 1977

until now, asking "Who are the students?" and "What courses are they taking?" while

also offering an analysis of English departments and, especially, the increasing role of

Composition Studies in those departments.

The neoliberalization of New York reveals the structure–to repeat David Harvey,

"the management of the New York fiscal crisis pioneered the way for neoliberal

practices" in the United States and elsewhere–of public education and the shape of higher

education across America after 1976. For higher education–four-year institutions,

especially–the adoption of New York's austerity "blueprint" would mean not only a

cutting back of open admissions-based experiments, but also a more general privatization

of the university. Indeed from this period and straight through until today, we see that

state and federal aid to public higher education has slowed dramatically. While in 1975

state and local governments had reached their peak for higher education spending,

contributing 60.3 percent of higher education budgets, by 2010 such contributions were

down to 34.1 percent (Mortenson). To give the example of my own institution, The

University of Illinois at Chicago–which has seen the largest recent cuts in state support of

any university in the nation–saw state funding drop from 52.8% in 1987 to 16.9% in 2012

(Chronicle). The share of costs from the federal government has also fallen drastically.

Between 1960 and 1980, for instance, sources of student aid dropped from 15 percent to

12 percent (Mettler 120). Tuition and fees at colleges and universities, which were

declining in the 1970s, have increased "by 247 percent at state flagship universities, by

230 percent at state universities and colleges, and by 164 percent at community colleges

since 1980" (NIPA data count). So if tuition-free open admissions in the early 1970s

represented a high point in the ambition of the American public commitment to higher

education, its defeat in 1976 represents an early stage in a march to a new low point.

　　While public funding to higher education has been drastically reduced, at the

same time and with respect to the forms of inequality and the two forms of difference

we've been looking at, 1976 also marked a significant change. The late 1970s and beyond

actually began to see a retreat from the effort to decrease economic difference and an

increased commitment to promote the other kind of difference, diversity. If enrolling

everyone no longer seemed an attractive (or at least a financially plausible) way of

producing equality in education, enrolling a diverse student body did. Shaughnessy, as

we have seen, was criticized by compositionists for thinking of difference as a problem

that needed to be solved. Now, in enrollment practices as well as in writing classes, refusing to think of difference as the problem and beginning to think of it instead as the solution became the dominant (and least expensive) model of social justice.

In the year after Open Admissions ended, 1977, the *Bakke* case put affirmative action at the center of higher education's efforts to deal with inequality, reinforcing the commitment to multiculturalism as the status quo among university administrators and the general public, placing the model of respecting diversity at the forefront of admission policy. As the eminent legal scholar and strong supporter Ronald Dworkin summarized the decision:

> The Supreme Court has now decided, by a vote of five to four, that the
> Civil Rights Act does not in and of itself bar affirmative action programs,
> even those […] that use explicit quotas. It has decided, by a vote of five to
> none, that the Constitution permits affirmative action plans, […] that allow
> race to be taken into account, on an individual-by-individual basis, in
> order to achieve a reasonably diverse student body. (305)

Recognizing, as Dworkin explained, that "racial diversity is as important as geographical diversity or diversity in extracurricular talents and career ambitions," the decision thus took race into account by allowing "the fact that an applicant is black [to] tip the balance in his favor just as the fact that another applicant is an accomplished flute player may tip the balance in his" (305). It thus became "unnecessary" (or at the very least, too expensive) to support programs like CUNY's Open Admissions, which dealt with economic inequality at the same time. And indeed it became financially attractive for universities to think of difference as a solution instead of a problem.

If there was a retreat from the effort to enroll the poor, there was thus no retreat from–on the contrary, there was a certain, almost compensatory, intensification of–the effort to enroll minorities. During the period of tuition-free Open Admissions, CUNY had seen a massive shift in its demographics; while in 1969 it was 81.9 percent white, by 1975 white students made up only half of enrollment (Morris 157). And we can conclude that, if every school followed their lead in principle and in practice, we would have seen an even larger increase in diversity throughout higher education. Indeed as David Lavin and David Hyllegland point out in *Changing the Odds: Open Admissions and the Life Chances of the Disadvantaged*:

> Throughout the 1960s and during the early 1970s, a variety of public and private efforts were undertaken to lower the barriers to college. Although the specific influence of individual policies cannot be precisely gauged, federal and state grant and loan programs, proliferation of postsecondary institutions, and special admissions programs targeted to minorities all stimulated the increase of enrollment–especially minority enrollment–in higher education. Indeed the racial gap in the college enrollment of high school graduates across the US actually disappeared: the rate of college enrollment by black graduates, which was 77 percent of the white rate in 1960, reached 98 percent of that rate by 1975. (1)

While they add that "this trend was less impressive than it appears because the high school graduation rate of blacks remained below that of whites," they further note that "In the latter half of the 1970s, these gains began to erode, and by 1985 the rate of college enrollment for black high school students had fallen back to 76 percent of the white rate–

just where it had been in 1960" (1). Since then, however, as a recent study from the National Center for Education Statistics makes clear, "between 1980 and 2007, the [college-enrollment] rate for blacks increased from 44 percent to 56 percent and from 50 percent to 62 percent for Hispanics" (Aud, et al. 118). As Anthony Carnevale and Jeff Strohl further point out,

> African Americans' and Hispanics' participation in postsecondary education is increasing much faster than that of whites. Since 1995, African-American and Hispanic freshman enrollments have increased by 73 percent and 107 percent, respectively, compared with a 15 percent increase in the larger white population. (16)

Of course this commitment has by no means been completely successful, and no doubt, there is still more work to be done when it comes to diversity, particularly in terms of which students attend which schools. In July 2013, "Separate & Unequal: How Higher Education Reinforces the Intergenerational Reproduction of White Privilege" notes that

> As minority enrollments increased, the dynamics of polarization became very apparent. Enrollment growth in the top 468 schools was 78 percent with white students capturing virtually all the growth, while 92 percent of net new enrollments in open-access schools, where growth was just 21 percent, went to African- American (48%) and Hispanic (44%) students. (17)

Still the larger institutional shift represented by the *Bakke* case can be seen as part of a more general commitment to pluralism within American colleges and universities, a shift

that has been successful (though not complete) in helping minorities attend American colleges and universities.

So if we looked at CUNY's Open Admissions program as exemplary of the earlier model of social justice in higher education–the commitment to economic difference–more recently, we might look to schools like the University of Michigan–"a premier public institution that has been at the forefront of the affirmative action battle in higher education"–as the model for a commitment to diversity. "Between 1992 and 2002," Peter Sacks writes, "[UMichigan] was championing the values of diversity and leading a legal fight for affirmative action at public universities that went all the way to the Supreme Court" (162). And the University's commitment to diversity has been a success: by 2012, as it relates to the overall population of the state of Michigan (80 percent white), the University reported its white enrollment to be just 68 percent ("Ethnicity"). The University is thus far more racially and ethnically diverse than the state itself.

But as Barbara Fields has argued, this commitment to racial proportionality embodied by affirmative action has meant "the reallocation of unemployment, poverty, and injustice rather than their abolition" (118). Reallocation, in this sense, has meant changing the racial and ethnic demographics of the poor and the unemployed and not making it so fewer people, overall, are victims of such inequalities. We have seen that, unfortunately, African-American and Latino minorities are still not proportionally represented in elite American universities. But they are better represented than poor people are. Generally, the years following Open Admissions would see declines in the number of poor students attending four-year colleges across the country. As Anthony P. Carnevale and Steven J. Rose make clear:

There is even less socioeconomic diversity than racial or ethnic diversity at the most selective colleges. […] Overall, a little more than 22 percent of the students in the top tier of college selectivity are Asian, African American, or Hispanic (11 percent Asian, 6 percent black, and 6 percent Hispanic), while only 3 percent are from families in the lowest socioeconomic status quartile and only 10 percent are from the *bottom half* of the socioeconomic status distribution. There are thus four times as many African American and Hispanic students as there are students from the lowest socioeconomic status quartile. ("Socioeconomic" 106)

Indeed by 2006, writes Richard Kahlenberg, at the most selective colleges and universities, 74 percent of students came from the richest one-fourth of the population, while just three percent come from the poorest one-fourth (*Rewarding* 1). And the Higher Education Research Institute reports that "[while] in 1971, the median incomes of college students were 46 percent above the national average, by 2006 the median incomes of students were 60 percent above the national average" (Pryor, et al.). As the 2014 Stanford Study on Poverty and Inequality reports,

Students from low-income families are dramatically underrepresented in selective four-year colleges. Only 6 percent of students at the most selective colleges and universities come from families in the bottom quintile of the income distribution. Almost 80 percent of students in these colleges come from families in the upper half of the income distribution. Some research indicates that low-income students are even more

underrepresented in selective colleges now than they were three decades

ago. (56; 58)

In the words of Patrick M. Callan, President of the National Center for Public Policy and

Higher Education, "Higher Education is more stratified than it has ever been" (Lewin

2011).

To return to the example of the University of Michigan, although we have seen

that it is more racially diverse than the state itself, when it comes to socio-economic

class, the University can make no such claim. While "In 1992, almost a third of the

university's undergraduates were lower-income students. As of 2002, Michigan's

enrollment of Pell Grant students stood at about 13 percent of undergraduates. That was

the fourth worst record in the nation among the state flagships" (Sacks 163). In 2003, the

year Michigan's affirmative action lawsuit was decided in the Supreme Court, Michigan

admitted more students who "came from families earning at least $200,000 a year than

came from the entire bottom half of the income distribution" (Leonhardt). And in 2008,

the university reported that 16.9% of its freshmen came from families earning above

$250,000 and 73.1% from families earning above $75,000, (the median family income in

Michigan was $59,618) (*University*). To take the further example of Harvard (a

university wealthy enough to afford exactly the kind of student body that has become the

elite ideal), some minorities are under-represented but not massively underrepresented–in

1972 the undergraduate class at Harvard was 4% black, today it is 12 percent black (48%

white). The figures for poor–or even middle class–students are quite different. Justin

Lanning calculated in 2012 that

approximately 45.6 percent of Harvard undergraduates come from

families with incomes above $200,000, placing them in the *top* 3.8 percent

of American households. [...] only about 4 percent of Harvard

undergraduates come from the bottom quintile of U.S. incomes and a mere

17.8 percent come from the bottom three quintiles of U.S. incomes.

The University of Michigan and Harvard are thus emblematic of elite universities, in

general, in the United States. The percentage of economic diversity in higher education is

not at all representative of the US population. (The degree to which we *ever* had a

university population representative of the US poor population is debatable and a

question I hope to pursue in future research.)

At community colleges, however, the situation is much different. Whereas in

four-year institutions wealthy students outnumber low-income students 14-to-1, in

community colleges wealthy students are outnumbered 2-to-1. But these schools,

designed for the population that can't attend elite schools, have become increasingly

closed to the poor. The 2012 Report "Closing the Door; Increasing the Gap: Who's (Not)

Going to Community Colleges?" notes that

College choice in the United States is stratified by family income.

Students with the lowest family incomes are relatively concentrated in

private, for-profit institutions and public two-year colleges […] For

students in the first SES [socioeconomic status] quartile, the increase over

time in postsecondary attendance is concentrated within the two-year

public sector, which increased from 14.2% in 1972 to 31.5% in 2004.

Those figures, of lower-income students becoming far more highly

concentrated in public community colleges, reveal a heightened social

stratification over the past thirty years. (qtd. in Rhoades 8)

In addition, explains Rhoades, "higher tuition and enrollment limitations at four-year

institutions have pushed middle-class and upper middle-class students toward community

colleges." And this has caused "a complicated 'cascade effect,'" which has increased

competition for seats in community colleges classrooms at a time when

community college funding is being slashed and fees are increasing. As

community colleges draw more affluent students, opportunity is being

rationed and lower-income students (many of whom are students of color)

are being denied access to higher education. (3)

This cascade effect is echoed by the survey from Sallie Mae entitled "How Americans

Pay for College" (2011), which

reveals a substantial shift in the percentages of middle- and upper-income

students who are attending community colleges. From 2009-2010 to 2010-

2011, the percentage of middle-income students in community colleges

increased from 24% to 29%; for upper-income students the increases were

from 12% to 22%.

All this shows that the "squeezing out" of low-income students from community college

seems to be intensifying. In California, for example, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that

"more than 140,000 students had been turned away from community colleges in

California during the last academic year [2010-11)," and another report in 2012

"indicated that 133,000 first time students had been unable to enroll even in a single

course in the 2009-2010 academic year" (qtd. in Rhoades pg. 6). In fact Cathy Davidson

wrote in the *LA Review of Books* that in 2013 alone there were 450,000 students on the waiting list for community colleges in California. As Rhoades points out, access to college is increasingly a zero-sum game. And thus poorer students have been pushed out of them.

Overall, then, when we see that the expansion of admissions under the GI Bill and through open admissions has been followed by a contraction that began in the seventies and continues to the present, we see that open admissions represented a high point in a history that has, since then, produced more closed colleges and Universities. As Peter Sacks concludes, "Despite the overall growth of the higher education sector–indeed perhaps because of that expansion (from Open Admissions up until 2000 and continuing to today)–American higher education [became] even more rigidly divided by social class than it had been thirty years earlier" (122). This picture has little resemblance to CUNY during Open Admissions and is, in fact, almost the exact opposite of what the ambition for public education was in the early 1970s. And of course this gap just mirrors the broader gaps in our society we have already seen–in 1968, economic inequality was at a record low (the top 10% of the population earned around 33% of the country's total income); every year since, it has risen, reaching a record high in 2012 (the top 10% earned half of the country's total income).

This is not to say that the picture has changed in terms of writing deficit; certainly, there are still vast numbers of students in higher education who write poorly. But our answers to the question of where that deficit comes from–whether it comes from a lack of concern for cultural diversity and/or whether it comes from growing up in poverty–are no longer plausible when we look at schools, as we did above, like the

University of Michigan. Ambitions like Shaughnessy's–to make up the educational deficit from which low-income students suffer–become irrelevant when these students are no longer being admitted. In other words, at such schools as a whole, we can no longer think of this kind of deficit (poor writing) as either the result of a lack of concern for cultural diversity (the percentage of racial and ethnic diversity is much more representative of US populations than it was forty years ago) or as the result of poverty (universities like these aren't really enrolling students from low-income households).

The question of poor writing has, at least since the period I have been outlining in this chapter, been a question of remediation (or as it has been called since Shaughnessy, Basic Writing). And it is precisely in terms of remediation that the question of who the students are gets linked up with the question of how to teach them (deficit or difference). After 1976, though higher education saw a retreat from programs like open admissions, those courses that were designed for open admissions students–Basic Writing courses– mostly remained. Yet the past few years have seen several initiatives to move Basic Writing courses out of the universities and into community colleges (and even to some private companies) in order to help university students graduate quicker. As Keith Rhoades reports,

> Another cascade effect is at work here, as four-year institutions push the responsibility for remedial education to community colleges. In some cases, there is an explicit policy push to reduce public support for remedial education. Over twelve states are restricting funding for remedial education, meaning increased numbers of such students are going to be applying to community colleges. (10)

Rhoades adds that "many colleges have entering classes with over 50% of the students needing remediation, a large proportion of whom are lower income and minority" (14). And thus movements in this direction are, in a strong sense, a move toward delegating all deficiencies out of the elite four-year institutions altogether, in which case four-year schools would be places in which all differences had nothing to do with deficits at all. Such a move away from differences that are in actuality deficits (class differences) is emblematic of the policies adopted by higher education in our current period.

While it is true that most writing instruction occurs in community colleges rather than in universities (and this is increasing as state policy dictates remedial or basic courses away from four-year institutions and toward two-year colleges), the expansion of Basic Writing courses to larger universities was formative for the field of composition. As more students have attended higher education in general–in 1970, there were around 5 million undergraduates in the US, with the number increasing to 10.8 million (47 percent) by 1983; between 1985-1992 the number increased another 18 percent, and between 2001-2011 it rose another 32 percent from 13.7 million to 18.1 million (in 2014 it is around 20 million) (*NCES*)–it has seemed that, though colleges and universities held onto the courses most representative of open admissions movements, even these vestiges of open admissions are bound to be stratified, as well.

This chapter has outlined a shift in overall policy–from programs like open admissions to policies like affirmative action–yet it has also shown that affirmative action programs have actually been *less* effective overall in providing access for minorities (and *a fortiori*, to the poor) to four-year universities and have produced a more stratified and exclusive structure of higher education. And it is the economic landscape of such

universities that have made this a reality by shedding not only economic deficit (excluding the poor) but also seeking to shed educational deficit (remediation) to two-year institutions. For Composition Studies, this has meant that pedagogies, like Shaughnessy's, designed for the students entering CUNY during Open Admissions, are mismatched for schools like the University of Michigan and appear more suited to community colleges, and pedagogies more grounded in difference–like what we see emerging in current scholarship (multi-modality, translingualism, etc.) appear better suited to the four-year universities where all differences between students are imagined to be productive and to have nothing to do with class differences. Students in the new university have performance differences, but the question of how to teach them to write better is no longer a question of class difference (students all come from wealthy families) and it is even questionable whether there are cultural differences at schools like the University of Michigan (though schools increasingly compete for international students who can afford to pay full tuition). Indeed this situation provides Composition Studies with a different version of the teaching of writing problem; what would a writing pedagogy be that isn't linked to social injustice or pluralism? Cut loose from this vision of American society? How do we see the difference between individuals if these differences are no longer cultural or racial or economic? Still, however, as I will show in Chapter Three, even when deficit is expunged as it relates to the students, deficit is alive and well in the figure on the other side of the desk. And the teachers in higher education will be the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter 3. The Other Side of The Desk: Contingent and Non-Tenure-Track Faculty

In this chapter, I want to look at the teachers in higher education. As *Inside Higher Education* reported in 2012, "adjunct, contingent faculty members [...] many working at or under the poverty line and without health insurance [...] now make up over 1 million of the 1.5 million people teaching in American colleges and universities" (Berube). By some estimates non-tenure-track faculty now make up ¾ of college instructors. While we see, in the period I have been focusing on throughout this dissertation, that poor students gradually have been pushed out of universities and even community colleges, in regards to their teachers we see the opposite effect as higher education becomes more reliant on a poor instructional workforce. In the article "The Ph.D. Now Comes with Food Stamps," Stacey Patton reports that "the percentage of graduate-degree holders who receive food stamps or some other aid more than doubled between 2007 and 2010." Between 2007 and 2012, "the number of people with master's degrees who received food stamps and other aid climbed from 101,682 to 293,029, and the number of people with Ph.D.'s who received assistance rose from 9,776 to 33,655" (Patton). Of course in community colleges, although the very poorest students are being forced out, their teachers and their remaining students are still poor; but in elite schools, it's just the teachers. "According to all the statistical markers," Jeffrey J. Williams concludes, "college is subject to a steeper class divide than it was 40 years ago, and academic jobs show a sharper stratification."

Composition Studies (as I argued in Chapters 1 & 2) has embraced the difference model of education in its scholarship and pedagogy, but at the same time–as I will show

in this chapter–its own deficits have increased: its teachers have seen their wages stagnate and even drop while the workload (courses per semester) has not slackened and, for many, has only increased (many adjuncts and lecturers are now accepting 5/5 teaching loads to make ends meet). So in Part One of this chapter, I will provide something like an analysis of contingent labor in higher education since the 1970s, looking at the labor situation within the discipline of Composition Studies and broader academia. In *Part Two*, I will suggest that what we can learn from the situation of adjunct and NTT faculty is that education itself, while offering individual opportunities for social mobility, isn't (and cannot be) the answer to economic inequality in the United States.

Part One: Contingent Labor in Composition Studies and Higher Education

As early as 1989, the Executive Committee of the *College Composition and Communication Conference* was reporting that

> More than half the English faculty in two-year colleges, and nearly one-third of the English faculty at four-year colleges and universities, work on part-time and/or temporary appointments. Almost universally, they are teachers of writing, a fact which many consider the worst scandal in higher education today.

Indeed we can say that first-year writing is synonymous with contingent labor and non-tenure-track faculty. At my own institution, for example, non-tenure-track faculty teach around 75% of composition courses (graduate assistants teach the other fourth). The field of composition, although indebted to the writing requirement for its very existence in the

university, is complicit in the university's contingent labor practices–perhaps more complicit than any other field. Tony Scott, for instance, argues that

> the emergence of composition as an established discipline over the last thirty years has not led to improvements in the percentages of composition courses taught by contingent faculty. Most of the people who teach college writing in America are contingent laborers whose salaries and working conditions don't even come close to meeting any reasonable minimum standards for professionals. ("Introduction")

Scott notes that in 2001, nationwide, only 7 percent of introductory undergraduate courses are taught by full-time, tenure-track faculty; "Of the remaining 93%, 18% of introductory undergraduate courses are taught by full-time, non-tenure-track faculty; 33% are taught by part-time faculty, and 42% are taught by graduate teaching assistants" (*ibid.*). Those numbers have hardly changed since 2001 and have, in fact, gotten worse.

The "Annual Report on The Economic Status of The Profession" (2014-15), published by the American Association of University Professors, testifies to the significant change in teaching personnel at colleges and universities in the last few decades. "In 1975," it reports, "full-time tenured and tenure-track faculty composed 45 percent of the total instructional faculty. Today, only 20 percent of instructional faculty are full time and tenure track." The report goes on to explain that tenured positions have been replaced by "an army of part-time instructional staff and graduate teaching assistants" (13). The American Federation of Teachers reports that from 1997-2007, two-thirds of faculty hires in higher education were contingent labor, and during that period, contingent labor grew from 2/3 to 3/4 of the total faculty (AFT 2009). As Jeffrey J.

Williams recently wrote in the *LA Review of Books*, citing Benjamin Ginzberg's *The Fall of the Faculty*:

> rather than professors, the cohort now dominating higher education is administrators […] the proportion of administrative professionals in American colleges and universities has grown from roughly half that of faculty 40 years ago to a majority now. In short, professors no longer constitute the core of the university, as the classic image typically has it: they are more commonly service providers for-hire, with the central figures being the managers of the academic multiplex who assure the experience of the student consumer.

Historically, the growth of contingent labor in higher education really got going in the mid 1960s. From 1965-1975, there was a 55% increase in non-tenure-track faculty; yet in the same period there was a 66% increase in the hiring of tenure-track faculty (Leslie 6). Between 1972-1977, however, part-time faculty increased by 50% and full-time faculty decreased by 9%–perhaps due to budget concerns combined with the opening of higher education. By 1977, part-time faculty represented 27% of all employees at four-year institutions while, at two-year institutions, part-time faculty represented between 40-51% of faculty. By 1980, 32% of faculty at all institutions were part-time; by 1993, nearly half of all new appointments were non-tenure-track, and contingent faculty had increased to 38% of all faculty (AAUP 1993). By 1998, 40% of all faculty were part-time, non-tenure-track; thus from 1976-1998, full-time NTT appointments increased 31% and part-time NTT appointments increased 119% (AAUP 2003). In 1998, of the total instructional workforce in higher education, graduate

employees were 19%; part-time faculty were 34%; full-time NTT faculty were 15%; and full-time TT faculty were 32%. In 1998, 70% of all higher education instructional staff were already non-tenure track while today, as I already mentioned, that number has reached 80% (AAUP 2003).

There are, of course, important distinctions between non-tenure-track faculty; such faculty generally include part-time (adjuncts) as well as full-time (lecturers) and also teaching assistants (graduate students). All are considered "contingent" on most accounts because their contracts are either by term or by year and, as such, non-tenure-track faculty cannot count on employment from year-to-year or even semester-to-semester. Graduate students who have teaching appointments, often included in "contingent labor" statistics, represent a more challenging inclusion as their situation differs greatly from other non-tenure track faculty precisely because they are students getting tuition waivers (the percentage of the college instructor force made up of teaching assistants has remained relatively fixed in the period I am tracking here–in 1975, 21 percent of the instructor force; in 2011, 19 percent). Thus discussions of academic contingent labor rightfully elide concerns over graduate labor and focus on the increase and working conditions of adjuncts and lecturers; my analysis will assume the situation and number of teaching assistants to have remained relatively unchanged since the 1970s (though the prospects for their employment as tenured professors has greatly diminished with the attenuating number of tenure-track jobs).

As I have already noted, the economic situation of the majority of college instructors at community colleges and, increasingly at 4-year colleges, has undergone a profound alteration. Around 1970 the median income of professors (who then made up

more than half of the instructional force in higher education) was $70, 227 (in 2012

dollars) while the median income of the country was $46,081 (Hargreaves). So in the

early 1970s, professors made considerably more than the typical American worker.

Today, however, more than half of the instructional workforce (adjuncts and lecturers)

reported a median income of just $22,041, compared to the median income of all

Americans, $51, 017 (House Committee; Hargreaves). Thus the majority of

postsecondary teachers today make considerably less than the typical American worker.

Put another way, while in 1970 a college teacher made 35 percent more than the average

American, by 2012 a college teacher made 57 percent less. Indeed as *Inside Higher

Education* also reported, today "many [adjunct and contingent faculty] are working at or

under the poverty line, without health insurance" (Berube). In 2000, 47% of part-time,

first-year writing instructors made $2000 per course. That means that teaching a full load

(4 courses per semester; 8 courses a year) an adjunct would make around $16,000 a year

with no benefits. While college tuition rose 38% from 2000-2005 (and still climbing),

adjunct pay-per-course has remained the same in 2011 as it was in 2000: today roughly

50% of adjuncts make less than $2000/course. To put this in context, college janitors in

2001 made an average of $20,637. At $2000/course, teaching a full-load of 5

courses/semester, adjuncts make around $20,000 per year with little or no benefits–

janitors in 2012 make an average of $24,850 per year (Farnen). (It is worth noting that

over 5,000 of those janitors today have Ph.D.s) (Vedder).

The racial demographics of contingent labor, for the most part, mirror the racial

demographics of full-time faculty, remaining relatively the same since the contingent-

labor boom in the 1970s. Historically, diversity has had little to do with contingent labor

in academia. As David Leslie noted in his 1978 report on part-time faculty,

> Race is a relatively inconsequential determinant of part-time labor force
>
> participation in the broader economy, a trend statistically borne out by
>
> figures for part-time employment in academic positions. Both whites and
>
> non-whites [in 1976] show part-time employment rates of within a fraction
>
> of 18%. Part-time positions also accrue to whites and non-whites in
>
> academia at nearly equal rates. (10)

In 1976, when we look at the whole of white faculty in the US, we see that 32% were

part-time; when we look at all non-white faculty, 33.8% were part-time (Leslie 9-10). In

his report for the American Council on Education (2002), Eugene Anderson noted that

"None of the institution types revealed a significantly larger proportion of people of color

among the ranks of part-time faculty. Public comprehensive, private research, private

doctoral, and private comprehensive institutions reported less racial diversity among part-

timers than among full-timers" (14). Of all academic disciplines, he reported, it was only

the "vocational fields, natural sciences, and engineering" that "demonstrated more racial

diversity among part-time faculty than among full-time faculty" (14). Anderson

concludes, "None of the institution types revealed a significantly larger proportion of

people of color among the ranks of part-time faculty" (10). Leslie concurs with the

findings of Anderson but includes a note on gender: "it is not valid to say that part-time

faculty roles are the province of both women and minorities: women, yes, minorities, no"

(14; 10). In fact men make up the majority of the contingent labor instructional force, yet

women make up a larger share of part-time faculty than full-time faculty.

Only 37 percent of full-time faculty were female, compared with 45

percent of part-timers. The larger representation of women among part-

timers may reflect either a greater willingness among institutions to hire

females for part-time positions rather than full-time positions, or a

preference among women for part-time faculty positions. (Anderson)

So in this case, while colleges *do* promote diversity through the hiring of tenured faculty,

it's clear that, although some evidence suggests women are over-represented, contingent

labor is not being used to promote racial, ethnic, or gender diversity.

While some may argue that NTT faculty don't have the educational credentials

required to obtain TT positions, it simply isn't the case. The increase in contingent labor

is not due to a lack of educational credentials on the part of non-tenure-track faculty. As

the AFT reported in 2010, "the vast majority [of all NTT faculty] have either a master's

degree or a Ph.D./professional degree." Indeed 83 percent said they have advanced

degrees–57 percent M.A. and 23 percent Ph.D. NTT faculty are thus commonly called

"underemployed professionals," by which is meant that NTT faculty have

more education than is required for the job, involuntary employment in a

field outside of one's area of education, more skills or experience than

required by the job, involuntary employment in part-time or temporary

work, and low pay relative to previous job or others with similar

educational backgrounds. (Kezar 30)

As we might expect, tenure-track positions are the realm of those with Ph.D.s while NTT

positions tend to be staffed by those only holding M.A.s. Additionally, conferred titles,

such as "senior lecturer," provide a false sense of job security and clout, for such "promotions" rarely come with substantial pay raises or long-term appointments. (I might also add, though statistics are hard to track down, most of those working as NTT faculty in writing programs have an advanced degree in something other than Rhetoric/Composition–a discipline which has, more than English itself, been *relatively* successful in placing Ph.D.s in TT positions–and thus their opportunities for being promoted within the field they now find themselves teaching in are limited.) Andrew Ross has argued that

> the value of a doctoral degree has been degraded. For most graduate students, the attainment of a degree is not the beginning but the end of their teaching career; they are not a product, but […] a by-product or waste product, of graduate education. Their degree holding is not a credential to practice; rather it presents a disqualification from practice while new divisions of labor have emerged. ("Academic Labor at the Crossroads")

Indeed we might also point out here that universities almost never hire their own graduates for in-house TT positions and, instead, commonly place them in adjunct and/or lecturer (NTT) positions.

On one hand, it would appear from the statistics above that there are simply too many people with Ph.D.s, for it would in a sense appear "fair" that those NTT faculty who hold only a master's degree should not expect TT work. Indeed, in his recent analysis of contingent labor in higher education, former MLA President Michael Bérubé argued that there are actually two distinct markets for faculty in academia: a local market

for NTT positions and a national market for TT positions. He argues that there is not an oversupply of Ph.D.s flooding the contingent labor market (thus driving down wages) but instead points out that M.A.s are still the (rightful) majority of NTT instructors–"65.2% of non-tenure-track faculty members hold the MA as their highest degree; 57.3% in four-year institutions, 76.2% in two-year institutions." Still, while it is true that there is indeed a dual market for local positions and for national positions (how many times have we heard of Ph.D. candidates dreading a move to *Alabama*?), the fact that so many part-time, non-tenure-track teachers (whatever advanced degree they might hold) do not make a living wage makes it clear–and I will return to this point more forcefully and extensively in Part Two of this Chapter–that more education hasn't provided the economic returns or job security that is so often seen as its *promise*.

Noting the dual nature of the job market doesn't change this fact but only ignores it. What might change this fact is something that the dual market itself makes problematic–namely unionization–by segmenting the academic labor force. Frank Donoghue notes that only 40 percent of faculty–a number that combines both TT professors and NTT faculty–were unionized in 2008. As he explains in *The Last Professors*, "the willingness of academics to think of their work as its own reward and thus not to concern themselves with money or think of themselves as a class will always work against the impulse to unionize" (69-70). When it comes to something like collective bargaining as a whole, many argue that it's not in the best interests of NTT faculty *or* TT faculty to join forces. Andrew Ross argued in 2006 that

> Academic unionism has yet to face its 'CIO moment,' when unions
>
> acquire the will to include all members of the workforce–full-time faculty,

staff, contract teachers, adjuncts, and TAs […] If class divisions within the

university workplace are to be properly confronted, then fully inclusive

unions are the models to strive for, even for knowledge industries, which

are basically structured along similar lines. ("Academic")

As Vincent Tirelli has pointed out, "a significant proportion of part-timers in any

program *increases* the workload for full-timers" (187). What Tirelli means by this is that

TT faculty, themselves already the new minority, will be required to accept more and

more service positions simply because they are full faculty and these professional service

positions require tenured faculty; as NTT faculty expand, TT faculty increasingly accept

more-and-more positions on committees, etc. to maintain their professional status.

Though recent unionization efforts–I point to my own institution here and the work of

United Faculty, a union comprised of both TT and NTT faculty–reached a comparatively

generous agreement with the University of Illinois that guaranteed NTT faculty an annual

salary of $37,500, the situation of contingent labor (with less tenured positions, more

"right-to-work" states, more federal and state cuts to higher education, etc.) doesn't look

any better than it did in the mid-1970s.

As these statistics point out, contingent labor has become an integral part of

higher education in the neoliberal period I have been analyzing, from the early 1970s to

today. More generally, the move toward contingent labor practices in higher education is

representative of the increasing "flexibilization" of labor under neoliberalism (today, the

standard example of such practice is called "uberization," which refers to the company

uber that hires drivers who can work whenever they want and for as many hours as they

want but receive no benefits and must incur all costs–gas, car maintenance, etc.–on their

own). It is important to note, however, that even though the form of labor encountered here–part-time/recurring contracts, few or no benefits, no training, little room for promotion, deprofessionalization–has few defenders, it *does appeal* to many who accept such positions. My own step-mother, for example, enjoys her adjunct Audiology job because she "doesn't have to deal with department politics and doesn't have to serve on department or university committees." Past retirement age, with good insurance benefits, and her career mostly behind her, she still wants to teach and remain active in her field. Her situation, of course, is very different from a newly minted Ph.D., unable to find a tenure-track position in a market that isn't creating enough openings to absorb the supply of graduates. But my main point in providing these statistics on contingent labor is not to agree or disagree with the continued production of more Ph.D.s in disciplines like English or even Business. My main point, which I will discuss in more detail in the next section, is *ideological*: that though many have continually seen education as the solution to economic inequality, education has not–for so many of those who make up the instructional workforce in higher education–produced middle-class rewards. Now there are simply more of them, and in many cases, in colleges and universities across the United States, the teacher is the poorest person in the classroom.

Part Two: Higher Education, The Job Market, and Economic Inequality

I wrote in the Introduction that inequality has seemingly always been "in" for Composition Studies. But if inequality has always been "in," we can say that, today, it is "in" in a new way. The concern is no longer just over the social inequity of the students but now includes a concern over the social inequity of their teachers. Indeed though we

have seen the disappearance of the problem of economic inequality with respect to the students–as I suggested in Chapter 2, poor students have been gradually pushed out of universities–we have seen its simultaneous reappearance with respect to their teachers. So if the problem of inequality as it was understood in the 1970s was the problem of producing an educational structure that would make the victims of social inequality–the students–more equal, that problem isn't gone today but is supplemented by a new one, how to make the teachers of those students more equal.

The solution to this problem, according to "The Just-in-Time-Professor"–a report submitted to the House of Representatives in January 2014–and indeed what was already thought to be the solution to the problem in the 1970s, is more education. "Increasing the number of Americans who obtain a college degree or other post-secondary credentials," says the report, "is a key to growing and strengthening the middle class and ensuring the country's global competitiveness." But as the report explains, "the expanding use of contingent faculty to achieve this goal presents a paradox." Why? What is the paradox? While the economic solution has been more education, "These instructors," as the report says, "are highly educated workers who overwhelmingly have postgraduate degrees." On the one hand, the economic solution to inequality has been more education, yet on the other hand, the instructors who are called upon to produce that education are themselves its victims. The "paradox," then, is that more education has not meant more economic equality for this group of people; in fact, more education has meant less.

The standard explanation of why we are giving the students more education in the first place–*i.e.*, to increase their ability to compete successfully in labor markets–begins to look a little suspect when we see that these adjunct jobs certainly do not offer the

salaries a college education, much less an advanced degree, was supposed to guarantee. Economist Bryan Caplan makes a version of this point when he writes that "Going to college is a lot like standing up at a concert to see better. Selfishly speaking, it works, but from a social point of view, we shouldn't encourage it" (qtd. in Marsh 20). For our purposes we can see the problem is not just the selfish advantage Caplan points to, but rather that for more education to count as an advantage, we must assume that others don't have it; when everyone has it, it ceases to be an advantage. Getting more people a college education doesn't change the amount of jobs requiring that education; instead, it increases the competition for the jobs that do. And this means that while our work as teachers might indeed help our students achieve that goal, it will also disadvantage others who do not take our courses.

We should thus be cautious about how much equality an educational approach is actually capable of achieving. Our economic situation is similar to the economic situation of the early 1970s–in which, as Jerome Karabel put it, "The higher education system virtually determines entry into the middle-and upper-level positions in the occupational hierarchy and is thus a key distributor of privilege"–and the amount of jobs that require college degrees, Carnevale, et al. report, has risen only slightly since that time (in the early 1970s "28 percent of all jobs [required] postsecondary education and training"; by 2020, "30 percent will require some college or an associate's degree") ("Recovery"). When we look at jobs outside of academia, we can see the increasing irrelevance of more education because the jobs projected to have the most openings won't require college degrees. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that "Seven out of the ten occupations that will produce the most new jobs by 2018 will require only on-the-job training (home

aides, customer service representatives, food preparers and servers)"; the Center on Education and the Workforce study reports that "by 2018 over one-third of the 46.8 million job openings will require workers with just a high school diploma or less" (qtd. in Marsh 70; 71). If these projections are accurate, only a small amount of college degree holders will have jobs that actually require a college education while the rest will have to make do as college-educated service workers.

The current plight of the composition adjunct (and of all NTT faculty) is not, as "The Just-in-Time Professor" suggested, a "paradox." Rather it represents the very *un*-paradoxical truth for Composition Studies and for higher education in the United States, which is that more education, in any guise, whether it be online, open admissions, affirmative action, economic-based admissions, or whether it be delivered through pedagogical innovations that emphasize difference or deficit or some mixture of both, cannot be the answer to inequality in the United States. While the composition teacher understands herself to be faced everyday with the challenge of helping students to an economically attractive future, what she is actually producing is a world in which, if everybody were to follow in her footsteps, still only a very few will gain access–thus the solution of more education is not only irrelevant to curing poverty but has also been irrelevant to helping her.

From this standpoint, most of what gets said about education reveals what I am suggesting to be an ideological mirage. Even the most cursory look, for example, at the Obama administration's education website shows the seemingly endless and misplaced faith in the connection between more education and the resurgence of the middle class. As the site declares,

Earning a post-secondary degree or credential is no longer just a pathway

to opportunity for a talented few; rather, it is a prerequisite for the growing

jobs of the new economy […] With the average earnings of college

graduates at a level that is twice as high as that of workers with only a

high school diploma, higher education is now the clearest pathway into the

middle class." ("Education")

Contrary to the above statement, post-secondary education may be less a "prerequisite"

for entering the job market and more (and here we might think of student debt) a burden

for job seekers in the future. As I have already mentioned, the college premium for

graduates is much higher than high school graduates, a fact that is undebatable, yet the

fact that college graduates expect to make much more than high school graduates itself

doesn't translate to something like a mandate for equality, for as I also already suggested,

college degrees only carry a premium if everybody doesn't have them. The recent

proposal from the Obama administration–to make two-years of community college free

for all Americans, regardless of socioeconomic class–seeks to remove, in part, the

obstacle to a college education (and the debt that comes with overcoming that obstacle) in

the name of equality of opportunity. This is, in a strong sense, a move in the direction of

CUNY's Open Admissions policy of the early 1970s, yet the twist here is that this move

is not just to get students degrees but also to steer wealthier students from four-year

institutions (where they outnumber low-income students 14-to-1) to community colleges

(where they are outnumbered by low-income students by 2-to1), thus increasing

economic diversity in both community colleges and, it is hoped, in four-year institutions.

In the face of governmental austerity to higher education, this plan seeks to drive the

resources of wealthier students to those institutions historically charged with serving the poorer students without any direct redistributive federal or state measures.

Yet the problem I have been outlining–seeing education as the solution to economic inequality–is a problem not just because the middle class itself has been shrinking; rather (and what amounts to the same thing) it is a problem because jobs like university instructor, which used to be middle class, don't pay middle-class wages anymore. In the words of John Marsh, "a Ph.D. working as a bartender earns bartender wages, not a professor's salary." Indeed a bartender's wages are liable to be less than a full professor but more than an adjunct; while bartenders in NYC's meat-packing district make roughly the same amount as an Ivy League professor, even the poorest bartenders make more than college adjuncts. There are in fact over 80,000 bartenders with a Ph.D. in the US and, as Richard Vedder reports, "some 17 million Americans with college degrees are doing jobs that the Bureau of Labor Statistics says require less than the skill levels associated with a Bachelor's degree." And this is what it means to say, as Marsh does, that "More education will help some workers escape the fate of [low-wage] jobs, but all the education in the world–or all the world with an education–will not make those jobs pay any more than they do" (20; 72). More-and-more education has produced, as we see in the adjuncts, not a surfeit of middle-class citizens but an emerging educational proletariat. The current plight of composition teachers can help us to see why the question of inequality (how do we get more people higher paying jobs?) and the question of education (how do we get more people college degrees?) should be disconnected.

This is not to say, as Adolph Reed, Jr. puts it, that we should stop working to provide "A G.I. Bill for Everybody," to provide everybody with free access to higher

education. And Reed's overall point is that free access to higher education is a good in itself not for "instrumental reasons related to employment" but for "noninstrumental reasons related to intellectual curiosity and self-fulfillment." Echoing Reed I do think that everybody should have access to free public education; a college education should indeed be free for everyone but not or at least not only because of its connection with job markets; it should be free because everyone should have the opportunity to benefit from the labor of learning. From the standpoint of actually producing a more egalitarian society, a society in which equality is not merely equality of opportunity, the implications of this argument are that we can't rely on education to do that.

I said at the beginning that Composition Studies has always understood itself as having to do with questions of the reproduction of social inequality. And composition, as I have argued, has adopted two models to resist that reproduction. But neither model has been successful because no model can be successful: education itself cannot plausibly offer an answer to this problem. As compositionists, the first political mistake we make is to think that our teaching is our politics; indeed the minute we think our teaching is our politics, we become defenders of the status quo. Unlike Stanley Fish, I'm not arguing that politics should be kept out–that our job description doesn't include political canvassing–I am arguing that no matter how much politics we put into the classroom, it won't have the political effect that we want. There is not an *educational* job market (truly in the case of disciplines like English and increasingly for others), only a job market as such. Even though I like to think that I myself have strong social justice commitments and even though I want to make my teaching a central expression of those commitments, understanding the classroom as the place to pursue those commitments no longer seems

political efficacious to me anymore. Or at least teaching my students to write better no longer seems to me an expression of those commitments. The first thing a left politics should want would be to get outside of the classroom; there is more politics involved in contributing to the fight of McDonald's workers for a living wage than there is to theorizing or inventing new modes of teaching writing.

In the next chapter, I want to offer a brief narrative of my own teaching philosophy, of my own sense of the politics of Composition Studies. I offer the narrative as a preemptive answer to the inevitable responses critiques of this kind receive–namely, "so what are we supposed to do *now*?" The narrative itself, while not resolving the kinds of contradictions I have been outlining in the first three chapters of this dissertation, is an effort to *change the conversation* from what are instrumental, economic accounts of education to something like experiential or, more precisely, a labor-focused account of the work in a composition course.

Chapter 4. On the Economic Value of Composition

In this chapter, I want to offer a kind of narrative of my own experience as a composition teacher in a large research university–the University of Illinois at Chicago. In one sense, I offer this narrative as a response to the kinds of questions that might arise from the skeptical position I have defended in the first three chapters–namely, if education isn't the answer to inequality (and actually has produced more of it), for those of us who do concern ourselves with social justice and who have thought of our teaching as our political action, what do we do when we no longer believe that to be true? This is a particular concern for the field of Composition Studies, for as I have tried to suggest, the standard model of Composition Studies–adopting a pedagogy of cultural difference while staffing courses with adjuncts–echoes the wider situation of higher education itself, championing diversity while employing large armies of proletarianized faculty. This argument is of course lost on those teachers who don't concern themselves with social justice at all. But, for those of us in such 14:1 institutions, who concern ourselves with that reproduction, what is the shape of our work? I feel it necessary to explain my own development–through researching and writing this dissertation–as a teacher for the last seven years at UIC. The narrative itself is meant to reveal (to myself and to readers) a kind of revision of my thinking as a teacher concerned with social justice over at least the last seven years based on my own experience and research as a teacher and a graduate student. In one sense this chapter is indeed an exposure of the contradictions of my own labor as a teacher. Teaching is a profession laden with contradictions between one's theoretical approach and one's actual labor. All teachers feel the weight of contradictions

in everyday practice, and this dissertation is not so much an effort to resolve

contradictions outright (I believe contradictions are productive and should be allowed to

breathe) but to more closely align my own theory and my own practice when it comes to

the politics of the writing classroom.

I moved to Chicago from Greeley, Colorado, where I completed a master's degree

at the University of Northern Colorado. The student population at UNC is 61 percent

white, with the largest minority being Hispanic at 14 percent. As a master's student, I was

given a teaching assistantship and taught two composition courses per semester, my first

experience as a teacher. From UNC I moved on to the University of Illinois at Chicago to

get a Ph.D. in English Literature (I would later switch to Composition). The student

population at UIC is quite different from UNC, with only 41 percent of the students being

white, the largest minority populations being Asian-American (18 percent) and Hispanic

(18 percent) and while UNC had only 3 percent international students, at UIC that

number was around 9 percent. Additionally, UNC had an African-American population

of around 3 percent; UIC's African-American population is about 8 percent. In my

classes at Northern Colorado, roughly two in five of my students were minorities, but at

UIC, roughly 3 in 5 of my students were (and that ratio was more like 4 to 1 in first-year

composition courses). There are also economic differences between the two schools; at

UNC the number of students eligible for Pell Grants (most often given to undergraduates

with family incomes below $20,000) was 32 percent while UIC reported a number of

around 53%. This may seem like minimal differences, but I experienced it as a sea

change, for if at UNC I had white students with some (mostly) Hispanic students mixed

in, at UIC, I would have Asians, African-Americans, Indian, and Hispanic students with some white students mixed in (with the white students themselves coming from Chicago's Polish and Russian communities). Indeed UIC is one of the most diverse institutions in the U.S.

The University of Illinois at Chicago has a deep commitment to diversity; as UIC's "Diversity Webpage" explains, "Diversity is not an end in itself but a vehicle for advancing access, equity, and inclusion. We are a learning, living, and working community that values our differences and works to ensure that neither difference nor disadvantage impede intellectual and professional achievement." As an incoming graduate student, being a part of UIC's diverse environment posed both a challenge for me (as a white teacher) and an opportunity, as I saw it, to really make a difference in helping underrepresented students achieve their educational goals and thus go on to professional success. The instrumental connection between collegiate success and professional success in the job market appeared to me then unproblematic, and I felt strongly that my instructional work in the classroom would help provide previously disadvantaged students with advantages. One way to put this is to say that I saw my politics as deeply connected with my teaching, precisely because my classroom work entailed working with minority students at UIC, providing them with skills to compete with their white peers. (This kind of work would be extended in my community work, teaching English at the Mexico-Solidarity Network in Albany Park and working with underprivileged children through Community Building Tutors). I saw myself–the son of a high school teacher and a full-time nurse–as privileged in relation to my students in both class status and, especially, racial status. My politics were thus aligned with the overall

institutional politics at UIC, for my central concern was, to repeat UIC's diversity goals, "advancing access, equity, and inclusion" for those who were racial and ethnic minorities, many of whom were first-generation college students.

Incoming graduate teachers are required to take UIC's "Practicum for The Teaching of English," which was the first composition course I had ever taken. At Northern Colorado, we had been given a week-long crash course prior to the first day of class, in which we were handed the *Norton Field Guide to Writing*, a syllabus, some grammar exercises, and some basic instruction on student-centered activities, then sent out to teach. The *Norton Guide* emphasized a kind of classical approach to composition pedagogy by emphasizing certain modes: narrative, observation, explanation, and argument. At UIC, however, the semester-long practicum was much different: "reflection" (along with observation and explanation) assignments were discouraged in favor of an emphasis on argument and, especially, "situated writing." Situated writing, as it is called, is an approach that sees all writing as situated in contexts that will confine the choices any author can make. Such an approach necessarily includes non-academic genres, for the whole point of the approach is that it is transferable to all genres and situations in which writers are called upon to write. A central focus of situated writing is an emphasis on genre. A genre-based approach emphasizes rhetorical analysis and an understanding of audience, asking students to read several models of each assigned genre (these could be things like manifestos, proposals, cover letters, and so on) in order to discern patterns, characteristics, and language common to each iteration of a genre, while also asking students to note the varying situations (including audience and consequences) in which each genre was used. The genre approach was thus to be understood as a way of

teaching students that "all writing is situated." The practicum also emphasized argument and more typical academic writing assignments like summary, synthesis, and the 20-page research paper. (UIC splits the first-year curriculum into two courses, the first based on genre pedagogy and the second based more on research and academic argument.) As a guide to this kind of writing, we were each handed a free copy of Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein-Graff's *They Say/I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing* (a handbook I have already discussed at some length in Chapter One), which explains academic writing as, first, summarizing an ongoing conversation (a "They say") and, second, entering that conversation (an "I say"). Both of these approaches neatly fit my own goals for the composition classroom: to give underrepresented students a framework for understanding writing tasks, in general (and thus write better in the "real world") and to help underprivileged students understand academic writing (and thus succeed in college).

At the time the Director of Composition, AnnMerle Feldman, had also designed and implemented a service-learning program–the Chicago Civic Leadership Certificate Program (CCLCP)–using the two-fold approach of situated writing and *They Say/I Say*. I was recruited as an instructor for the program and taught with them for the next four years. The program combined in-class rhetoric/composition coursework with outside non-profit organization experience; students applied out of high school, and we accepted a cohort of around forty students every two years. CCLCP asked students to help further the goals of non-profit, community service organizations around the city of Chicago. Students were paired with various organizations and asked to complete writing assignments with/for them. These projects were supplemented with in-class, genre-based

rhetorical analysis assignments and more standard academic writing assignments, such as the research paper (for which we relied heavily on *They Say/I Say*). As a service learning program, CCLCP thus gave students several advantages over more conventional first-year writing courses insofar as students left the program with portfolios of the professional projects they had completed as well as community service work–experience they could include in their resumes–so cherished by graduate programs, law schools, and other postsecondary opportunities. The great majority of CCLCP students, however, were already highly motivated, elite students (many from the Honors College); indeed we received more applications than spots and could handpick our cohorts.

The goals of CCLCP were an extension of the goals of the composition program at UIC. On the one hand, CCLCP provided students real-world experience with professional genres; examples of assignments students did in conjunction with community organizations included grant proposals, websites, social network design/upkeep, community outreach flyers/brochures, information packets, and many others. On the other hand, CCLCP provided instruction in academic writing designed to help students succeed in their future college careers. Not just that, but the program also had an implicit political agenda insofar as the organizations students worked with were community-oriented, non-profit organizations serving, for example, the LGBT community, minority populations, and the poor. The program thus had an implicit social justice agenda–which as an instructor with the program, I identified with. CCLCP, for me, was thus a political extension of the composition classroom, embodying my own political commitments in using education as a tool for social justice. Most of the CCLCP students were minorities, so I was helping them gain advantages over students from, say,

Northwestern that would help them compete in the job market after college. The program also provided free labor (more than free, each organization received a small stipend) to the non-profit organizations with which the students were working, thus furthering community-oriented goals.

As I already noted, I entered UIC hoping to specialize in American Literature and Rhetoric. My politics in those first years as a Ph.D. student were thus a kind of literary politics insofar as I understood politics in terms of narrative. Briefly (and I have already discussed narrative and pluralism in some detail in Chapter One through the work of Hayden White), my political commitments entailed positing some majority narrative and then countering that majority narrative with minority narratives; because narratives were merely (rhetorical) accounts of how things are, they were not true or false but merely "dominant," and as such simply silenced other counter-narratives. A successful political program, from this point of view, was thus an act of recognizing the narratives of others as different yet legitimate. This particular politics was thus a politics of pluralism, in which competing accounts of the same set of events could be seen as legitimate despite their appearance as contradictory. Politics were embodied in narrative. Yet I began to see limitations in the politics of literature, limitations in understanding political problems in terms of competing narratives. The institutional politics of UIC entailed the championing of diversity and multiculturalism, yet by my third year, I became seriously concerned about my own precarious position as a Ph.D. candidate seeking a middle-class job through education and became increasingly aware of a job market (particularly in American Literature) that made my chances of getting such a job very unlikely. The politics of literature, as I began to see, avoided questions of this kind. Another way to put

this is that the politics of English departments (dominated by Literature), at best, tended to limit questions of academic labor conditions to questions of academic freedom or, at worst, simply ignored them. Literature departments also rarely seemed concerned with the labor of teaching (or at least that didn't appear as a topic of political interest in scholarship and journals). Composition, however, did address the issue of academic labor and teaching much more directly in its scholarship (indeed I remember reading in a formative moment that Composition Studies considers teaching part of its research program). In this sense, the politics of composition spoke to my current (precarious) position more than the politics of literature: the discipline of composition, itself comprised of so many lecturers and adjuncts, was more directly concerned with issues of academic labor. Such workers are not victims of discrimination (the overwhelming majority are white) but rather are victims of something more like exploitation. And this was not a question of diversity (the UIC version of politics) but rather a question of the relationship between education and economics. As such my own politics went in a different direction from a concern with diversity or with the literary politics of representation; I became interested in the political economy of the university and, particularly, academic labor.

In many ways, by this point, my own sense of the politics of my own classroom had become confused. On one hand, I had adopted the institutional politics of UIC–namely, to provide educational advantages to large numbers of underrepresented students, the majority of whom were minorities seeking degrees in fields like science, math, technology, and economics. Indeed another program in which I was a teacher–UIC's Project CHANCE, a program designed to help minority students (particularly African-

American students) successfully apply to and complete college–explicitly pushed

students into fields like civil engineering, in which, as one spokesman for the program

told CHANCE students every summer, they "could make a million dollars." On the other

hand, I saw firsthand how more education hadn't helped "The New Faculty Majority" at

UIC, the army of adjuncts and lecturers who had Ph.D.s yet were still making less than

$30,000 a year as teachers in higher education. My own position as a graduate student

increasingly came to be seen as hopeless insofar as I felt a deep skepticism about my

prospects of earning a professorship that would pay middle-class wages (and this

hopelessness was combined by the increasing amount of student loan debt I continued to

take on). It thus became increasingly dubious to tell my students that success in college

would grant the kinds of economic benefits *all* of them (a question I regularly asked in

my classes was "why are you here?") were there for in the first place.

     I thus began to realize that, to remain consistent, my politics would have to take a

different direction than simply emphasizing access and opportunity to underrepresented

students; my own approach to composition, previously informed by something like the

two-fold, CCLCP approach, would have to change. What needed to change, specifically,

was how I defined the goal of academic labor in the first place, by which I meant not only

the situation of the new faculty majority doing all the teaching but also the kind of labor

that students did everyday in the classroom, for if I could no longer see my courses as

instilling the kinds of skills that employers would pay for and, what is a different question,

if I could no longer count on other disciplines to assign the kinds of writing I was training

my students to excel in, then I could no longer see my courses as guaranteeing future

economic value for the majority of my students. More to the point, even if my classes

somehow did have economic value for my students, it would be at the expense of other students who didn't take my courses. The problem, then, wasn't whether some of my students got rich and some didn't but, rather, the universal belief that more education for all would create more economic equality for all. I thus began to reinvent my own approach to composition courses in order to give the courses immediate value that was disconnected from the kind of exchange value I had previously thought them to have.

The next course I taught marked a significant departure from everything I had done before. A summer course, it was contracted into four weeks, four days per week, with each course lasting three hours. I did away with any general course theme and assigned no required texts. Instead I emailed students prior to the course and asked them to show up on the first day of class with their own inquiries–as I put it in the email: "I am giving you four weeks to explore a topic of your choice; please choose a rich topic, about which you are curious, that you want to research." I wanted to make student texts the content of the class. I also wanted to give students a chance to do academic work (not prepare them to do it in some future class). This was the first class in which I didn't require (or work from) *They Say/I Say*. Rather than argument, I framed the course around *inquiry*, by which I mean something like intellectual exploration, curiosity, or even research or rumination. On one hand, this is simply a way of making better arguments, for you need to have more than a cursory knowledge of a topic before you can have anything good to say about it. On the other hand, the central problem in first-year writing–as I had begun to understand it–is student engagement, in something like the perceived *value* of the course. Though I agree that there are academic "moves" and even "modes of thinking" (e.g. argument) that are important to teach, teaching the moves

without first getting students to engage with intellectual curiosity generated a kind of "bloodless" writing (and generated a lot of plagiaristic attempts at academic writing, to boot). Of course one way of instilling a sense of value in the labor of composition courses is to tell students that such skills are necessary to their success in college and college is necessary to their success in the job market. (This is similar to saying, as many teachers do–and as I used to do–that learning proper grammar is akin to wearing the proper clothing to a job interview because employers judge you on appearance, first impressions are crucial, etc.) But another way of instilling a sense of value is to disconnect the course from "the real world," from the idea that students are learning things that will help them down the line or prepare them for a job or provide them with a marketable skill set and, instead, try to create the conditions in which the labor itself becomes valuable. This is a considerable trick, involving the ability to improvise and adjust, register curiosity in a constructivist way, and most importantly, to hand the content of the course over to the students. With this course, I emphasized engagement–getting students to register their own intellectual curiosity and then build on it–which I hoped would lead, in production, to a sustained investment their writing, a willingness to actively revise their own work, resourcefulness, and a deepened curiosity in following intellectual lines of inquiry.

Let me quickly describe the first assignment for this course. After choosing individual topics (and clearing them with me), students were asked to create a conference brochure for their topic. The first thing I asked them to do was to find three authorities on their topic and make them keynote speakers at their mock conference; they needed to include a picture of each speaker and summarize their work while also giving each talk a title. They were asked to include an engaging summary of the overall conference topic

and a summary (and photo) of themselves (perhaps fictional or representing their future goals), which would register them as an authority on the topic, as well. The brochure was to include images relevant to the conference, and students were to choose a suitable location (with thematic relevance to the overall topic). One student, for example, a military veteran who had chosen the topic of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, titled his conference "From Warzone to Classroom: The Effects of PTSD and TBI on Student Veterans." And here is the summary he wrote about himself:

> [Student] is a US Navy veteran and a current student at UIC. He is using his knowledge and experience from the military to work as a work study for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). His most important responsibility is his work as a veteran-to-veteran peer mentor on campus; he provides assistance to student veterans enrolling for VA benefits, helps incoming veterans navigate campus, and provides advice on how to achieve academic success. His goal at UIC is to have a Veterans Resource Center established to better assist incoming veterans and increase their retention.

Indeed he did go on to start a Veterans Resource Center at UIC. This assignment echoes Graff and Birkenstein's "They Say" section insofar as it asks students to begin by discovering what others are saying about a topic and summarize what others have said, yet I asked them to produce a multi-modal brochure that would also incorporate visual elements and digital design. Finding authorities on the topic served as a kind of "filter" for their research; as we know, sifting through the sheer volume of information about any general topic can be daunting, but in finding authorities, students were given a touchstone

to start their inquiries. After the brochure, students worked on drafts of the final research paper. There was, in short, only a single paper that the students worked on for four weeks. In terms of reading, students consistently shared their work with each other; it was not uncommon for students to become engaged with the projects of others, exchanging drafts as the papers developed (without my asking). In this way, the texts of the course were student texts.

Difference, furthermore, was encouraged; yet, as I put it in the syllabus,

While encouraging difference, this course aims to address a serious deficit–namely, when we talk about what academic writing is, we tend to assume this work is done only by professors, researchers, and university administrators, and we tend to forget that academic labor and academic production happen even in such "humble" spaces as this (required) summer writing class. As such, we will approach our work not just as academic imitation (although there is some of that) but, rather, as serious labor and creative knowledge production. We aren't just in this class to imitate academic work; we are in this class to learn about and to engage in the creation of academia itself.

In this context, difference means variation from paper to paper; indeed students were encouraged to choose individual topics and to approach their research according to their own resourcefulness and research narratives. The "serious deficit" is engagement in academic inquiry and in, ultimately, revising a single paper several times, thus taking ownership of that paper. Creative knowledge production can mean argument–as I asked students to learn about the topic first, getting through cursory knowledge (i.e. anything

that could be found by a simple glance at, say, Wikipedia), and then uncovering controversies (hopefully recent) within the inner realm of the topic–but it could also mean making connections from one line of inquiry to another (thus furthering curiosity) and "internalize"–*i.e.* learn–the information. The "creation of academia" was thus developing lines of inquiry that could be followed and then re-tracing those lines of inquiry (in a kind of research narrative) in writing, with argument becoming explicit only near the end of the process. I don't see this, however, as an "anything-goes" classroom; I don't see this approach as simply turning the screw on the student-centered classroom. There was a clear deficit I was out to address–namely, students' valuing the work they were doing and understanding academia not just in instrumental terms (as the means to a better job) but rather in something like experiential terms or, one could say, more in terms of a Liberal Arts education.

I thus began to move away from *They Say/I Say*. It wasn't that I disagreed with the premise of *They Say/I Say*, that I disagreed there were academic "moves" which needed to be taught; rather what took precedence over the development of arguments or the development of standard academic English was student engagement and quality of labor. Certainly, this wasn't a rejection of Graff and Birkenstein's approach, and I still found myself incorporating much of the foundation they outline in their book (beginning with a "They say," for example). The central goal, however, was not to focus on some future labor that students would be doing; it was instead to focus on the labor they were already doing. And this approach, though an effect of my own understanding of politics, was not in itself political. Why not? By way of contrast, and as a way of clarifying my own practice, I want to turn to two writing assignments from two bestselling textbooks in

the field which align, alternately, with the politics of difference and the politics of deficit: Catherine Latterell's *ReMix: Reading and Composing Culture*, a composition reader with assignments that emphasize readings of cultural objects to get students to "see the world differently, speaking back to the forces that impact their lives"; and Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein-Graff's *They Say/I Say*, which seeks to help initiate students into what they have called elsewhere "argument culture."

In *ReMix*, the very first assignment asks students to write a one-page profile of themselves based exclusively on the objects they carry in their wallets. Each object, Latterell says, has a story to tell, and the overall goal of the assignment is for students to answer questions like "What do the contents of a wallet reveal about a person's identity? What stories could someone piece together about you based solely on an examination of your wallet and its contents?" (4). Interestingly, talk of what wallets are actually designed for–namely, to hold money–is completely avoided. Instead students are asked to examine "pool or gym memberships, driver's licenses, library cards, ATM cards, video store cards, school IDs, coffee club cards, discount cards, and credit cards" (4). Even credit cards are to be examined not as monetary objects but as forms of "identification." This is certainly understandable as a move to avoid student anxiety over whether they have money in their wallets or not (or whether they have credit cards that are theirs or their parents' or whether they have credit in the first place), but it begs the question of whether having money or not is part of one's identity in the first place. Still, *ReMix* represents a commitment to turn students into cultural critics who by analyzing cultural assumptions and producing cultural remixes "reinterpret, recombine, and reinvent their cultural landscapes."

The second assignment comes from *They Say/I Say*. At the end of the "So What? Who Cares?" chapter–a chapter that asserts, "writers who cannot show that others *should* care and *do* care about their claims will ultimately lose their audiences' interest"–Graff and Birkenstein propose a brief exercise that asks students to "Look over something you've written yourself. Do you indicate 'so what?' or 'who cares?' If not revise your text to do so" (101). Graff & Birkenstein contend that academic culture *is* argument culture and, as such, teachers should stop hiding this fact from their students and instead demystify how it works. *They Say/I Say* is, in large part, an extension of Gerald Graff's work for at least the last thirty years, which at its core is interested in questions of equality of opportunity and access. Indeed this is precisely the point of the templates: to give every student, in as explicit a way as possible, access to marketable skills–namely, the ability to think and write like an academic–enabling students to succeed in academia and capitalize on the opportunities college is supposed to offer.

In one sense, these approaches to composition pedagogy are similar insofar as they both seek to generate a more critical subjectivity, but they differ on what they think that means. Going back to that difference formulated by Shaughnessy with which we started–the difference between understanding inequality as an economic gap between the poor and affluent and understanding inequality as a cultural gap with economic difference understood as an effect of cultural difference–the two approaches to composition we have been working with now can appear as versions of these two understandings of inequality: *ReMix* a version of the minority/majority model; *They Say/I Say* a version of the poor/affluent model. *ReMix*, a cultural studies reader, represents an approach that, as Ann George explains, "engages students in analyses of the unequal power relations that

produce and are produced by cultural practices and institutions […] and it aims to help students develop the tools that will enable them to challenge this inequality" (qtd. in Fulkerson 660). This approach, as Richard Fulkerson puts it more bluntly, emphasizes "not improved writing but liberation from dominant discourse" (660). *They Say/I Say* can be said to do just the opposite–namely, it seeks precisely to improve writing while also teaching students to understand, write, and speak the dominant discourse of the University. So while *ReMix* wants to *distance* students from culture–that is, make them cultural critics–*They Say/I Say* wants to *initiate* students into a single culture, "argument culture." And this distinction highlights a central difference between *ReMix* and *They Say/I Say* as a difference between two kinds of political commitments: the first a kind of liberation from authoritative structures; the second a mode of access to them.

It is in this sense that we can begin to understand the political commitments of pedagogies like *ReMix* and *They Say/I Say*. *ReMix*, as we've already seen, is a sort of newer version of the cultural studies reader, and as I have hoped to show with the example of the wallet assignment, there is a tendency in this camp to privilege cultural difference and cultural identity at the expense of economic difference. The wallet assignment asks students not to see how much money they have or don't have but, rather, to see what things like gym memberships and coffee cards say about their identity. And if it remains unclear how *ReMix* addresses the problem of economic inequality, *They Say/I Say* is in a sense precisely designed to address it. If students need to succeed in college to succeed in the job market after college, if initiating oneself into academic culture is then a crucial first step in succeeding in college, then Graff & Birkenstein's book wants to remove that obstacle–the mystery of academic writing–to provide a more equal playing

field, so that *any* student might become a doctor, lawyer, accountant, or a college professor rather than a service worker, clerk, adjunct, or Assistant Manager at Chick-Fil-a.

First, let me attempt to clarify–vis-à-vis *ReMix*–my approach to "identity" in the composition classroom. My most recent first-year writing courses do include identity-based genres; in particular, I assign a memoir. Yet my approach to the memoir, as I see it, differs from Latterell's in which she asks, "What stories could someone piece together about you based solely on an examination of your wallet and its contents?" Instead I am less concerned about students being able to register a difference between how others see them and how they see themselves; I am more interested in using the memoir to get students engaged in their own writing. To do so, I assign what I call an object memoir, in which I ask students to choose four objects from their past (meaningful objects they have kept with them, significant objects from their past, photographs they have kept, etc.) and use the objects to explain important moments from their life. I ask students to include images of the objects in the paper (placed adjacent to the explication of what the object represents or helps them remember). The goal of requiring students to use objects to tell their story is that, first, it gives them concrete starting points for each vignette they describe; second, and what is more important, using objects "opens up" the events to more vivid details and thus leads to more vibrant writing. What I ultimately hope for with this assignment is that students find themselves "getting lost" *in the act of writing*, which is another way of saying that the labor of writing becomes something more akin to pleasure through focus. It is worth noting that the assignment has produced excellent results in terms of the writing itself, as students take more ownership over their memoirs;

another important challenge of the assignment is that students have to create transitions between each vignette, which serves as an important lesson in things like topic sentences, subordination, and organization. I don't see this assignment as having anything like the political goals that Latterell's identity assignment expresses; the goal is instead to create the means for a changed approach to the labor of the composition classroom, and by changing the labor conditions, the writing itself improves. Here, for example, is a brief excerpt from a recent student memoir (with object image included):

At the age of six years old, I didn't know what the word "bitch" meant. The only thing I knew about the word was that it was a bad word and that I wasn't supposed to say it. I can still remember lying under the big lion

blanket that my grandmother had just brought back from Mexico. It was three in the morning and I woke up to my parents screaming at each other. I heard the word bitch among many other hurtful words all directed to my mother. The sound of my mom crying scared me because I didn't hear it very often. The only times I heard her cry was between 12:00 am and 2:00am. Since I was only six years old, I couldn't do much when I saw my mom being bullied by my dad. The only thing I seemed to do was put that lion blanket over my head because for some reason I thought it helped block out the yelling that I was so tired of hearing. The blanket was my shield. It helped me get through the endless nights of

screaming and the banging noises of my dad either punching a wall or throwing the first thing that he saw.

Let me now turn to the Graff & Birkenstein assignment, and my recent thoughts on using *They Say/I Say* in first-year composition courses. I have and still do find the book to be unmatched in the composition field due to its content, price, readability, and organization. I believe the book is second-to-none in its practical approach to teaching the moves of academic writing. Furthermore, its overall goal directly acknowledges the economic structure and wants to provide students more direct access to it, and as such it is better and more politically desirable than the cultural model. Graff & Birkenstein want writing teachers to learn the skills that will help students get degrees and give them access to more comfortable positions within that structure. But, admirable though it is, this commitment is no more politically egalitarian than its educational competitors. It is indeed true that a person with a college degree can expect to make considerably more money than a person with only a high school diploma. The most commonly cited number for the college premium, a recent study from the Urban Institute reports, is that individuals with bachelor's degrees generally make a median earning of $21,300 more than those with only high school diplomas every year ("Higher" 1). The interesting paradox is that when asked, "should you send your kids to college?" the answer is always "yes"; but when everyone starts sending their kids to college, the premium inevitably will drop, and, what is more important, given the changing economic conditions that are more reliant upon contingent labor, de-professionalization (jobs that not requiring professional, academic skills), and the kinds of jobs that students can be expected to get upon graduation (customer service, health aides, etc.), seeing the function of higher education

as resolving American economic inequality appears precarious at best. Another way of saying this is that for *They Say/I Say* to be an effective program for a politics of composition, we have to assume higher education to be a closed (or elite) system in which only a lucky few are able to get college degrees and thus retain the advantages a college degree is supposed to guarantee.

Yet *They Say/I Say* also expresses its own ethical dimension. In the Preface, the authors note that since they ask "writers not simply to keep proving and reasserting what they already believe but to stretch what they believe by putting it up against beliefs that differ, sometimes radically, from their own […], in an increasingly diverse, global society, this ability to engage with the ideas of others is especially crucial to democratic citizenship" (xxvi). As we have already seen from Chapter One, the ethic described here is one of the recognition of difference, of the ability in the face of diversity not to condemn the views of those who might differ but to engage, ethically, with them. So what I have described as a handbook interested in helping students overreach their deficits (as being mystified by academic writing) and thus helping students succeed in academia (and thus beyond) also has an interest in that other model of social justice: the appreciation and recognition of difference. And if we know that, in economic terms, college does provide advantages for some (though at the expense of others), it is yet to be seen whether a faith in attuned democracy will have any effect on rising economic inequality in the United States.

In making these arguments–that neither the difference approach to education, nor the deficit approach to education can be the answer to inequality (in fact, no approach to education can be the solution)–I have, in a strong sense, been making the argument

against teaching as a political act. This position, as I have hoped to show, goes decidedly against the grain of social justice educators, who argue, in one form or another, that American education is a hierarchical system designed to train a population (and thus control this population) through either hegemonic or authoritarian means and the erasure (or ignoring) of meaningful differences. Those involved in literacy education, in particular, see their work as political insofar as the work involves giving students access to a language of power (as Shaughnessy puts it, the "language of public transaction") and thus a voice to speak back to power. While I tend to agree with this analysis of the structure of American education, I do not agree–though I used to–that making one's teaching political (in whatever sense that means, whether it be a kind of political canvassing or whether it be a kind of "exposing" to different worldviews or political thinkers, or whether it means simply disrupting the functioning of the educational system, in general) is the way to challenge rising economic inequality in the US.

I no longer see my work in helping college students to write better as ultimately political work. Why? Precisely because, although it makes sense for me to want to, on the one hand, give my students an edge in the job market, I realize that in so doing I am making it harder for someone else's students. In other words, I am not entirely satisfied by own contributions to a meritocratic structure. On the other hand, though it might also make sense to try to influence my students' critical worldview–through, for example, readings, assignments, and conversations about race, gender, or class–I realize that, in so doing, I am not giving them the "job skills" or the kind of writing instruction to which many tuition-paying students (and their parents) feel entitled. I might also add that I do not think teachers have the kind of political weight they think they do, for at the end of

the day, students (especially those in first-year, *required* writing courses) merely seem, understandably, to want to go along with the instructor while exerting the least amount of energy. While there are always exceptions to these generalizations, so-called political interests in the classroom lose their bite, for example, when a) the students in that classroom are already holding privileged social positions, as in four-year universities, or b) students' only route to social mobility is indeed through education (thus by not addressing the writing deficits, we are only extending their college careers and thus their chances of not finishing), as in most community colleges. I believe that teaching service must involve something more than just producing competitive students in the job market or challenging students to "try on" a worldview that will be discarded and forgotten after 16 weeks.

So there is one sense in which I have found myself at least in part disillusioned about the contribution that we as teachers can make to a more equal society. But in another sense, this has also been a process of liberation, of understanding the value of education not only in instrumental terms–by teaching students to write better, I am guiding them to high-paying jobs–but rather in understanding the value of education in non-instrumental terms, as having a value in "intellectual curiosity and self-fulfillment." I want to say that there is value in teaching people to write and think better that isn't just economic value. I recognize that there are lots of things an education can't do, but in a way, once we see that education can't do everything we want from it, we actually get a greater value. The labor of writing is a labor of putting things together, the work of combination, revision, rewriting, crafting, a labor of individual choices, of making an object in the world and putting one's name on it. And in the college writing course, or in

the college writing center, two groups of people get this pleasure: those who teach or

tutor on one side, and those who learn on the other.

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<p style="text-align:center">Curriculum Vitae</p>

Lucas J. Johnson

<u>Education</u>

Ph.D., English (Composition/Rhetoric)
University of Illinois at Chicago (2008-present)
Dissertation: *Neoliberal Composition: Economic Inequality in the History, Theory, and Practice of Modern Writing Studies* (Summer 2015).

Master of Arts, English
University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, Colorado (Spring 2008).

Bachelor of Arts, Liberal Arts (Music)
University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, Colorado (December 2005).

<u>Conference Papers</u>

"Providing Student Feedback Using Jing Software." UIC Professional Development Institute for Writing Instructors, University of Illinois at Chicago: August 2014.

"Promoting Difference to Our Own Deficit: Mina Shaughnessy, The Student-Centered Classroom, and Adjunct Pedagogy." Paper delivered at CCCC in Indianapolis, IN: March 2014.

"Creative Approaches to Teaching the Research Paper." Mile 8: Seminar on the Teaching of First-Year Writing, University of Illinois at Chicago: August 2013.

"No Room for Class: Learner-Centered Composition, Academic Labor, and The Piece Wage." Paper delivered to the MLG Institute on Culture and Society in Columbus, OH: June 2013.

"The Cover Letter, or Back from Whence It Came." Mile 8: Seminar on the Teaching of First-Year Writing, University of Illinois at Chicago: Spring 2013.

"Argument, Inequality, and the History of Composition Studies." Paper delivered at the Rhetoric Society of America Conference in Philadelphia, PA: May 2012.

"What is Situated Writing?" Mile 8: Seminar on the Teaching of First-Year Writing, University of Illinois at Chicago: Fall 2012.

"The Politics of Composition." Mile 8: Seminar on the Teaching of First-Year Writing, University of Illinois at Chicago: Spring 2012.

"Measuring History in the Post-national." Paper delivered to the MLG Institute on Culture and Society in Chicago, IL: June 2011.

"Representational Violence: Montage and Collage in Michael Ondaatje's *The Collected Works of Billy the Kid*." Paper delivered to The Popular Culture Association Conference in San Francisco, CA: April 2008.

<u>Teaching Experience</u>

Teaching Assistantship: Department of English

University of Illinois at Chicago (August 2008 to present)

English 160: Academic Writing I

English 161: Academic Writing II

English 122: Understanding Rhetoric

Sociology 213: Sociology of Youth

Psychology 231: Community Psychology

English 555: Practicum in the Teaching of Writing (Grad. Course)

Instructor: Chicago Civic Leadership Certificate Program (CCLCP)
University of Illinois at Chicago (Fall 2010; Fall & Spring 2010-11; Fall 2011)

Collaboratively reviewed student applications and chose student participants; co-designed course syllabi, learning goals, and plans for writing projects on which students collaborated with non-profit organizations. Served as liaison between CCLCP students and numerous non-profit organizations. Co-taught the courses with other CCLCP instructors.

Instructor: CHANCE Program
University of Illinois at Chicago (Summer 2013-present)

Eight-week session (Fall 2013)

Designed and taught a weekly writing course for two sections of under-represented Chicago high school juniors and seniors

Four-week summer camp (Summer 2013)

Sponsored by Ill. Department of Transportation

Designed and taught a four-week writing course for under-represented Chicago high school sophomores and juniors

Writing Center Tutor: English Department
University of Illinois at Chicago (Fall 2008)
University of Northern Colorado (Fall 2006-Spring 2007)

Related Professional Experience

Assistant Director, First-Year Writing Program
University of Illinois at Chicago (Fall 2013, Spring 2014).

First-Year Writing Program Placement Exam Reader
University of Illinois at Chicago (Spring 2012-present).

Search Committee Member (Rhetoric and Composition)
School of English Language and Literature, University of Northern Colorado
(Fall 2007).

Professional Development

Certified Completion of Professional Development Series Supporting the Writing of English Language Learners (Fall 2014).

Teaching Practicum in the Teaching of College Writing: University of Illinois at Chicago

(Fall 2008).

Teaching Practicum in the Teaching of College Writing: University of Northern Colorado (Fall 2006).

Community Service

Site Coordinator, Curriculum Designer, and Instructor: Community Building Tutors, Chase Park, Chicago (Fall 2013-Spring 2014).

ESL Instructor: Mexico Solidarity Network-*Centro Autonomo*: Albany Park, Chicago (Summer 2012).

Editing Experience

Editor: *A 3-D View of Foster, Kinship, and Adopted Children: Using the Bio-Psychological Model to Better Understand Children with Multiple Impacts*, James Kagan, M.D. and Richard Delaney, Ph.D. (2010).

Scholarship Editor: *Packingtown Review*, University of Illinois at Chicago (Spring 2009–Fall 2010).

Languages

Spanish, reading and conversational

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