

LOCATING PLACE IN WRITING STUDIES: AN INVESTIGATION OF
PROFESSIONAL AND PEDAGOGICAL PLACE-BASED EFFECTS

by

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Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
AddRan College of Humanities and Social Sciences
Texas Christian University
In partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

May, 2008

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Acknowledgements

I owe all that I am to my parents, Roger and Janet McCracken, two people who have led by example and given me endless love and support, even after I changed my report card in kindergarten. I wasn't the easiest child to live with, but never once did either of you make me feel like asking questions and doing more was a burden. Thank you for teaching me about integrity and honor and love. This is equally true for my other mothers, Aunt Gale and Mick Mick, whose birthday cards, e-mails, care packages and love sustained me these past ten years. I also want to thank my Uncle Louis, who always had teaching stories to swap and books to share.

Thank you isn't enough, but it is all I have for my husband, Robert Ruetz, who has shared in carrying the weight of this project for the past year. R, there were many nights when you believed in this work more than I did, but your unwavering belief in my abilities kept me focused. Thank you for sharing our first year of marriage with a massive job search and with this project. Thank you for making me laugh all those days and nights when I had no sense of humor and for reminding me to have a life outside of work. Thank you for being my partner in life and for moving with me to the face of the sun. You are the love of my life.

Thank you to my siblings and their spouses, Ethan and Robin McCracken and Erin and Patrick Martin, for *teaching me* about friendship, companionship, and parenting. Thank you to my in-laws, Steve and Diane Ruetz and Liz and Kevin Smith, for nodding along when I rambled about this project and for sitting through three graduations. Thank you to my high school English teachers. Mrs. Haynes, you started this whole process by writing a single question on one of my papers, "Are you sure you want an MBA?" No, I wasn't sure. Mrs. Riley, thank you for allowing me to share my stories and for always being excited with me.

I acknowledge the members of my dissertation committee for their professional support throughout this project. Thank you to Carrie Leverenz for being my first mentor at TCU and for always teaching by example. Thank you to Charlotte Hogg for being my “placed” mentor and for showing me how to work in academia even if my heart is in another place. Stacia Neeley, thanks for coming on board halfway through this project and for “keeping it rural” in a chaotic semester. Thank you also to Bonnie Frederick for serving as the fourth reader and contributor.

This project would never have been completed on time if it weren’t for the behind-the-scenes work of my friends and colleagues. Thank you to my reading group, Jason King and Kurk Gayle, for their weekly motivation and last-minute feedback. Travis Mann, thank you for your willingness to read a chapter in a few days and for always giving me your true assessment, especially when it was tough and honest; we began our time at TCU together, and I cannot imagine this experience without you and our standing coffee dates. The same goes for the family I’ve found in my program, including the Monday-Night (turned Whatever-Night-We’re-Free) Crew: David, Rebekah, and Noah Elder; Jack, Lorri, Ella, and “Axie” Downs; Angela González and Ryan Dungy; and Jordan, Aleisa, Amy, and Carla, our new additions. Sarah Yoder, you are part of the “original” Monday-Night Crew, and you are the kindest soul I know. Thank you for being my job-search friend, for teaching me about Midwestern pleasantries and kindness, and for telling me, in Tim Gunn style, to “Make it work.” Stephanie Wyatt and Mitzi Ellington, you have been my spiritual midwives, and my heart will forever be grateful for your lessons of faith, feminism, and the feminine divine.

I dedicate this dissertation to those who won’t get to see me walk across the stage on May 10, 2008: Norma and C.C. Hayter, who taught me how to have fun and how to cook;

Marion Harkins, who taught me about true grit; Linda Hilt, who taught me about devotion and who shared in my love of purple (Go Frogs!); and Oneta Harkins, who gave me the gift of being her granddaughter and my first name.

I also dedicate this dissertation to my future. To my “favorite” nephew, Hunter Cole, you may smell like a boy, but you were the first little human I fell in love with. May you find your place in the world, teaching others with your kind soul, empathetic spirit, and steadfastness. To my brassy, intelligent, and beautiful nieces: Aubrey MaKenna, Elle Elyse, Mia Blythe, and Sarah Elizabeth. You are the women of our future. I see hope, ambition, and courage in each of you. May each of you find friends to support and be supported by; may each of you find partners who respect your independence and value your wisdom; may each of you break rules and push boundaries. May all of you know that the greatest source of pride in my life is being your Auntie Mo.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
LIST OF FIGURES	vii
INTRODUCTION	1
A Methodology in and of Place	8
CHAPTER ONE	
<i>Individual Terroir</i> , or How Place Influences Identities	20
Defining <i>Individual Terroir</i>	23
Defining Place	27
Moving towards <i>Individual Terroir</i> : Complicating Definitions of Place	35
Place Matters in Writing Studies	44
CHAPTER TWO	
Place in the Academic Job Search	66
Advice about the Job Search in English: Cast a Wide Net	69
Surveying Job Search Candidates	87
Mentoring Job Candidates	102
<i>Individual Terroir</i> and the Academic Job Search	120
CHAPTER THREE	
Critical Pedagogies of Place in Writing Classrooms	124
Defining a Critical Pedagogy of Place	124

Six Case Studies of Critical Pedagogies of Place	132
Perceived Benefits of Place-Based Approaches	174
CHAPTER FOUR	
Locating Place in Academia and Writing Studies	193
Why Place Matters for Academia	193
Why Place Matters for Writing Studies	206
Appendix A: Listserv Posting for Research Participants	214
Appendix B: Pre-Job Search Survey Questions	215
Appendix C: Post-Job Search Survey Questions	218
Appendix D: Job Search Interview Guide	221
Appendix E: Breakdown of Applications and Interviews	222
Appendix F: Breakdown of Applications and Interviews, cont'd.	223
Appendix G: Place-Based Pedagogy Interview Guide	224
Appendix H: Place-Based Pedagogy Survey Questions	225
Appendix I: Anthony's Course Syllabus and Assignment	228
Appendix J: Rebekah's Course Syllabus and Assignment	239
Appendix K: Brad's Course Syllabus and Assignment	251
Appendix L: Sarah's Course Syllabus and Assignment	255
Appendix M: Megan's Course Syllabus and Assignment	262
WORKS CITED	271

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. “How attached are you to where you are from?” Pre-Job Search Survey Responses	93
Figure 2. “How attached are you to where you are from?” Post-Job Search Survey Responses	93
Figure 3. “What factors are affecting your job selection?” Pre-Job Search Survey Responses	99
Figure 4. “What three (3) factors affected your decision to accept a job offer?” Post-Job Search Survey Responses	99
Figure 5. “How attached are you to where you are from?” Place-Based Pedagogy Survey Responses	176

I haven't spent thirty years in Texas just to be able to be objective about the place.

-- Larry McMurtry, *In a Narrow Grave: Essays on Texas*

The personal and historical forces that severed my father's relationship with place ramify into my own life. I am heir to his unsettling, and my imagination and energy for the past several years has focused on healing what I see as the wound of this severing between a person and his or her place. Feeling a lack in my life, I return again and again to the idea that being rooted in a place and in a community will open possibilities of experience impossible to find in a wandering life. For me, the route toward that healing begins with stories.

-- David Syring, *Places in the World a Person Could Walk*

INTRODUCTION

Leave the state. The cautionary words of my professor stared back at me from my inbox. As a senior English major with no desire for a nine-to-five job or law school, I was entertaining the idea of attending graduate school when a former professor sent me an e-mail with a single piece of advice: *leave the state*. He said that even if I changed universities, multiple degrees from a single state might be read by some in the academy as an unwillingness to take risks. He worried that my education would represent an inbreeding of nativeness—a serious liability in the academy. I didn't want to jeopardize my future in higher education. Going to college was all I had wanted. When I left my hometown in 1998 to work on my undergraduate degree, I, like many rural students, was simply trying to escape from what I thought was a dead-end existence. Staying meant marriage and babies. Staying meant living with the same fourteen people I graduated from high school with. Staying meant failing at something I couldn't quite name. As a rural student who had aspirations beyond her hometown city limits sign, I had accepted what Anthony Petrosky has identified as the “success-means-leaving bind.”¹ Like countless others, I had entered the academy to escape where I was from, not to embrace it. So, when my professor told me to leave the state, I

¹ See “Rural Poverty and Literacy in the Mississippi Delta: Dilemmas, Paradoxes, and Conundrums.” *The Right to Literacy*. Eds. Andrea A. Lunsford, Helene Moglen, and James Slevin. New York: MLA, 1990. 61-73.

began to understand that not all degrees are equal. (It would be another four years before I understood the concept of pedigree in higher education.) As an undergraduate who respected the experiential advice of her professor, I accepted his suggestion to leave Texas as a “Truth” of who I was expected to become in my newly chosen profession.

Three years after being told to leave the state, I was sitting in my first round of doctoral coursework and wondering what would happen to my professional aspirations because I was *still* in Texas. I played at keeping my Texas roots quiet because I was haunted by my educational past: two degrees from two Texas universities. I didn’t talk too openly about my past—vague references seemed to satisfy people’s curiosity. But as I prepared my first vitae, I knew I couldn’t deny my roots; they were right there in black and white. From the Texas Panhandle to West Texas to the Hill Country and finally to North Texas, I had lived, studied, and worked in four different universities in four different regions of Texas. If I had been living on the east coast, my four different zip codes would have represented four different states in six years, but in a state with 261,914 square miles, these moves simply meant I stayed at least two hours from the border in any given direction.

All around me, institutional lore echoed my undergraduate professor’s advice, repeating messages about shedding place-based attachments and allegiances. By suggesting that I go out of state to complete my PhD, my professor was simply speaking from what Eric Zencey has termed an “ethos of rootlessness.” Though often unspoken, the ethos of rootlessness is built on the belief that living in one state or being attached to a single place is a detriment to one’s personal and professional aspirations. It also seems to be an assumed requirement for entering university life. Academics are assumed to be citizens of a *cosmos polis*, or world city. As citizens of this world city, they are expected to hold allegiances to

“the boundless world of books and ideas and eternal truths,” not geographical territories (Zencey 15). By attending universities in my home state, I could not deny where I worked, let alone where I lived. I was placing myself in Texas. I was marking myself as rooted by entering a doctoral program in Texas. I was dismissing the first condition of the ethos of rootlessness: change your place to shed your attachments.

The ethos of rootlessness perpetuates assumptions about who academics should be, what they should value, and where they should live, and it finds some legitimacy when considered in conjunction with the academic job market. Even if an academic is rooted in a place or has a vested interest in a particular location, the academic job market is structured so as to encourage rootlessness, something Brooks Blevins suggests in “Back to the Land: Academe, the Agrarian Ideal, and a Sense of Place,” an essay in *Black Earth and Ivory Tower*. As Blevins notes, jobs in the humanities are “rare as hen’s teeth,” and first- and second-year students watch their fourth-year colleagues “fling themselves on the market for a shot at one of the handful of those teeth” (307). Reality quickly sets in for all involved, and “[b]y the time most of us reach the stage of job-hunting, the consideration of a job’s geographical location has ceased being a factor in the overall equation and instead has been reduced to a luxury enjoyed only by the idealistic or the naïve” (307). Rather than attaching to a place and risk being seen as naïve, (many) academics heed lore-based advice and accept the university’s truth: place cannot matter for university professors any more than it can matter for military personnel. In some ways, entering the academy becomes like enlisting in the military—neither of which one enters in order to return home.² Instead, military

² I want to acknowledge that some academics intentionally conduct limited searches. For instance, a number of my colleagues have not conducted a national search because their families are established and rooted in the areas surrounding our doctoral program. This choice, however, is often regarded as “not the best choice.” Conducting a national search is regarded as the best way to have the most options when searching for a job (see Chapter Two). Staying in a particular region or area is still regarded (by some) to be a limiting decision.

personnel accept their orders and move as commanded, and academics “try to find that good, tenure-track job, wherever it may be, and adapt to the surroundings as best they can” (305).

The ethos of rootlessness and its counterpart, mobility, may be seen as byproducts of the modern American psyche. A number of scholars have postulated why being placeless seems to be a requirement in modern, Western societies. For instance, Wendell Berry, a writer known for his agricultural and rural affiliations, traces Americans’ detachment from place to Christopher Columbus. When Columbus encountered the New World, he simultaneously created the modern condition of being away from home and desiring to see more rather than exploring one’s home place. The result, at least as Berry sees it, is that having a place, just one place to which an individual is attached, is no longer viewed as a benefit to personal development. Instead, the phrase “No farther. This is the place.” represents a parochial and unglamorous life choice (*Unsettling* 4). For Paul Theobald, the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution are two distinct time periods when people began to operate with a sense of placeless independence—a life “unencumbered by the constraints of nature or community” (Theobald 7). In American society, this notion of independence quickly came to mean independence from nature. Many Americans no longer recognized their intradependence with the natural world; that is, they no longer took note of their “dependence within a place, dependence on the land and dependence on the good will and wisdom of the people with whom the land is shared” (7). Instead, the railroads, Manifest Destiny, and a number of growing economic factors perpetuated the idea of human beings independent of nature and free of place-based attachments (15). Americans spread out and built new “formless, soulless structures,” rather than reusing and preserving the old (Moe and

Wilke x). Current estimates suggest eighty percent of everything built in the United States has been erected in the past fifty years (Kunstler 10).

Many Americans are influenced by romantic notions of place—the mythical image of a single location in which one owns and cares for a plot of land. In truth, the American desire for mobility eschews connections to particular places (Tall 106). Rather than treating a place as a source of identification, Americans often treat place simply as property, as a commodity, and as a route to profit. Rather than treating place as something attained for keeping, we treat place as something to be consumed and then discarded. The place-as-property or place-as-commodity mentality translates into the modern manifestation of placelessness and its accompanying belief that mobility will bring success and happiness. We even give psychological power to the concept of mobility, accepting the idea that just by changing our city or our state, we can change our lives. As Deborah Tall suggests in her essay “Dwelling,” “[t]o stay in one place for life is often interpreted as being unambitious, unadventurous—a negation of American values. Moving up in the world means moving on” (Tall 104).

When I began this project, my committee members expressed conflicting opinions about my analysis of place in academia. They challenged my claims about the ethos of rootlessness and mobility, and they noted that the research didn’t align with their experiences. In fact, all of my readers suggested that place *does* matter for academics, especially during the job search process. Wendell Berry, it seems, may agree with them. Berry was preparing to leave New York University for a teaching post in his home state of Kentucky, when he found himself in the office of a senior faculty member. During their conversation, this colleague asked Berry to remember Thomas Wolfe’s wisdom: “‘Young man,’ he said, ‘don’t you know you can’t go home again?’” Berry quickly realized that their

conversation centered on an underlying (often unspoken) assumption about place that permeates academia:

His argument was based on the belief that once one had attained the metropolis, the literary capital, the worth of one's origins was canceled out; there simply could be nothing *worth* going back to. What lay behind one had ceased to be a part of life and had become "subject matter." And there was the belief, long honored among American intellectuals and artists and writers, that a place such as I came from could be returned to only at the price of intellectual death; cut off from the cultural springs of the metropolis, the American countryside is Circe and Mammon. Finally, there was the assumption that the life of the metropolis is *the* experience, the modern *experience*, and that the life of the rural towns, the farms, the wilderness places is not only irrelevant to our time, but archaic as well because unknown or unconsidered by the people who really matter—that is, the urban intellectuals. ("From" 280-281, original emphasis)

Place was far more than subject matter to Berry. The state of his childhood was the foundation of his identity, an inextricable (and perhaps indefinable) part of who he was and is. He was rooted in Kentucky, and he wanted to return to his roots. But place also mattered for Berry's colleague. As an "urban intellectual," he distinguished between places that were and were not conducive to academic life, which is why, it seems, he couldn't understand Berry's desire to return to rural Kentucky after he had become successful in metropolitan New York.

I suggest that Berry's colleague could not understand the desire to return to a *rural* place. Implicit in the senior faculty member's comment is, of course, a hint of urban elitism; their conversation can be read (on at least one level) as a detailing of the misconceptions and assumptions rural faculty members (may) face in academe, which is often urban centered (see *Rural Literacies*). The faculty member's resistance to location as a source of identification may also be read as resistance to roots and as one possible articulation of the ethos of rootlessness: move on, move up, stay gone. For Berry, returning to Kentucky would not result in an intellectual death, but for his colleague, Kentucky, as a place, (seems to have) represented the opposite of intellectual vitality, which (may have) impeded his ability to understand how place(s) could matter for Berry as an academic.

Embedded in Berry's desire to return to Kentucky and my assertion that place matters is an undeniable fact. As academics, we make a living with our minds, and as Blevins so astutely asks, "What difference does it make *where* you teach World Civilization or Composition I? Isn't the physical world ultimately superfluous to the life and career of the intellectual?" (305). Yes and no. Academics earn a living by developing and refining thoughts and ideas, but these acts occur in a place. Writing and discourse are situated in particular contexts, but so are the producers and consumers of those texts and discourses. As a colleague pointed out to me, if academics truly belong *only* to a world of books, ideas, and eternal truths, if these are the criteria by which we are to view one another, then why would it matter if we lived, studied, and worked in the same place throughout our academic careers? If place does not matter for the academic, then why does staying in one place matter so much?

I suggest that place doesn't matter as a concept unless the academic is staying put; place doesn't matter unless the academic acknowledges being attached to a particular place (as was the case for Wendell Berry) or unless the academic transgresses the unspoken rule of academic life (the ethos of rootlessness). As residents of the world city, university faculty members are expected to resist place-based attachments because their interests (should) lie with the theoretical, abstract, and universal, not the "immediate and mundane" (Orr 126). As professionals in higher education, they are expected to be *deplaced* people, those who no longer rely on places to supply their basic, daily needs; they can live and work from anywhere. Because they do not depend on places to sustain their lives, place should have lost its "larger economic, ecological, social, political, and spiritual possibilities" (127).

Having listened to the stories and experiences of PhD candidates on the job market and writing instructors who self-identified as interested in place-based pedagogies, I propose that (some) academics do have an embodied and rooted relationship with place, what I am calling *individual terroir*. Grounded in the French term *terroir*, which is often translated as the "sense of place" embodied by wine, my project extends the belief that a region and its location (its soil, climate, and culture) can influence vineyards and wine production to consider how a location—a place or context—can influence the individuals who live there.

A Methodology in and of Place³

Perhaps because I lived in one house with much of the same furniture for eighteen years; perhaps because I lived in the community where my parents and grandparents were born and raised; or perhaps because I am reminded by family members, high school teachers, and old friends "not to get above my raisin'," I am acutely aware of how place matters to me

³ Chapters Two and Three include in-depth discussion of my data collection methods as well as initial findings about my research populations.

as an academic. In the opening of *The Alchemy of Race and Rights*, Patricia Williams tells readers: “Since subject position is everything in my analysis of the law, you deserve to know that it’s a bad morning” (3). By sharing the reality of her day, Williams prepares readers for her arguments by acknowledging that her positioning and even her mood affect her discussion of the research. Before diving into my own research and theory, I acknowledge the very subjective entry point which began this dissertation project—my own concern that I could never be a “real” college professor if I had three degrees from Texas *and* remained attached to my hometown. I cannot deny my attachment to McLean, and while much of my opening narrative may read as idealistic and sentimental, this glossing and condensing of experiences should not be read as my definitive opinion on place and academics, particularly within the context of this study. I have many fond memories of my hometown, but life in small-town Texas is not glamorous or even ideal for a strong-willed, intellectually-driven young girl. After surviving high school and finding a life beyond McLean (two of my mother’s popular expressions), I staunchly defend the people and the place that often left me feeling like an oddity, even as I (often privately) resent the rural location for its “limited” experiences and often clichéd close-mindedness.

My entry point into this project mirrors other published accounts about place in higher education. Many academics discussing the role of place in the institution are from rural areas and/or have agricultural connections with the land; many academics writing about place are doing so to consider the positive benefits of developing and maintaining a relationship with place, especially a location that seems not to be valued by higher education or American culture more generally. Perhaps these academics vocalize their experiences because the transition to an academic life is jarring for them (noticeably and uncomfortably

different from where they were), or perhaps they share their stories because they feel narratives connect them, in small ways, to the people and traditions of their past. A general overview of the literature written about place by academics fails to explain why so many who are invested in place seem to be from rural and agricultural areas, nor can an overview account for the complexity and variety of rural and agricultural experiences expressed in texts such as *Black Earth and Ivory Tower*, *Placing the Academy*, *Rooted in the Land*, and *Rural Literacies*. The simple truth is that academics who are most vocal about their (often positive) experiences with place are those who share stories similar to mine, but just as the authors of *Rural Literacies* “acknowledge the complexity of rural populations” and move beyond “the commonplace myth that rural America is homogeneous” (3), my project attempts to complicate mainstream discussions of place in the academy (as well as my own assumptions and narratives) by suggesting that regardless of an individual’s relationship with place (good, bad, or indifferent; long-term, short-term, or temporary) and regardless of the size of her place (rural, urban, suburban, international, or all of the above), there are benefits to interrogating where an individual has lived and how those places have influenced her experiences.

Current conversations about place may be dominated by academics who have had positive, community-building experiences in a limited number of locations, but all individuals experience place, and a multiplicity of voices and stories can help academics interested in place complicate its long-standing (and controlling) (mis-)conceptions. As Linda Brodkey suggests, “[w]e study other people’s stories not because they are true or even because they are false, but for the same reason that people tell and listen to them, in order to learn about the terms on which others make sense of their lives” (47). Chapters Two and

Three of this project use participants' experiences to make sense of *individual terroir* in academia and to consider how these stories might challenge the dominant narrative of place in higher education.

By calling attention to various academics' *individual terroir* and their varying relationships with place, my project highlights how (all) academics are and have been situated in the material conditions of locations. The individuals in my project have lived in rural spaces and urban places; some have strong bonds and attachments to homesites, and others feel disconnected and uninterested in the places of their past. The differences in their experiences notwithstanding, they acknowledge that their experiences occurred in a place-based context.

In her concluding chapter, "A View from a Bridge: Afrafeminist Ideologies and Rhetorical Studies," Jacqueline Jones Royster acknowledges the struggles of subjective positioning in research. She writes, "I have also had to confront directly, in the rendering of text, my own status as a researcher who identifies unapologetically with the subjects of my inquiries" (252). As a writer, I have spent the past few years balancing and interrogating the subjective, personal, invested perspective from which this research derives. I believe place matters to all of us in some way—the question is simply, "*How* does place matter to you?" Before fully discussing my theory of *individual terroir* or considering the experiences of my research participants (as I do in the following chapters), I reiterate that my subjective entry point into this project may allow me to illustrate "a more nuanced sense" of the interaction between *individual terroir* and academic lives (Williams 11). As a researcher, I also "recognize as valuable the perspectives of the scholarly fields in which I operate; simultaneously, I respect the wisdom of the community with which I identify" (Royster 254).

Thus, my project works towards a careful analysis of the data collected and the ethical imperatives that come with human subject research, which is why I will share my completed chapters with my participants and protect their anonymity. I also recognize that as a doctoral candidate and a writing teacher interested in place-based pedagogy, I have two communities of identification in this project (doctoral candidates and writing teachers), which is why I cannot deny that, as Syring suggests in the second epigraph to this Introduction, I am studying individual, personal experiences with place in the academy to better understand my own story. My interest in place, however, extends beyond my story and into Rhetoric and Composition as a discipline. Building on the work of researchers like Brodkey, Royster, Williams, Roxanne Mountford, Beth Daniell, and Morris Young, my study opens up academic discussions about the role of *individual terroir* in higher education.

In his previously unpublished essay, “Places in the Mind,” Jim Corder writes:

Some of us, of course, don't seem to pay much attention to places. Some don't even seem to notice where they are. Some don't seem to need to pay much attention—places are not what they see, not what they think about. If some of us always have places in mind and want to be situated there, to see them, and to see them again, while others don't seem to think about places, it may yet be that places matter for all of us, in one way or another. Even if we don't pay much attention to places, to landscapes, rivers, mountains, valleys, canyons, cities, buildings, towns, houses, there may be a place for each of us, a home we're always looking for, even if we never find it—a particular moment in the past, a particular piece of the future. (278-9)

Corder has become a silent partner in my project on place. We not only share an institutional place, TCU, but we also share an interest in the geographic places we have lived (in Texas) and how those places continue to matter to us long after we have moved away. In some ways, we both reflect the sentiment expressed by McMurtry in the opening epigraph to this Introduction: neither of us is or aims to be objective about where we're from.

As Corder notes above, we are all in place, even when our attention is diverted. Place may not be our immediate focus, but this doesn't mean that geographical locations are irrelevant. In fact, Corder challenges writing studies scholars to think about place. He asks us "to reveal our motivations, to reveal how and when and why we came to the subjects we explore, and [he thinks] we will usually do better to show ourselves in the world we live in, thinking what we think, than to try to declare ourselves in our propositions and proofs" (Corder 295). Just as Corder asks us to put ourselves in a place, this project uses empirical, qualitative evidence to investigate the controlling research question for this project: **How does place matter in academia?** More specifically, my project seeks to uncover the ways in which place may affect academic identities by attempting to answer these questions: (1) How does place affect the doctoral candidate's job search? (2) How does place affect the pedagogical choices of writing teachers?

In "Methodological Pluralism," Gesa Kirsch suggests that researchers who use multiple methodologies also engage in reflection. She specifically calls for "an open discussion of (1) the researcher's *relation* to the subject (the researcher's presence and authority are never neutral); (2) the *purpose* of the researcher's questions (they must be *grounded* in the subject's experience and be relevant to the subject); and (3) the researcher's *agenda* (it is never disinterested)" (256). I have chosen to divide my methodological

discussion among three chapters, in part, because I want readers to consider my methodology in direct relation to this introductory narrative as a way of disclosing my relation to the question at hand. As a doctoral candidate conducting her first job search, a teacher who uses place in her writing classes, *and* an academic who identifies with her home place, I am not neutral in discussions of how place matters to academics, and I hope that this introduction can serve as an articulation of the assumptions guiding my project. As Kirsch points out, all research is “necessarily interested, limited, and partial, no matter the methodology used” (258). I hope that by “unmasking” myself—interjecting my narrative into the Introduction and Chapter Four—I signal to readers that, like my participants, I am “situated” in a particular context (Chiseri-Strater 120), one that cannot be concealed or dismissed.

Data Collection

My research project includes the collection of quantitative and qualitative data from two different participant pools: (1) two surveys of doctoral candidates conducting a traditional job search in Rhetoric and Composition during the 2006-2007 academic year, and (2) one survey of writing teachers who self-identified as interested in place-based pedagogies. Taking a cue from Mary Sue MacNealy’s *Strategies for Empirical Research in Writing*, I chose to survey both participant pools because surveys allow for the collection of “opinions, preferences, beliefs, feelings, and other personal information” (148). More importantly, survey data allow me to generalize about two particular populations in Writing Studies (PhD candidates entering the job market and writing teachers using place in their classrooms). The surveys also allow me to establish the kind of relationship between place (geographical location) and job selection as well as place and pedagogical choices.

At the end of all three surveys, I solicited contact information from those participants willing to volunteer for follow-up interviews. In the spring of 2007, the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) drew a large contingency of rhetoric and composition faculty members and graduate students to New York, New York. I took advantage of the timing of the conference to conduct interviews with PhD candidates who were just wrapping up their job searches. In advance of the conference, I e-mailed forty-six volunteers. Five volunteered to meet at CCCCs. I pre-arranged a meeting place with the participants, relying on the hotel restaurant and coffee bar as a neutral and easily accessible location. Over the course of two days, I conducted four face-to-face interviews, recording the conversation with the verbal consent of each participant. (One participant forgot about our appointment.) I also conducted one instant message interview, and three phone interviews, which were also recorded with participants' verbal consent. Thirty-four writing teachers volunteered to participate in follow-up interviews to discuss their use of place-based pedagogy. I conducted ten follow-up phone interviews in the spring of 2007.

Before surveying or interviewing the two primary groups of human subjects, I received approval from TCU's Institutional Review Board to conduct human subject research. I also completed the necessary tutorial at <http://ohsr.od.nih.gov/cbt/>. To protect the participants' confidentiality, I removed identifying information from interview transcriptions, and I used pseudonyms in the narrative renderings of our interviews as well as in the materials included in the Appendix. All of the participants granted me written permission to publish any statements or writing through an informed consent form.

Data Analysis

Throughout Chapters Two and Three, I blend the quantitative data from surveys with qualitative information gathered during follow-up interviews to construct case studies (or snapshots) of the participants. In “The Narrative Roots of the Case Study,” Thomas Newkirk suggests that case studies have value because of their realism, their ability to convey “the gritty, day-to-day” details of the participants’ lives (133). I use a case study approach for this reason; I want to convey the realities faced by my participants. As a writer, however, I had to remember that particularities, especially those unique to the individual, remain a construction of the researcher. As researchers, we are often cautioned against being storytellers, but my project began with a story (my story, in fact), and I also want to tell the stories of my participants. Thus, the case studies presented in the following chapters do, in many respects, follow what Newkirk labeled “mythic narratives—deeply rooted story patterns that clearly signal to the reader the types of judgments to be made” (135). I construct narratives to challenge what I believe to be a core cultural value of the academy: belong to ideas not places. Thus, these case studies can be seen as advocacy studies; after all, I am recounting the experiences of participants who are affected by the academic value of placelessness and pointing out the experiences of participants who resist being affected by placelessness.

In “Ethnography and Composition: Studying Language at Home,” Beverly Moss recalls how her personal interest in a research site drew her to ethnographic research methods. Much like me, she wanted to find a way to make her scholarly life relevant for her personal life, or, as she says, “I knew then that I needed my scholarly life to have some real connection to my personal life, that I needed a bridge between what I saw as a rather large gap between academic research and real problems that affected the people where I came

from” (153). Moss sought out a research method that would allow her to be a part of the portrait, even as she captured the interactions, beliefs, and behaviors of a particular community. She decided to undertake an ethnography because “this methodology not only allows for but emphasizes the context that contributes to acts of writing and written products” (155). In this way, my case studies also incorporate ethnographic elements, particularly those presented in Chapter Three. First, these narrative renderings recall the original context for writing—the academics’ place(s). Second, they allow for emic perspectives (157). I depend on the participants’ narratives to explain their relationships with place and with the academy; rather than treating the participants’ syllabi and writing assignments as separate artifacts, I use these artifacts to expand on the participants’ verbal descriptions of the writing assignments as well as their explanations of the use of place in their classrooms. Thus, I construct “thick descriptions” based on the participants’ words and examples, ever mindful that “how the members make meaning and explain and interpret social actions in their communities” is the baseline for my discussion (Moss 157).

Project Overview

As I discuss in Chapter Two, university instructors and administrators are socialized to embody the values of their disciplines. As practitioners of their fields, they are taught how to observe and execute the disciplinary norms within their research and classrooms; they are sanctioned to uphold the expectations of the university through evaluations and promotions, and the ethos of rootlessness is part of this academic socialization. My study aims to investigate how place matters to academics in the face of (placeless) socialization, and I uncover the evidence behind this assumption by focusing on two key moments of

socialization—the doctoral candidate’s search for her first full-time job and the writing teacher’s decision to incorporate place into her writing classroom.

In Chapter Two, I use past issues of the *ADE Bulletin* to sketch out the historical transformation of the job search in English, noting its evolution from a person-to-person process into a more nationalized (often impersonal) process. Working from pre- and post-job search surveys I conducted with doctoral candidates in rhetoric and composition, I challenge the idea (circulating in published accounts and lore-based advice) that place is not and should not be a factor in the academic job search. My data indicate that (1) place matters to a majority of job search candidates even if (2) mentoring does not take their identification with place into account. Although the doctoral candidates were interested in the geographic location of a university and in the institutions as places, candidates received little to no advice about place, save the clichéd suggestion to “cast a wide net.” I conclude by responding to the claim that place does not matter to the PhD candidate who is searching for a job, arguing, instead, that *individual terroir* is a powerful and legitimate force in the job search.

In Chapter Three, I examine how writing instructors who self-identify as interested in place-based pedagogy are incorporating place into their classrooms. I analyze my national survey of place-based pedagogues and profile six case-study participants, focusing on three questions: Who is working with place and why? Where are place-based discussions occurring? How is place being incorporated into writing classrooms? Beginning with the instructor’s motivations for incorporating place into the writing classroom and drawing evidence from their writing assignments and syllabi, I argue that place is not a monolithic pedagogical approach but one dependent upon context for understanding.

If academics have an *individual terroir*, and place matters in the professional and pedagogical lives of academics, what are the implications for higher education and rhetoric and composition? In Chapter Four, I outline key changes for academia and rhetoric and composition as a discipline. For example, I propose including considerations of *individual terroir* throughout the mentoring process rather than encouraging candidates to “cast a wide net” when they begin their job search. Blending empirical research data with my own job search experiences, I call on mentors and candidates to balance *individual terroir* against the realities of the job search in rhetoric and composition. Finally, I discuss how my work with *individual terroir* can advance discussions of place. Namely, I call for place to be reconsidered as the context for all other experiences of difference; thus, rather than relying on a holy trinity of difference (race, class, and gender), academics can use a “matrix of difference” in their classrooms—a tool that considers all forms of difference (including place) in relation to the others rather than treating these cultural markers as independent, acontextual actors.

The word “topophilia” is a neologism, useful in that it can be defined broadly to include all of the human being’s affective ties with the material environment Topophilia is not the strongest of human emotions. When it is compelling we can be sure that the place or environment has become the carrier of emotionally charged events or perceived as a symbol.

-- Yi-Fu Tuan, *Topophilia*

All history is ultimately local and personal. To tell what we remember, and to keep on telling it, is to keep the past alive in the present. Should we not do so, we could not know, in the deepest sense, how to inhabit a place. To inhabit a place means literally to have made it a habit, to have made it the custom and ordinary practice of our lives, to have learned how to wear a place like a familiar garment, like the garments of sanctity that nuns once wore. The word habit, in its now-dim original form, meant to own. We own places not because we possess the deeds to them, but because they have entered the continuum of our lives. What is strange to us—unfamiliar—can never be home.

-- Paul Gruchow, *Grass Roots: The Universe of Home*

CHAPTER ONE

INDIVIDUAL TERROIR, OR HOW PLACE INFLUENCES IDENTITIES

As I alluded in the Introduction, discussions of place throughout this project are aimed at uncovering how considerations of place might complement and extend work being done on categories of cultural difference, such as race, class, gender, and sexual orientation. I open this chapter with an unconventional reading of a narrative offered by bell hooks, a reading intended to illustrate the relationship between place and other categories of cultural difference (see Chapter Four).

As a teacher, writer, and cultural critic, hooks is often recognized as an important contributor to contemporary discussions of critical pedagogy, race, and social class in rhetoric and composition. In *where we stand: class matters*, she reflects on her life experiences and theorizes class as a category of cultural difference. The book opens with hooks remembering the homes of her childhood: the concrete block house, which was “dark and cool like a cave” (10); Baba’s house, which was “a rambling two-story wood frame shack with rooms added on according to [her] temperament” (13); and Mr. Porter’s house,

which was her mother's dream because it was a "freshly painted big white house with a lovely front porch" (18). hooks offers a thick description of each home, culminating in a discussion of the class-based lesson she learned in each house. For example, the concrete house taught her how privacy and property are luxuries not always available to lower classes and how loneliness and fear may be the only available staples, especially if one is afraid of falling off a top bunk and "crack[ing] one's head wide open" on the concrete floor (11). Baba's house taught her that "[i]dleness and self-sufficiency did not go together" and that recycling meant repurposing because "nothing was ever thrown away and everything had a use" (14). The lessons learned in Baba's country house contrast with those she learned in her mother's dream house in the city, where Mr. Porter's house stood, in part, as the physical manifestation of her mother's class struggle—her mother was so "[d]etermined to move on up" that she moved her family "from the country into the city, out of the concrete box into Mr. Porter's house" (18). hooks recalls, "Even though we knew that mama spent her teenage years wanting to run away from this backwoods house and old ways, to have new things, store-bought things, no one talked about class" (17). hooks explains how she learned about class through the lens of these three different places, but she does not comment on the relationship between class and place. She does not connect the places of her past with her class-identity development, nor does she reflect on her mother's desire for social mobility through the (seemingly obvious) rural-to-urban transition.

Place is not the primary focus of hooks' critique, but as a scholar interested in the relationship between place and difference, I cannot help but notice that hooks learned about class in different places and in different homes; in fact, she seems to be following the directive of Gaston Bachelard in *The Poetics of Space*. As David A. Gruenewald

summarizes, Bachelard “asks his readers to remember a house in which they used to live—its details and nuances, what life was lived there—as an example of how places, memory, experience, and identity are woven together over time” (“Foundations” 625). Though the places of her childhood may read as passive settings and not active agents in hooks’ original text, she frames each lesson she learned about class—about being self-sufficient, being lonely and afraid, being frugal and recycling—in a *particular* house with its *particular* context and circumstances. As a writer, she may have been more interested in outlining the characteristics of social class, but the relationship between place and class is there. She cannot discuss these lessons as acontextual; instead, she presents each lesson as individual and separate but also interdependent, as they all worked together to form her holistic understanding of class.

As a reader of the text, I cannot know why hooks describes class in three homes but does not describe how those homes scaffold the nuances and variations of her class lessons. Given the detailed descriptions of her relationships with each place, it does not appear that hooks holds a disaffected attitude towards her childhood homes. I suspect that hooks does not consider the context for her social class experiences because, in many ways, discussions of place often have little cultural capital in academe.¹ By recounting three distinctive narratives in three particular locations, hooks (perhaps unintentionally) illustrates a powerful point raised repeatedly by cultural geographers: we do not experience difference—be it race, class, gender, sexual orientation, or physical ability—on the head of a pin. Difference is inextricable from context, from place.

¹ I do wish to acknowledge that people will experience multiple cultural differences as having different levels of importance; as such, I am certain that social class was more acute for hooks, especially when she enrolled in Stanford as a southern black woman. However, her discussion of class is context-bound, and it contains overtones of rural-versus-urban dichotomies that are as much about place as they are about class.

I open this chapter with an alternative reading of hooks' text because I want to point out how her understanding of class, its operations, and her identity are connected to the locations of her past—in this case, the three homes of her childhood. I also want to point out that place was present but overlooked in her original textual explication of difference and identity because, as I suggest, place is often seen as the setting for difference rather than a part of the experience of difference. In the rest of this chapter, I theorize how place matters for academic identities by unpacking the term *individual terroir*, a concept which accounts for place not simply as the setting of our experiences but an active agent in the contextualizing of experience, learning, and relationships.

Defining Individual Terroir

Vidalia onions. Idaho potatoes. Florida oranges. Muscatine cantaloupes. Parma prosciutto. Modena balsamic vinegar. Ask a foodie about any of these items and watch the knowing response. Better yet, ask a sommelier to recommend a wine to accompany these foods, and the recommendation will likely include a passing reference to the term *terroir*. A quintessential French term often translated as “a sense of place,” *terroir* refers to the way in which wine, coffee, and other foods embody the place where they are grown. *Terroir* captures the belief that goods take on the taste of the place where they are grown and suggests that foods produced in and by a particular region are unique to that place. When not simply translated as “terrain” or “earth,” the term *terroir* captures “the way foods and wine express the soil, climate, culture and tradition of a region” (Black). As James Wilson notes in *Terroir: The Role of Geology, Climate, and Culture in the Making of French Wines*, “[t]he true concept is not easily grasped but includes physical elements of the vineyard habitat—the vine, subsoil, siting, drainage, and microclimate. Beyond the measurable ecosystem, there is

an additional dimension—the spiritual aspect that recognizes the joys, the heartbreaks, the pride, the sweat, and the frustrations of its history” (55). Thus, the concept of *terroir* brings together the physical and spiritual (or psychological) effects of a place on wine.

In her 2007 article “The Geography of Flavor,” Jane Black introduced *Washington Post* readers to Arlin Wasserman, a Minneapolis consultant credited with bringing *terroir* to the United States. Wasserman is credited with introducing farmers and manufacturers to a new way to sell food. His sales pitch was simple: Don’t market goods based on price alone; market them based on where the food comes from and how it is grown. Focusing on phrases that capture a business perspective, like “identity preservation” and “geographic identity,” Wasserman found himself working with a variety of clients from General Mills to Amish goat farmers—each one hoping to follow the path of the Lummi Island salmon co-op, who identified themselves with “a strong sense of place” and modernized a traditional Native American fishing method. The benefit of advertising their goods through the lens of traditional techniques and location was \$2.00 more per pound of salmon wholesale.

Wasserman’s story illustrates how *terroir* often operates as a benefit in today’s economy, as a distinguishing and beneficial feature of food and wine, and Wilson’s definition accounts for both the physical and spiritual aspects of *terroir*. Both writers, however, acknowledge the difficulties of translating this term. In Wilson’s estimation, any “working definition” of the concept should acknowledge that scholars and researchers dispute the specific influences that compose *terroir*. At its most restrictive, *terroir* refers to the soil in which vines are grown. At its most expansive, the concept refers to a variety of elements, including (but not limited to) soil type, geology, aspect, and altitude. Also in dispute is the positive spin often given to *terroir*. In their article, “Talk Dirt to Me,” Harold

McGee and Daniel Patterson note the phrase can be traced to the seventeenth-century phrase *goût de terroir*, or “taste of the earth” (para. 2). It wasn’t until 1831 that the term gained a positive connotation after a Burgundy landowner, Dr. Morelot, noticed the similarities between wines grown in the rocky soil of the region. Morelot reasoned it was the geology producing the distinct flavors of the wine, and it is his reasoning that carries over into modern understandings. Though wine enthusiasts and producers often debate how quantifiable *terroir* is in the taste of a wine—just how much you can actually “taste the earth” in a glass of wine and how much taste variations should be attributed to human interventions rather than natural or environmental variations—even the most skeptical anti-*terroir* critic is hard-pressed to dispute that plants, when rooted in the earth, are affected by the characteristics of the soil and its surrounding region.

Sommeliers, cheese makers, salmon-fisherman, and onion farmers understand how location affects the end product. Academics, in comparison, often resist discussions about how place matters to professional identity, thus allowing the academy to operate largely as a placeless institution, one in which overt and covert messages including the ethos of rootlessness suggest that place should not matter in the life of the intellectual. Academic resistance to a place-based intellectual identity can be traced (at least in part) to the identity politics of being and becoming an intellectual, which often assume a universal rather than place-specific perspective. As Barbara Ching and Gerald Creed note in *Knowing Your Place: Rural Identity and Cultural Hierarchy*, academe has long resisted place because

[i]n the West, few intellectuals have deep rural roots, and for those who do, education often severs these connections. The traditional pedagogical agenda, with its emphasis on enlightenment through the liberal arts, has long been

opposed to the supposed essence of rusticity—lack of cultural sophistication and a preference for practical know-how over erudition. (10)

Ching and Creed focus on the rural-versus-urban dichotomy that seems to permeate academia in order to scaffold their discussion of place because there is a place hierarchy; being attached to large cities and urban centers is not viewed as negatively as being attached to small towns. But one does not need to be rural (or have an affinity for a small town) to have a relationship with place. (Again, I wish to note that those academics with a rural association are often the individuals giving voice to these issues.) Ching and Creed’s larger claim—that the institution stifles place-based identities through its “educational displacement” (10)—mirrors Zencey’s position on the ethos of rootlessness. In many ways, academics gain social power and respect from belonging to a world of ideas and theories rather than a material and everyday place. After all, linking our identities to something “as seemingly fixed as land” may lead to an identity that is “more immutable and ‘essential’ than radical constructionism would allow” (Ching 12). It is a misconception in higher education that by attaching identities to place, we are subscribing to explicitly essential constructions of identity and self. Acknowledging the connection between identity and place does not have to be parochial or naïve; instead, it may allow academics to consider more fully how *who* they are is socially constructed because people and places are both social constructions (as I argue later in this chapter).

Academe’s subtle and overt messages of placelessness contradict and dismiss *individual terroir*—the way in which place affects who academics are and what they do—as merely an affective experience. Thus, academics who wish to embrace place must find ways to either conform to or subvert the placeless assumptions dominating academic discourses

without risking professional advancement and reputation. A full interrogation of *individual terroir*, however, can disrupt the dominant academic narrative, interjecting considerations of place into discussions about academic identity and pedagogical practice. In the coming chapters, I use *individual terroir* as my interpretative lens. By focusing on how our identities are not inherent to us but produced in relation to place, I explain why many job candidates factor place into the academic job search and why many writing teachers use place in their writing classrooms. Together, these considerations suggest ways in which place can be an agent in the identity formation of academics, suggesting that place is far more than just a setting in which we live and work.

Defining Place

What is place? Is it a location? Is it a building? Is it a state of mind? To understand how academics can be affected by *individual terroir*, we must consider the multiple definitions of this nebulous term. Providing a scholarly definition for place, one that encompasses all its varied uses but is still understandable, is difficult. The word “place” is, after all, not a specialized academic term, like rhetoric or critical pedagogy. It is a word that we use every day in the English-speaking world (Cresswell 1). We use the term to agree on geographical locations: “Are we meeting at your place?” We also use the term in idiomatic expressions, referring to psychological and social positioning: “She sure put me in my place.” Our daily discussions may be filled with vague references, but we rarely consider what we mean when we use the term “place.”

For example, in the spring of 2007, I began my sophomore writing course with a brief survey of the students’ relationships with place. I wanted to know where they were from, if they were attached to their hometowns, and the characteristics they value in place. The

students stared at me blankly when they read the fourth question on their surveys: “Define the term ‘place’.” For some, the question seemed too simple, but as they began to write, discrepancies appeared. Some students immediately made a connection between “place” and social relationships. One student responded, “Home.” Another said, “The term place, for me, is synonymous with home/family.” Other students included qualifications and criteria in their definitions: “It is a location, somewhere where something is or maybe [*sic*], somewhere with a purpose,” said one student. Another went even further: “A place is a certain area that you can set apart from others. A place can have significance to it or just be a spot that is separate from its surroundings—distinguishable from it’s [*sic*] background or areas around surrounding.”

In academic settings, common sense definitions of place are further complicated by the term’s popularity across the disciplines. Geographers, sociologists, historians, political theorists, philosophers, psychologists, and (some) educators (seem to) recognize the influence of place on human activities, and this cross-disciplinary interest has resulted in a blurring of disciplinary knowledge: social scientists borrow concepts and theories from the geographers who borrow ideas about place from the humanities. Because definitions of place vary depending on external and interdisciplinary influences, it is helpful to return to the foundational work of geography, the discipline charged with considerations of place when reconstructing a working definition.

The disciplinary work of geography appears to have one goal: “the study of physical and human landscapes, the processes that affect them, how and why they change over time, and how and why they vary spatially” (Geography). The discipline’s early focus on the physical dimensions of the earth’s surface are reflected in Richard Hartshorne’s 1939

publication, *The Nature of Geography*. In this text, Hartshorne focuses on “the actual character of geographic work” (10-11). He reviews past and present publications on geography to “determine what kind of study [geography] is” (11); namely, he wants to know if the concern of geography is human geography or physical geography, animate or inanimate phenomena (64). Hartshorne argues that the discipline should be focused on the observable phenomenon of the earth’s surface and not the relationships between places on earth and humans, and he concludes that geography must recognize “its own distinctive purpose,” which he believes is “to observe and analyze earth features composed of the interrelations of diverse elements with each other” (80). He hopes that his arguments will transform geography into a legitimate, scientific field. The work of regional geographers best represents Hartshorne’s emphasis on the natural phenomenon of the earth as geography’s purpose, for they focus on “specifying and describing the differences between the areas of the earth’s surface” (Cresswell 16). Regional geographers draw borders to separate and classify regions based on their differences, a practice referred to as “chorology,” or “a spatial version of ‘chronology’” (16).

Hartshorne’s work also represents the early roots of geography as a university subject. As a discipline, geography first studied “particular places, both their human and environmental aspects” (Castree 168), and geographic studies often identified the quantifiable characteristics of the region and discussed the interaction of man with the land (culture). By studying “man-land relationships” (168), geography was seen as the academic discipline most capable of bridging the human and natural sciences. The observations of man and land would change in the 1950s. During World War II, geographers drafted into the military realized they were ill-equipped to perform the tasks assigned by the military and

intelligence communities (Castree 169). Their descriptive understanding of regional areas did not mesh with the need for scientific data and quantifiable statistics. To save itself as a discipline, geography responded to the cultural clout of academe, turning to rigorous scientific methods as a way to legitimize itself. Thus, geography began to mirror the “scientific and quantitative revolution” (Burton qtd. in Castree 169).

By 1962, however, resistance to the solely scientific study of human activity began to surface, and just as rhetoric and composition responded to the social and cultural changes of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, so, too, did geography answer the call for greater disciplinary responsibility to and understanding of human lives.² Cultural geographers opposed the earlier work of regional geographers, arguing that a “man-land” approach to geographic study amounted to environmental determinism—the belief that “the characteristics of human settlement (culture) were largely a response to environmental imperatives.” Cultural geographers did not believe that “environment determined society and culture” (Creswell 17). Instead, they advocated for an analysis of “the ways in which cultural groups affect and change their natural habitats” (17). Thus, in the 1970s, these “humanistic geographers” reintroduced the “the subjective, qualitative and emotional aspects of human existence” into geographical studies (Castree 170).

Moving from objective analysis to more subjective experience, the rise of humanistic geography signifies an important shift for definitions of place. The study of place no longer meant the researcher would focus solely on a point on the earth’s surface. Instead, the researcher was invested in recovering “people’s varying sense of place” (Castree 170). As research began to examine “how different individuals and groups, within and between places,

² I am thinking specifically about composition’s acknowledgement of the needs of first-generation writers and basic writers, the interjection of feminist theory into pedagogical practices, and the ground swell of support for critical pedagogies in response to the needs to LGTB students as well as students of color.

both interpret and develop meaningful attachments to those specific areas where they live out their lives,” place found new meaning and new purpose (Castree 170). Physical geographers continued to operate as the “earth-and-dirt” geographers, studying primarily landforms, water, climate, and meteorology—the work most people associate with geography. Human geographers also shared an interest in the physical landscape of the earth, but they began distinguishing themselves by studying “the characteristics and phenomena of the earth’s surface that relate directly to or are due to human activities” (“Geography”). It is their interest in the social, political, cultural, and economic processes of daily life and the connection between these processes and human activity which distinguish human geographers from physical geographers. Another way to distinguish between physical geography and human geography is to consider how each has been influenced by outside theoretical movements. With some exceptions, most physical geographers “have ignored postmodern, postcolonial, or poststructural attempts to deconstruct, critique or reconstruct languages of space and place” (Hubbard et al. 3).

On the human geography side of the discipline, however, feminist geographers embrace postmodern theories, as reflected in their critique of the discipline. Geography is a profession that has long been dominated by men, and this male domination resulted in a number of unstated assumptions within the field. The result was a limited research field, one in which most geographers concentrated only on those spaces, places, and landscapes seen as men’s domains and realms. For Gillian Rose and other feminist geographers, the historically masculine focus of geography limits knowledge (particularly knowledge about feminine spaces, such as the home) and engrains an attitude about “what counts as legitimate geographical knowledge and who can produce such knowledge” (2). Feminist geographers

have been able to identify male domination within the discipline by relying on poststructuralist theoretical movements that investigate identity formation and subjectivity.

Regardless of theoretical perspective(s), place is a central theme for geography, and the work of human geographers has distinguished place from space. As Cresswell alludes in *Place: A Short Introduction*, geography began focusing on space rather than region (or place) in an attempt to fit with the “nomothetic or generalizing impulse of science” (19)—part of the post-World War II push for greater scientific legitimacy. The particulars of place no longer had capital in the generalizable realm of a post-enlightenment world. Spaces were understood to be “empirical, objective, and mappable” (Rose 4) areas that could be studied using scientific methods and geometry. As the cultural and social shifts of the 1970s made their way into the academy, geographers came to regard space as “inherently caught up in social relations, both socially produced and consumed” (Rose 4-5).

The term “place” emerged to refer to a particular space. Space has long been seen as a container—something outside of daily human experiences. Space did not impact daily life; instead, space was the canvas on which daily life unfolded, a “surface on which the relationships between (measurable) things were played out” (Rose 4). Unlike the empirical and objective space, the more particular term “place” represents “a distinctive (and more-or-less bounded) type of space that is defined by (and constructed in terms of) the lived experiences of people,” which allows place subsequently to provide individuals with a “locus for identity” (5). Places are not a canvas on which daily life unfolds. Rather, places encompass people and their interactions with others, allowing for “a sense of belonging” for the people who live in the place. Disciplinary conversations in geography soon centered on

humans in a particular place. Place became a location—the realm of the “particular, the limited, the local, and the bound” (Escobar 143 qtd. in Creswell 19).

Like Theologian Philip Sheldrake, I believe that “the concept of place refers not simply to geographical location but to a dialectical relationship between environment and human narrative” (1). In order for place and human narrative (experience) to have a dialectical relationship, place must be defined with an eye towards multiple and encompassing experiences. For the purposes of this project, therefore, I define place as a location, a locale, and a sense of place. To experience place is to first encounter a particular place in a larger space, which is why place begins as a (geographic) location. All places have a fixed coordinate on Earth, after all. For instance, the location of McLean, Texas, is 35.23287° N 100.59995° W. The location of McLean is also 72 miles east of Amarillo and 20 miles west of Shamrock. This location is both constant and stable, but as feminist geographers Doreen Massey and Linda McDowell have argued, defining places as fixed and stable locations is problematic. They suggest, instead, that places are not so much singular, fixed, and unproblematic as they are areas of open and porous networks of social relations. Throughout this project, I am working with a definition of place that begins with the notion of a fixed and stable geographic location, but just as my definition of place has three interdependent components, I recognize the importance of McDowell’s argument: places are made through power relations which construct the rules which define the boundaries (4). Thus, my definition does not limit itself to location or a fixed coordinate on a map.

As sailors in a submarine or tourists on a cruise ship might attest, the location of a place need not be stationary, and we don’t experience environmental surroundings as fixed coordinates. Rather, we experience place as a locale, or as “a material setting for social

relations” (Cresswell 7). The locale of a place, like a place’s location, is experienced in material terms, but there is a difference in scale. You can find a location on Google maps, but to find a place’s locale, you must find the people. That is, you must find the sites within the places where interpersonal communications and interactions happen. It is through these human interactions, through the concept of locale, that humans “produce and consume meaning” (7), which means that places are physical sites with unique geographical and environmental characteristics (location), but places are also those sites in which human interaction takes place (locale). (For many people who use the term “place,” the reference usually means a locale, especially when the individual’s focus is on the constitution of place through human interactions.) The experience of a locale through human interactions leads to a third understanding of place. An individual’s “sense of place” is based on her attachments to a place because of human relationships, which can often (but not always) foster belonging and attachment. If place is defined in three ways—as a location, as a locale, and as a sense of place—then place can be seen to have “a determining influence on the way people behave, the way they think, the rhythm of their lives and their relationships” (Sheldrake 4).

By defining place as a location, a locale, and a sense of place, I account for multiple degrees of investment and various forms of attachment. As the participants in Chapters Two and Three demonstrate, individuals are not simply attached to their home sites or college towns; they are also detached from locations and attached to locales (or the people they have relationships with in those locations). In the context of my study, the dominant feature of place is experience, and relying on a three-part definition of place allows my study to fill in the gaps of previous work, accounting not just for the locations of our past or present but also

considering how human relationships and interactions feed into place, thus complicating and personalizing how place matters for academics.

Moving towards Individual Terroir: Complicating Definitions of Place

Humans are not grapevines or coffee beans bound to the earth by roots, which are dependent upon rainfall, sunlight, and soil conditions, so extracting a theory of how place matters to academic identity from an understanding of wine and coffee is somewhat problematic. Academics are not plants, but we are “grounded” in that we rely upon places to aid in the formation of our identities, regardless of our attachments to and feelings towards place(s). Even as I suggest that academics are grounded, I do not mean that an individual must love her hometown; in fact, she does not even need a hometown to be grounded because, regardless of attachment or investment, she is living in some place. Thus, as I move forward with this discussion of *individual terroir*, note how this discussion nods towards multiplicity; that is, having defined human relationships with place as *individual terroir*—with equal weight given to location, locale, and sense of place—I consider both the reflective considerations of place (those focused on past relationships and investments with place) as well as speculative considerations (those focused on current and future investments in place). An individual can, therefore, be grounded in the places of her past but also in her present places, and both locations can serve as powerful sources of positioning.

Edward Relph argues in *Place and Placelessness* that “[t]o have roots in a place is to have a secure point from which to look out on the world, a firm grasp of one’s own position in the order of things, and a significant spiritual and psychological attachment to somewhere in particular” (38). Simon Weil advances Relph’s point in *The Need for Roots*. An

individual's roots, Weil suggests, supply not only an individual perspective on the world but they also act as the source for holistic development:

To be rooted is perhaps the most important and least recognized need of the human soul. It is the hardest to define. A human being has roots by virtue of his *real, active and natural participation in the life of the community*

This participation is a natural one in the sense that it is automatically brought about by place, conditions of birth, profession, and social surroundings. Every human being needs to have *multiple roots*. It is necessary for him to draw well-nigh the whole of his moral, intellectual and spiritual life by way of the environment of which he forms a part. (53, emphasis added)

Relp and Weil describe the psychological and spiritual benefits of “rootedness.” These perspectives are significant because rootedness is a loaded term, particularly for individuals who have negative experiences associated with their home sites. According to Relp and Weil, the term “rootedness” need not mean an individual is physically connected to a single spot on the Earth; rather, their explanations imply that roots must be real and active. So even though the term “rootedness” may imply a historical or long-standing psychological relationship with place—roots run deep is the cliché—individual experiences may load and warp the term rootedness (changing its meaning for each individual). Therefore, the term captures the idea of transplantation (roots can be moved) as well as reintegration (roots can be multiple). Just as a grape growing on a vine in the Bordeaux region of France does not have the same taste as a grape growing on a vine in Fredericksburg, Texas, so, too, are humans affected by the people, culture, climate, region, landscape, and socioeconomic features that compose the places in which they have lived. An individual may not be

conscious of the interaction between her self and her place (as I suggested in my reading of hooks' text), but these places and experiences work together to compose her *individual terroir*.

Place as a Continuum of Experience

I began my discussion of *individual terroir* and place by parsing, at least superficially, the differences between “place” and “space.” Space is the universal canvas on which life unfolds, but place is the specific context for our daily lives. Space is general and objective. Place is limited and subjective. As I noted, place is also often discussed in three primary ways: as a location, as a locale, and as a sense of place. The 1976 publication of Edward Relph's *Place and Placelessness* marks a shift to a more humanist approach in geography as a discipline. He believes “the foundations of geographical knowledge lie in the direct experiences and consciousness we have of the world we live in” (4), and his central claim in the book is that the only way to understand place is to recognize that “[t]o be human is to live in a world that is filled with significant places: to be human is to have and to know your place” (1). Relph grounds his understanding of place as a component of human experience in practical knowledge of places, in the everyday and mundane fact of our knowing where to enact our lives. By doing so, he offers a renewed focus on place as a concept that expresses “an attitude to the world that emphasize[s] subjectivity and experience rather than the cool, hard logic of spatial science,” which is why Relph's work is often read as a reaction against the previous more quantifiable, scientific focus on space (20).

According to Relph, space is “amorphous and intangible and not an entity that can be directly described or analysed” (8). Places, in contrast, can be described and analyzed because they cannot be separated from “their conceptual and experiential context” (8). Place

is not simply a more specific space; place is that environmental context knowable only through varying degrees of personal interaction. Humans can only know place through experience, which leads Relph to suggest that place is an actor in human experience, not simply the setting in which we live our lives. This relationship between the individual and her place is indisputable:

Places are fusions of human and natural order and are the significant centres of our immediate experiences of the world. They are defined less by unique locations, landscape, and communities than by the focusing of experiences and intentions onto particular settings. Places are not abstractions or concepts, but are directly experienced phenomena of the lived-world and hence are full with meanings, with real objects, and with ongoing activities. *They are important sources of individual and communal identity, and are often profound centres of human existence to which people have deep emotional and psychological ties.* Indeed our relationships with places are just as necessary, varied, and sometimes perhaps just as unpleasant, as our relationships with other people. (141, emphasis added)

By equating human-to-place relationships with human-to-human relationships, Relph challenges geographers to re-examine how place matters in human existence. More importantly, he puts place into an interdependent relationship with human development. Filled with meaning and activity, place supports identity development in individuals and communities. (Again, this relationship between individual and place is not monolithic or singular, but varied and complex.)

To reinforce the idea that place is an actor in human experience, and not merely a setting, Relph complicates his use of the term “location.” He reminds readers that residences may be mobile (think about the earlier examples of a submarine and cruise ship). By noting that locations are not always physically stable, he simultaneously argues that just as “mobility or nomadism do not preclude an attachment to place,” having a stable and fixed “location or position is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition of place, even if it is a very common condition” (29). Relph, quite accurately, demonstrates that an individual need not be attached to a specific geographical location in order to consider her relationship with place any more than she needs to have just one, lifelong homeplace. Places can be actors in human experience even if we have lived in multiple places and even if our places have changed significantly. The location of the place and the length of the individual’s relationship to that location are secondary to her unique relationship, investment, and attachment in the place itself. As I suggested earlier, there is no monolithic or universal experience of place, for, as Relph argues, “[a]ll places and landscapes are individually experienced, for we alone see them through the lens of our attitudes, experiences, and intentions, and from our own unique circumstances” (36). Each individual must not only determine her relationship with place, but she must also use her experiences, attitudes, and intentions to frame and understand her relationships with places, and this assessment can be made of past places or current places. It doesn’t matter. What does matter, according to Relph, is that an individual uses direct experiences to arrive at a direct relationship with place. Relph suggests that a direct experience of place can be equally profound, and whether it is an abrupt and ecstatic experience, or a slowly developed, gently grown

involvement, what is important is the sense that this place is uniquely and privately your own because your experience of it is distinctly personal. (37)

Just as brothers and sisters share divergent memories of childhood events, every person has individualized experiences of place. To help individuals reflect on their relationships with place, Relph devises a continuum of experience, which tracks conscious and unconscious experiences of place as well as individual and collective interactions.

According to Relph, humans interact with place through particularities, but they also interact with places in abstract, theoretical ways; thus, our interactions with and understandings of place can be experiential and corporeal, but they can also be emotional and intangible. He represents this variation with a continuum, in which direct experience is on one end of the spectrum, and abstract thought is at the other end. The continuum distinguishes between corporeal, concrete experiences of place (what he terms primitive space) and epistemological, abstract relationships with place (what he terms existential space). By imagining human experiences of place along Relph's continuum, I avoid arbitrarily separating location, locale, and sense of place into three separate encounters with place; instead, I conceive of our experiences of place as malleable and multiple—constantly slipping from the primitive to the existential and back again. That is, each new understanding of place and each new relationship between place and the individual builds on the previous one even as understandings may shift.

As humans born into the world, we first experience place as a concrete location. We are firmly entrenched in direct experience, and we experience place in an instinctual and unselfconscious way. Relph labels this experience-driven aspect “primitive space.” It is the most basic interaction between the individual and place, one in which place is a concrete,

physical space in which the individual lives her life. Picture a baby crawling around the rooms of a house. For the baby, place is simply a space in which she acts and moves. Her body moves through these multiple and differing physical environments—in this example, the rooms of her home. She has no conscious reflection on the changing locations. She does not reflect on her relationship to each new location (Relph 8). Primitive space is important, however, because the baby learns to orient herself in relation to the rest of the world through primitive space. Only by being physically situated in a place can she learn the difference between left and right, above and below, in front of and behind (Relph 9).

Humans do not spend the entirety of their lives experiencing place in a purely physiological manner, however. Just as the baby moves from one stage of understanding to another—think of Piaget’s schemas for infant cognitive development—humans come to understand place on increasingly abstract levels. We move from the purely physical orientations of a location (or primitive space) to the relationship-driven and emotionally framed locale (or perceptual space). If we move unconsciously through primitive space, then we move consciously through perceptual space, which Relph defines as an “egocentric space perceived and confronted by each individual.” While primitive space is a largely physiological experience, one marked by a body interacting with external objects in an environment, perceptual space, on the other hand, is “the realm of direct emotional encounters with the spaces of the earth, sea, and sky or with built and created spaces” (Relph 10). As we become aware of ourselves in relation to places, we move from simply being physically oriented in the world to being psychically connected to physical aspects of place. As the baby grows and develops, she no longer simply orients her body in locations by crawling from room to room in her house. Soon she begins associating particular places with

specific emotions and interactions rather than observing these places as physical or environmental markers. For instance, the baby, now a toddler, walks in front of the glass door in the family living room just as the family dog barks at a squirrel in the backyard. The sound startles and frightens the baby, and she begins to cry. In that moment, the living room isn't just around her or behind her; the room has become a frightening, loud place. The parents know there is no danger, but for the baby, the living room has an emotional and psychological resonance it did not have before. The living room is no longer a neutral or primitive space; it is now an emotional, perceptual space.

Perceptual spaces are filled with “content and meaning” because “they cannot be divorced from experiences and intentions” (Relph 10). As we experience the world, we organize perceptual spaces into clusters of personal significance, such as the community park we visited as a child, a grandmother's farm on the outskirts of town, or the restaurant where a partner proposed. Because perceptual spaces connect experience and emotion to place, they form the foundation for *individual terroir*. Remember that definitions of *terroir* include both physical and spiritual aspects of place. The region's winter rainfall amounts and the grower's attempts to stave off a freeze influence the wine's final flavor. Similarly the physical elements and spiritual aspects of a place affect the individual, and *individual terroir* is composed of the geographic location(s) of an individual's place(s) and the content and meaning infused into those locations by emotional and experiential encounters. Perceptual spaces are filled with meaning and emotion, and, as such, these spaces provide the contextual situations within which our roles and identities are formed.

As I have already noted, an individual's first experience of place is as a physiological site of personal orientation. We look around ourselves as small children and locate the

familiar, anchoring ourselves to a location within a place. This is also true when we encounter a new place for the first time. For example, when we arrive in a new city, we often pull out our map, look left and look right, and pinpoint a landmark or building to help us distinguish North from South and East from West. But we soon move from physiological connections to psychological experiences in locations. We move beyond our singular world views to more collective, culturally shaped perspectives, which is possible only as we develop more abstract understandings of the world. After all, places are more than the physical realms in which we orient ourselves in the world, and places are more than the locations to which we attach emotional experiences. As Relph notes, places can also be existential spaces, which are “intersubjective.” According to Relph, existential spaces are amenable to a group of individuals, all of whom have been “socialized according to a common set of experiences, signs, and symbols” (Relph 12). One way to differentiate an existential space from perceptual space is to focus on existential spaces as the “inner structure of space as it appears to us in our concrete experiences of the world as member of a cultural group” (12). Perceptual spaces and existential spaces, therefore, are both sites of emotional investments, but existential spaces build upon perceptual spaces by assigning larger social investments to places. As Gillian Rose notes in her essay “Place and Identity: A Sense of Place,” an individual’s sense of place may be personal and unique, but it is “not entirely the result of one individual’s feelings and meanings; rather, such feelings and meanings are shaped in large part by the social, cultural and economic circumstances in which individuals find themselves” (89). So even though an individual experiences places in multiple ways, an important determiner of place-based experience remains social relationships. Places are physical locations in which we live, but places are also

intersubjective, social locations in which we come to know who we are through (socially mediated) experiences.

Perceptual and existential spaces are essential to understanding *individual terroir* because they are intertwined with the emotional experiences of individuals and the larger social and power structures that influence the socialization of academics. In the coming chapters, I discuss how place matters for PhD Candidates on the job market. Thinking about perceptual spaces will help us understand why, as explained in Chapter Two, candidates targeted particular regions of the country as well as particular institutional settings; thinking about existential spaces and how place is socialized out of academic thinking will also help us understand why candidates did not feel comfortable sharing their investments in locations with their institutional mentors. In Chapter Three, when considering how place matters for writing teachers employing place-based pedagogies, thinking about perceptual spaces will help us understand the teachers' original interest in place-based pedagogy; thinking about existential spaces will also help us understand the kinds of writing assignments the teachers composed for their classes. Thus, in subsequent chapters when I speak about how participants' *individual terroir* affects their professional and pedagogical identity within academe, I am referencing their perceptual spaces (which are sources of individual meaning) and their existential spaces (which are sources of collective meaning capable of "being created and remade by human activities") (Relph 12).

Place Matters in Writing Studies

The relationship between the individual and her place is not a new concept in educational theory. In fact, teachers and scholars have long recognized that there are "nonhuman environmental factors that affect the learning of students" (Simpson 60), and

these nonhuman factors include the material conditions of neighborhoods and school facilities as well as the economic circumstances of families and the cultures of schools and classrooms. Educational theory has not always been integrated into contemporary writing studies research, but John Dewey's work on the ecological dimension of learning is an important foundation for understanding the relationship between place, experience, and learning. For instance, he notes that

we live from birth to death in a world of persons and things which in large measure is what it is because of what has been done and transmitted from previous human activities. When this fact is ignored, experience is treated as if it were something which goes on exclusively inside an individual's body and mind. It ought not to be necessary to say that experience does not occur in a vacuum. There are sources outside an individual which give rise to experience. It is constantly fed from these springs. No one would question that a child in a slum tenement has a different experience from that of a child in a cultured home; that the country lad has a different kind of experience from the city boy, or a boy on the seashore one different from the lad who is brought up on inland prairies. (*Later Works* 13:22)

Dewey asserts that the location in which the experience occurs gives rise to aspects of that experience—place and experience work together to form a framework through which the individual can make sense of both. Dewey also asserts that we shouldn't have to draw attention to the geographical and environmental aspects of place in experience, but more often than not scholars, teachers, and theorists in writing studies fail to recognize the contextual and material experiences of our students and, for the purposes of this project,

ourselves. We are socialized into a profession where place matters less than ideas; in turn, we often assume that the local, specific, material, subjective, mundane, and contextual experiences that shaped us prior to entering the academy matter less than the global, abstract, and objective evidence we can offer students through ideas and theories. But as Dewey's explication highlights, the material conditions experienced by students prior to entering the classroom are factors in their education. In fact, the experiences of all those involved in educational activities act as "bodies of understanding and ways of thinking that influence learning" (Simpson 70). The instructor, therefore, is part of the curricula because she "communicates what she understands and thinks about educational materials, subject matter, social concerns, and other students to each student" (71). Students, accordingly, are not simply learning and absorbing the written, sanctioned, and approved curriculum; they are also absorbing the personal interactions of the sponsors involved in their education.³ As a result, the experiences of the teacher become as important as the experiences of the student, and the positions, ideas, and topics valued by the instructor can become one possible vehicle for instruction. Many of us, who were once students, are also affected by these earlier interactions with place as well as our contemporary interactions. *Individual terroir* does not have an expiration date, an "expires before conferral of PhD" clause. If place mattered for many of us as students, as Dewey suggests, then it may still matter for us as academics—even if we are socialized not to consider place and even if we are not comfortable considering its effects.

Composition studies gives weight and respect to experience as part of its intellectual tradition (see Elbow 1998 and Spigelman 2004, among many others). As writing instructors,

³ This is, in fact, one of the central claims of my project. Our classrooms are not neutral sites, and our perceptions and attitudes about place can influence our pedagogical choices as well as our students' willingness to share their place-based experiences.

we teach students to value experience by encouraging them to write personal narratives, but, while we are valuing their experiences, we do not always teach them to examine their experiences in context, nor do we consider the contexts of our own experiences. To fully appreciate the value of experience in our classrooms, we must recognize all the players' experiences—our students' and our own—as contextual and material. We need to account for the place-based dimensions of experiences instead of effectively asking everyone involved to leave context (place) behind.

In recent decades, a number of movements within writing studies have been working to reintegrate place into the educational experience. The work done by these scholars is crucial for my study, which is why I'll consider these movements at length. However, while all of these approaches influence my theory of *individual terroir* in some way, I suggest that most are limited because they tend to focus on place as either a location, a locale, or a sense of place. They often dwell on only one aspect of place rather than looking for multiplicity and gradations in experiences of place. Moreover, the scholars focus almost exclusively on student writing and student experience. By and large, academic work on place has not focused on the place-based experiences of professors, and when there are exceptions to this rule—as demonstrated by the authors of *Placing the Academy*, *Black Earth and Ivory Tower*, and *Rooted in the Land*—the work is positioned as either an academic memoir (one expounding on the connections between rural life and academia) or as personal essays (often aimed at revaluing community and place). In the memoirs and essays, the relationship between an individual and her place is implicit, and a number of contributors (many of whom appear in this project) reflect on their relationships with place as academics. However, I wish to extend this previous work with place by explicitly interrogating why place, and *individual*

terroir more specifically, might matter for academics transitioning into and already employed by academe.

My theory of *individual terroir* is heavily influenced by the place-based educational movement, which focuses on “the reintegration of the individual into her homeground and the restoration of the essential links between a person and her place” (Sobel ii). Beginning with a series of “seemingly simple questions: Where am I? What is the nature of this place? What sustains this community?” (iii), place-based theories use an individual’s locations (and her love of place, nature, and community) to help students explore and realize their connection to the culture and nature of their local place. This focus on geographic location and investment mark place-based education as invested in developing reciprocal relationships between individuals and their place(s). It works from the belief that all citizens should be invested in the health and success of their immediate, physical community, which is why a place-based education works toward helping students transition into roles as participants in place(s). Rather than allowing students to act as passive observers, a place-based curriculum often uses the study of a place to inspire stewardship of the land and encourage participation in local civic life (iii).

The place-conscious educational movement is a counterpart to the place-based movement. Rather than focusing more on an individual relationship with place, the place-conscious approach focuses more on the group. By centering itself around the “intradependence” of human life—an awareness that life exists by virtue of necessary relations within a particular place—place-conscious education focuses on the cultural, natural, and agricultural relationships that influence local places and allow students to practice civic involvement so that they may know the past and future in order to inform the

present. Much like a place-based approach, the premise of place-conscious education is that learning, writing, and citizenship may be richer when tied to and flowing from local culture. In addition, the place-conscious movement accepts the idea that communities, regions, and histories are places where individuals shape their lives. Thus, it foregrounds the idea that the economic, political, and aesthetic issues of local places are every bit as complex as similar issues which may be occurring on national and international scales. The difference for place-conscious education is that by focusing on the local rather than the global, individuals are better able to act, affect, and improve conditions locally. As Robert Brooke notes in his introduction to *Rural Voices: Place-Conscious Education and the Teaching of Writing*, people often form strong civic practices and reasoned writing through words linked to place, to the expression and preservation of local history and landscape—all of which runs counter to contextless academic writing, which strips perceptions of relevance (namely the local and rooted). Therefore, when grounded in a place-conscious approach, writing education becomes relevant to the places where students reside in order to become a real force in improving societies in which they live—more closely linked to local spheres of action and influence.

Place-conscious and place-based educational movements are often attributed and applied to rural areas, where a pedagogy of sustainability may resonate with students and teachers who see their small-town and agriculturally-based lifestyles disappearing in (more) mainstream and standardized curricula. Both of these movements are heavily invested in place as a location, as a place on the map, which may also explain why these approaches are viewed as “rural-only” in spite of their collective vision, which includes “a theoretical framework that emphasizes the necessary interpenetration of school, community, and

environment, whether it's urban, suburban, or rural" (Sobel 11). Both educational movements remain central to any educational approach that incorporates place into the curriculum, but in addition to being assumed as rural-focused, both movements have traditionally focused on more comprehensive and holistic K-12 education.

Place-based and place-conscious movements are generally seen as holistic pedagogical approaches rather than focused writing pedagogies, but place does have historical precedent in writing classrooms; after all, Aristotle introduced the concept of place, or *topos*, when suggesting that students of rhetoric follow the invention strategies of more successful rhetors. Like many of the other specialized terms he introduced, Aristotle left *topos* relatively undefined. Most writing studies scholars, however, associate *topos* as *topoi*, with standardized categories for constructing an argument.⁴ Even when scholars note that it can refer to “feelings of belongingness that are evoked by the ‘where’ dimension of a person’s relationship to the physical environment” (Hutchison 11), this reading of *topos* (when considered in the context of Aristotle’s writing) still suggests that place is used to help the rhetorician contextualize a pre-determined argument aimed at an opponent’s thesis. For Aristotle, it seems, place was not an actor in experience or argument but a setting intended to frame a line of reasoning.

In the 1970s, composition instructors were not relying on invention strategies to teach writing; instead, most writing teachers were returning to the four forms of discourse—narration, description, exposition, and argumentation. This effective and reasonable, albeit flawed, modes-driven approach to writing gave students and teachers a guide for classroom instruction and discussion. But this approach soon faced criticism for being abstract, formulaic, and lacking social context. For instance, Richard M. Coe (1975) published “Eco-

⁴ This trend can be seen in Janice M. Lauer’s entry for “Topics” in the *Encyclopedia of Rhetoric and Composition* (1996).

Logic for the Composition Classroom,” in which he expresses his concern that composition textbooks are dominated by “rhetorical modes that divide wholes into smaller units to be discussed individually or serially” (232). Coe wants students to examine complex interrelationships rather than break activities into disparate parts. Instead of relying on four modes (which he acknowledges are effective), Coe wants students to work from an eco-logic: a logic designed for analyzing wholes as wholes and not as smaller component parts. In order to illustrate his call for an eco-logic, Coe highlights that meaning is relative to context (an ecological principle), which he subsequently traces to human perception. According to Coe, humans do not perceive data; we perceive patterns (235). Thus, he encourages writing teachers to instruct students in “systematic interrelations instead of analytic separations” (237), which are more adequate for dealing with the complex realities facing students. Though Coe focuses explicitly on writing pedagogy, his interest in a more systematic and contextual approach serves as a precursor for later place-based and place-conscious educational movements, both of which deliberately extend context to include local politics and invested relationships.

By the mid-1980s, interest in context shifted again, this time with the goal of redefining “the discipline’s boundaries in order to provide more contextual, holistic, and useful ways of examining the world of discourse,” according to Christian Weisser and Sid Dobrin, co-editors of *ecomposition* (1). The newfound concern for systematic interrelations and wholes was pushing composition away from the process movement and towards what would eventually be labeled post-process theory⁵. Before post-process became the preferred (and even dominant) term, scholarly interest in systems of writing were organizing around

⁵ In many ways, I am making a somewhat arbitrary separation here between *ecomposition* and post-process theory. Both movements are focused on the larger systems in which writing occurs, and when reading edited collections and articles, it is difficult to determine which came first. For example, Marilyn Cooper’s (1986) article, “The Ecology of Writing,” is anthologized in Vandenberg et al’s *Relations, Locations, and Positions* reader (a post-process collection).

the ecology of writing. Scholars, including Sidney Dobrin, were exploring “the ways in which the massive cultural projects of ecology and writing inform one another.” For example, in his 2001 article “Writing Takes Place,” Dobrin retraces his thoughts on composition and ecology to uncover why and how these seemingly unrelated concepts might serve one another. He writes,

I have been contemplating what it means to say that there is a relationship between nature, place, environment, habitat, location, and discourse, that rhetoric and composition and ecology might somehow be bound in their historical constructions and might somehow be productively constructed for compositionists and ecologists alike. (11)

Dobrin’s exploration of the relationship between writing and the environment can be seen in Marilyn Cooper’s “The Ecology of Writing,” which was written in 1986.⁶ Process theory, according to Cooper, is based on the faulty belief that writers are solitary authors, isolated from the social world (183). Cooper suggests teachers stop focusing on the activities (process) involved in creating a text (product) because “language and texts are not simply the means by which individuals discover and communicate information, but are essentially social activities, dependent on social structures and processes not only in their interpretive but also in their constructive phases” (184). To accommodate the social and peripheral factors which influence writing, Cooper proposes an ecological model of writing. This ecologically based model (much like its predecessor eco-logic) has a fundamental tenet: “writing is an activity through which a person is continually engaged with a variety of socially constituted systems” (186). These systems are concrete and, as such, can be “investigated, described, altered”

⁶ Cooper’s work is usually identified as being a social-constructionist approach to writing pedagogy; but her interest in the systems in which writers are participating in the activity of writing also aligns with the positions of ecompositionists and post-process theorists.

(188). By calling for an ecology of writing, Cooper introduces the idea that writers *and* writing “both determine and are determined by the characteristics of all the other writing and writings in the systems” (187); these systems, in turn, allow us to see students as “an infinitely extended group of people who interact through writing, who are connected by the various systems that constitute the activity of writing” (193).

By bringing context to the forefront, Coe and Cooper push writing instruction beyond pre-set genres and pre-determined activities. Their call for greater context—namely systems—lays a foundation for *ecomposition*, which is often seen as focused on the systematic relationships among discourse, people, and place. Or, as Weisser and Dobrin argue in their introduction to the edited collection *ecomposition*, “it is about the coconstitutive existence of writing and environment; it is about physical environment and constructed environment; it is about the production of written discourse and the relationship of that discourse to the places it encounters” (2). As an area of study, *ecomposition* asks students and teachers to put ecological thinking and composition in conversation with one another, the end goal being a consideration of both the “ecological properties of written discourse” as well as “the ways in which ecologies, environments, locations, places, and natures are discursively affected” (2). To aid in this exploration of discursive effects on the environment, *ecomposition* sometimes calls for the inclusion of activism and participation beyond the classroom space (7) in the writing process—a move that is also reflected in place-based and place-conscious end goals of an involved and active local citizenry.

By 2001, Dobrin was arguing that writing has an ecological component and that individuals write from a place; in fact, he contends that it is through writing that students learn to define place (19). In “Writing Takes Place,” he says that writing and rhetoric “cannot

be separated from place, from environment, from nature, from location” (19). Thus, according to Dobrin, composition is (already) an ecological pursuit, one in which contextual concerns extend beyond the environment. He is interested in how places create the contexts in which words have meaning rather than how places create the contexts in which writers find meaning. For Dobrin, then, context is “the environment where words are situated in relationship to other words, to other knowledges, to other texts, to other traditions in order to construct a system of words that have meaning” (19). He is pushing compositionists to think of the environment as more than (geographic) location; he is calling for a collapsing of environment and locale so that human relationships and discourse can be seen as mutually supportive—a determination which can only be made at the local level. He wants ecocomposition to move beyond “environmentalist” concerns in order to examine “concepts of environment, location, space, and place as encompassing all of the spaces we inhabit” (24)—a desire which has still not been met, as most compositionists consider ecocomposition to be focused on environmental-discourse concerns. But, by calling on ecocomposition to move beyond its earlier environmentalist associations, Dobrin advocates for an understanding of the relationship between the individual and her place. However, his focus remains almost exclusively on textual concerns.

Christian Weisser, in contrast, seems to be interested in the relationship between place and identity, and he builds off Dobrin’s call for a reconsideration of the role of ecocomposition in writing studies in his article, “Ecocomposition and the Greening of Identity.” Weisser contends that composition’s current conceptions of identity do not account for the degree to which various ecosystems and their inhabitants affect the production of discourse. In fact, he suggests that our discussions and considerations of identity have been

“constricted by the underlying premise that our identities are fashioned only through our connections with other humans” (81)—a claim that seems to overlook the work of scholars in place-based and place-conscious pedagogy. As Weisser notes, composition expanded its pedagogical approach to account for a variety of influences on a writer’s identity, particularly as it shifted from a model of “the solitary, detached writer to the interconnected network of other humans” (84). Influenced by postmodernism, cultural studies, and feminism, compositionists also expanded their definitions of a writer, “defining a writer’s identity as constructed, fragmented, and decentered, the product of an array of social, political, and ideological forces” (85). All of these changes have helped the discipline articulate the connection between identity and discourse. But, according to Weisser, composition’s current conceptions of identity tend to be pre-ecological; that is, “we envision identity and selfhood from a strictly human-centered perspective” (85). Weisser implies that we are still focused too closely on the human-to-human relationship rather than incorporating more human-to-place considerations. To Weisser, compositionists must recognize our dependence on “the biological matrix” of our lives; we must see our personal, social, and political lives as inextricable from ecological and planetary systems (82). He goes on to re-envision composition’s interest in identity by proposing that our theories begin with the recognition that we are influenced and affected by the nonhuman world, just as we are affected by our social interactions: “a recognition that the material world ‘out there’ is part of our identity ‘in here’” (86). By suggesting a new way to conceive of identity, Weisser argues that writing instructors will be better prepared to help students understand, interrogate, and critique their relationships with the “people, places, things, animals, and plants” affecting their daily lives (93). In fact, he believes that “[a]s compositionists, we should search for effective techniques

to make these ecological connections more apparent to our students” (93). Though Weisser hopes a “greening of identity” will enable writing teachers to find new ways to talk about identity and discourse with their students, he (somewhat ironically) overlooks the *teachers’* relationships with place. Like Dobrin, he calls attention to the absence of place in our teaching and research, but he doesn’t call on academics to revision their own relationships with place as part of this work even as he is addressing compositionists directly in the text. Both authors, and the others I have discussed thus far, seem to assume compositionists will do this work on their own, that they’ll reflect on their relationships with place as they reconceive discourse, identity, and ecology in their classrooms and for their students. I am skeptical that such a direct interrogation will take place. Place-based identities have little transactional value in the academy, and most writing teachers are socialized not to think of their own place even if they are reading ecocomposition theory. This may also explain why ecocomposition-related conversations have been replaced with a more generic (less grounded) term: post-process.

The lines between ecocomposition and post-process theory are somewhat blurred, but much like its ecologically focused counterpart, post-process theory calls on writing teachers to help students interrogate the contexts of writing processes. Peter Vandenberg, Sue Hum, and Jennifer Clary-Lemon suggest that post-process theory is more closely affiliated with “a change in focus from product to the *circumstance* of production” (1, emphasis added). That is, rather than focusing exclusively on the ecological influences behind writing and discourse production, post-process theory investigates three central contexts which influence the writing process—relations, locations, and positions, which is also the title of their anthology of composition theory: *Relations, Locations, Positions: Composition Theory for Writing*

Teachers. The authors and editors of this composition theory reader are not interested in establishing neat compartments for composition theory, nor is their aim the abolition of process-based pedagogy. Rather, they hope to reinforce the idea that “how composition theory can or should influence instruction may be determined only in specific material circumstance” (9). They outline three primary convictions (which highlight the material circumstances surrounding the writing process):

- Writing occurs through conversations and negotiations with others (relations).
- Writing is shaped by material places and intellectual spaces (locations).
- Writing reflects the contingency of our beliefs and values, and in so doing composes identity (positions). (9)

All three convictions of post-process theory, as articulated by Vandenberg, Hum, and Clary-Lemon, recognize the importance of a “writer-in-context,” and the presence of these three convictions highlights not only the interdisciplinary nature of writing instruction (by blending sociocultural understandings of knowledge making with disciplinary expertise on writing and literacy acquisition) but also the undeniable reality that “no single unifying theory can provide teachers of writing with all they need to know; no generalized process can prepare students for the manifold writing contexts they will go on to occupy” (7), which is how post-process theories of location connect with *individual terroir*.

By paying attention to context and situatedness, theories of location can foreground the limitations and possibilities of location by highlighting how public and institutional spaces work to structure and maintain social control and power; they also emphasize the ways in which difference can be naturalized (held “in place”) by spaces and places (11-12). Thus, post-process theories of location assert that “acts of writing are inevitably ‘situated,’

that one always writes from some place,” which is why all theories of location “are grounded in the belief that a sense of place or scene is crucial to understanding rhetorical contexts” (11). Post-process theories of location ask writing instructors to help students focus on the contexts of composing. Moreover, students should be encouraged to consider the process of writing in relation to its context by showing them that responsible discourse “depends on a self-conscious awareness of how one is located” (12). Ironically, this is often where compositionists are falling short. Contemporary research that fits with post-process theories of location asks primarily for students to develop a self-conscious awareness of their locations. Again, instructors are not called to reflect on their locations or self-conscious positioning.

For example, in “Location, Location, Location: The ‘Real’ (E)states of Being, Writing, and Thinking in Composition,” Johnathon Mauk suggests that “the value of academia for students depends upon their interpretation or creation of academic space. To buy (into) academia (and its attendant postures, behaviors, and perspectives), students must buy (into) a particular conception of the terrain” (198). As a possible remedy to students’ increasing unsituatedness, Mauk proposes “a heuristic for orienting the acts of teaching and learning writing in increasingly spaced-out college environments: *third space*, a concept borrowed from critical geography, which projects a ‘real and imagined’ realm of intellectual-social action” (200). Mauk uses his experiences at Gordon Community College as the backdrop for his theory. After detailing the “students’ nomadic lifestyles” (212), he proposes a new *where* for students and for composition courses, a *where* centered around a third space.

Throughout his article, Mauk talks about students *and* their composition teachers. He even incorporates teacher voices into the analysis of the students’ placelessness. But at no

point does Mauk address the instructors' place-based context nor does he consider how his community college and higher education work together to perpetuate and construct an environment absent of place. He recognizes how college campuses are constructed to reinforce particular beliefs about appropriate practices, but he fails to see how academics are constructed and socialized into particular relationships with place. Like other researchers addressing geography, place, and identity in composition studies, Mauk is adept at inventing unique and engaging ways for students to reflect on the contexts for their writing. He and others, however, often fail to consider how we, as academics, are located. Apparently, even when teaching theories of location and geography, we are to remain rootless.

The 2004 collection *Classroom Spaces and Writing Instruction* is another text seemingly positioned to interrogate the relationship between *individual terroir* and pedagogical practices. After all, the aim of the book is to make “an initial foray into the way that space—literally and figuratively—mediates or affects the many things that writing teachers do in the classroom spaces” (1). As the editors note, the collection “calls attention to the ways that teachers of writing must attend to the idea of the classroom, must be conscious of the spaces in which they meet students, and must be aware of the physical, material conditions that constrain or affect the teaching of writing” (10). Building off this notion that “the classroom represents a physical, material place for learning, a bounded space within which teachers and students meet for a specific purpose” (1), the collection investigates how classrooms and writing instruction operate as a designated space, and they discuss how spaces—in this case a business building and its “business” design—promote and prevent pedagogical invention. For all its concern with the work of teachers of writing, there is no discussion of the writing instructor's perception of or relationship to place. There is no

recognition that “rhetorical effectiveness in a given location depends on one’s interpretation of and attitude toward place” (Vandenberg et al 13). Julie Drew, in her essay “The Politics of Place: Student Travelers and Pedagogical Maps,” focuses on the composition classroom, on “the place of writing instruction itself” (58), and she encourages writing instructors to re-imagine students as travelers in order to “include the material realities of movement—of travel—and the multiple spaces within which students reside and learn” in their pedagogical plans (61). Yet, there is still no acknowledgement that place matters for students *and* for writing teachers.

Perhaps the most familiar discussion of place in writing studies is Nedra Reynolds’ *Geographies of Writing: Inhabiting Places and Encountering Difference*. In this text, Reynolds argues that “composition studies needs cultural writing theories and material literacy practices that engage with the metaphorical—ways to imagine space—without ignoring places and spaces—the actual locations where writers write, learners learn, and workers work” (3). By focusing on what she terms the “spatial practices of the everyday” (such as walking, mapping, and dwelling) in different “spatial scales” (the body, the street, and the city), Reynolds uses qualitative research with geography students at the University of Leeds to suggest that the politics of sociospatial difference and the teaching of writing are both spatial practices. Reynolds argues that “writing instruction [is] rooted in time and space and within material conditions that affect students who are often transient residents of learning communities” (3). Thus, she considers the role of geography and materiality in student writing by focusing on composition’s use of border and boundary language and introducing her idea of the student as *flaneur*, or “one compelling example of moving through the world, dependent upon both walking and seeing, and how place and materiality

construct identity” (8). By asking her students to map the dividing lines of the city, as well as their experiences and modes of transportation within these boundaries, Reynolds demonstrates how differences (such as race, gender, age, or economic security) can affect a student’s interaction with material spaces (8).

Reynolds’ text is a major contribution to writing studies and theories of location, but her study centers on geography students, not students enrolled in a writing course. As she explains,

In order to explore the relationship between the spatial and the social in a concrete and practical way, I interviewed eight students in a cultural geographies class at Leeds University about their experiences in Leeds, with getting around the city, with living and working there as students. My purpose was to explore the everyday material existence of university students in the “mundane landscape” of the campus, the surrounding area, their housing, and the other places of their social and spatial lifeworlds While participants were certainly not randomly selected, they were all third-years, all seeking BA degrees in geography, and all white. (86-87)

In the above description of the interview project which supports much of her text, Reynolds describes the “third-year cultural geographies module in which [she] was a participant observer” (87). Without any context, readers would not know that (at the time of the text’s publication) Reynolds is a professor of writing and rhetoric at the University of Rhode Island. There is no mention of writing exercises and the relationship between social and spatial lifeworlds and writing. Furthermore, as reviewer Michael Dean Benton points out, the last two chapters of the text offer “no direct examples of writing projects or exercises

designed to bridge the lessons and practices of cultural geography with the needs and requirements of composition courses” (3). I do not believe that all contributions to our field must be grounded in praxis; however, I do believe that theoretically important contributions grounded in a different discipline and its students, in this case geography, be tested against writing students in writing courses. The outcomes for each discipline are different as are the inclinations of the student populations. As such, we should determine how disciplinary vocabulary and lessons translate to a classroom focused on discourse, argument, and writing. Moreover, by failing to consider how her relationships with place affected her pedagogical and professional identity, Reynolds’ study falls victim to the rootless, placeless trap of other theories of location.

Reynolds ends her introduction with two self-reflective mini-narratives. In the first, she acknowledges that she chose to work with the Leeds School of Geography “for circumstantial reasons—it fit with other parts of [her] sabbatical leave” (10). She then aligns her research methodology with her experience of living with and among the students at Leeds. She walked the streets, formed mental maps, reflected upon her dwelling, rode the bus, stood in line, and learned about “geography as a lived event—including how spaces and places are inscribed upon us—and about how our experiences in spaces of the everyday impact upon our identities, our confidence, our senses of self” (10). In these two brief paragraphs, Reynolds reflects on how place affected her professional and pedagogical identity. She even constructs a new way of conceiving of composition’s work based on her time in Leeds. But her accounting of place and experience is solely dependent upon her *post-academic* self—on who she is now that she’s a professor of writing and rhetoric. In fact, the text reads as if she had no pre-student experiences with place, as if the only time place

impacted her identity, confidence, or sense of self was when she was researching geography, literacy, and writing in Leeds. Because she chose to keep personal details out of her academic narrative—a decision that may be the result of authorial distance and academic resistance to personal experience as evidence—we don't know the “circumstances” leading up to her work with place, ignoring Corder's challenge to writing scholars. As I noted in my introduction, he calls on compositionists to reveal how, when, and why we come to our research subjects; he also calls on us to show ourselves living in our world. By failing to account for the role of place in her development of a personal identity as well as the role of place in the development of her research agenda and academic identity, Reynolds illustrates my point about *individual terroir* and academe: most academics do not consider how their initial relationships with place (may) impact who they are and what they do within the walls of the ivory tower (even though her larger research project demonstrates how we can use current and temporary places to explore *individual terroir*).

As the above review of research notes, there are a handful of scholars interested in theories of location, but many simultaneously fail to apply their theories to themselves or their work, perpetuating the myth of the academic who belongs to a world of ideas and not places. Those who are talking about place and their investment in it are often relegated to the memoir/personal narrative genre—often absent of theoretical or pedagogical implications—while those investigating the pedagogical and theoretical implications of place often construct narratives void of place-based personal experience, thus, leaving the writing teacher out of discussions and establishing a relationship in which we are placeless even if students are not. We have institutional discourses endorsing particular ideas about place and the roles individuals should play in it, but I am asking us to pause and reflect on the role

place plays in our identity formation—how our memories and experiences transform generic spaces into personalized places.

As a discipline, writing studies has spent the past forty years theorizing about the importance of place and location, but we have not fully considered how our relationships with place (both past and present) may impact who we are as members of a professional community. More importantly, we have not considered how our relationships with place impact what we do in the classroom. Because many academics have either not reflected on or failed to vocalize how and why place matters to them as individuals, academia continues to conceal (and omit) the effects of place on who we are; worse yet, this continued omission perpetuates myths about how to be successful in academia. We theorize about public places and institutional spaces as locations, but we have failed to interrogate publicly how our interpretations of and attitudes toward place affect our instructional choices. We need a moment in writing studies, a moment in which we consider how *individual terroir* affects our academic identities. We need to refocus on the teacher of writing because while we may be able to help students see their sense of place as crucial to rhetorical contexts, we can do so more effectively if we confront our assumed rootlessness more directly.

As a discipline, we do not need a monolithic definition of place, nor do we need a universal experience of place. Instead, we need a collective and professional acknowledgement that our discourses and beliefs are influenced by *individual terroir*. Post-process theories of location describe how written texts effectively erase the (contextual) circumstances of their production. It is time for academics to describe how professional advancement within academe erases (or attempts to stifle) our contextual pasts through the

controlling metaphor of the academic job search (“cast a wide net”) and through the reproduction of content-driven, context-absent pedagogical practices.

With *individual terroir* as my theoretical lens, my project foregrounds the contextual circumstances surrounding not only the production of this project but also the projects undertaken by my participants. In Chapter Two, the PhD candidates participating in my study were acutely aware of how place would act as a determining factor in their final job search, even if the depersonalized and national job search made attention to place a risky personal choice. The anecdotes and experiences of these emerging rhetoric and composition scholars construct a counternarrative to the placeless academic job search, challenging the notion that one can enter academe as an assistant *professor* only by ignoring (or overlooking) *individual terroir*. In Chapter Three, the writing instructors interviewed embody *individual terroir*. After considering how they are located and how place influenced them, these teachers took the question to their students, transforming their classrooms into sites of personal and civic reflection through critical pedagogies of place.

Where does the drama of history get its material? From the “unending conversation” that is going on at the point in history when we are born. Imagine that you enter a parlor. You come late. When you arrive, others have long preceded you, and they are engaged in a heated discussion, a discussion too heated for them to pause and tell you exactly what it is about. In fact, the discussion had already begun long before any of them got there, so that no one present is qualified to retrace for you all the steps that had gone before. You listen for a while; then you put in your oar. Someone answers; you answer him; another comes to your defense; another aligns himself against you, to either the embarrassment or gratification of your opponent, depending upon the quality of your ally’s assistance. However, the discussion is interminable. The hour grows late, you must depart. And you do depart, with the discussion still vigorously in progress.

-- Kenneth Burke, *The Philosophy of Literary Form*

CHAPTER TWO

PLACE IN THE ACADEMIC JOB SEARCH

In the opening chapter of *Disciplining Feminism: From Social Activism to Academic Discourse*, Ellen Messer-Davidow describes American higher education as a business industry served by various disciplines. According to Messer-Davidow, disciplines have three primary functions in higher education. First, the disciplines serve as production sites for knowledge discourses. They determine which statements and positions are appropriate as well as the “knowable objects and knowing subjects” (20) of the field. They also “control the knowledge economy [of the university] because . . . they are organized and organizing” (20); that is, each discipline is a business in and of itself, complete with an infrastructure (departments and colleges, professional associations, and professional publications) that allows the discipline to control the information traded in the “knowledge economy.” As Messer-Davidow argues, “At the macro level a discipline sets the knowledge problems, regulates the market, and distributes the goods, and at the micro level it inculcates and enforces the schemes of perception, cognition, and action the practitioners must use” (20). Finally, she argues that disciplines endure through the practice and reproduction of knowledge makers (academic professionals). Accordingly, each discipline perpetuates itself through a rigid system of socialization:

When a discipline trains future practitioners, it doesn't just teach them its knowledge contents; it exercises them in its ways of perceiving, thinking, valuing, relating, and acting—thereby . . . inserting them into its schemes of practice. Once the discipline has credentialed and employed [the practitioners and professionals], it ensures that they continue to observe its “good subject” practices by subjecting them to ongoing evaluations: it rates their teaching performance, appraises their publications, checks their professional service, and tenures or terminates them. Competent practitioners learn (as inept ones do not) *to observe disciplinary norms*, and innovative practitioners learn (as merely competent ones do not) which norms they can transgress in order to generate new knowledge. But *woe to the practitioner who violates the disciplinary truth*—its “ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation, and operation of [true] statements”—because the discipline will regard (*sic*) her as a bad subject to be subdued or expelled. (20-21, emphasis added)

Messer-Davidow articulates how disciplines use their infrastructures and power systems to not only control information but also to control the practitioners of knowledge by constructing and maintaining a system of socialization. Her analysis captures the concerns I have about the ethos of rootlessness. In addition to being part of published advice and institutional lore, the myth that *all* academics are mobile and placeless operates, in part, as a disciplinary truth not to be violated by newcomers entering the university system. To borrow an example from Kenneth Burke, whom I quote in the opening epigraph of this chapter, doctoral candidates enter disciplinary parlors when they enroll in programs. These programs

have institutional and disciplinary job search parlors, and many candidates rely on these ongoing conversations as the cornerstones for their job search process.

Whether she chooses to explore an academic or a non-academic career, likely every doctoral candidate, at some point, enters a discipline's job search parlor. Some candidates enter with dissertation directors and other mentors who guide them and direct their attention to particular conversations. Some doctoral candidates enter a virtual job search parlor, one composed entirely of academic listservs and wikis.¹ Still others find themselves entering the job search parlor through alternative doors: advice books, journal articles, spouses, colleagues. Regardless of how doctoral candidates enter the job search parlor, they cannot escape its influence. No one can transition from graduate student to university professor without listening to and participating in that interminable discussion: an ongoing conversation about finding and keeping a job in which old advice re-circulates with new advice, senior scholars help junior scholars, and the seemingly tried-and-true methods mingle with new metaphors, anecdotes, and cautionary tales. While standing amidst this cacophony of voices, faculty and doctoral candidates alike forget that few remember where and how the advice started; more importantly, no one knows if the suggestions about the job search are supported by empirical data. While it is not clear if academia intended to discipline place out of the profession, it is clear, as I discuss below, that academic institutions—and rhetoric and composition as a discipline—operate in a system where there is little room for place.

¹ The 2006-2007 academic year marks the first use of a wiki for job search candidates in rhetoric and composition, and a number of my participants reported a love/hate relationship with the anonymous, real-time information it provides. The site discussed by my participants, can be found at: http://wikihost.org/wikis/academe/wiki/composition_and_rhetoric. This site has an archive of data from the 2006-2007 academic year, as well as current data (2007-2008).

Advice about the Job Search in English: Cast a Wide Net

For over forty years, academics working in English departments have published advice for doctoral candidates about how to have a successful job search, and, as I suggest above, much of this advice continues to circulate in the job search parlor. In the remaining sections of this chapter, I trace the field's transition from a mentor-dependent system to a more national, independent approach to job placement, paying particular attention to how place disappeared as a determining factor in job search advice for candidates in English departments. As rhetoric and composition emerged as a discipline, considerations of place in the job search tightened, transitioning from considerations of place (as a location, a locale, and a sense of place) as an actor in academic lives and into a handicap to be avoided for the sake of successful employment. I use this brief overview of the changing nature of the English job search to contextualize the advice many candidates hear from mentors and advisors: "cast a wide net." Working from empirical data compiled through national surveys and interviews, I then consider how this "cast a wide net" approach to the job search affects the *individual terroir* of rhetoric and composition doctoral candidates searching for employment in the 2006-2007 academic year.

One of the earliest pieces of published advice for PhD candidates in English going on the job market is "How to Get Hired: Advice to New Ph.D.'s," an article published in the October 1963 edition of *College English*. In this piece, Richard B. Hovey, a professor of English at the University of Maryland, assures readers there is no "ideal way" to land a first job as a college English teacher. He does, however, describe one way a doctoral candidate might find employment: "Get your Ph.D. from a reputable university, make yourself a protégé of a nationally known professor, and be recommended by him to his personal friend

at a prestigious school which happens to have a vacancy in your specialty” (1). Hovey continues, suggesting that if marrying an “affluent wife” or inheriting family money was not an option for the candidate, then his job prospects seemed to have depended on the reputation of the candidate’s mentor (or dissertation director) and the mentor’s connections at other institutions.² This word-of-mouth recommendation was the best option available.

Candidates could seek additional and alternative support through a university’s placement service, as John H. Raleigh suggests in his essay “The Function of the English Department Placement Officer.”³ The placement officer’s primary role was to provide “information and moral support” (5). The officer would talk with a candidate long enough to ascertain what kind of job the candidate desired, but the conversation also allowed the officer “to get some sense of what this person is like” and “to ascertain what job would be best suited for the student.” Together, the candidate and the placement officer would discuss a list of prospective employers, a conversation that, according to Raleigh, required “tact” when students overestimated their abilities and qualifications: “The mediocre student who will only consider Harvard or Yale must be set right immediately. Sometimes, however, student ambitions have to be punctured more gently” (5). After meeting with the placement officer, the candidate filed a dossier with the University Placement Bureau, or the university’s equivalent, and drafted a one-page, largely autobiographical, letter to be sent to prospective employers by mid- to late-October.

² When discussing the early published advice available for candidates, I use masculine pronouns because the author used masculine pronouns. It is possible that the masculine was intended to evoke “gender neutral” language, but, as a feminist scholar, I believe the language use hints at the largely male audience receiving this advice. There were women earning doctoral degrees in the 1960s, but the published perspectives seem to reflect the sexist nature of a fairly patriarchal academic job search, one epitomized by the “old boys’ network.”

³ In September 2007, I posted a query to the WPA listserv titled, “History of the Academic Job Search,” to which a number of scholars responded. For example, one long-time scholar in the field confirmed the approach hinted at in Hovey and Raleigh’s articles. He first went on the job market in 1959, and at that time, there were two ways of finding out about openings: “The best was the old boy network (and I do mean boy): my dissertation advisor (Harry Levin, as it happens) would let me know about calls he had received and jobs he thought I should pursue. [...] The second route emerged from the career center, or whatever it was then called, where traveling department chairs would set up shop for interviews and try to induce us to come to Wherever U. Ah, those were the days.”

The placement officer, in turn, would prepare a letter on behalf of the student. The placement officer's letter was to be "concrete and objective," detailing how the candidate performed in the classroom and on qualifying exams. At least one paragraph of the letter was reserved for a "specific description of what the person looks like and what the person is" (6). Though the candidate might send out a number of inquiries, the placement officer would mail the university's letters only after a college or university expressed interest in a candidate or when the officer believed there was a fit between a particular candidate and position. It was also the job of the placement officer to secure administrative funding for the candidate to attend the MLA meeting. The job search process was "usually finished by two weeks after the MLA meeting" (6).

Together, Hovey and Raleigh's accounts of the job search indicate a system in which control over the job search process was in the hands of external players, not the job candidate. The candidate was either dependent upon a mentor to make a recommendation on his behalf, or he was at the mercy of the placement officer, who seems to have operated as an institutional gatekeeper, combining objective analysis of performance with subjective analysis of appearance and personality. These historical accounts also hint at contemporary advice circulating in the job search parlor. As Hovey's article continues, he transitions from an overview of the job search process into a conversation with his readers. He qualifies his recommendations by revealing that he has done no research and noting that his observations are byproducts of a singular, personal perspective. They "are not official" and, subsequently, "pretend to no statistical validity." He also notes that his suggestions "are made under the auspices of no professional organization." Rather than claiming to tell the "total truth," he hopes his observations "merely point to some of the less publicized truths" (1).

The first less-publicized truth to which Hovey refers is the reality that in the eyes of hiring committees, doctoral candidates are “more promise than fulfillment” (a harsh reality candidates often forget). Hovey’s assertion seems aimed at reminding candidates they have no control over the search process; they are dependent on external players to determine their qualifications for seeking employment. The second truth Hovey notes is that if the “the ideal job at the ideal school” doesn’t appear, then candidates must decide to which schools they will apply (1-2). Rather than allowing candidates to languish as they wait for their dream job to open up at their dream institution, Hovey suggests they compile a list of potential schools, and he provides a list of questions for doctoral candidates to help them get started. He indicates, again, that his advice is grounded in experience and observation; as such, it seems that these questions must have played some role in his own job search or in the searches of others milling about in the job search parlor, those whose experience and “first-hand observations” (1) make up his recommendations. Hovey asks (and I quote at length here):

Have you strong preferences as to geographic location? Will you feel at home in a small town? Or are you more at ease in the crowded anonymity of the big city? If plays, concerts, museums, restaurants sustain you, will you pine for their lack in a rural, isolated community? Must you settle where the school system looks adequate for your children? You may wince at imagining yourself in a small school where everybody knows everybody else, but are you certain a university will suit you? We all have egos: what sort is yours? The man who prefers being a big frog in a little pond probably does better at the middling small college How much does prestige, the reflected sort, mean to you? If you thrill to the prospect of a job where you

will have as a senior colleague an eminent scholar, will you be downcast if it develops that the Great Man is so absorbed in his own pursuits he never notices you?—or does notice you, with a mild but ineradicable annoyance at your regional accent or a slight but perdurable distaste for the slant of your ears? Are you sure the glitter of the starting salary is so golden as it seems? Besides whatever the future may bring, the cost of living varies from place to place. Have you considered that in some locations your wife, should she want it, might find gainful employment but elsewhere would seldom have the opportunity? Have you realized that in some schools you can never have a chance at summer teaching or extension classes in the evening? (4)

Hovey's comprehensive questions open (and close) with a concern for place as a location and a locale. He asks the doctoral candidates to consider the kinds of institutions in which they would be happy and sustained, he asks them to consider the specific details of the position, but he also asks them to factor in details and specifics about the place of each job. He isn't focused solely on the location of the job—the climate or region of the country. Instead, he seems intent on pushing candidates to identify those places where they could find relationships and communities in which they might invest their time and energy (just two indicators that might denote place as having an experiential connection beyond a physiological orientation). Although his advice may not represent the 1960s job search reality in English, the article suggests that at some point in time, place was part of the job search parlor conversation.

In March of 1964, Harrison Hoblitzelle, head of Academic Placement at Columbia University, proposed a more effective way for English departments to exchange information

about job vacancies.⁴ His proposal would ultimately bypass the “old boys’ network” and establish a centralized, albeit impersonal, application process and replace it with a more national search. “A Proposal,” reprinted in the *ADE Bulletin*, argues that “professional societies can—and should—bring order to the hiring process in their own fields” (5).

Hoblitzelle believes that the hiring process should operate with the “least mystery” possible; unfortunately, Hoblitzelle laments, “the old custom of swapping job information by *word of mouth* and *personal correspondence* is today simply not up to the task of staffing institutions of higher learning with teachers of English. The present situation in English frustrates and bewilders not only the job seeker, but those in charge of our graduate schools and liberal arts colleges” (5, emphasis added). Rather than relying on faculty connections and networks, Hoblitzelle calls on the Modern Language Association (MLA) to publish a listing of vacancies in English, following the example of the hard sciences. As he notes, Chemistry and Physics no longer depend on annual meetings to exchange vacancy information. Instead, the two disciplines publish periodic listings of job vacancies. The American Chemical Society even solicits announcements from departments and publishes job vacancy booklets three times a year, a model which “offers some useful guidelines to the English profession.”

Adamant that a more organized system is needed, Hoblitzelle outlines a plan of action to demonstrate how the new job search system might work:

Invitations to list vacancies would be sent out to department chairmen in September, January, and April. A summary of the listings received, offset from typescript for speed and economy, would then appear in November, February, and June. (The November issue would permit appointing officers

⁴ The article itself is not authored by Harrison Hoblitzelle. Instead, the article recounts the proposal presented by him to the bulletin, thus making the authorship a bit confusing. However, the opening line of the article indicates that the ideas belong to him: “Mr. Harrison Hoblitzelle, Head of Academic Placement at Columbia University, has presented a proposal for the more effective exchange of information concerning academic vacancies.”

and candidates to arrange in advance interviews for the Christmas meetings.)

Each issue would make the previous one obsolete. Copies would be sent to all graduate departments and would be made available at cost to individuals. (5)

Under this model, the discipline has several options for how jobs may be listed: positions could appear alphabetically, or they could be published according to field or geographic region. Institutions could even remain anonymous, if they so choose, by using a key number rather than the university name.

Hoblitzelle leaves no detail up for speculation in his desire to change the system. After outlining how to advertise jobs, he explains that candidates would apply for the posted positions by writing “directly to the appointing officer stating where his references are on file and enclosing a resume that need not be returned. His dossier would then be sent only at the request of the appointing officer.” The candidate would continue to submit information to the university, but rather than writing blind letters to prospective universities, the candidates would address a particular contact person about a job published in the national listing of vacancies, and the candidate would now receive updates on the status of the application. Hoblitzelle even suggests that all applications be acknowledged and that departments “notify each applicant as promptly as possible of the disposition of his application,” which could include form letters or post cards.

Hoblitzelle recognized that while a centralized job listing may not solve all the staffing problems faced by English departments—no listing could physically increase the supply of doctoral candidates available to fill vacant positions—but a comprehensive listing of job vacancies in English departments would

give greater mobility—vertical as well as horizontal—to the existing supply at a time when academic excellence is dependent more than ever upon the best man [*sic*] to the most responsible positions. It would facilitate the search for qualified talent wherever it is to be found. And last, it would give to the fledgling instructor a new self-reliance in planning his own career.

His use of the term “mobility” is significant when contrasted against Hovey’s advice from the year before. Hoblitzelle appears more interested in moving academics (the commodity) to their necessary location (wherever the demand might be). Thus, this proposal published in the *ADE Bulletin* outlines the best-case scenario for job candidates in higher education: a vertical and horizontal exchange of goods and services. This proposal also forecasts the future of the academic job search: an emphasis on mobility. Hoblitzelle does not assume that academics belong to a world of ideas, but he does assume that universities should search far and wide (or vertically and horizontally) for the most qualified academics. He also seems to recognize that candidates may be searching for particular kinds of locations because he recommends job listings be published according to field and geographic region. This new proposal gives some control back to the job candidate—by exchanging information freely and openly—but it also creates a scenario where mobility may begin to rub against preferences for particular geographical locations, depending on how the job candidates respond to his suggestions.

Within the *ADE Bulletin* archives, there is no indication as to how the proposal was received. It is apparent, however, that his plea for a new model was successful. On June 16, 1964, a joint meeting of the MLA sub-committees decided to publish a listing of open positions at colleges and universities in a free publication to be distributed three times a year

(recommendations outlined in the proposal). According to C.L. Barber's report in the *ADE Bulletin*, however, there were numerous debates about the viability of such a national list. Although there were doubts about "the extent to which such a resource would actually be used," the final consensus was that the benefits outweighed the drawbacks (namely the expense of publishing and distributing the materials). In fact, "[w]hile it was agreed that better-known places and their better-knowing candidates might not at present feel a need for an inventory of opportunities, a systematic listing of positions, if it became a regular part of the placement process, might make an important contribution to the health of the profession" (2). Thus, it seems, the *Job Information List* began as a way to expedite the job search process for less well-known institutions in more obscure places while simultaneously evening the playing field for those candidates without access to the "old boys" network. The MLA sub-committee agreed that producing and compiling a comprehensive, national listing of jobs would be demanding and expensive, but they also reached a consensus that charging candidates for copies of the list and charging institutions for their listings would defeat the purpose of controlling access to information about vacancies. Therefore, the MLA would "take on the mechanics of assembling and publishing the lists." The national job list would use abbreviations, and each job posting would include information about:

rank to be filled; salary range; degree qualifications; fields of special competence; experience; scholarly achievements looked for; duration of the job (permanent or temporary; hours per week, a) freshman, b) sophomore, c) other; fringe benefits; additional information (e.g. semester or trimester system, class size, etc.). (Barber 3)

The sub-committee also determined that the first list should be distributed in October, as the early-fall publication would assure that the list was “useful for the MLA meeting” by allowing candidates enough time to set up appointments with “chairmen at the meeting” (3). A second listing would be published after the first round of applications but before the CCCC meeting; the third would come out before summer.

By the 1970s, it appears that departments of English across the country were relying on the national job information list, and for the first time, job candidates were no longer dependent solely on personal experience or advice about finding employment in higher education.⁵ In fact, the *ADE Bulletin* is filled with statistical information gathered from a variety of surveys, including the September 1970 “MLA-ADE Manpower Survey,” which extends previous work assessing the state of employment in English departments.⁶ The survey indicates that the job market was tightening for candidates committed solely to literary studies and openly acknowledges that “the need for full and associate professors in many areas will grow and opportunities will open for specialists in composition, linguistics, and the teaching of reading” (25). The survey goes on to suggest a number of things candidates might do to improve their job search chances. For example, the survey notes that an interest in developing and teaching introductory courses may improve a candidate’s prospects, particularly if the candidate indicates “a willingness to teach a wide range of courses rather than a special field” (25). This advice is supported with data: “52% [of

⁵ The 1960s were filled with political and cultural turmoil, and academia was certainly not immune. The shift of English departments to an open-access job search certainly seems connected to the Civil Rights movement and the subsequent changes to hiring practices signed into law by President Johnson. However, tracing the impact of the Civil Rights movement on academic hiring practices is beyond the scope of this project, which focuses on changes in departments of English. Also, there is no textual evidence in Hovey or Hoblitzelle’s text indicating this connection, so as a researcher, I limit my analysis of their publications to the evidence they included. I do wish to note that Altenbernd’s concerns about transparency and equality in the job search process (discussed below) suggest that by the 1970s the relationship between the Civil Rights movement and hiring in English departments was making its way into publications).

⁶ In November 1969, David Orr’s article “College English Faculty Salaries—A Preliminary Report” and George J. Worth’s “1969-1970 Survey of Salaries in English Departments with Established Ph.D. Programs, with a Glance at the Assistant Professor ‘Market’” appeared in the *ADE Bulletin*. Worth’s article ends with information about participating departments’ plans to hire PhDs for the 1970-1971 academic year.

departments] consider the area of specialization less important than their need for qualified undergraduate teachers” (25).

By 1971, job search advice seemed to focus on the changing job market and the responsibility of “those already admitted to the profession toward those seeking admission to the profession.” As A. Lynn Altenbernd suggests in “Reflections on the MLA Manpower Commission Recommendations,” the short-range recommendations of the committee “do not—cannot in the nature of things—affect the fundamental problem, which is that of altering the unfavorable ratio of jobs to job seekers” (11). Instead, Altenbernd takes up the recommendations of the “Bellwether Conference,” a meeting called by ADE and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst that consisted of thirty departments from across the nation. The Bellwether Conference suggested that the vacancy listing published by ADE be replaced with a booklet outlining the staffing situation in departments—they would indicate open positions or no vacancies to be filled. The Conference also established when candidates should reply to job offers. Though the Manpower Commission had recommended that no new PhD programs be formed until the job market stabilized, Altenbernd finds this recommendation “professionally irresponsible” because “[n]o one has yet noted that the small beginnings toward the reduction of discrimination against women, Blacks, and other disadvantaged people, which we have made during the prolonged period of expansion, may now be endangered” (13). He goes on to say that whatever the status of the job market “perhaps we should publicly resolve that the present contradiction must not be used as an excuse for further delay in improving the status of disadvantaged colleagues” (13).

This sampling of advice from the 1960s and 1970s, when read against the following more contemporary recommendations, reveal how the job search parlor in English resolved

the conflict between relocating qualified candidates for vacant positions and allowing candidates to self-select geographic locations. Though the history of the job search in English is not part of contemporary discussions about placement and candidacy, these discussions, proposals, and recommendations are part of the job search in English and are circulating in the job search parlor and in contemporary job search methods. Job candidates in rhetoric and composition still rely heavily on the *MLA Job Information List*, and the majority interview at the annual MLA convention, even though this is not the primary conference for the discipline. (Conventional wisdom suggests the Conference on College Composition and Communication is *the* rhetoric and composition conference.) Hovey's published advice regarding the role of place in the job search, however, has all but disappeared. Contemporary discussions regarding geography have shifted from personal advice aimed at helping candidates live fulfilled and sustained lives in a locale to nuts-and-bolts considerations of location as evidenced in Trudelle Thomas's 1989 article "Demystifying the Job Search: A Guide for Candidates." Thomas notes that the job market is strong, especially in composition, and she encourages candidates to approach their searches with optimism. She says they should treat the job search as a research project: "Regard your search as an opportunity to gather information about the job market and to identify and learn about the positions which suit you best" (314).

Thomas then suggests candidates learn about the types of jobs which exist in academia and brush up on their geography. She doesn't want them to reflect on subjective questions about preference and comfort or consider their level of satisfaction in a particular place; instead, Thomas takes a more objective approach. She recommends candidates read Rand-McNally's *Places Rated Almanac*, a text which should help them think about "where

[they] might want to work” (314)—it seems that she doesn’t want them to consider where they might want to live. She then poses a series of questions to candidates: “Are you willing to consider any part of the U.S. (or abroad)? Do you prefer city vs. country, northeast vs. southwest, cold climate vs. moderate?” (314) Both Hovey and Thomas ask candidates to consider what makes a city livable, but Thomas encourages candidates to examine cost-of-living indices, rainfall totals, and crime rates in order to create a “composite rating for how livable each city is” (314). The focus for Thomas is not on developing a satisfied life in a place but in finding a geographical location in which one can work.

By foregrounding superficial information about place (as a location) that is separate from the concerns which might lead to an invested life (in a locale), Thomas distinguishes the candidate-at-work from the candidate-in-place. Candidates should compare the cost-of-living indicators and crime statistics for various locations; rain fall amounts may supply individuals with information about the kind of life possible in a particular location. My concern is that Thomas presents these details through the lens of employment. Her recommendations seem to ignore that living in a place involves more than a location (a city or spot on the map)—it includes a locale (interactions with people in a place)—whereas Hovey’s questions—focusing on relationships with people and interactions with communities—imply an awareness about locale and sense of place, both factors in understanding place as more than a setting for human life.

Thomas is not the only academic to give advice about the job search from a place-as-location perspective, and as the advice for doctoral candidates continues, the assumptions about the desire of candidates to be mobile increase and a more singular view of place—as simply the spot on a map where academics work—emerges. In *Ms. Mentor’s Impeccable*

Advice for Women in Academia (1997), Emily Toth extends Thomas' advice, marking a shift in job search advice. Place is no longer just a geographic location in which academics work; place is a limitation to be overcome, something that should be dismissed for a life of the mind to be truly successful. Toth instructs candidates to balance the time and money required to conduct a job search against the new "reality" of life in academia—a life seemingly affected by placelessness and assumed mobility. Toth writes, "And so aspiring academics are also mortgaging their psyches. They must consider living apart from loved ones who also have careers; they *must* be willing to be *academic gypsies*" (22, emphasis added). Toth's suggestion that candidates accept the possibility of life as a gypsy seems tempered compared to the suggestions given in *The MLA Guide to the Job Search* (1996). In this text, the authors suggest PhD candidates apply "to a range of institutions in different locations" (21). Even as the authors acknowledge that unlimited mobility may not accommodate all personal circumstances, they offer no solace to candidates with geographic limitations and/or interests: "Obviously, family circumstances might limit your freedom, but you must bear in mind that many of your rivals for jobs may have no such limits or may be willing to accept a 'commuter marriage'" (21). After suggesting that only those without *freedom* are restricted by place, the authors warn the candidates:

You ought to recognize from the start that such [geographic] limitations give you a *handicap* in an already difficult situation. Neither prospective employers nor your mentors are likely to have much patience with you if you disdain jobs simply because you prefer a certain type of school or a certain region—especially if, as is usual, the type of school and the region you prefer are those that most candidates consider desirable you may have little

choice about the region or the type of institution where you take your first job. You can become qualified in more than one field, so as to maximize your opportunities, but to get started you must be prepared to go where the job is. (21, emphasis added)

By presenting the commuter marriage as an option for academic gypsies, the above advice both repeats and modifies earlier suggestions about the academic job search. Like the advice of the 1960s and 1970s, the *MLA Guide* encourages doctoral candidates to expand their skill sets, but rather than encouraging candidates to explore place as a locale—as part of their professional development and identity—the advice simply speaks from a panicked perspective (an issue I address extensively in Chapter Four). Gone are the considerations of place as even a location. Candidates must find a job; there can be no concern for place.

In *The Chicago Guide to Your Academic Career* (2001), John Goldsmith admits that “[o]ne of the very worst sides of academia is how difficult it is—virtually impossible, really—to find a job in one’s discipline in a specific geographical area. You have to be willing to take a job wherever it may turn out to be” (237). Though many academics might wish it were not true, higher education operates as a business. Like any business, the university thrives on market competition for “natural resources,” which in this case are the professors and their intellectual pursuits. Goldsmith explains how competition makes mobility an accepted (albeit unique) practice in American universities and colleges:

American academics are quite unusual, on a global scale, with regard to the amount of moving around that they are willing to put up with and that they even take for granted. French Canadians by and large will not leave Québec. A Frenchman living in France may land a job in the provinces, but the center

of his academic life and point of orientation will remain Paris no matter what happens. Americans, on the other hand, think nothing of moving from Brandeis to UCLA and then back east again to Johns Hopkins, moves on a scale that would be unthinkable in Europe, or anywhere else in the world for that matter. (225)

Goldsmith outlines how the expectation of mobility is unique in American higher education, even hinting at our willingness to leave behind or conceal those places that may have once been our points of orientation. He attributes the American professoriate's willingness and expectation of mobility to the lack of a centralized university system in the United States. The US does not have a nationally sponsored or sanctioned educational system, which might assign or even localize faculty members. Though there are regional accreditation agencies, each university and each college maintains autonomous control over its operations—an autonomy that translates into competition for resources, which, in higher education, is the faculty member. Because universities are competing for resources, seeking out the best and brightest wherever they might reside, a lack of mobility is constructed as the worst obstacle any academic can face. John Komlos suggests “career mobility is invariably tied to geographic mobility for most [academics] and that geographical mobility is not always gentle on family life” (237-8). What is an academic to do? According to Penny Gold, the answer is quite simple: “Make the most of the situation that you're in, even while you may be looking to move elsewhere” (254). Change your location to change your life; accept mobility and placelessness to find the best jobs available.

Contemporary anecdotes and tips echo advice given decades earlier even as they reinforce the idea that a willingness to be mobile can result in a better professional

opportunity. Interwoven into these placeless messages is a covert and subtle secondary message, one that extends beyond attitudes about moving and into perceptions about personal attachment. Information about the benefits of mobility morph into messages about who professors should be in relation to the concept of place, and while the preceding texts serve doctoral candidates by not sugar-coating the reality of life in academia, by treating place as a *handicap* to be overcome, the published advice manuals alienate those candidates who recognize *individual terroir* as a source of personal identification and strength. The dismissal of place as a legitimate factor in job placement perpetuates the idea that academics can be happy anywhere so long as they have a job, thus reinforcing an ethos of rootlessness. These conversations about academic gypsies—workers willing to move anywhere for the right job—resonate with the job candidates I interviewed for my study, even if they don't support the central premise.

After years of working as a chef in restaurant kitchens across the United States, John, a forty-five-year-old single father with joint custody, moved to the Northeast and enrolled in college.⁷ Long before he entered a graduate program, John was privy to candid conversations about employment in higher education and its gypsy existence:

I've heard at least one kind of story [about the job search], and that is you should not bind yourself to a place. If you're going to be a real career-oriented, go-getter, do what's best for you, for your progress [as an academic], then you'll be willing to go anywhere anytime regardless of whether that means leaving your partner halfway across the country, your kids, whatever. I'll never forget, even before I was in graduate school, my honors project

⁷ I use pseudonyms for all my participants.

director said, “Fuck your girlfriend. You’ve got a dissertation to write.” That’s kind of the story [about place] I’ve been hearing.

Hovey’s original interest in finding a sustainable and livable location disappeared as the job crisis of the 1970s and 1980s pushed employment concerns away from place. Jobs tightened in literature; rhetoric and composition struggled for legitimacy as a discipline, and the focus became finding employment. Period.

Even as the stories circulating in the job search parlor focus on gypsy lifestyles and placelessness, doctoral candidates are thinking about place and how it affects their job search. Ask job candidates about their experiences on the job market, and they’ll supply candid responses (as I learned in my surveys and interviews). The candidates may even offer up a story to relate their perceptions and experiences with place and the job search, which is exactly what one participant chose to do when sharing the following fable from Japan:

The frog in the well thinks she has a wonderful life, with a great view of the night sky, and plenty of water to swim around in. But when the frog in the well meets the frog in the ocean[,] and they start talking, the frog in the well realizes how limited her perspective has been, and begins to understand that the well isn’t the world, but just one small corner of it.

The participant who shared this fable mentions that most of the job candidates at her institution are in-state students. As such, she was one of the few candidates to “conduct a truly national search.” Did this candidate share her fable and personal experience with me in order to emphasize the importance of acknowledging the limitations of attaching one’s self to place? The fable does seem to mirror the ethos of rootlessness circulating in academe: be mobile because staying put can be limiting. Was the candidate indicating that place-based

attachments are parochial, or was she emphasizing the importance of experiencing new places, of leaving the familiar well for the benefits of a different and larger ocean? I cannot be certain because the fable was included as part of the survey. This anecdote about a frog in a well foreshadows data uncovered by my research with the academic job search in rhetoric and composition—know *where* you are (the job search parlor) but also know *where* you want to be.

Surveying Job Search Candidates

As I noted in my introduction, Brooks Blevins and Eric Zencey contend that academics belong to a world city, hold no attachments to geographical locations, and are desperate for jobs, wherever they may be. But, discussions with colleagues and my dissertation committee members suggested that place may be a factor, perhaps even a factor of importance, when PhD candidates enter the job market. By surveying doctoral candidates entering the job market in 2006-2007, I test the validity of both claims against empirical evidence and qualitative data. Does place matter to candidates conducting a job search in rhetoric and composition job? Are PhD candidates in rhetoric and composition looking for *any* job in spite of the high number of rhetoric and composition jobs available? A comprehensive and exhaustive survey of all job seekers in higher education was beyond the scope of this project, so I narrowed my research sample to focus on PhD candidates who position their work in the field of rhetoric and composition. As I stated earlier, I chose this research sample primarily because I am a doctoral candidate in rhetoric and composition and, as I will note in my conclusions to this chapter, most contemporary research on and advice about the job search focuses on English (i.e., literary studies). I am also concerned about the effects of place(lessness) on writing studies and the teaching of writing.

In September 2006, I contacted the representatives listed in the Consortium of Doctoral Programs in Rhetoric and Composition, hoping to compile a cluster sample of doctoral candidates entering the job search during the 2006-2007 academic year. I contacted all seventy-two (72) universities listed. Forty-three (43) never responded to my e-mail query, and three (3) universities refused my request for the names of doctoral candidates entering the job market. Three universities (3) indicated that their programs were too young to have candidates actively seeking jobs, and four programs (4) had no candidates on the market. From the seventeen universities (17) that agreed to supply me with the names of candidates, I was able to compile an initial list of fifty-eight (58) potential job candidates in rhetoric and composition. The PhD candidates I contacted were using the *Association of Departments of English Modern Language Association Job Information List (JIL)* as their primary source for jobs available in Rhetoric and Composition, and they were searching primarily for employment in four-year institutions.

I began my research with surveys because they allow for the collection of “opinions, preferences, beliefs, feelings, and other personal information” (MacNealy 148). More importantly, survey data allows researchers to generalize about a particular population in Rhetoric and Composition (the PhD candidate entering the job market) and to establish the degree of the relationship between place and job selection. In October 2006, I distributed the first of a two-part, online survey aimed at understanding the role of place in the traditional academic job search. I began by sending individual e-mail invitations to my cluster list of fifty-eight candidates, detailing how I received their contact information and providing them with a link to the online survey, hosted by a third-party survey service. In order to reach other potential job candidates at the universities from which I did not receive contact information, I

also distributed requests (see Appendix A) to four listservs related to the discipline: Writing Program Administration (WPA-L), the Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment (ASLE and ASLE-CCCC), H-RHETOR, and TechRhet.

The pre-job search survey contained eighteen questions focused on the factors impacting candidates' criteria for selecting jobs to apply for (see Appendix B). I began with demographic information: name of PhD institution, city and state of current residence, age, ethnicity, marital status, and research and teaching interests. There were also specific questions about the candidates' experiences with and relationships to particular places. In addition to establishing the candidates' connections to place, I asked candidates to describe the advice they received about place as they entered the job market, hoping to determine whether or not candidates are advised to seek out places they want to live or to take the best offer regardless of location.

The pre-job search survey was available online for four weeks, and during this time, the survey site had 168 visits. Sixty-two participants completed the survey. These participants were living and working all over the United States. Not every participant volunteered the location of current residence, which often correlated to the PhD institution's location, but five were living in the Northeast, thirteen in the Southeast, fourteen in the Midwest, eleven in the Southwest, and nine in the West. I also had two participants from Canada, and one from New Zealand. A majority of my participants (88%) were non-Hispanic white, and most (69%) were married or in a domestic partnership. Twenty-one percent reported they were single.

The post-job search survey (see Appendix C), distributed in March 2007, was available online for a total of eight weeks, and during this time, the survey site had 133 visits.

Forty participants completed the closing survey. These participants came from all over the United States, though only thirty-six participants volunteered the location of their PhD Institution. Four were living in the Northeast, six in the Southeast, sixteen in the Midwest, eight in the Southwest, and one in the West. A majority of my participants (95%) were non-Hispanic white, and most (76%) were married or in a domestic partnership (8% were single).

Factoring Place into the Job Search

The participant responses to my pre-job and post-job search survey suggest that doctoral candidates are not as rootless as the academy's conventional wisdom might suggest. When asked to indicate their attachment to a home site, a majority (76%) of respondents said they are attached to where they are from. In the pre-job search survey, 34% of respondents selected "very attached" and 42% selected "somewhat attached" (see Figure 1). These numbers hold true for the post-job search survey, in which seventy-eight percent of respondents indicated they were "very attached" (28%) or "somewhat attached" (50%) to where they were from (see Figure 2). These responses indicate an investment in home sites, and they challenge the notion that academics are not attached to or invested in place. For instance, Catherine defines herself as "deeply rooted" to her home site, and she correlates her commitment to her belief that she cannot contribute "to brain drain" in her urban area. She wants to remain in her city and give back to the community that raised her rather than exploring national employment options. When I asked Catherine to describe her attachment to her home during our follow-up interview (see Appendix D for a list of questions), she mentioned a family history of anxiety disorders and separation anxiety, but Catherine also sees her relationship with the city of Philadelphia as contributing to her rootedness. At the age of twenty-nine, she has lived "within the city boundaries" her entire life. In fact, her

Philadelphia roots can be traced through both of her parents: her mother's family moved to the city in the 1860s, and her father's parents migrated to Philadelphia from other locations prior to having children. For Catherine, being attached to where she is from is also more than a story of family history. It is about being part of a village. She lives in "what is rumored to be the most diverse neighborhood in the United States," and she first experienced its cultural, ethnic, racial, and economic diversity as a child. Being able to ask questions and interact with others different from herself allowed Catherine to develop relationships with her immediate family and with the family that was her city block. Catherine's description of her attachment to Philadelphia plays into the city as both a location and a locale; she is invested in the city (a geographic location) where her family settled generations before her, but she is also invested in the city as a locale. In fact, Catherine's reasons for staying put have more to do with the social and emotional relationships she has built with the people in the city than with the city infrastructure.

Catherine expands on her roots with neighbors in her community by reminiscing about a social structure that no longer exists: "I grew up on the same block as my grandparents, my great-great aunt, my great-grandmother, my great-uncle and great-aunt, and various extended cousins or, you know, old Italian ladies who had been living there for fifty years so might as well be part of this extended family." This extended family roots Catherine to Philadelphia so much so that she finds it difficult to "relate to people who hop from place to place to place, or who move such great distances to go to school." Catherine may be living in an urban center, but her relationship with place echoes those of academics who spent their youth in more rural and agricultural areas. She is so rooted in the city and its places that she cannot imagine packing up and moving around for any reason, let alone a new job. Catherine

serves as an example of an academic who is attached to a place that is not rural, but it is important to acknowledge how her location has made this attachment possible. She did not have to seek out a new location to complete her undergraduate or graduate degrees, which, in turn, means Catherine may have some success in finding employment near her home site.

Catherine was attached to a place that offered ample educational and employment opportunities. Her self-awareness about this attachment made it possible for her to be frank with her colleagues and mentors about where and how she was going to look for jobs. As she told me, “I’ve been really upfront about that with them from the very beginning. That I was rooted in place and that I wasn’t leaving and that nothing they said or did was going to change my mind about that; so they could just get used to it. If they didn’t like it, too bad for them.” Catherine was not alone in expressing attachment to a home site. She is not alone in her decision to focus on place as one part of her academic job search. In fact, my survey results suggest that participants’ attachments to place did affect their job search process. When asked, “How important will the geographic location of a university be when you decide to *apply* for a job?” 58% of my survey participants selected “very important.” Surprisingly, only 6% indicated that place was “not at all important” in the job search. These numbers are startling given published accounts, like Blevins’ and Zencey’s, which suggest that place is not a consideration for academics looking for employment. The interest of participants in geographic location becomes even more significant when we consider that only 5% of respondents indicated they were willing to live anywhere for the right job. Contrast this number with the 71% of pre-job search respondents who said there were certain places they were unwilling to live.

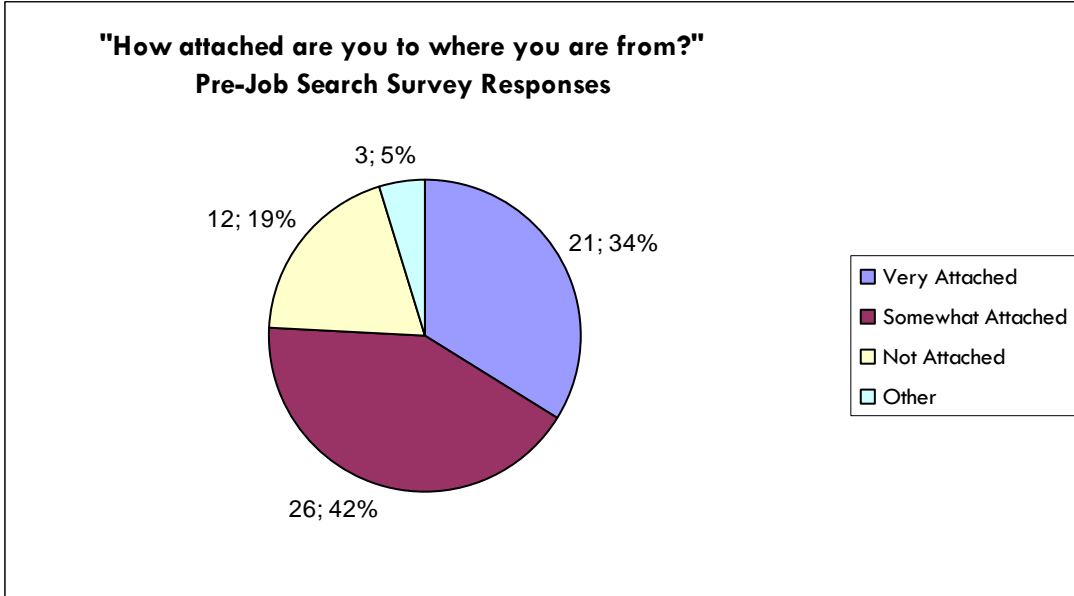


Figure 1. Pre-Job Search Survey Responses

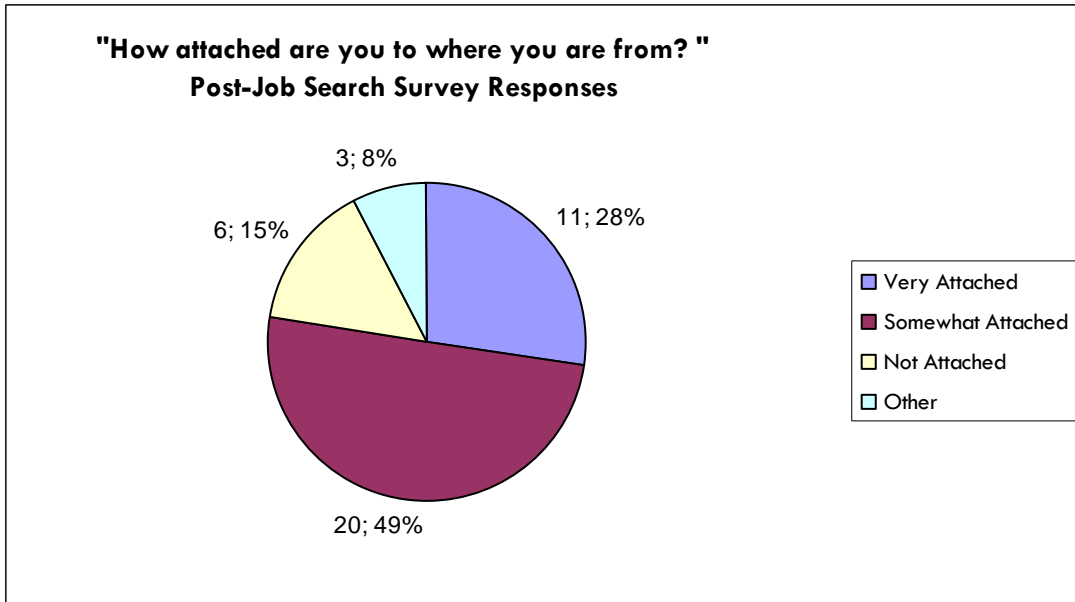


Figure 2. Post-Job Search Survey Responses

A majority of my participants (93%) anticipated that the geographic location of the university would be “very important” (56%) or “somewhat important” (37%) in their decision to *accept* a job offer. These numbers held steady in the post-job search survey. I asked participants the following question: “Now that you have accepted a position, how important was the geographic location of the job in your decision to accept the university’s offer?” Thirty-five out of the forty total respondents selected either “very important” or “somewhat important.” That is, 87% of the post-job search survey participants indicated that place was a determining factor in their decision to accept a job offer. For Catherine, accepting a job offer based on its geographical location ended up being an easy decision. A week before Christmas, a job was created at her undergraduate institution that “could not be more perfect for” her. Not only is her new job located in the Philadelphia area (a requirement for a woman intent on staying in the city), but the new job will allow her to explore her primary research interests in faculty development.

Like Catherine, David expressed attachment to a place, but his attachment is not to a childhood city or region (a location). David is attached to his doctoral institution, an attachment that focuses on the university as a locale. David’s description of his doctoral institution, however, includes overtones of location, especially when he describes his university as “in a way where I [am] from because I am invested in the place and the work that I do there.” David does not express an attachment to where he was born and raised, as Catherine does, but he acknowledges an attachment to his university as a source of personal identification. When it came time for David to find a job, he focused less on finding a particular geographic location and more on finding an ideal institutional locale. He wanted a job where he could do his “digital work and not have to fight for it or argue why it was

important,” so while applying for eighteen jobs, David focused on only those institutions which had a “sense of why [digital work] was important and not just, ‘Oh, we need it,’” and those that had graduate programs (he knew he was interested in working with graduate students). David’s interest in finding the right university place to do his job mirrors a secondary pattern in the pre-job search survey.

I provided respondents with a number of open-ended questions so that they could tell me, in their words, what criteria were affecting their job search. Participants were asked to respond to the following open-ended question: “Name your top criteria for selecting jobs as you begin your search.” Thirty-nine of the sixty-two respondents mentioned place in some way, a number that echoes other survey data, primarily the data indicating that a majority of applicants were attached to a home site and the data indicating the importance of place in candidates’ decisions to apply for jobs. For the participants who indicated that place was a top criterion in their job search, there remains variety and nuance in their explanations. Some of the participants focused on place as a location, indicating, sometimes in humorous ways, that there are locations in the United States where they cannot live. As one participant notes, “Where I move has to be funky!!! [I]n other words, I ain’t moving to [Georgia], [Louisiana], [Alabama] or [Mississippi] or [U]tah.” For others, the criteria related to place were less specific, but they often connected to place as a locale; for example, one participant was seeking deliberate social relationships: “Creative possibilities, in a city, in a place I consider physically beautiful, students I can connect with (in terms of social class).” Most participants, however, used a repetition of phrasing that created a pattern to their responses. Twenty-two participants listed “location” (e.g., “Location: North East, closer to New York”). Nine of the respondents listed “geography” (e.g., “Geography/Family” and “1) Geography / 2) Research

1 University”). Seven of the thirty-nine participants used the combined phrase of “geographic location” to describe the role of place in their search (e.g., “Job description / geographic location / collegiality / salary”).

Thirty-eight participants volunteered *place* as a criteria affecting their job search. Five of these thirty-eight listed place as the *only* criterion for accepting a job offer. For these five, place was all that mattered, even though their answers alternated between geography, location, and geographic location. Additionally, ten more of these original thirty-eight participants included place in their criterion, but they listed place first in the series. For example, one participant wrote, “Location, benefits, pay, teaching load, support services.” Another wrote, “Location, dept. emphases and their relationship with my research and teaching interests, community atmosphere, salary, and tenure-track expectations.” Just as David was seeking a university that would accept and respect his interests and specialties, most respondents saw a variety of factors affecting their job search, and these place-based factors fit into three categories: job-related factors (such as teaching load or benefits), university-related factors (such as collegiality of faculty), or family-related factors (such as relocation opportunities and school districts). All three of the place-based factors candidates used to talk about university places correspond to the three-part description of place scaffolding my study. The location of a university may determine the number of jobs available for a spouse or the kinds of schools open to children. The locale of a university may determine the kinds of colleagues a candidate will have, and the sense of place a candidate gathers about a university may affect her decision to accept a teaching job over a research job. I point out the connections between defining place and defining universities as a place because the participants’ interest in universities-as-places pushes my hypothesis about how

place matters a little further, even as it reinforces my point that place (in multiple ways) can affect the job search in rhetoric and composition.

David focused on finding a university locale that would allow him to develop the career of his dreams, but the location of the university was also a determining factor in his job search. Place mattered “a little bit,” because, as he said, “I had been given instructions by my wife that I should not look anywhere in the south.” Growing up in South America, his wife spent her entire life without seasons in a warm weather climate, so in addition to avoiding the Southern accent, which she found “disconcerting,” she wanted a location with four distinguishable seasons. Thus, David’s search, like that of many other participants, became a multifaceted balancing act between his desire for the ideal institutional locale and his wife’s desire for the ideal geographic location.

As a follow-up to the open-ended question asking participants to identify the criteria affecting their job selection process, I asked respondents to select the factors that might affect their job search from a control group of eleven possible choices (see Figure 3). When asked to select criteria from a pre-selected list, fifty-four out of the sixty-two respondents selected “geographic location of institution” as a factor in their job search. Eighty-seven percent of the respondents indicated place as a factor, the highest ranking factor out of the eleven possible choices. Geographic location of the institution was followed in popularity by teaching load (43), salary (40), and institution type (37).

In the post-job search survey, I asked participants to select the top three criteria that *affected* their decision to accept a university’s offer (see Figure 4). Working from the same control group of eleven possible criteria, there was a tie for the most popular criteria affecting the acceptance of a job offer. Spouse/partner (17) and teaching load (17) won out above all

the other possible factors. Geographic location remained a determining factor for participants, as fifteen (15) of the forty (40) respondents indicated that the geographic location of the university was a factor in their decision to accept a university's job offer. Based on David's narrative, I assume that a spouse or partner might influence the final choice in a job search, and I suspect that place is one of those scenarios. After all, David's spouse expressed her preference for a particular climate and region, and he did his best to accommodate her request. Employment opportunities outside the institution may also be a place-based, partner-dependent consideration.

To better understand the participants' choices, I asked them to explain in their own words why they selected their top three factors. In these personalized answers, why geographic location mattered more to participants than the academic reputation of a university or the size and type of institution becomes clearer. A number of participants were unable or unwilling to relocate as part of their job search, though their reasons varied. For example, one participant said she would not move because she has "an established home, business, and family ties. The job is close to home." Another participant, who has not completed his PhD, said matter of factly: "I do not want to move." He also listed two motivating factors for staying put. First, because he has not completed his PhD, he wanted to be "close to [his] PhD school." He also wanted to remain in his current location because his youngest child "won't finish high school for three years." For other participants, factoring in geographic location was tied to spouses, partners, and families (as David's narrative suggests). One respondent wrote, "My husband is mobile job-wise, but he wants to live someplace different from where we are now (i.e., not in the Midwest)." For another, relocating to another place was an easy decision: "Partner and I were from the area and

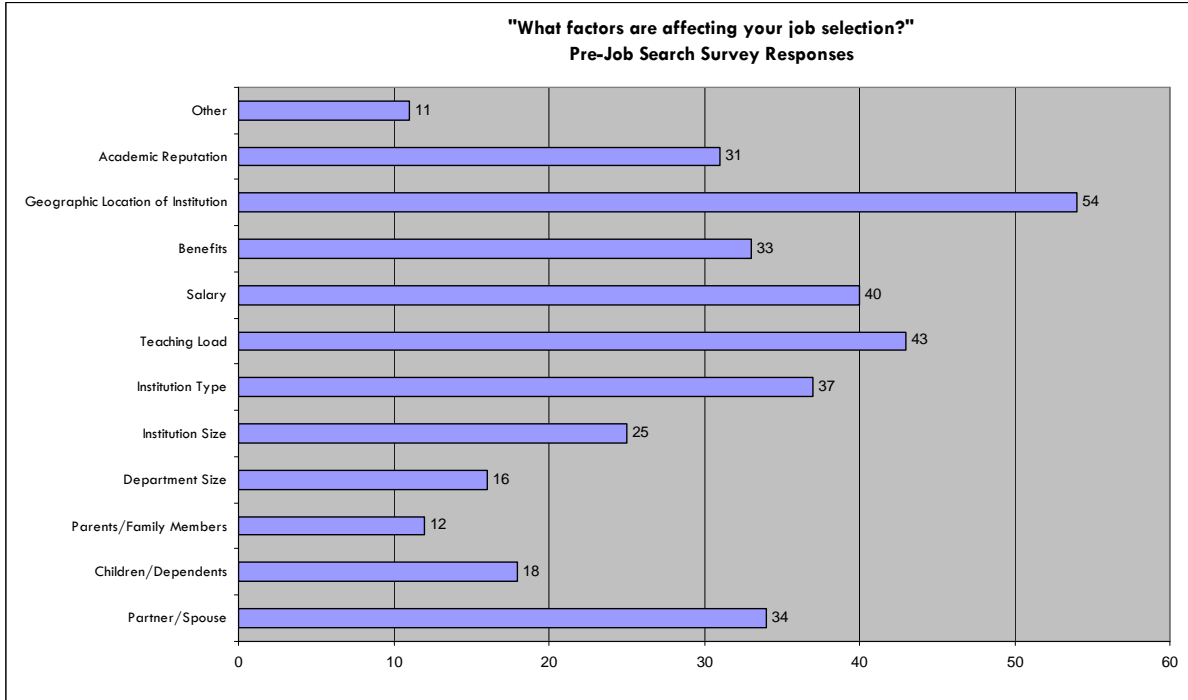


Figure 3. Pre-Job Search Survey Responses

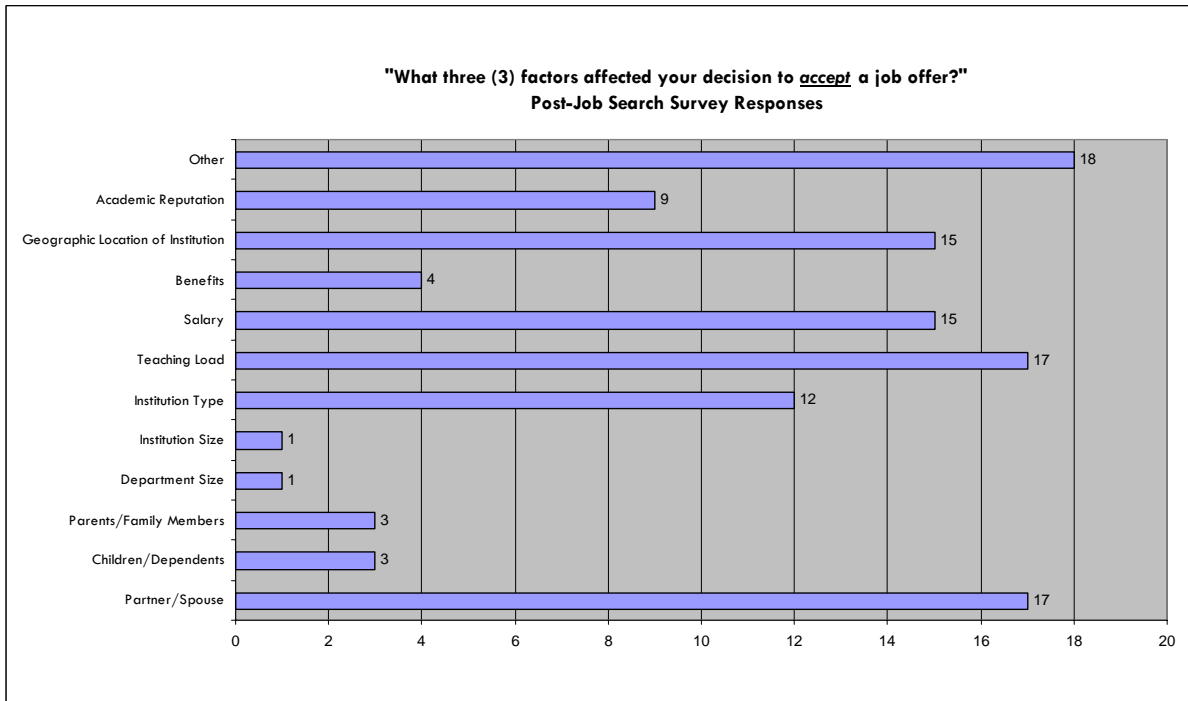


Figure 4. Post-Job Search Survey Responses

wanted to return.” Yet another noted that his search was always focused on geography: “I looked for a position in a limited geographic area. The offer was the best in terms of fit for family (myself and spouse) and best in terms of academic strength. I might have chosen a place with less rigorous tenure expectations had not the location been ideal.”

In their selection of criteria and in their explanation of why particular factors mattered, many doctoral candidates reveal that place mattered for them and for their families. Yes, they were all interested in things such as salary and benefits, but when the final decision had to be made, place remained a top criteria in the decision-making process. As Mia shared in her survey response,

It is most important to me to work in an institution that values ALL of the work that I do as a writing specialist who cares deeply about teaching and building/strengthening writing programs. I admit that location started to matter more once I started going on campus visits and got my first offer—once I had to start making decisions. However, it doesn’t matter where in the world I go if I take a bad job. I’d still be unhappy, and it’s not worth it to me to be unhappy. I’d rather take a good job and be able to do work that matters.

Mia’s response to the question reveals how place cannot be a monolithic factor in the job search. Even though she is attached to the geographic location of her childhood (as I discuss below), she also sought out an institutional locale where her work would be valued and respected. In the end, the university as a place mattered more than the place of the university, which is why her response seems to indicate that she couldn’t take a bad job and hope to be happy because she was in a good place.

My survey results indicate that the importance of place was not a new consideration for the participants in my study. In fact, 77% of my respondents indicated that the geographic location of a graduate program mattered when they were applying to doctoral programs. Forty-five percent indicated that the geographic location mattered “very much” when they were applying to graduate programs, and 32% indicated that it mattered “some.” For David, place was a matter of trees (and locale and sense of place) when he was looking at graduate programs. The university he visited in Texas had great people and great facilities, but there was no “culture.” There were no art galleries, only a couple of good restaurants, and though he didn’t want to resort to stereotyping, he confesses:

I didn’t sense that I would be happy there because I . . . do better if I have lots of social activities I just didn’t see that connection to the place, and for me, I’m really, really attached to trees. And if there’s one place that has no trees [it was there]. . . . but not only do they not have trees, they don’t have shrubs either. They have, like, dirt.

David admits that he could have been successful at the university, but he opted to go elsewhere, to a place with trees because he knew that the institutional locale would not be enough. During his campus visit, he had a negative sense of place—one connected to the community as a locale—and he trusted himself enough to know that an academic life would not be enough for him. His decision is not all that unusual. I asked participants to respond to a statement: “When I was *accepting* offers from graduate programs, the geographic location of the university *did* impact my selection.” Sixty-nine percent of participants selected yes, which, again, indicates that place was not just a factor for the job search process but a

criterion in the decision-making process from their initial entrance into academia, as was the case for David.

Mentoring Job Candidates

A majority of my survey participants were unphased by the ethos of rootlessness, demonstrated by their use of geographic location as a factor in their selection of graduate programs and academic positions. Unfortunately, being un-phased by the attitudes about place circulating in academia does not mean that the candidates are not acutely aware of these perceptions. After completing a Master's degree and teaching for several years at a small, private liberal arts university in the southeast, Mia enrolled in a comprehensive doctoral program in the southwest. During our interview, I asked if she thought there was a myth about place in the academy, and in her response, Mia articulates why the locations and locales of her past affect her academic identity. Mia said,

I do think that we assume that nobody cares about where we are or where we come from and how that affects the work we do in terms of our writing and our research and how we interact with each other in terms of our colleagues and our students. But, I don't think that is true. I really think that the places I've lived and the town that I grew up in and the places that are in my sinews really do have an affect on the kinds of topics I'm interested in, the kinds of research that I like to do, and the ways that I approach teaching. I think that is a part of me, and I think it's a part of others, too. I can see that in other people.

Mia recognizes that her past experiences in place affect her teaching and her research, and she has held on to this effect in spite of institutional perceptions to the contrary. Rachel had a similar reaction to my question about place and the academy. As a graduate student, she

enrolled in a Midwestern comprehensive doctoral program, one that conducts high intensity research. As a student, Rachel didn't notice the ethos of rootlessness right away, but she did notice ideas circulating about how place should be unimportant during the academic job search:

I think the myth is that we're supposed to not pay attention to [place]. Maybe that is because of where I am coming from. I do have rather ambitious faculty, and they want me to be ambitious. The fact that I am much more attached to community than I am to, "This is absolutely the kind of work I want to do," probably is a little surprising to them at times I say we underestimate how powerful place is I think we become much more attached to place than we actually talk about. What would it mean to relocate? What will it mean to do these things? What is the value of where I am now? So, we go into the job search thinking somehow we will shed all that.

Both Rachel and Mia understand that the dominant message of the academy is that place ought not to matter to them, but they both articulated how past experiences of place and future interest in locales matter to their personal and professional identities. They recognized early on in their careers that the appearance of mobility seems to matter in academia (a point I will discuss later), but they both resisted this message. As the data below reveal, Rachel and Mia are not alone in their experiences. When considering mentor-mentee conversations about the job search in rhetoric and composition, job candidates found place seemed to be overlooked and ignored by the faculty mentors helping them prepare for and conduct a job search.

In the pre-job search survey, I asked candidates whom they were consulting with about the job search, and all of the participants indicated multiple people. A majority of my participants (47 out of 62) were consulting with their dissertation directors. Others were consulting with partners and spouses (40) and other non-dissertation related mentors (39). Some were reading academic listservs (38). Although participants sought out a variety of people to assist them with the research, there was an absence of information about geographic location and its role in the job search. For example, I asked pre-job search survey participants, “What advice have you been given about geographic location as it relates to your job search?” Twenty-two (22) of the sixty-two (62) survey respondents reported that they have received little or no advice about the role of place in the job search. Of the twenty-two respondents who indicated they have received little advice, fifteen simply wrote “None” in the response box. These fifteen participants received no advice and no guidance on how to balance their *individual terroir* with the reality of a national job search. Place as a location or even a locale was not anticipated to be a consideration at least between candidates and mentors. As one participant explains, she received no advice from her mentor, but she was thinking about place: “None, really. My husband and I discuss it all the time, though.”

In the post-job search survey, I asked participants to report which advice about geographic location was most helpful when they were deciding which job offer to accept. Candidates again received little or no advice about how to factor location into their job search process. In fact, nine (9) of the forty-two (42) survey respondents heard nothing about how place might factor into the final decision of a job search. The answers supplied by the survey participants varied greatly, from simple dismissal to telling silence:

“Ignore it.”

“None.”

“I didn’t really have any.”

“I didn’t receive any.”

Two participants indicated that the advice they heard about geographic location was associated with the kind of job search they should conduct. For instance, one participant reports, “I received no advice but to apply broadly (as in geographically), but I did not do this.” Another says, “The advice is usually for a wider geographic search. If place is important to a person, this should be ignored.” Another captures the field’s attitude in her response, as she explains why job candidates are not talking about place with their mentors, even if place is a factor in the job search:

The attitude in the field seems to be that geography is least important in making one’s decision. However, I know that for most of the people on the market this year that I talked to, geographic location was one of the most important deciding factors. Most people did wide national searches but when it came down to choosing between offers, location was important. I would have taken a job in an undesirable location if I had had to, but I would most likely go back on the market in a year or two to get to a better place.

The participant’s analysis captures the disjuncture I have noted between the candidates’ needs and the advice circulating in the parlor and between the discipline’s desire to maintain lore-based advice it finds useful and the candidates’ sense of place. These responses highlight the problem with place and the job search as it is currently constructed. Job candidates want to talk about place because it matters to them, but according to the candidates, those tasked with easing the transition from graduate student to professional (faculty mentors and

advisors) appear to be unwilling, unable, or unaware of the need to talk about place—though I do not have data from faculty mentors to verify this assertion.

Sometimes, however, the perceptions and advice of the mentors may do more harm than good, as was the case for Catherine. During our follow-up interview, she mentioned her faculty members were not wholly unwilling to talk about place, but their advice made it clear that valuing place was not an acceptable position for a doctoral candidate. In one incident, her intellectual merit and professional aspirations were belittled because she expressed no interest in conducting a national job search. Years before she was even on the market, Catherine was enrolled in a dissertation seminar aimed at providing professional development to graduate students. One week, her assignment was to pull jobs from the *MLA Job Information List*, which she might consider applying for. Being attached to Philadelphia, the assignment was not simple:

I stewed for a really long time before I went into that day’s meeting. I wanted to say up front that I did not plan on leaving the Philadelphia area, but I knew, *I knew* what [the professor’s] response was going to be, and I wasn’t wrong. I said all of that, and what he said [in response] was, “You should do a national job search anyway because people who do local job searches don’t consider themselves real researchers.”

Catherine fumed with “righteous indignation.” As a professionally active graduate student, she refused to be dismissed as someone who was not a real researcher. Her belief in the merit of her work and the value of her scholarly activities allowed her to dismiss the comments as absurd, but, unfortunately, her experience is representative of disciplinary attitudes towards *individual terroir*.

In her post-job search survey, Catherine shared another competing story of how place might be factored into the job search. This time, she shared the “best” advice she received from a faculty advisor:

The best advice I received was not specifically about geographic location but does include geographic location. The associate director of my department’s graduate program held a job search meeting in which she told students that the job search was ultimately about values. In other words, before embarking on a job search, we needed to think long and hard about what was most important to us (geographic location, institution type, academic reputation, whatever) and to determine how much (if at all) we were willing to compromise on (each of) those points. After years of being ignored or derided when I said I wanted to remain in this area, this advice really resonated for me.

Catherine appreciated the values-based approach to the job search, but this advice came *after* she had been “ignored or derided” for expressing an interest in staying in Philadelphia. As a doctoral candidate, Catherine received competing and contradictory advice about the job search, and without accurate, published data, she had to rely on personal analysis to determine which voice to ignore and which voice to believe. And given the negative comments made to her by a faculty member in her department, it seems unlikely that she could rely on institutional history to guide her process.

Catherine was not the only participant to recount hearing advice that was biased against those who expressed an interest in or attachment to place. In one example, the advice was delivered as a backhanded compliment. The participant was told that she was “‘courageous’ for not doing a national search.” While praising the candidate’s courage for

conducting a more local and regional search, this comment parallels the “real researchers” statement made to Catherine. Both imply that successful candidates conduct national searches and hold little allegiance to place; moreover, candidates who consider themselves “real” academics are (apparently) more willing to position the job specifications above all other factors (including place).

Amy, another interview participant, was not bothered by the advice she was receiving from her mentors and advisors. The treatment and comments a colleague endured, however, caused her to reflect on the relationship between a life in academia and her *individual terroir*. Trained at a large, Research I institution in the Midwest, Amy notes that her job search advice has generally focused less on geography and more on the search for a “like institution.” Candidates leaving her program are expected to seek out and accept a Research I job “wherever those Research [Ones] may happen to exist.” This expectation, according to Amy, is grounded in the doctoral candidates’ preparation in the department. Through coursework, exams, teaching, and research, they have been groomed for a particular *kind* of job at a particular *kind* of university. At Amy’s institution, there is little room for alternative choices. She made this point by recounting her colleague’s experience:

Her goal for academia was to be a community college teacher, and she was given a lot of grief by different advisors and people here this year when she chose to do that and actually only applied for community college jobs. She had really and still [is] getting a lot of prejudicial type of comments: about her choices, about wasting the schools’ time and money and [wasting] her time and money by coming to such a big school here and now going to [work at] a junior college . . . as far as geography of where she chose to go, it wasn’t

really the geography. [The advice] was more the level of school that she chose or that all of us have chosen to take jobs at.

As this anecdote suggests, the academy operates with a particular set of (unspoken and assumed) ideals about what is to be valued—and that is the status of the job over all other factors. By not talking about place with job candidates, mentors and advisors implicitly suggest that place is an irrelevant part of the job search—something not worthy of full consideration. By offering pointed judgments about candidates who *do* choose to factor in geographic location, mentors perpetuate a culture in which place is forced into the closet. For individuals attached to locations and for individuals who use place as a factor in the job search, academe operates as a hostile environment—one in which there is little room for place to matter.

The willingness or unwillingness to talk about the role of place in the academic job search does not change the current reality of the job search in English: most contemporary advice offered to the job candidate remains unsupported by empirical evidence and/or is irrelevant for the candidate in rhetoric and composition. Throughout this chapter, my focus has been on rhetoric and composition candidates because this is my area of expertise and my discipline. I chose this focus because, as a discipline, we can no longer pretend that doctoral candidates in rhetoric and composition face a job market reminiscent of the 1970s, when the overproduction of PhDs created a job crisis. As Edmond Volpe described in the *ADE Bulletin* (1971),

The report [*MLA Manpower Survey*], given the prominence it deserves in the MLA convention bulletin, details the grim findings of the survey: a sharp decline in the available full-time positions in foreign languages and English,

and eventual over-production of nearly 900 English Ph.D.'s annually if present programs are maintained, and perhaps, of most importance, it reveals a severe loss of a market for Ph.D.'s. (28)

There are no firm numbers detailing how many doctoral degrees are granted each year in rhetoric and composition (a discussion for another place).⁸ From the data available, including the Fall 2004 *MLA Newsletter*, I deduce that the market for those with Rhetoric and Composition PhDs remains healthy. For example, there were 1,362 English jobs advertised between September 2003 and July 2004. Of the jobs advertised from 2000 to 2004, the listing terms "composition and rhetoric" had the highest percentage of positions advertised. In 2004, 29.4% of jobs were listed in composition rhetoric, 8.5% were listed in technical and business writing, and 7.7% were listed in technology and digital media. This data indicates that the job search for rhetoric and composition candidates is not in a crisis; quite the contrary. In 2007, a quick search on the *ADE MLA Job Information List* for Assistant Professor openings in composition and rhetoric reveals 231 possible positions with an additional 67 openings in business and technical writing.⁹ These numbers are preliminary, but they reinforce my point that candidates in rhetoric and composition enter a relatively strong market even as much of the job search advice is rooted in past (literature specialization) experiences rather than the realities of the present. It will never be easy to find employment in academe, but we should not let lore-based advice (centered on literary studies) should not dominate our discussions.

⁸ In August 2007, just such a conversation occurred on the WPA listserv (see thread "ADE PhD Rhet Comp Grad figures," 2004). As part of this exchange, Louise Weatherbee Phelps notes one of the hindrances to the discipline accurately reporting on its graduates and their subsequent placement. The best method of tracking graduates is the "Survey of Earned Doctorate," but it has no code for Rhetoric and Composition (broadly understood to mean writing studies, rhetoric, professional and/or technical communication, ESL writing, etc.). Phelps is working on this problem, on behalf of the Consortium of Doctoral Programs in Rhetoric and Composition. Dissertation Abstracts, now managed by Proquest, also does not capture graduates working in Rhetoric and Composition, even though there is a code available. She goes on to note that the National Research Council's (NRC) survey of doctoral programs will not improve the situation; it captures only those graduates whose rhetoric and composition programs are large and old enough to be listed as independent programs and whose universities agreed to follow the NRC instructions to do so. This does not account for those students who are completing specializations in rhetoric and composition in smaller doctoral programs housed in traditional English departments.

⁹ The language of job ads often results in interdisciplinary crossover. Searches for literature faculty might be categorized as "composition and rhetoric" if the ad includes language about a willingness to teach freshman composition courses. The same is true for an emphasis in business and technical writing.

One piece of advice about place that participants repeated again and again, regardless of their institutional size and location, was the phrase “cast a wide net.” When discussing what kind of job search to conduct or when summarizing how to approach the market, advisors and mentors told their candidates to cast a wide net. Three (3) of the sixty-two respondents (62) to the pre-job search survey repeated the “cast a wide net” metaphor in their open-ended responses to my question about the advice they are receiving about place and the job search:

“Cast a wide net for the first job.”

“I have heard you need to cast a wide net.”

Mentors told participants that a successful job search begins with a large geographic pool of institutions; therefore, the candidates had to “be open, [and] cast a wide net [because] if offered a position, [it] doesn’t mean you have to take it.” Mia, who both hated and loved the small town of her childhood, never used the phrase “cast a wide net,” but her reference to a “broad search” fits with the spirit of those casting wide nets.

Even when the participants were not repeating the “cast a wide net” metaphor, they were referencing the priority given to national searches by their faculty advisors. The advice about conducting a national search often centered on the job candidate concealing or overcoming the *terroir* “handicap,” a perceived attachment to or preference for a place. Candidates were told, “Don’t limit yourself.” They were also told, “At the letter-writing/first interest stage, don’t worry too much about [geographic location],” and, “Not to worry about it too much initially; apply for everything.” One even heard, “Apply to a wide-range[;] don’t let geography alone limit your applications,” while still another participant was assured:

“Your job opportunities expand in proportion to the flexibility of the job seeker. That is, more job opportunities exist for the person willing to relocate.”

Pieces of the above advice clearly harken back to the tips given in *The Chicago Guide* and the *The MLA Guide*, which I discussed earlier, but this advice strikes me as somewhat different. First of all, this advice assumes more applications equal more job opportunities. As one participant wrote, “Cast a wide net for the first job. Apply to at least 40 institutions to get 10 interviews.” While this advice would seem likely to hold true, more applications *should* net participants more job opportunities, my post-job survey does not fully affirm this conventional wisdom. When analyzing application-to-interview data (see Appendix E and F), I categorized the 40 respondents according to the type of job search conducted. Five participants conducted local searches, ten conducted more regional searches, and twenty-three conducted national searches. Two participants conducted international searches, and the remaining three conducted an “alternative” search; for example, one participant was asked to apply for an open position, and another applied to pre-selected cities. Somewhat surprising to me, attachment to a home site did not necessarily determine the kind of job search each participant conducted. For instance, three of the participants who conducted local searches indicated they were “very attached” to where they were from, as did three of the participants conducting regional searches. Of those participants conducting national searches, five indicated they were “very attached” to a home site, while thirteen indicated they were “somewhat attached.” It seems that the advice a candidate received (whether or not to cast a wide net) was a more likely indicator of the kind of job search conducted than the degree of a candidate’s attachment to her or his homeplace.

When comparing the number of applications each participant submitted to the number of interviews each participant received, the data varies widely. There is seemingly no predictor for how many interviews will come from the number of applications a candidate mails out, but the data indicates that applying to more jobs does not always guarantee more interviews. For my study, the average number of applications was 30.4. Some participants applied for one job (4 participants), but one participant applied for ninety jobs. The number of applications completed by a candidate depended, in part, on the kind of search being conducted. Obviously, candidates conducting local searches mailed out fewer applications than those conducting national searches, and these differences are reflected in the averages of each search.

Candidates searching locally sent out an average of 2.4 applications, while those searching regionally mailed an average of 26.6 applications. The national job seekers distributed an average of 43.0 applications. Given the variation in averages, the expectation would be that those candidates who sent out the most applications would receive, in turn, the highest average number of interviews. Candidates conducting national searches did receive the highest number of interviews, on average. However, the number is not as significant as conventional wisdom (and lore-based advice) suggests. In fact, national searches yielded an average of eight follow-up interviews, while regional searches yielded an average of five follow-up interviews. Though national applicants sent out almost twice as many applications, they gained on average only three additional interviews. They were only 9% more successful than their regional counterparts in landing an interview.

This data represents a fairly limited sample. However, these numbers reveal an alternative picture to what Mia called the “numbers game.” That is, applying to *more* jobs in

more places did not necessarily mean a higher return on the candidate's investment of time and money, at least for participants in my study. In fact, the participants who sent out the highest number of applications had the lowest success rates. The candidate who applied for ninety positions received fifteen interviews, a 17% return. The candidate who applied for eleven openings sat for six interviews at the national convention, a 55% return. Seventeen percent return is pretty low, but for the (already neurotic) candidate on the job market, some is better than none, and it seems that the zero-return nightmare was both an unfortunate reality and motivational factor for job candidates.

At the outset of this chapter, I noted that one byproduct of the national search was the increased control given to doctoral candidates. Rather than depending on a dissertation director or placement service to identify vacancies, candidates were given access to information and the responsibility for finding appropriate job opportunities. The national search soon coupled with a job crisis and an increase in the number of PhDs in English, and this combination left candidates feeling out of control. Again, a limited number of job opportunities may be the reality for candidates completing degrees in literature, but this is not necessarily the case in rhetoric and composition. Even so, many doctoral candidates looking for rhetoric and composition jobs believe themselves to be up against the same odds because the advice they receive is targeted for a more competitive, tighter market. When faced with the possibility of a failed job search, it is far easier for candidates to latch on to the "cast a wide net" narrative than to be selective about geographic location or any other preferences for employment: benefits, teaching load, tenure and promotion requirements.

The "cast a wide net" metaphor feeds into the lack of control job candidates already feel when they begin the job search process. Over the course of our interview, Jennifer

realized that she had used several fishing metaphors to describe her job search. Studying in a new PhD program, Jennifer's department lacked a programmatic history that might have indicated how successful she would be with the job search. She had no previous placement rate numbers on which to rely. But she did have expectations about her qualifications as a job candidate because she had worked in a number of administrative positions, creating an active, professional profile. She entered her search with some optimism: "I'm hopeful that I'll get nibbles, and I expect that I'll get some nibbles." In addition to working in a new program without a placement history, Jennifer was also not pursuing a "traditional rhet/comp degree." Thus, she was unsure of how much she would have to defend her training. She subsequently decided to follow the advice she had read online and heard from advisors: "I really did want to cast a fairly wide net because I didn't know the kind of response I was going to get."

Near the end of the interview, Jennifer pointed out her overuse of piscatorial metaphors did not reflect her interests. She hates fishing. She then confessed that the metaphor fits "in many ways." For example, she applied to fifty jobs, and by sending out a wide number of applications, she became a fisherman "trying to get somebody to grab on to [to her] bait slash vitae and realize that [she was] right for them." The fishing metaphor also fit because it mirrored the lack of control Jennifer felt during her search:

I mean people that cast a wide net aren't looking for the right job. They're looking for *a* job. And I don't mean that literally, like I wasn't looking for the right job. I just mean fishermen, when they cast a wide net, they're not looking for the right fish. They just want a fish.

The “cast a wide net” approach to the job search reinforces the academic gypsy mentality mentioned earlier. Rather than encouraging sustainable and long-term relationships with place, this advice tells candidates to overlook negative aspects of place because, as five respondents were told, they can always move. Moreover, as Jennifer points out, the advice implies that any job is better than no job—and in a tough job market, this seems to be true (much like the zero-return on applications submitted).

Again, the problem is not necessarily that individual opinions serve as the source of the advice mentors are giving to job candidates; the problem is the apparent inaccuracy of this advice in light of contemporary demands for rhetoric and composition faculty members. The problem is the lack of empirical evidence to support the claims made by advisors and mentors—advice that will often go unquestioned by job candidates who are buying into the institutional myth that *individual terroir* cannot matter in the academic job search. As the authors of *The Academic Career Handbook* note, “it is hardly surprising that higher education remains a land mapped by myths: commonplace understandings which, whatever their reality, many take to have some truth” (12). The most prevailing myth about the job search in rhetoric and composition is that casting a wide net will produce a more successful job search than the consideration of one’s personal identification with and preferences for place.

It is a legitimate fact that candidates will have more (and possibly better) choices if they submit applications for jobs in places they may know nothing about (but suspect they may not like), but this advice should not be delivered along with the advice that usually follows just such a recommendation: “You can live anywhere for the right job,” and “You can always move in three or four years.” I caution against this advice because there are

studies questioning higher education's assumption about academic mobility. In their 1986 article "Institutional Mobility Among Academics: The Case of Psychologists," Rachel Rosenfeld and Jo Ann Jones examine psychologists' career histories to determine if academics are institutionally mobile.¹⁰ The focus of their study is on inter-institutional job mobility, or those academics who leave one department or college for another with the intention of improving their rank in the university. The researchers found that there was surprisingly little mobility among psychologists; they also learned that most moves made by academics were horizontal (or out of academia moves) rather than vertical, internal moves—the jumps that would improve an individual's career standing. They even conclude that "[a]lthough institutional mobility is supposed to be pervasive and rewarded in academia, [there was] relatively little evidence of it" (223). In fact, the researchers determined that changing institutions "decreased an individual's chances of becoming an associate or full professor six years after graduate school. This indicates that institutional mobility can disrupt rather than advance careers" (223). Rosenfeld and Jones do not deny that the "ability to change schools (and often geographic location) can be crucial for [career] advancement," especially in academia, but they also make a rather surprising assertion. Based on their research, they suggest that "the appearance of willingness to move is often important for upward mobility even within an institution" (212). Thus, it seems that academia may not reward actual mobility among its workers, but, at least internally, the perception of mobility may benefit faculty members—a disturbing scenario because it seems to ask candidates and faculty members to deny or suppress investments with previous locations and forego developing connections with current institutions and communities.

¹⁰ I would like to acknowledge that there is considerable difference in the institutional work of psychologists and rhetoric and composition researchers; however, the study is still an interesting investigation of mobility-based advancement among career academics.

In “Patterns and Effects of Geographic Mobility for Academic Women and Men” (1987), Rosenfeld and Jones take up the issue of mobility again, this time focusing on the reality that most professional workers have greater chances for mobility than non-professional employees. This time, the researchers assert from the outset that

Academics are representative of their occupational category. Their job market is national. Often advancement requires moving to take a better job, especially early in the career. At the minimum, successful academics usually relocate from where they attend graduate school, since most departments do not hire their own new doctorates. Not just actual mobility, but also *being perceived* as potentially mobile can enhance career progress. (493, emphasis added)

Again, it is not necessarily the ability to be mobile that helps academics; instead, academia rewards the faculty member’s *perceived* willingness to be mobile. Thus, rhetoric and composition candidates enter a job search parlor where lingering concerns about the job search for doctoral candidates with specializations in literature may spark unnecessary fears about finding employment (there are fewer literature-focused jobs than rhetoric and composition jobs, which means candidates in literature probably do need to be willing to “go anywhere” if they want a particular kind of academic job).

The job market in literature should not, however, dictate the advice given to rhetoric and composition candidates, but rhetoric and composition candidates also should not assume that ideal jobs in ideal locations are abundant and easy to find. Consider, for example, the e-mail I received from a job candidate. She had attempted to complete my post-job search survey and was frustrated because I did not account for those candidates who were

unsuccessful in their job search. (It seems I assumed *all* rhetoric and composition candidates would find a job.) This participant had searched for a tenure-track position but was unable to secure a job offer. She does not associate her lack of success with the kind of search she conducted, but she acknowledges an alternative (perhaps damaging) reason for the allure of the “cast a wide net” metaphor for candidates:

All too often, we enter graduate school thinking it’s a “graduates’ market.” We’re idealistic. We believe in fairytale endings. We believe that the perfect job is just waiting out there for us—suspended in time. Of course, this is not realistic. Those that graduate before us let us know and tell us “to cast a wide net[,]” [which], of course, refers to probability. The greater number of applications you send, the greater the probability of you getting an interview. It’s Marketing and Math 101. Many colleagues that graduated a year before me sent out 30-40 applications. Nearly all of them received jobs. I sent out three applications for [tenure-track] positions and, unfortunately, I did not receive any interviews. I’m sure if I asked around I would be told that I should have cast a wider net. In this way, I find “to cast a wide net” can be a metaphor of blame. This metaphor of blame frees the institution, department, and program from blame and places it on the applicant. In reality, there are a multitude of complex factors involved in job decisions. The focus should be solution-orientated, not blame-oriented.

The perspective offered by this candidate reinforces the reality that numerous factors influence and complicate the job search for all PhD candidates. No search will be perfect, but we can and should revisit the metaphors we use to describe the search as well as the advice

we are giving to candidates particularly if either seems outdated or inaccurate. Scholars in rhetoric and composition can re-consider the factors of the job search which have been traditionally overlooked in most job search parlor conversations: place.

Individual Terroir *and the Academic Job Search*

One participant in my study astutely notes that place “matters (or doesn’t matter) based on the advice giver’s own apparent sense of family importance. In other words, some advice givers who are not particularly close to family suggest that location doesn’t matter. Visa versa is also true.” Most advice given with the intention of setting the candidate up for the most successful job search possible is often based on either the experiences of the individual giving the advice or the experiences of those associated with the advice-giver (his or her colleagues, friends, mentors). But occasionally, candidates resist the narratives of their mentors and allow place to serve as a source of identification and strength. Consider, for example, Roger’s job search narrative.

Place has been on the forefront of Roger’s mind since he was a boy. He still considers himself “very attached” to Minnesota, where he was born, but cross-country moves left him in a “vexed” relationship with his home state. His family moved first from Minnesota to Florida, where he lived for fourteen years, and then, just as he was preparing to enter high school, Roger moved back to Minnesota. This time, he left a large city for a small, farming community, a place where he experienced the culture shock of changing “social” scenes. As an undergraduate student, Roger stayed in Minnesota, but after earning his bachelor’s degree, he moved to the mountains of Arizona to earn his Master’s degree. Seven years of living and working in the arid desert climate were enough for him, and he returned to the upper Midwest to begin a doctoral degree.

I interviewed Roger after he completed my online survey of writing instructors interested in place-based pedagogies. A thirty-seven-year-old doctoral candidate at a doctorate/extensive university in the Great Lakes region, Roger talked about the mobility he experienced as a child and as an academic, telling me that it wasn't the culture shock or jarring differences in climate that caused him to notice place. Instead, his interest was sparked by the people and ideas he encountered while living in each location. As an undergraduate, he was an English major with an interest in the Beat poets, particularly the work of Gary Snyder, a poet known for having an environmental perspective. As a Master's student, Roger enrolled in a program with an ecocomposition orientation, a program that he credits with helping him understand that there was a way to write and to think about place in academia. After earning his Master's degree, Roger discovered a handful of scholars publishing books that continued to fuel his interest in place, including Derek Owens' *Composition and Sustainability* and Christian Weisser and Sid Dobrin's *ecocomposition*. By the time Roger applied to and enrolled in his doctoral program, he "knew [he] wanted to do something ecological, or something to do with place," two concepts that still blur together for him.

In May 2007, Roger was preparing for his dissertation defense, and he had recently accepted an assistant professor position in Iowa, a job offer that was a byproduct of what he termed a very deliberate job search. I had called Roger to discuss his work with place and place-based pedagogies, but when I asked him the final question of the interview ("Do you think there is a myth about place in the academy?"), he began talking about the role place played in his academic job search. After contemplating the question for a few seconds, Roger shared the following with me:

I think that there is this conception in America and maybe even beyond, in Western society, it is sort of this Aristotelian, “One place is as good as another. Places are just sort of places. They’re points on a map. And sure, one place might be Ann Arbor or Madison and another place could be Dallas. It’s the people that make the places different. Right?” I’m not sure I buy that, really. People think that I’m nuts because I’ve got this dissertation which does some pretty high-powered, theoretical stuff, but I didn’t apply to any Research I institutions. Or, I applied to a couple, but they were geographically bound. So, Michigan was one end, and University of Nebraska-Lincoln was another, the western end. But I wasn’t willing to go to Florida, where Sid Dobrin is, or University of Nevada—Reno, where Scott Slovic is. Those are just places where they might have people there that would be interesting to dialogue with, but they’re not places I want to live. So, they kind of think, “Dude, you’re not playing the game.”

You know, I’m not subscribing to the myth that if I don’t like it in Reno I can always move in three years. I don’t even want to deal with that. So, that’s kind of the thinking about place that most people have, and they’re not willing to . . . maybe they’re just so happy to get a job when they’re done. I’m certainly ecstatic. But, I also knew I had to do a little bit of extra work to find a place that was still in the Midwest, where I wanted to be, but also could accommodate the kind of teacher and scholar that I am.

As a job candidate, Roger understood that there were expectations about how he would (or should) approach his job search and how he would not—or more accurately, should

not—factor place and geographical location into the decision-making process. But, like the majority of doctoral candidates who participated in my job search study, Roger was un-swayed by the expectations that he should seek out and accept a job at a Research I institution simply because he trained at one. Although he looked for more research-oriented jobs, he was honest about where he hoped to end up: “there were none that were within the geographical area that I would even consider.” For Roger, place was not a factor to be ignored, suppressed, or overlooked in the job search. He was not casually interested in climate, cost-of-living indices, and growth patterns. He was invested in place. He knew where he wanted to live and finding a job in that area was of paramount importance, even if it meant he was not playing the “cast a wide net” game correctly. His *individual terroir* affected his job search, thus affecting his professional entrance into academic life.

Few of us in contemporary North American society know our place. When I asked twenty university students to name a place where they felt they belonged, most could not. The exceptions were two Navajo women, raised more or less traditionally, and a man whose family had been on a southern Illinois farm for generations. For many, displacement is the factor that defines a colonized or expropriated place. And even if we can locate ourselves, we haven't necessarily examined our place in, or our actual relationship to, that place. Yet our personal relationships to history and place form us, as individuals and groups, and in reciprocal ways we form them. Land, history, and culture meet in a multicentered society that values place but cannot be limited to one view.

-- Lucy Lippard, *The Lure of the Local*

CHAPTER THREE

CRITICAL PEDAGOGIES OF PLACE IN WRITING CLASSROOMS

Defining a Critical Pedagogy of Place

As an art writer, Lucy Lippard reflects on her relationships with a variety of places—from New York City to Maine to Colorado to New Mexico—and it is through her study of places that she recognizes how locations and landscapes impact her life and her relationships with others. For the purposes of my study, Lippard's understanding of how we interact with place is formative in the second major phase of my project. I am not only interested in why place mattered (and how it affected) the job search of rhetoric and composition candidates, but I also want to understand if and how place continues to impact academics when they enter their classrooms and progress on the tenure track. I want to know how place influences the pedagogical practices of writing teachers.

Academics have worked tirelessly for the past fifty years to dismantle the notion that professors are a uniform group of raceless, classless, genderless, cultureless, and sexual-orientationless individuals, yet we have not adequately challenged the notion that we are rootless. With the help of feminist and critical pedagogues, we have come to acknowledge that classrooms are not neutral, recognizing how we bring our political affiliations into the

classroom.¹ However, we have failed to see rootlessness and placelessness as political positions that may not only affect our identities and pedagogical choices but may also affect the way students and colleagues perceive us.² Many academics are socialized in departments and institutions in which *the* way to be an academic is to be rootless. In the absence of a large-scale (re-)consideration or interrogation of academics' attachments to place, the assumption has been and remains that professors are (and should be) of no place: de-placed people who belong to a world of ideas, preferring the universal, theoretical, and abstract to the particular, relational, and mundane. But, if we have an *individual terroir* (as I suggested in Chapter One), then it seems that this relationship with place might affect what we do in the classroom.

In Chapter Two, I used the narratives of PhD candidates to unpack my theory of *individual terroir*, thereby asserting not only that place mattered during the job search but also hypothesizing why place mattered for the candidates. The doctoral candidates I interviewed were drawn to particular geographical regions and landscapes and particular kinds of universities and departments, but the candidates were also seeking out places where they could develop sustainable relationships with communities and people. They were using place as more than a backdrop or setting for their academic lives; they were using place as an actor in their future. In this chapter, I focus on how place affects the pedagogical practices of writing teachers because, in part, I agree with educational theorist David A. Gruenewald, who in "Foundations of Place: A Multidisciplinary Framework for Place-Conscious Education," asserts that places are profoundly pedagogical: "That is, as centers of experience,

¹ See Patricia Bizzell's *Academic Discourse and Critical Consciousness* (Pittsburgh: U of Pittsburgh Press, 1992); Sue Ellen Holbrook's "Women's Work: The Feminizing of Composition" (*Rhetoric Review* 9 (1991): 201-29); and Rae Rosenthal's "Feminists in Action: How to Practice What we Teach" in *Left Margins: Cultural Studies and Composition Pedagogy* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1995. 139-156.).

² I am referring to the discussion in Chapter Two about the weight given in academia to *perceived* willingness to be mobile.

places *teach* us about how the world works and how our lives fit into the spaces we occupy. Further places *make* us: As occupants of particular places with particular attributes, our identity and our possibilities are shaped” (621). But, Gruenewald notes, the kind of teaching and shaping places can accomplish in our lives depend on the kind of attention we give them. Thus, this chapter investigates, in part, what kind of attention writing teachers give to place and how they arrive at the decision to incorporate place into their pedagogical approaches. In a separate article, “The Best of Both Worlds: A Critical Pedagogy of Place,” Gruenewald offers a framework for viewing the work being done by the participants in my study—a framework that may help us understand how a personal investment in place might lead to pedagogical practices with place.

In “The Best of Both Worlds,” Gruenewald calls on two often disassociated theories—place-based pedagogy and critical pedagogy—to create an alliance, one that might provide each with a more stable theoretical base. As he suggests, each theory has limitations that the other might address. For example, place-based education is born not from a well-established discourse of critical theory but from “primarily ecological and rural associations,” which has led to its easy dismissal; that is,

place-based education is frequently discussed at a distance from the urban, multicultural arena, territory most often claimed by critical pedagogues. If place-based education emphasizes ecological and rural contexts, critical pedagogy—in a near mirror image—emphasizes social and urban contexts and often neglects the ecological and rural scene entirely. (3)

By acknowledging the limitations of both theories and aligning the strengths of each theory, Gruenewald proposes a hybrid theory, “a critical pedagogy of place,” a pedagogical approach

aimed at contributing “to the production of educational discourses and practices that explicitly examine the place-specific nexus between environment, culture, and education” (10). The chief implication of this approach—“the challenge it poses to all educators to expand the scope of their theory, inquiry, and practice to include the social and ecological contexts of our own, and others’, inhabitance” (10)—intersects with my goal as a researcher, for my study also argues that the context of the instructor, and her *individual terroir*, should be factored back into classroom practices.

To alleviate concerns that may come with the seemingly rural lens of place-based pedagogy and the seemingly urban lens of critical pedagogy, Gruenewald frames the critical pedagogy of place as an approach that enables individuals to “reflect on their own concrete situationality in a way that explores the complex interrelationships between cultural and ecological environments” (6). Thus, each theory contributes to the hybrid critical pedagogy of place, as he constructs it, because educators need both. We need place-based pedagogies “so that the education of citizens might have some direct bearing on the well-being of the social and ecological places people actually inhabit,” and we need critical pedagogies so that we might continue to challenge “the assumptions, practices, and outcomes taken for granted in dominant culture and in conventional education” (3).

The value of critical pedagogy and place-based pedagogy lies in their calls for local and social action and geographically bound experience; as Gruenewald argues, “[a]cknowledging that experience has a geographical context opens the way to admitting critical social and ecological concerns into one’s understanding of place, and the role of places in education. This is the goal of a critical pedagogy of place” (9). To set-up his definition for a critical pedagogy of place, Gruenewald summarizes the sociological context

of critical pedagogy, highlighting what he believes to be the key features of this pedagogical approach.³

Critical pedagogy, according to Gruenewald, was born of the Marxist and Neo-Marxist movements thus establishing itself as “a transformational educational response to institutional and ideological domination, especially under capitalism” (4). Critical pedagogues argue that ideological domination extends into education, and they insist that education is always political, and that educators and students should become “‘transformative intellectuals’ (Giroux, 1998), ‘cultural workers’ (Freire, 1998) capable of identifying and redressing the injustices, inequalities, and myths of an often oppressive world” (4). As intellectuals and workers, critical pedagogues create learning environments in which all participants and learning and sharing as they question and think critically about a variety of issues, often those identified by the students as their topics of interest.⁴

Gruenewald continues, highlighting the work of Paulo Freire, Brazilian educator and activist, to emphasize the importance of cultural context in critical pedagogy (which will connect it to place-based pedagogy) and to provide the groundwork for the two objectives of a critical pedagogy of place: decolonization and reinhabitation (which I discuss later in this chapter). In his seminal text *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire suggests that individuals can begin critical reflection—what he later calls *conscientização*—only after they recognize their situationality:

People, as beings “in a situation,” find themselves rooted in temporal-spatial conditions which mark them and which they also mark. They will tend to

³ Rather than tracing the history of critical pedagogy in order to construct a working definition of critical pedagogy for the context of this project, I use Gruenewald’s description of the movement (which is limited but not inaccurate) because his definition focuses on the points of intersection between the place-based movement and critical pedagogy.

⁴ My familiarity with critical pedagogy comes, in large part, from reading Dr. Stacia Neeley’s dissertation, “Critical Contentions: Feminism(s) and Critical Pedagogy in Composition Studies,” which offers a 30-year overview of the movement for compositionists.

reflect on their own “situationality” to the extent that they are challenged by it to act upon it. Human beings *are* because they *are in* a situation. And they *will be more* the more they not only critically reflect upon their existence but critically act upon it. (90, original emphasis)

As Gruenewald notes, Freire does not fully address the issue of situationality in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, but his awareness that individuals are human beings because they are in a situation “demonstrates the importance of space, or place, to critical pedagogy’s origins” (Gruenewald “Best” 4). Freire’s acknowledgement that critical reflection begins in a situation also connects to post-process theories of location, which argue that all writing is shaped by material places and intellectual spaces (as I noted in Chapter One). Whether the language is one of situationality (critical pedagogy) or of a writer-in-context (post-process theory), there is a recognition that writers are grounded in and affected by place.

In “Place-Based Pedagogy for the Arts and Humanities,” Eric L. Ball and Alice Lai praise Gruenewald’s work, noting his argument that “place-based educators have largely ignored questions of sociocultural difference and politics” (Ball and Lai 267). The authors go on to extend Gruenewald’s critical pedagogy of place by identifying the aims and goals of what they are calling a “critical place-based pedagogy” (261). They suggest that while a critical place-based pedagogy may examine “texts, artifacts, and performances of local cultural production *as* literature or art” (279), it cannot assume students will be “sufficiently interested in their locale to find local content learning provocative” (271). Some students may be engaged in local cultural productions, and they may find meaning in these artifacts, particularly, as Ball and Lai suggest, if they live in a locale “where there is a strong sense of local cultural identity or pride.” However, students may also live in locales that the

mainstream culture dismisses as unimportant, thus leaving the students to internalize “the notion that their place isn’t important enough to matter” (272). So critical place-based pedagogues must not only explain why they are using place and local cultural artifacts in their classrooms (280), but they must also create “dialogical negotiation between the particular interests of local students-inhabitants and those of educators armed with our theories of the common good and socioecological transformation” (273).

In addition to involving students in the selection of topics and cultural artifacts and respecting their possible indifference to place, Ball and Lai remind critical place-based pedagogues that they cannot “assume that there is a single most important immediate focus for *all* place-based pedagogy.” Rather than espousing a monolithic approach to or definition of place, educators should focus “on the place in question, on the extent and nature of the interest in and concern for place among its inhabitants, and especially that of the students themselves” (273-4). Educators must not only account for variations within student interest and engagement, but they must also be conscious of variations in locations, so that “the kinds of local content that are incorporated into the curriculum, and the ways these are approached, . . . vary with the locale” (274). Finally, educators using a critical place-based pedagogy must “remain attentive to the political geography of difference not only among places, but also within places” (270); that is, they must emphasize how “larger-than-local historically contingent processes” such as capitalism are implicated in “local socioecological conditions” (270). By bringing the global into the local, a critical place-based pedagogy can address a variety of concerns in a way that students may find more persuasive because the context for examination are those artifacts, texts, and performances that they found in their local cultures.

The participants discussed in the remainder of this chapter did not use the phrases “critical pedagogy of place” or “critical place-based pedagogy,” but their pedagogical approaches and goals enact a critical pedagogy of place.⁵ Each instructor came to discussions of place through *individual terroir*—his or her understanding of the geographical contexts of experience—and each acknowledges in her/his opening narratives that personal experience cannot be divorced from the context in which it occurred. In the sections that follow, my discussion focuses on how each writing instructor translated her or his understanding of *individual terroir* into writing assignments geared at helping students reflect on and analyze how social and ecological concerns are connected with place. By asking students to reflect on place and experience, these writing instructors were enacting a critical pedagogy of place not considered by Gruenewald or even Ball and Lai: they were often using place as a matrix to discuss difference (connected to or embedded in their locales).⁶

Before introducing my six case-study participants, I want to acknowledge that most of the participants in my study follow the pattern for place-based research I noted in the Introduction. That is, many of them, at some point in time, had an attachment to a rural (or agricultural) place. I do not believe this trend invalidates my findings because rather than seeking a truth about the role of place in each writing teacher’s life, I aim to “explore, challenge, question, reassess, speculate” (Olson 8). I explore how each of the participants experience place and reassess this relationship as an articulation of *individual terroir*. Then, I speculate as to how their *individual terroir* has influenced their pedagogical choices in the classroom, thus questioning our socialized (and often unquestioned) idea about a rootless

⁵ I am choosing to use the term “critical pedagogy of place” because I believe the phrase place-based carries residual attitudes about rurality that, however inaccurate and limited, will prevent a wide audience from identifying with this pedagogy. I recognize that the use of the term place may also have the same effect—a catch-22 of naming.

⁶ In Chapter Four, I outline my theory for a “matrix of difference,” which is a way to factor place into more traditional discussions of difference, namely those centered on race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and ability.

professoriate. As Gary Olson suggests, “[t]heorizing can lead us into lines of inquiry that challenge received notions or entrenched understandings that may no longer be productive; it can create new vocabularies for talking about a subject and thus new ways of perceiving it” (8). In this chapter, I challenge the tacit assumptions that writing teachers are not situated in place when teaching students, that teachers can (best) teach writing without considering their relationships with place, and that teacher relationships with place do not affect their classroom instruction.

Six Case Studies of Critical Pedagogies of Place

To introduce the participants in my study, I connect my theory of *individual terroir* to the narratives these writing teachers shared with me during our interviews (see Appendix G for a list of interview questions). With the permission of participants, I recorded each of these phone interviews, which all took place in the spring of 2007. To begin each conversation and to make each participant more comfortable with the awkwardness of a phone interview, I asked all six (1) to describe their attachment to a home site and (2) to tell me how she or he first became interested in writing and teaching about place. As these narratives reveal, each participant had a different relationship with place (often as a location and a locale), and this identifying connection found a way into her or his professional life—both consciously and unconsciously. Before I reflect on how these participants used place-based pedagogy in their classrooms, I offer their framing narratives as articulations of *individual terroir*, as an identification with place that shapes who they are as academics and as teachers.

In many ways, it is fitting that my discussion of how place affects teachers of writing should begin with Robert Brooke, a forty-eight-year-old full professor at the University of

Nebraska-Lincoln, a doctorate-extensive institution in the Midwest.⁷ As a writing studies scholar, Robert is known, in part, as one of the first writing specialists to bring rural places to the forefront of academic inquiries into writing with the edited collection *Rural Voices: Place-Conscious Education and the Teaching of Writing*. In his introductory chapter to the text, Robert shares “a personal story, with a moral.” Like so many other academics, Robert landed in Nebraska after ten years of college training in what Paul Gruchow describes as a course in “How to Migrate.” Along with generations of academics, Robert enrolled in “a course of study that separates learning and writing from their connections to *one’s place of origin*, and substitutes instead an immersion in abstract ideas and skills and national marketability” (2, emphasis added). Because being an academic was framed as a leaving of one’s place of origin or home site for a world of books and ideas, Robert left his native Colorado as an undergraduate and moved to the upper-Midwest to work on his graduate degree. He embarked on a career path centered on mobility, and when it finally came time for him to apply for jobs, he accepted the standard maxim of higher education: “Academics can’t choose where they work” (2).

For the past twenty-five years, Robert has been living and working in Nebraska, and he and his family have immersed themselves in the range of local issues that affect how people’s lives are shaped by place. In our interview, he noted (with some surprise) his attachment to Nebraska. After growing up in Colorado and marrying a woman who grew up in Seattle, Robert and his wife both thought “that the landscape would be a little too foreign, and [they] would end up not forming as strong attachments as [they] have.” But, as he noted, “What we found in the time we’ve been here is that it’s very hard to imagine living

⁷ Dr. Robert Brooke granted me permission to use his real name in the course of this project. All other participant names used in this chapter are pseudonyms, a preference each indicated on the participant consent forms.

elsewhere just because of the range of both social and personal webs we've built around the place." By staying in one place for more than two decades, Robert was able to integrate himself into the community and view its problems as his own.⁸

Robert's connection to Nebraska marks the integration and reclamation of place through personal attachments (thus establishing his relationship with the place as a locale). His investment in the place also marks the beginning of his academic explorations—of his construction of himself as an academic invested in matters of place. As he pointed out in our interview, his major work on place started with the 1997 Rural Institute Program. In connection with the Nebraska Writing Project, he and other scholars and teachers coordinated with the school housed within the center. He also developed a working relationship with Paul Olson, a man Robert describes as "the biggest mover and shaker in getting me into place-conscious thinking." The writing project focused on addressing issues of out migration in small towns, trying to determine how it might be possible for schools to serve as centering locations in their communities. The participants in the writing project aimed, essentially, to focus on making life in their places seem sustainable to students rather than preaching migration for employment and personal opportunities.

For Robert, place is about much more than "a narrow or naïve geographic sense of place." When he talks about place with his students, he is interested in the "deeply experienced psychological sense of place," a sense of place (not simply location) that often includes a student's family background. As he recounted to me, Nebraska has struggled for years with the out migration of its citizens. Like rural students across the country, those living in Nebraska have internalized a success-means-leaving bind, one that prohibits them

⁸ At the time of our interview, I did not think to ask Robert why he has stayed in Nebraska and at UNL for so many years. As one of my co-chairs mentioned, it would be valuable to know how the decision to stay put shaped his career path and his research interests.

from considering the ways in which a life might be possible in the Midwest let alone in Nebraska. To counteract this exodus of youth and brain power, Robert aims to help students consider the mental categories that support understandings of place, and he often begins this work by asking students to consider how they are “the product of a family migratory history.” As he said,

[The students’] parents came to Lincoln or Omaha just a generation ago, and [the students] lived in the suburbs, so they have a relationship both to that place which they don’t quite fully understand but they also have the family farm out in Iowa or western Nebraska that’s not sustainable anymore, but they have memories of going to grandma’s and grandpa’s a lot. But the place they’re in now is this other world, this suburban world, so they have those two things. Many of them have a sense of history going back to the old country that’s worth pondering a bit. Many of them have a burning desire by the time they are first- and second-year students to find a new place that will make them feel more themselves because the thought of living in the suburban space outside of Omaha just doesn’t cut it for them at present.

Much like him, his students “haven’t thought very deeply or very profoundly about the parts of mental categories that make up place,” nor have they considered the ways in which “they’ve been directed away from seeing the immersion in the local as anything that relates to their own lives.” So as a teacher of writing, Robert uses his experiences with place—his story of migrating after buying into the “go wherever the work is” myth of academia—to connect with students who are also products of someone else’s migratory pattern.

Robert was not the only participant in my study who saw professional development and *individual terroir* at odds with one another. For Megan, a thirty-two-year-old doctoral candidate at a doctorate/extensive university in Great Lakes City, mobility is inextricable from her place in academia and from what she terms “the rootlessness and the vagabond existence of always moving around and searching.” Megan assumes that she’ll move again; in fact, she knows she’ll move again because she has “no intention of staying in the Midwest,” where she is currently completing her degree. Her intentions aside, she perceives an expectation in higher education about place: “I think that there’s that assumption in academia that you do move around and even when I land somewhere for my first job that may not be the place that I stay.”

The imperative to move does and does not resonate for Megan; after all, she describes herself as “somewhat attached” to her home place, but unlike Robert, she qualifies this position by admitting that she feels as “detached” as attached. In fact, when I asked Megan to describe her attachment to where she is from, she immediately began talking about her place-based approach to pedagogy:

I began exploring place-based pedagogy and theory and so forth by thinking about how often I had moved and how often I sometimes felt not quite rooted in any certain place our generation who has been so willing to pick up and go, [we may get a] wonderful and rich life [but it also can] leave us feeling ungrounded in many ways.

Megan’s interest in place stems not from childhood attachments to small-town America or even from summers on a family farm. She began investigating place because she felt like she didn’t have a single place where she was rooted; she wanted to discover what place meant to

her and how her relationship with and to places affected her identity. During our interview, she began asking herself a series of questions: “Where are you from? What does that mean for you and your identity? And what does it mean if you’ve left?” She then answers her own questions. She acknowledges she can’t answer the all-too-often-asked question, “Where are you from?” Reflecting out loud, Megan wonders if she is from Colorado, where her family lives, even though she has not lived there for years; if she is from California, where “her heart” is; or if she might be from Massachusetts, where she experienced great periods of intellectual growth.

Megan’s struggle to pinpoint her *individual terroir* represents a very postmodern (and not all that unusual) circumstance: as academics move from institution to institution, completing their degrees, they may identify with or attach to particular aspects of each place (as a location, locale, or sense of place), thus bypassing the “I’m from *here*” approach to place-based attachments. Because she is not rooted to a single place or locale, Megan demonstrates a claim I have made throughout this project: there is no monolithic definition for or relations to place. Megan did not live in one house for twenty years, and her status as a graduate student means that she will be moving again when she enters the job market. Her narrative does, however, set up a relationship between personal experiences of place and personal development—*individual terroir*—because she is acutely conscious of how place affects who she is and, as I’ll explain later, what she does in the classroom. Her experiences with place demonstrate that having *individual terroir* does not mean that an academic longs for her home site or aims to return to the region of her birth. Having *individual terroir* means that the academic questions how her experiences in and movements between various locations impacts her attitudes, perceptions, and identity. Having *individual terroir* means the

academic actively reflects on each new place, questioning her relationship to the location, the locale, and the sense of place.

Megan's complicated relationship with place provides a transition point for Rebekah, a fifty-year-old associate professor at a baccalaureate-granting institution in the Midwest. When I asked Rebekah to describe her relationship with her home town, she laughed. "There is something," she said, "about the smell of sulfur gas that gets into your system, and you can't get it out." While the sulfur-ridden air of "deep West Texas, out in the oil fields" might make an outsider cringe, it is soothing to Rebekah. In fact, she has found herself to be "very attached" to the dry, dusty, desolate plains surrounding Midland and Odessa. But the craggy Texas landscapes of Rebekah's past have given way to the organized fields and grassy plains of her Midwestern present—a change in scenery and landscape she cannot easily overlook. The Midwestern city where she is currently living and teaching may sit in "equally flat country," but the landscape is a lot "prettier," and Rebekah isn't sure she likes this fact. The cultivated rows and maintained acres make her long for West Texas' big sky and rugged wildness, a longing that she explores in her unpublished essay, "The View From Up Here." She writes:

Going home. Well, sort of. I'm headed for a conference in Fort Worth, back home to Texas where I was born, where I was "schooled," in more ways than I probably realize. The plane lifts off magically as ever, and I am quickly positioned to see the landscape below—[the Midwest]. I am struck by the sense of decorum and order laid out by unseen folk and machines. From my little rectangular window, the tiny plots of land dotted with various farm buildings and homes are neatly encased in square blocks of tilled soil. The

scene with all its connecting square grids radiates design, intent, and planning. The lines of roads separating farms and joining farming families link together in the ninety-degree angles of squares. Squares, everywhere I look—squares. The entire landscape appears to have been manufactured by some meticulous, anal-retentive mastermind. No one seeing this landscape from my vantage point could possibly doubt that *Man* had conquered *Nature* in [the Midwest].

Rebekah's comparison of the overly neat and overly "nice" population of her Midwestern town with the dusty desert of her hometown is only one way she articulates how the landscapes of her past seem to be conflicting with the landscapes of her present—how the *individual terroir* of her past seems to be rubbing up against her present place.

Rebekah clearly identifies with the West Texas attitudes and environments of her past, and this identification demanded she re-learn place when she took her current job. As she told me, she was thinking about place before moving from the southwest to the Midwest, but she also acknowledges that "[place is] unavoidable here in the Midwest It just seems like this is the place of ferment." Place is everywhere for Rebekah, in Dutch-front stores and green pastures, but also in institutional affiliation. Her university is celebrating its one-hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary by holding a year-long "Minding Place" symposium, a celebration of place which includes a visit and reading by Kathleen Norris, a Midwestern writer who has articulated how the grasses, winds, and open spaces of South Dakota have affected her individually and spiritually. All around her, place is a topic of discussion: Rebekah is thinking about place, and she is teaching at an institution actively engaged in reflecting on its place, but the connection between individuals and the land is also on the

minds of her colleagues. For example, her colleague across the hall has spent his entire scholarly career trying to escape his place, only to realize that he is, indeed, a farmer at heart.

Although Rebekah left the oil fields of Texas for the east coast and a Master's degree, she eventually returned to Texas to earn her doctoral degree. At her doctoral institution, she heard undergraduate students talking about a Texas-themed course being taught by an adjunct professor, a course concept that caused her to reflect on "how little [she] knew about the literature of [her] own place." In order to remedy her place-based ignorance, she began attending talks and discussions at conferences that focused on all things Texas, be it Texas films or Texas writers. As her interest grew, so did her thinking about place: "I just started being more interested and started reading cowboy poetry and, you know, trying to understand who I was and how that impacted me as a scholar." For Rebekah, understanding who she was meant understanding what it meant to be a Texan, and the intersections between identity and place became even more acute for her when she changed landscapes. As a Texas transplant to the Midwest, she realized she had better "figure out what the Midwest is like because most of [her] students were from there," a personal and pedagogical choice squarely tied to not only her *individual terroir* and her recovery of a Texas identity but also to her belief that a person's place is inextricable from a person's (professional) identity.

Robert, Megan, and Rebekah all connected their experiences and relationships with place (their *individual terroir*) to their experiences as academics. For all three of them, the assumed mobility of academic life provided a backdrop (perhaps even a catalyst) for them to consider how place affected who they were. Brad's awareness of place had nothing to do with academia initially. He is a thirty-nine-year-old assistant professor at a Master's degree granting institution in an "incredibly rural" community in the southeast. Originally from the

North Carolina mountains, Brad is “very attached” to his home site, though he classifies much of his attachment as nostalgic memories of spending time on his grandparents’ farm. Like a number of my research participants, Brad believed, at one time, that his home site would be the only source of attachment for him. But as he experienced new places, he began to develop new attachments: “For a long time, I didn’t think there would be anywhere that I would be as attached to as the North Carolina mountains, but I’m becoming more and more and more attached to [my new place], and I think it will be pretty easy for me to say that I’ll be as attached here as I was to the North Carolina place.” Unlike Megan, Brad identifies with a singular home site and an agricultural past, but he is also reflective about his connections, for he acknowledges that some of his feelings are nostalgic. He also recognizes that investments and attachments need not be singular; the more time he spends in his current location, the more invested he becomes, thus illustrating how one individual’s attachments may be retrospective and/or contemporary.

Though Brad was attached to the mountains, it was “a lot of different threads that just kind of came together sort of haphazardly that got [him] interested in thinking about place.” Though there were multiple reasons he began writing and thinking about place, “two contributing factors” stand out for him. Brad’s father was a truck driver, and as a young boy, Brad would accompany him on trips across the country. Starting at age four and lasting until he was in his late twenties and early thirties, Brad rode alongside his father, trekking the landscapes of the country, seeing a variety of places. Traveling through contrasting landscapes at sixty miles an hour, Brad learned to pay attention to what he saw. His father taught him to watch for “how the landscape changes, how the weather changes, what kind of wildlife you see, what kind of plants you see.” Sitting in the cab of an eighteen-wheeler,

riding next to his father, Brad thought about places not as stable and fixed but as transient and changing; his first real exposure to ideas about place were not connected to the grounded and singular woods of the North Carolina mountains but to the changing landscapes traversed by a tractor trailer.

Once he entered academia, however, his experiences with place took on what he termed a “more scholarly or writerly” perspective, and his reflections on place took a more focused approach. As a graduate student, he enrolled in a “Writing and a Sense of Place” course, and he spent three weeks in Alaska, reading and writing about the terrain and its mountainous landscapes. Once he arrived in Alaska, however, Brad found himself writing about North Carolina. Thus, his scholarly push to investigate matters of place more critically was, in part, the result of being out of place and being obsessed with the more familiar landscapes of his childhood. As he says, “That perspective (or whatever) made me start thinking about places more specifically, or maybe more systematically would be a better way to put it.” In some ways, Brad shares in Megan’s postmodern experience of *individual terroir*. He initially learned about place not as a rooted and stable source of identification but as a changing and evolving landscape. Brad also shares a more traditional experience of place represented in the participants’ narratives; like Rebekah and Megan, he learned about place as a student, and as I discuss later on in this chapter, these lessons they learned as students carry over into what they do as teachers.

Brad was not my only participant with connections to North Carolina. Sarah spent her summers in North Carolina, where her maternal and paternal grandparents were farmers. With two family farms in full operation, Sarah was often busy harvesting crops and “putting-up” vegetables, and she credits these experiences with helping her understand how being

rooted can be physically and emotionally visible and complicated. For her, the most powerful example of the complexity of roots can be seen in her parents' migration to the Washington, DC, area, where they both found work before their children were born. Sarah acknowledges that both families accepted the move, acknowledging it as a necessary change, but neither her maternal nor her paternal grandparents considered the move to be a permanent relocation. Her parents were *from* North Carolina, and she was from North Carolina, even if she lived in Washington, DC. As she told me, "I had this sense of being literally rooted to a place. That idea that even if you stayed at wherever my parents worked for thirty odd years or something, then that's just a place [where] you were kind of hovering. Like we were *really from* North Carolina."

Sarah found the notions of roots to be amusing, and she laughed at the idea that you can be *from* a place even if you don't live there. She respects and even understands the thought process behind the rooting of a person to a place, and she sees a similar sense of rootedness and attachment mirrored in her husband's life. Employed by the United States military, mobility is an expected part of his job, but the mobility required for his employment does not counteract his rootedness to a small community in Maine. Much like Sarah, he grew up in the same town as his parents. Much like her grandparents' farm, his family's lakeside cabins in Maine serve as a source of connectedness and meaning: "[Both of] those places having meaning for us. That's where we're from and sort of form us as who we are." Now a thirty-five-year-old assistant professor at a two-year community college in a mid-sized suburb of an urban center along the Mississippi River, Sarah describes herself as "somewhat attached" to both where she is from and where she is currently living. And, like the other participants, she associates her explorations of place to coursework. She earned her

undergraduate and graduate degrees in Tennessee, where she worked in Scottish Appalachian studies (an area she now sees as helping her explore how culture is connected to place).

Much like Sarah, Anthony was working with issues of place long before he was acknowledging or considering these implications for his position as a teacher. Anthony grew up a West Coast boy, living a “small-scale farm life” with his professional parents in the agricultural area outside the city limits of Sacramento. Surrounded by other part-time farmers, Anthony watched suburbia swallow up the farms and open spaces of his childhood. As the land filled with housing developments, he recalled the unpleasantness of being torn between urban sprawl and childhood friends, a series of experiences that left an impression on him. As he told me, “I think some people just have that place gene and it kind of insists on being dealt with.” What Anthony calls a place gene I am calling *individual terroir*.

Regardless of its name, writing about a place (in this case California) provided Anthony with a way to start his fictional stories. He hasn’t lived in California in more than twenty years, but it is on his mind because, as he says, “you imprint on the place where you were a child and grew up.” Perhaps this is why, as a creative writer, he found himself “unintentionally” writing about his early experiences with place and even setting all his fictional pieces in Northern California, to which he is “very attached.” Anthony describes his relationship with place as unintentional, and he argues that he has come to see the connection between place and writing only in the last few years.

Anthony is now a forty-year-old assistant professor at a doctorate/extensive institution located in the suburbs of Easternville, an urban center on the east coast, and as a teacher of writing, he uses his early connections with place to help students explore their identities. Even though he does not teach a traditional composition course for the English

department, he adapts place-based strategies for his writing-intensive classroom, a decision that illustrates how instructors can allow local contexts to drive their definitions of place and how they also use student interest, personal investment, and institutional needs to drive writing assignments.

As these opening narratives demonstrate, an academic's sense of *individual terroir* cannot be universalized or generalized. However, there were patterns that align these stories with those of the doctoral candidates searching for their first jobs. Almost all of the participants I interviewed noted how academia factored into their understanding of place as well as their realization that place was serving as an actor in their lives. For Rebekah, it was landing in a familiar place—Texas—and realizing that she knew nothing of its cultural heritage. For Robert, it was arriving in a place and developing roots with a community that allowed him to reflect on how place might operate for a more sustainable future. For Megan, it was facing the prospect of moving, yet again, that made her connect her attachment and detachment to places. For Brad, it was his father's career and a graduate course on place. For Anthony, it was working as a creative writing instructor and realizing all his stories were set in a single place. Each of these participants had a personal investment in and different relationship to the locations of their past and present, but place mattered to the participants in my study, and each of them acknowledged either a personal or professional moment when identification with place proved foundational for the work they were trying to do as teachers. As they entered their classrooms, place did not cease to be part of their professional identity. Place continued to matter for these writing instructors, and it becomes an entry point into their pedagogical goals, a way to connect with students and to experiment with a critical pedagogy of place.

By considering how these six writing teachers became interested in ideas about place and how they incorporated place into their classes, my research on place factors academics back into the equation. Writing teachers have been reflective on and critical of how our students encounter and relate to place, but all too often, we have not been part of that context. But, as post-process and critical pedagogy of place theorists suggest, writing depends on a self-conscious awareness of how we are located as writers and how our attitudes about place affect this context. In this case, location refers not only to our sociocultural positioning but also our geographical location; after all, we come to know who we are where we are.

In the analysis that follows, I demonstrate how these writing teachers implement a critical pedagogy of place into their writing classrooms by working from their *individual terroir*. (Each participant integrates place into his or her classroom in a very personal and contextual way.) Examining the syllabi and writing assignments of these instructors at different universities, my research confirms that place is not a monolithic or universal pedagogical approach. There was no generalizable or universal definition of place being used by each instructor. There was no hegemonic or monolithic standard for integrating place in their writing classroom. Nevertheless, each participant used the location and locale of her/his university to determine the focus of classroom discussions, and intended outcomes were overlapping and consistent: use place to help students understand, connect with, and reflect on experience; use place to help students exercise authority over their writing, research, and arguments; and use place to encourage active, participatory citizenship at the institutional, local, and national level.

Although many academics are not considering how *individual terroir* might impact their pedagogical approaches, each of the writing instructors in my study translates a personal

interest in place into a pedagogical approach aimed at increasing student investment in the writing topics. The instructors don't prescribe definitions of place for their students nor do they provide students with rote, theoretically pre-determined understandings of place and space. Instead, all six writing instructors allow the local exigencies of their differing student populations to determine how place might fit with the goals of their writing courses, which, though the instructors did not use the term, fit with the tenets of a critical pedagogy of place. Thus, my study demonstrates how place can be used as an inroad for critical pedagogy even if the original interest in place is the academic's *individual terroir*.

Before I discuss the assignments of my case-study participants, I want to reiterate again that there was no central articulation of how place mattered for them, nor was there a central definition of the term "place." In fact, writing instructors interested in place-based pedagogies are using a variety of places in their writing classrooms.⁹ I asked participants in my survey (see Appendix H) to identify the kinds of places about which they ask students to write. Public places (78%) and natural places (77%) were the most popular topics among writing instructors. I do not know why these places were the most popular, but I speculate that a number of instructors using a place-based approach were familiar with ecocomposition (which focuses on natural environments) and that public places are readily available for visual and spatial analysis. Hometown places were also quite popular (62%) as were university places (57%). In addition to using workplaces (45%), residential places (37%), and

⁹ Beginning in January 2007, I distributed an electronic query to three academic listservs (WPA, h-Rhetor, ASLE) in order to reach writing instructors who self-identified as interested in place-based approaches to writing. In my query, I asked participants to complete a sixteen-question survey hosted by a third-party website. At the end of the survey, I included a call for volunteers, asking willing participants to contribute sample syllabi and writing assignments and/or participate in a follow-up interview. The online survey was available throughout the spring of 2007. During this time, the survey site had 226 visits. Sixty participants completed the survey voluntarily. I want to acknowledge that the writing instructors who responded to my query were likely those who already held some interest in or possible attachment to place. I certainly do not believe that instructors must be invested in matters of place to incorporate these discussions in the classroom, but the pattern in academe (and in rhetoric and composition, in particular) seems to be that personal investment spawns new thought about pedagogy: feminist pedagogy gained a foothold in our classroom practices only as more and more women entered the academy and began speaking out against sexist professional and pedagogical practices.

commercial places (28%), the options I provided on the survey, participants indicated that they also encouraged students to consider international places and online places. These responses reveal a number of things about the use of place in writing classrooms (many of which align with the aims of Ball and Lai’s critical place-based pedagogy). First of all, place-based approaches to writing do not carry with them a prerequisite discussion of place; using place in the writing classroom does not mean that students must or should reflect on their hometowns, universities, or even a particular physical location. Rather, the use of place as a theme in the writing classroom simply suggests that students will be asked to respond to spaces which have meaning for them (a finding that the writing instructor profiles below support).

If defining the term “place” is difficult, explaining what we mean when talking about place with our students can be just as difficult, leaving even the most articulate and experienced teachers scrambling for the right words and phrase. But one trend among the participants in my study was the inclusion of the notion of the local in their discussions of place. In her book *The Lure of the Local*, Lippard acknowledges that place is her “locus of desire.” By examining how historical narratives are written in landscapes by the people who live there, Lippard’s text focuses on the “intersections of nature, culture, history, and ideology from the ground on which we stand—our land, our place, the local” (7). She defines the vague term “local” by stating that local and place can only be known by individuals. That is,

Inherent in the local is the concept of place—a portion of land/town/cityscape seen from the inside, the resonance of a specific location that is known and familiar. Most often place applies to our own ‘local’—entwined with personal

memory, known or unknown histories, marks made in the land that provoke and evoke. Place is latitudinal and longitudinal within the map of a person's life. It is temporal and spatial, personal and political. A layered location replete with human histories and memories, place has width as well as depth. It is about connections, what surrounds it, what formed it, what happened there, what will happen there. (7)

For Lippard (and for the participants in my study), any investigation of place must begin with a personal consideration of the self in a local context, in a portion of the larger context, which varies from the spiritual to the institutional to the environmental. Because place is a space filled with meaning and context—a perceptual or existential space, a locale or a sense of place—it should come as no surprise that investigations into place can only begin with the personal. This personal exploration of the local, of place, holds a clear benefit for the individual, one that moves beyond personal reflection or self-awareness. In Lippard's estimation, "When we know *where* we are, we're in a far better position to understand what other cultural groups are experiencing within a time and place we all share" (10). For her, this "sense of place" is an invaluable social and cultural tool, as it provides connections to nature and cultures that are not our own (33).

For the six participants profiled in this study, Lippard's multicentered approach to place is essential. It allows them to transform the local and personal into social, cultural, and communal concerns. To begin this process, the instructors allow students to define place in their own terms rather than supplying the definitions for them. The distinctions we have set out to make between space and place, following the work of human geographers and scholars, are of little importance for the instructors here. Instead of focusing on theoretical

rationale for using space or place, these instructors pushed students to reconsider place in ways similar to those undertaken by Lippard. All six recognized the nebulosity of the term “place,” which may be why they all asked students to ground discussions of place in experiential knowledge and local contexts. That is, the writing instructors allow the theme of place to act as a vehicle for discussions about personal experience and critical reflection on that experience and its connection to larger cultural issues.

Place Substitutes for the Environment

Anthony teaches in the Easternville Learning College (ELC), a humanities and social science college that allows students to pursue interdisciplinary degrees while attending the larger university. Currently, he teaches the fourth course in a writing-intensive, four-course sequence in the Freshman Experience program (see Appendix I). ELC’s Freshman Experience series allows students to complete a majority of the university’s required courses in a single academic year. Rather than taking regular classes, students attend small, seminar-style classes that meet four days a week, four hours a day over the course of six weeks. In all of the courses, “writing [is] embedded in the context,” as are discussion, collaboration, and intensive reading.

In the current Freshman Experience sequence, the first course asks students to investigate themselves as a community of learners. They explore their transition into college life, noting and examining their different learning styles. In the second course, students focus on the natural world and explore topics related to math and science. The aim of the second course is to have students investigate how the self might be biologically determined. The third unit, according to Anthony, “cuts the ground out from under them” by considering how the self is socially constructed. By the time students get to the fourth and final unit, the one

taught by Anthony, they are questioning their individual agency. In order to restore a sense of agency in their lives and the world, Anthony's unit asks students to consider how the self operates as a citizen. By considering what it means to live in a democratic country and how individual responsibility is a factor for shaping government, Anthony works with his students to think about where they stand in relationship to their places. Already, place acts as a starting point for students to reflect on their experiences and gain authority over writing assignments.

Anthony's course is not a traditional composition course, but he structures the course around a combination of high-stakes and low-stakes writing assignments. Students complete weekly journals and written responses to readings, in addition to writing one traditional and one hypertext essay. He also outlines three guiding questions for the course, all circulating around the idea of what makes a "good citizen." Thus, he asks students to consider how the values and principles of our nation's founding have become embedded in our systems (social, political, and economic), but he also calls on them to address the negotiation of individual, communal, and governmental rights. He does this by asking students to consider the context for their development as citizens: "How do the circumstances of our lives—especially place, family, and culture—shape our sense of ourselves as citizens?"

For example, in their hypertext essay, Anthony's students explore the ways in which their notion of citizenship has been influenced by a place. The assignment sheet tells students that "some of the most powerful associations we have are with places—the place where one's family comes from, the place where one learned to bodysurf or bake bread or bait a hook, the place where one was wounded or healed, the place where one worked in earnest, chanted in protest, or sang for joy." Anthony goes on to tell students that they may select a public or

private place, but it should be a place that has helped define who they are by informing their personal values and beliefs, an aside that demonstrates the range of experiences valued in the assignment. Students are not limited to academic or even institutional examples; instead, they can draw from a variety of sources. When talking about this assignment, Anthony shares with me that he wanted to add an environmental citizenship component to the course as soon as he joined the Easternville Learning College (ELC), but the context of his university ultimately affected the ways in which he might be able to address this issue with students. If you will recall, Anthony's interest in environmental concerns can be traced in his opening narrative; what Anthony remembers most about Northern California were his encounters with disappearing natural spaces and urban sprawl. As a teacher, he wanted to write assignments that would raise students' awareness about environmental stewardship, but he also knew that the conservative inclination of students would make them "pretty resistant to anything they associate with environmentalists and environmentalism." Thus, Anthony combined his experiences with place with his local, contextual experiences at the university to create an alternative approach.

For Anthony, place is a "gateway" to the concepts of environmental citizenship as well as a natural evolution of his thoughts about citizenship and the environment because place was "a way of getting students to think about the relationship between people and the physical environment that they live in and the living things they share the environment with." Anthony likes using place in his classroom because, as he suggests, it is not a loaded or charged word for the students, and they seem to come to it intuitively. By talking about "place," a word that carries less baggage than environment, Anthony is able to have environmental discussions with his students, particularly when they reflect on the changing

nature of their home sites. Moreover, the hypertext essay assignment encourages students to bring in the personal, which he hopes helps students make connections between their personal lives and the theoretical and abstract ideas of the course: community, democracy, equality. He asks his students to start with a concrete, material place and examine it in detail to make meaningful connections with their own lives and, ultimately, with the authors they read throughout the semester, like Scott Russell Sanders and Terry Tempest Williams. Because Anthony was focused on place, he was able to reflect on the local context of his students and their relationship with place. In turn, he was able to assess that his attitude toward place was different than those of his students, so rather than choosing an environmental focus for the course, he chose to talk about place and let students come to environmental concerns of their own volition. By being self-reflexive about his attitudes toward place, Anthony found a way to connect with students who had different interests and levels of engagement.

Anthony's course does exactly what Gruenewald suggests might come from a synthesizing of place-based pedagogies and critical pedagogies. For Gruenewald, when the two approaches work in concert, they create a pedagogical approach aimed at explicitly examining "the place-specific nexus between environment, culture, and education" ("Best" 10). Anthony is able to achieve the ELC's outcome of discussing citizenship, community, democracy, and equality (all ideas related to culture) by having his students write about their places. Moreover, Anthony is able to guide his students into thinking about where they live and how they inhabit the area surrounding the District of Columbia. Again, he is reaching a chief implication of a critical pedagogy of place, for, as Gruenewald suggests, educators should "expand the scope of their theory, inquiry, and practice to include the social and

ecological contexts of our own, and others', inhabitation" (10). Anthony shows how an awareness of our own *individual terroir* can benefit our pedagogical practices. If we challenge "each other to read the texts of our own lives and to ask constantly what needs to be transformed and what needs to be conserved," then we can help our students consider how their own education is implicated in and affected by the environment and culture and place. To truly develop a critical pedagogy of place, we must make "a place for the cultural, political, economic, and ecological dynamics of *places* whenever we talk about the purpose and practice of learning" (10-11, emphasis added).

Place Serves as Spirituality

Rebekah's work with place began with a re-examination of her own relationship to place. She then used this self-education as a way to connect with her students in the Midwest, a place she knew nothing about. For Rebekah, her attitude about place first affected how she chose to relate to students. Rather than assuming places are all the same, she wanted to know about the Midwest to know how this place might affect its residents. She wanted to know where her students lived so she might better understand the source of their experiences. After she arrived in the Midwest, Rebekah soon discovered that she could not ignore the relationship between place and education. She teaches at a private, Christian college, one that describes itself as a place to ask questions and wrestle with hard ideas in an environment where a Christian worldview is integrated into every class. For that reason, the students at Rebekah's university selected the institution as a place. The college explicitly connects a life of the mind and a life in the spirit, and the students wanted a college experience in which their spiritual lives would be taken seriously. Consequently Rebekah's local context has very

specific parameters, which, in turn, determine how her students will approach the concept of place. This is a part of the mission of the university:

Because of the kind of college we are—we're a faith-based college—place is always connected to spiritual place. We give a lot of lip service around here to the journey . . . [and] one of the ways, as a faculty, that we've developed to sort of get [the students] to come along with us is to talk about journeying.

The concept of journeying is “embedded in the lexicon of teaching at [her] religious college,” and the faculty at Rebekah’s university use scholars like Frederick Buechner and Thomas Merton to help students see the college experience as a physical and intellectual journey, one that is “not only a physical journey into a new kind of place—a place of the mind—that is indeed connected to your place that you came from” but also a journey requiring spiritual movement because “you’re also spiritually going to be moving away from that place that you’re very comfortable from, and you know moving into territory that’s going to make you really uncomfortable.” By framing intellectual exploration as a journey, the faculty hope students may find themselves better prepared for the rest of their lives. As she said during our interview, “We’re trying to produce [an] educated citizenry, who happen to be Christians, who are also aware that their place is also not just this Midwestern environment that they know so well, but it’s also the world.” As a writing teacher, Rebekah is not simply exploring the place-specific nexus of the environment and education and culture; in fact, she enacts a central tenet of place-based pedagogy by focusing on a specific aspect of culture unique to her locale: spirituality.

Rebekah tailors the writing assignments in her College Writing course to be an exploration of (spiritual) places (see Appendix J). Before the students explore the

connections between their physical places and their spiritual place, they investigate the places from which they come, to work to understand “who are they as people who belong to a place.” In an assignment she calls “An Interesting Research Paper on ‘Place’,” Rebekah and her students read John McPhee’s *The Pine Barrens*. In this text, McPhee considers the natural and cultural aspects of New Jersey’s untouched wilderness—the New Jersey Pine Barrens, which is the largest wilderness east of the Mississippi. Working from McPhee’s example, Rebekah directs students to “write with passion and interest about a place that you know or would like to know so that I and our class can experience it along with you.” The assignment also prompts students with a series of brainstorming questions and generative writing activities: “Where have you lived? List all the places. Think about places within those places. What about a place you have dreamed of visiting? Where have you visited? What place do you plan to visit this semester?” To begin the assignment, students select their place, and they work through various levels of research to compose a memoir-like essay that uses evidence from primary research (including interview transcripts, family documents, and pictures) and library-based research to say, “Here I am as a writer trying to figure out this place that I’m connected to.” They are exploring place as the nexus of their experience and culture, but they are also examining each other’s places as a source of personal inhabitation.

After considering place as a location through a personal investigation of themselves in place, Rebekah asks her students to explore the connections between place and spiritual identity, an extension of their culture as well as their non-academic education. Students read *Salvation on Sand Mountain* by Dennis Covington, in which he explores the spiritual and regional history of snake handling in an attempt to understand his own religious past. By reading this text, Rebekah prepares students for their “Understanding Difference—a

Research Project” assignment. In this writing project, students rely on their experience and authority to explore a difference; in this case, they are considering religious difference. As part of their research, Rebekah expects students to “meet people and encounter places” that have “some religious affiliation or connections, a group who might seem to spring from very different perspectives from the perspectives [they] hold.” To help students generate ideas for the assignment, Rebekah again provides her students with a series of generative writing prompts: “Where have you lived? Describe your religious background. Are you in those places where you lived were there groups of people that were whispered about? Mistrusted? Describe briefly encounters with the religious other that you remember.” These questions demand the students reflect on their place and the ways in which it has shaped their exposure to religious difference.

Building off a published text in which the author explores his spiritual heritage, Rebekah asks students to pick a church that is within driving distance of the university. In small groups, the students visit their research sites, investigating archives and denominational histories. This primary research asks the students to balance perception against institutional and historical data. Throughout the research process, Rebekah prompts the students to make identification connections, asking them to return their focus to a single question: “How are these people like me?”

Part V of the assignment sheet describes her expectation that students will make an explicit connection with their “othered” group:

Look at the way Covington connects his topic to other realms. Think of myths and whisperings surrounding your people (you might even have some family myths to tell about them!). Think of ways others have viewed them, of things

that are related to them. Think of any silliness that might be connected to the topic, of visual representations of them in art or film, musical representations. Think of who might consider these people important. Think of interesting stories connected to your topic.

Rebekah asks her students to investigate a spiritual heritage through place, but more importantly, she asks students to consider how their place has impacted their relationships with people who do not share their spiritual heritages.

To further understand the power behind this assignment, consider a point made by Lippard in her text *The Lure of the Local*. Lippard suggests that place is “latitudinal and longitudinal within the map of a person’s life. It is temporal and spatial, personal and political. A layered location replete with human histories and memories, place has width as well as depth” (7). To understand the width and depth of a person’s place, Lippard argues that we must understand the “intersections of nature, culture, history, and ideology from the ground on which we stand—our land, our place, the local” (7). Knowing the local allows an individual to consider the intertwined memories and histories that they have experienced and inherited from their place. More importantly, knowing the local prepares the individual to understand and empathize with others because “[w]hen we know *where* we are, we’re in a far better position to understand what other cultural groups are experiencing within a time and place we all share” (Lippard 10). Thus, when Rebekah asked her students to investigate the spiritual history of another group from their same place (the Midwest county in which she teaches), she is using place to connect spiritual differences that might not be bridged with a traditional ethnographic assignment. She is asking students to use their commonplace knowledge and authority to understand how place might operate as a source of difference, or,

at the very least, how place might exaggerate or emphasize a difference, thus feeding into a matrix of understanding. Thus, her assignment brings critical pedagogy into a discussion of place because it requires the students to become conscious of how place—and the local *mythos* of various religious groups—affects their consciousness and how place might have made them complicit in essentialism or oppression.

In her College Writing course, Rebekah's first assignment asks students to work with a familiar place; the students research it, and they collect data—both primary and secondary—before writing to discover something they didn't know before in order to argue for a broader definition of that place. Then, the students write the research paper on difference, which starts with the unknown, or that which “maybe shrouded in some kind of false *mythos* that they've inherited,” and they find ways to connect themselves and their lives to groups of people who may have been labeled as different or as Other. In both cases, Rebekah uses place and the students' experiences in place to serve as sites of identity formation and critical reflection.

Place Reveals Sociocultural Perceptions

According to post-process theorists, responsible discourse depends on the author's awareness of how she or he is located. For two of my participants, the integration of place in the writing classroom depends on their students understanding place as a category of difference, as something shaped by varying sociocultural perceptions. If you'll recall, Brad discovered place by riding in his father's eighteen-wheeler, but he found his academic connection to place by being out of place, writing about North Carolina while in Alaska as a graduate student. Brad's personal interest in the term has not made it any easier to discuss with his students. In fact, he claims to struggle with defining place:

Place is a slippery word. I mean, how do you define it? I guess maybe it's kind of like pornography. "Well, if I'm in a place, I know it when I see it," or something like that. But how do you pin that down, and where do the boundaries stop, and where do they end, or where do they begin? It's pretty wide open.

Rather than being derailed by the ambiguities of place, Brad brings these contradictions into his classroom (see Appendix K). He does, however, ask his students to recognize that "place is a space that has been invested with meaning It's a place where—we usually define places based on our memories and our interactions with those kinds of places, places that we go repeatedly, they have a kind of familiarity, places where we've lived our lives." In this way, Brad's definition aligns with those of Relph and other geographers. By focusing on how experiences invest place with meaning, Brad defines the term with students, focusing on cultural geography definitions, and, by extension, prepares students to consider more fully how their perceptions may be influenced by place. Though Brad believes he is only "playing with the notion of place," he engages students and helps them parse the differences among existential, perceptual, and primitive spaces.

Brad's focus on experience in place does not mean his course centers on idyllic reflection. In fact, he has little interest in asking students "to think about where they're from, to think about how that makes them who they are or shapes who they are and that kind of stuff." Rather, Brad uses his experiences with place and couples them with the experiences of his students to ask them to write about place in terms of perceptions, namely sociocultural perceptions:

When we learn where a person is from, it colors our perceptions of who that person is; it colors our perceptions of the way we identify them and that kind of stuff, so I don't come at [place] so much from asking the students to think about their place specifically, but I ask them to think critically about the word place, and the word space, and what those two things might mean, and how they might color our perceptions or sort of create judgments within us that we might not ordinarily think about.

Thus, for Brad, considerations of place focus on perceptions as well as the interactions created between individuals based on initial perceptions. Brad's focus on attitudes about place aligns with his local context. As he told me, a number of his students come from the rural areas surrounding their "rural" university. As such, the students confront the powerful stereotypes associated not only with rural areas but also the assumptions about being rural. As he told me,

New York City's four and a half hours away, but not very many of my students have been there. But they have these perceptions about people that are from the city, just like people in the city have perceptions about them being from the country. I'm always sort of taking [Raymond] Williams' lesson that the city depends on the country, and the country depends on the city kind of a thing, and trying to work that into the class somehow, so the students cannot have these knee-jerk reactions about, well, "City people are gonna shoot me when I show up," or "They're going to come out here and think I'm a dumb-ass."

Brad's teaching approach extends the work being done by scholars like Creed and Ching because he treats place as a source of difference and perceived difference. He isn't interested in the students identifying with their home sites, but he is interested in their questioning how places shape our thinking about people and how our thoughts about place shape locations.

In his Composition I course, "The Symbol-Using Animal: Writing About Nature and Culture," Brad is clearly focused on pushing students to challenge their "previous assumptions" about nature and culture so they might reflect on why individuals "may think and feel differently" than they do. Though Brad does not mention being influenced by Kenneth Burke, he clearly draws from Burke's definition of man in his title for the course. In *Language as Symbolic Action*, Burke defines man by noting the human capacity for using and inventing symbols, a capacity that also leads to separation by these same symbols. He writes, "Man is the symbol-using inventor of the negative separated from his natural condition by instruments of his own making goaded by the spirit of hierarchy and rotten with perfection" (Burke 16). Brad's subtle invocation of Burke sets up his course design, which asks students to consider how their assumptions might be operating as symbols—how their attitudes and ideas about culture and place might be separating and dividing them from one another and from the environment, landscapes, and natural world.

Over the course of the semester, Brad's students complete three major assignments, and their third essay, "The Analytical Animal," turns explicitly to matters of place. Beginning with primary research, Brad's students select a public space (streets, parks, churches, etc.) to analyze, and then they "map the space, take notes, watch people, and even ask them questions." He then asks students "what the design and/or use of [the] space says about American values of nature," and they are expected to answer this question by

considering “how humans shape spaces and how spaces, in turn, shape [human] behavior.” It is in this final essay that students reflect on how their culture lives and what it values in order to answer the question, “How does the public space construct or shape the way people experience it?” While the students are writing, Brad’s prompt encourages them to reflect on the symbols of their culture and the relationship they have with these places and with one another, bearing in mind that, as William Cronon argues, “we are always a part of the natural world, no matter where we are or what we do.” The Cronon quote offers some additional context for Brad’s assignment because he uses the article, “The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature,” to demonstrate how naming affects perception. In this case, Cronon suggests that humans created wilderness as civilizations were developing. Thus, wilderness serves as an example of the power of naming to control how we connect to and are affected by places. By invoking Cronon, Brad brings students back into the natural world, to natural places. His students may use the built environment to critique American values, but he ultimately wants them to consider how constructed structures mediate and determine their relationships and their perceptions.

In our interview, Sarah mentions that one goal of her department is helping students develop a “critical eye” towards the world; for her goals, she wants students to think deeply about issues that affect their daily lives and to think about the larger cultural assumptions that devalue the places they are from. As she told me, her students, both rural and urban, have place work to do. The students from rural places have to undo their “perceptions that if they’re from small farming towns [then] they’re from nowhere.” Students from the largest and closest urban center often live in the neighborhood designated as one of the “worst places to live” in the country; they too must re-evaluate how places are valued by the culture

at large. To accomplish this work, Sarah often asks first-year students to mentally re-visit their elementary schools in order to contrast their perspectives of that particular place then and now. Or, she asks them to reconsider the “Go West!” mantra of the American dream and to think critically about the “larger cultural assumption that always being on the move and going wherever is cutting edge; it is the thing to do.” More often than not, though, Sarah finds her definitions of place working to counteract the cultural messages students receive about their places and the value that can be found there. Sarah works to help students think critically about the cultural assumptions that go into the thinking that tells them someplace else is “cooler, better,” and that being anywhere else is better than being here. Sarah’s definitions of place center on helping students interrogate their assumptions that there is a singular, “normal” experience of place; she wants them to “define what a normal place is.”

Much like Brad, Sarah uses her connections with place to help students reflect on their perceptions of place in her Rhetoric & Composition I course (see Appendix L). Sarah’s outcomes are quite traditional for a first-year writing course. That is, students are expected to write papers for particular audiences, using and incorporating effective writing strategies. For example, in the second writing assignment of the semester, the “Coming to Terms with Place” essay, students blend investigations of place with the rhetorical concepts of voice and organization. To help students understand the rhetorical concepts, she provides two questions: “From what perspective am I relating to my readers?” and “How have I logically and stylistically connected my points?” To help students reflect critically on their places, she builds off the Scott Russell Sanders essay, “Homeplace,” asking students to prepare for their essay by writing three paragraphs, each with its own focus: “Where is your ‘homeplace’ located (physically, culturally, emotionally, etc.)? When in your life did you recognize this

‘homeplace’? Why do you consider this place to be your home?” Sarah’s assignment focuses on homeplaces, in part, because her students are already thinking about where they are from and where they went to high school; and because her students segregate and define themselves based on these locations, using a homeplace assignment allows her students to make meaning based on the spaces they inhabit and have inhabited. More importantly, a home place assignment allows Sarah to push her students to interrogate social and cultural definitions of normal. Using her students’ experiences of place, Sarah is able to help them contextualize the places they inhabit while considering how external discourses may have affected their attitudes and assumptions.

Gruenewald’s critical pedagogy of place has the dual goal of reinhabitation and decolonization: “If reinhabitation involves learning to live well socially and ecologically in places that have been disrupted and injured, decolonization involves learning to recognize disruption and injury and to address their causes” (“Best” 9). For Anthony, talking about the environment through place was a way to help students identify human disruption and injury of place; he was able to use his earlier experiences to help students. For Rebekah and for Brad, a place-based approach to writing was focused largely on helping students identify and counteract their (complicit) role in the disruption and injury of places. Neither was talking about environmental activism, but they were talking about human responses to place. For Rebekah, the focus was on how students’ unquestioned relationships with place might have resulted in inaccurate understandings of different religious practices. For Brad and Sarah, the focus was on how unexperienced places might have resulted in negative sociocultural perceptions; thus, helping students re-conceive their relationships with place becomes the end goal for these teachers.

Place Provides Connections

Rebekah blended the intellectual and spiritual goals of the university with her goals as a teacher of writing. For Megan, defining place in her classroom does not require as much contextualization. Instead of focusing on experiencing places as part of a larger spiritual journey, Megan leaves the definition of place “pretty wide open.” Her loose definition, however, reflects the value she first found in a place-based approach. Megan found that place was a topic broad enough for collaborative work: “We could, together as a class, come up with different ways of thinking about place.” Thus, place gives Megan and her students “a framework” to use in their class, one that often returns to the idea that “what it means to be place-based [is] . . . to find a particular community and situate yourself within that community,” an aim that sounds a bit like reinhabitation (see Appendix M). Like several of the other participants, Megan incorporated place in her classroom only after discovering an assignment one of her colleagues was using successfully in his own writing course. Her colleague’s assignment asked students to explore the city, a task that appealed to Megan because it got students “out of their chairs and out of the classroom” and into the world exploring—it situated them in their current place. More importantly, the assignment presented a way to help her with place. At the time, she loved her college on the east coast but was struggling to get a sense of intimacy with the city; as she reflected back on that time, she remembered thinking that the assignment might help her “appreciate the city more,” which would be a great way for her to know this new place more intimately—through the eyes and words of her students. As the students began conducting their research and writing up and reporting on their investigations, she realized they were doing tremendous qualitative research and ethnographic studies, which, in turn, made the city come “to life for all of us.”

Remember, Megan had both attached and detached relationships with place, but by talking about the city with her students, she not only hoped to learn from their experiences, but she also hoped to connect to the place they lived and studied, effectively rooting herself in their common home site.

Over the years, Megan's composition course has become less focused on modal writing and more grounded in a theme. She has recently begun to focus all of her assignments around a series of particular questions that were inspired by her writing program director, who was also asking rhetorical questions to create a greater sense of purpose in student writing. In fact, Megan, the program director, and two other colleagues began exploring questions of place and community, which resulted in a textbook focused on issues of place. In her courses, Megan collapses the term "place" with "community"; she asks students to reflect on the communities they used to belong to by exploring where they are from; she asks students to consider the community they belong to currently by researching issues that affect them; and she asks students to reflect on their future communities by examining a field or discipline to which they hope to belong. Megan finds an important connection between writing about place and developing awareness as an informed, participatory citizen. For that reason, she asks students enrolled in her "Finding Your Place" course, part of the first-year writing sequence, to begin with that which is most familiar: themselves. On her syllabus, she tells students that their essays, Reflections, and Scrapbook assignments will ask them to "recall the places of [their] past, explore the places of [their] present, and consider the places of [their] future." In order to help students write about themselves, the Scrapbook assignments give students a very simple task: collect letters, concert stubs, photos, found items—any artifact which represents the student's ongoing

project and daily travels. So, whenever a student picks up food at the local Chinese food buffet or drops off dry cleaning, she is expected to pick up an artifact from that place, write a sentence or two about it, and keep the artifact for future reference. The Scrapbook, thus, becomes its own place, a material site where students can locate and represent themselves by reflecting on and documenting where they go. This assignment helps the students informally consider how they are living in their spaces and how they are using and interacting with places; it can be seen as a “conscious consumer of place” assignment.

The departmental outcomes at Megan’s institution are clear: the purpose of the first-year writing course is to create “complex, analytic, well-supported arguments that matter in academic contexts.” Within these parameters, Megan has carved out a space for her interest in place-based pedagogy and writing—an interest that she clearly lays out in her course description. She explains to students that many “composition scholars believe that there is a deep connection between the places in our lives and our writing,” and she then extends this connection to include rhetorical principles by noting that “each place has its own community and rhetorical rules, and by locating our place within these places we can begin to make connections between our identity, our communities, and our writing.” As a teacher, Megan foregrounds the aims of post-process theory. Therefore, students in her class study places and the communities and languages that compose these places. By building off her work with discourse analysis, Megan integrates place into her classroom and pushes her students to consider how “the writing process can serve as a catalyst for connecting with our environment” and how students might position their experiences and voices “within a larger community, which can in turn lead to everything from greater personal understanding to social advocacy,” also a goal of critical pedagogy.

To help students write about places, communities, and rhetorics, Megan structures her course into three phases (“Where are you from? Where are you? Where are you going?”), constructing a three-phased approach to place with three different writing assignments. All three approaches, however, ask students to complete traditional writing assignments through the lens of place. For example, the personal essay asks students to “take a mental stroll down memory lane and revisit some of the significant places of [their] past that have helped shape [them] into the [people they] are today.” By focusing on place, this assignment asks students to reflect on their agency and identity by reflecting on their connections to particular places. Megan asks her students to consider (and reconsider) the relationship between places and identity by exploring how places from their past have shaped them into who they are currently, so while the assignment retains many narrative features—gathering moments, identifying the tension, constructing characters and dialogue—it also asks students to draw explicit connections between physical places and possible influences on personal development and character. The descriptive analysis essay asks students to explore the city and community in which they are currently living (and will live for the next four years). Requiring them to transition from where they are from to where they are, this assignment sends students out into the campus and the surrounding area, thus giving them the “opportunity to observe this city, especially by way of the campus, so that [they] can (re)discover the culture of this place while also considering [their] connection to it, however new it might be.” Drawn, in part, from her own desire to learn a new city, this assignment helps students construct arguments that are timely and relevant for themselves and their peers.

Critical Pedagogy of Place

The end goal of critical pedagogy is to engage learners in action against oppressive elements of experienced realities, be they social, political, or economic. A critical pedagogy of place calls learners and teachers to action by identifying “‘places’ as the contexts in which these situations are perceived and acted on” (Gruenewald “Best” 5). For the writing teachers in my study, place can’t be divorced from the social, political, religious, and environmental pressures faced by their students. As these case studies make clear, each instructor used her or his place as the initial context for working with students; they began with their university and their student population, tailoring the work of the course to the place-based needs of their students. But a critical pedagogy of place is about more than the examination of human oppression in particular contexts; “it also,” Gruenewald writes, “must embrace the experience of being human in connection with others and with the world of nature” (6) even if postmodern thought would suggest that drawing explicit connections between the individual and her environment is “essentialist” or, worse yet, “homogenizing.” For the place-based educator, the “spiritual, political, economic, ecological, and pedagogical reasons” (7) for exploring human connections with lived environments are complex and non-standardized ways to help students build on their experiential knowledge. Instead of dismissing place and suggesting that students learn in a geographically “neutral” site, a critical pedagogy of place acknowledges that experience has geographical contexts and contributes “to the production of educational discourses and practices that explicitly examine the place-specific nexus between environment, culture, and education” (10).

By allowing students to construct a definition of place grounded in context, these writing instructors tacitly emphasize the concept that places are subjectively defined and

(often) individualistic; they also demonstrate that places are filled with shared attachments and meanings (Sheldrake 5). By resisting a singular, theoretical definition for place, the instructors gave students permission to connect with one another, and often the larger concepts of the course, by first linking themselves to the world in their own way and according to their own standards. The ways in which these writing instructors use place to construct and support writing assignments also highlights how writing classes can be focused on the local and contextual while still employing rhetorical principles.

In Chapter One, I outlined how scholars and researchers in various disciplines define space and place, highlighting considerations of place as a location, a locale, and a sense of place. I also noted we often use the term “place” as a psychological term; for example, when I tell a friend, “I’ve been there,” then I am suggesting that we have experienced the world in a similar way, that we’ve been in the same location experiencing similar events and feelings. By considering the material (or ontological) connotations of place as well as the psychological (or epistemological) ones, place can represent what is, and place can influence what we believe, which is what these writing assignments do. Robert and Rebekah highlight the epistemological influence of place for students: Robert asks his students to consider how their families’ experiences with place and migration may have, in turn, influenced what the students believe about living in Nebraska, and Rebekah asks her students to consider how their religious traditions are influenced by place, namely the interactions and disputes between competing immigrant faiths (the goal of their “Understanding Difference” research assignment). For Brad and Sarah, the writing exercises combined the material and psychological aspects of place, as each asked students to consider how a material location might draw out particular psychological and sociocultural responses. Finally, for Megan,

material aspects of place allowed her and her students to develop psychological perspectives; it was only by finding value in the community at large that she could identify with and connect to her new city.

By considering the ontological and epistemological meanings of place, these writing instructors offer evidence for how individuals, both students and academics, attach to and identify with places, how their places affect(ed) their work as writers and researchers, and how place affected their beliefs and knowledge about higher education and academic institutions. Though none of the participants mention a familiarity with the work of Tim Cresswell, their work with place reflects his argument that “place is not simply something to be observed, researched and written about but is itself part of the way we see, research and write” (15). These participants used place in their writing classrooms because they had an identifying and defining relationship with place. Some found their academic development in competition with previous meaningful attachments, and others found their way to place because of a writing course’s emphasis on place. In all six cases, *individual terroir* appears to have influenced (or at least jump-started) the pedagogical choices they made in the classroom. Place was not overlooked or dismissed but integrated and attended to.

By incorporating their experiences with place into the writing classroom, these instructors were able to extend their previous pedagogical practices. As Lippard notes,

A sense of place is a virtual immersion that depends on lived experience and a topographical intimacy that is rare today both in ordinary life and in traditional educational fields. From the writer’s viewpoint, it demands extensive visual and historical research, a great deal of walking “in the field,”

contact with oral tradition, and an intensive knowledge of both local multiculturalism and the broader context of multiculturedness. (33)

By incorporating place into their pedagogical strategies, the participants in my study did much more than ask students to reflect on a common theme or umbrella topic. Place was not simply another way to limit research projects and focus personal narratives, though these were certainly byproducts of some of the writing assignments. The emphasis on place allowed the instructors to justify and explain the importance of primary and secondary research strategies, particularly ethnographic methodologies. By asking students to be “in the field,” in one particular place, these instructors opened up a realm of possibilities for critical pedagogy, particularly a critical pedagogy of place. The students explored reinhabitation and decolonization, but they also explored the attitudes behind these concepts, focusing on how place became a site of difference.

Being “in the field” also provided students with a chance to encounter multiculturedness, a concept coined by Lippard that plays off the idea of multiculturalism. As she explains,

Most of us move around a lot, but when we move we often come into contact with those who haven't moved around, or have come from different places. This should give us a better understanding of difference (though it will always be impossible to understand everything about difference). Each time we enter a new place, we become one of the ingredients of an existing hybridity, which is really what all 'local places' consist of. By entering that hybrid, we change it; and in each situation we may play a different role. A white middle-class art type without much money will have a different affect and effect on a mostly

Latino community with less money than on a mostly white upper-class suburb with more money. S/he remains the same person, and may remain an outsider in both cases, but reciprocal identity is inevitably altered by the place, by the relationship to the place itself and the people who are already there.

Sometimes the place, or ‘nature,’ will provide nourishment that social life cannot (5-6).

College classrooms provide an ideal environment for exploring multicenteredness. Some students are local, and some students are not. All students, however, are experiencing the college or university as a place for the first time, and to help them navigate this new role, we can ground them in a common context: place. Asking students to investigate their local places does not have to be an exercise in parochialism or nostalgia; rather, focusing on place can open up a realm of possibilities for exploring how place is constructed in the culture at large and how perceptions and (mis)conceptions of place can affect personal identity, which brings us back to Creswell and the ontological and epistemological dimensions of place.

Perceived Benefits of Place-Based Approaches

My interest in who was using place in their writing courses and why has been answered, in part. When I began this research, I speculated about the correlation between attachment to place and interest in place-based pedagogies. Through my research, I learned that a majority of writing instructors (80%) who completed my survey were “very attached” or “somewhat attached” to where they are from (see Figure 5). I did not ask each participant to elaborate on his or her connection with a home site, but the case studies suggest that the participants were often drawn to discussions of place because of their relationships (both attached and detached) to the places of their past. In addition to a shared attachment to a home place, there

was some demographic uniformity among my survey participants as well. For instance, a majority (98%) were non-Hispanic Caucasian, and most participants (75%) indicated they were involved in either domestic partnerships or marriages. Although the demographics appear quite uniform, there was variation in the participants' education levels and employment classifications. Most of the participants held terminal degrees: thirty-four had doctoral degrees and two had MFAs. The remaining participants held or were working towards other advanced degrees: nine had Master's degrees, twelve were classified as ABD (all but dissertation), and two were PhD students. The variation in the highest level of academic degree received connects to the variation in the teaching appointments held by the participants. Thirty-three out of sixty participants held full-time positions at the university/college level. Twenty-two classified themselves as assistant professors, six were associate professors, and seven were full professors. Therefore, not only were a majority of the participants full-time employees, but one-half (thirty out of sixty) were employed by doctoral-granting institutions.

As the survey data suggests, my original assumptions were both correct and incorrect (at least for my participant pool). Originally, I assumed that instructors interested in place-based pedagogies would be more prevalent at small institutions located in rural environments—places where, as Rebekah noted, place would be unavoidable. This assumption, it seems, was incorrect, as a majority of my participants are teaching at Doctorate/Extensive and Doctorate/Intensive universities—a finding which seems to indicate that interest in place is not tied to the size of the institution and that in spite of my initial assumptions (and those still held by many academics) critical place-based pedagogies can be integrated into rural, suburban, and urban universities and communities. (It may also be true

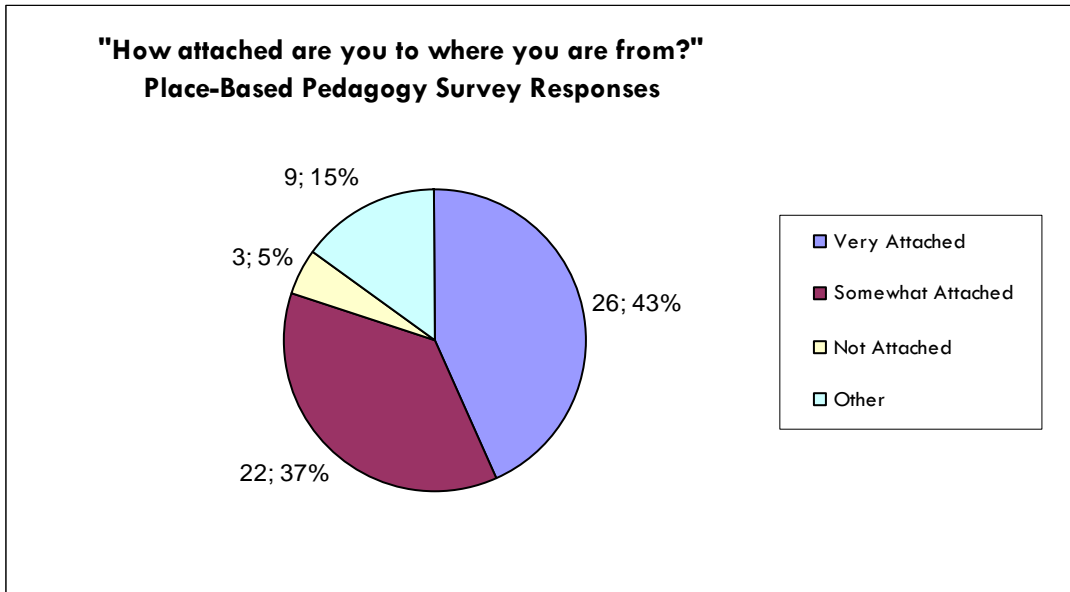


Figure 5. Place-Based Pedagogy Survey Responses

that faculty members at larger institutions are more likely to subscribe to and participate in electronic discussion lists, which was how I distributed my survey information.) Moreover, a majority of my survey participants also live and work in mid-sized to urban areas, which seems to indicate that an interest in place-based pedagogies and approaches to writing is not limited to rural environments.

In addition to knowing the who, where, and why of place-based pedagogies, I wanted to know what the instructors believed students got out of this kind of local, focused curriculum. During our interviews, I asked my case study participants to reflect on what they perceived to be the benefits of such a pedagogical approach. After all, each of them had taught more traditional courses in the past. For a number of my research participants, the benefits of place-based pedagogy center on the belief that a focus on place can help create engaged citizens; in fact, the instructors hope students will become active, engaged, and participatory citizens. In this way, the central tenets of a critical pedagogy of place and post-process theories merge. For Anthony, the benefit of a place-based approach to writing is that it creates a space for students to connect their lives with larger concepts and issues of the first-year experience course. For Megan, the benefit is that it allows students to become active, not passive, participants in place. For Robert and Rebekah, writing about place opens up opportunities for students to reconceptualize citizenship. The benefits that each of these instructors find in their place-based approaches to writing do not focus on producing “good” writers. Instead, each one hopes, in her or his own way, to produce a more active and critical thinker and a more engaged, place-aware writer.

In Rebekah’s case, she wanted students to reflect on the *mythos* (the biases and prejudices) that they had inherited from their own oppression and domination by other

religious and social groups. She sent her students out to read the world, as Paulo Freire might say. By entering denominations and church histories that were not their own, students engaged in praxis—in reflection and action—which allowed them to understand the world on their own and from a new perspective. When I asked Rebekah what students might learn from a place-based writing course that they might not learn in a more traditional curriculum, she shared with me a story about her own identity formation as a teacher of writing.

Before transitioning to a place-based pedagogy, Rebekah was “really dissatisfied” with the courses she had taught. She felt they were too scattered, too disjointed. Most writing instructors have only one semester with students, and, as such, she believes writing teachers should have “a set of goals that everything in that class is pointed towards, and you should be doing nothing in that class that veers away from those goals.” For her, genre-based, unconnected writing assignments supported by a generic reader may allow students to learn how to write better, but this approach to writing will accomplish little else. While extrapolating on her position, Rebekah recalls a time when she believed that her job was simply to teach students how to write “better.” In the following anecdote that she shared with me, one that begins with a disagreement she had with a colleague as a doctoral student, Rebekah shows herself transitioning into a writing instructor who embraces the tenets of a critical pedagogy of place:

We were having an argument about what a college writing class should do, and I said, “Well, you know, excuse me, but I thought I was here to teach writing.” And he looked at me, and he said, “So, you’re going to turn out a bunch of perfectly writing little Nazis?” And I went home, and I thought about that. It hadn’t occurred to me that there was a lot more opportunity in a class.

It wasn't about teaching a subject. You really are trying to mold people into good citizens. Rhetoric helped me understand that. So, you know, how do you create this class, whatever level it is, that points people not only in learning the subject matter, in becoming better thinkers and writers, but how do they become better people?

And it seems to me one of the best things you can do is to get them to see where they've come from because they're not going to be examining sort of the values that they bring with them until they see what they are. Like this religious assignment they do here. Working through a set of prejudices that they've inherited from their religious heritage, which stems from their history, which stems from the kind of immigrant population they were. You know all of that stuff is connected. But that's a really good service I can give to a beginning student But you're still always getting them to sort of back up and see "Why do I think this?" Place seems to be a wonderful way to do it because they know. You know?!? These students aren't stupid. They know through the Internet, through TV—they are connected to the world in a way that I wasn't.

For Rebekah, writing instruction is about more than teaching students to be better writers and thinkers. Writing instruction is about producing better thinkers and writers by producing better citizens, and she sees place-based pedagogies as a way to begin this conversation with students. By asking students to interrogate where they've been (in terms of a spiritual journey), Rebekah connects place with values and judgments. She links thought and action to place.

I would like to briefly acknowledge that interwoven in Rebekah's above response is an either/or proposition that seems to mirror the conflicts between critical pedagogy and its opponents. What is the aim of the writing classroom? In particular, her response seems to capture the concern that critical pedagogies in the classroom are less focused on writing instruction and more focused on converting students to the instructor's particular viewpoint. In her dissertation, "Critical Contentions," Stacia Neeley revises one of the most contentious and debated criticisms about critical pedagogy: Maxine Hairston's "Diversity, Ideology, and Teaching Writing." In her re-reading of Hairston's position, Neeley argues that the article illustrates two problems all critical pedagogues must face before they can begin teaching and/or learning: "1) deciding what "choice" means for student and teacher and texts in a composition course, and 2) finding ways to make pedagogical strategies explicit so that subject matter read and written about opens up a conversation instead of becoming the "trump card" that ends one" (41). I believe Rebekah answers both of these issues in the second half of her answer. She references a research assignment (see Appendix J, "Understanding Difference") in which students are encouraged to choose from their past religious experiences in order to explore points of connection and difference. In the assignment sheet, Rebekah even explains what she hopes students will gain from the experience, framing the outcomes, in part, as her "teacherly hope."

Rebekah uses place in her writing classrooms because she believes it will help her do more than teach writing; she believes place can help her students become better thinkers and better people. Anthony does not mention helping students become "better people" during our interview, but his writing assignments encourage students to combine creativity and experience in the context of citizenry. Rather than exploring metaphysical understandings of

place, he requires students to connect with a physical place. Some use their bedrooms, while others use landscapes. Regardless of the place they choose, Anthony believes that thinking and writing about place can benefit his students:

What we're hoping to achieve by doing that is trying to get students to make connections between their personal lives, their own experiences, and these big ideas that we deal with in the course that have to do with community and democracy and equality—all these kind of large things. They can actually start to get at [these ideas] if they start with this very concrete place and start examining the place in very careful detail and evoking it and then start making connections about what it means to them. Often, they'll find that they can then take that next step and reach out to one or more of the course authors and bring that person's words into their work.

For Anthony and his colleagues, place is a personal, concrete site of engagement that will grant students authority over very abstract and theoretical concepts. By considering their places and the relationships that are supported by and developed in this context, students can extrapolate their understandings of the local to broader terms (such as community) and then make the intellectual leap of finding themselves and their experiences in the work of others. Beginning with their place, in essence, grants them access to the places of others.

Like Anthony, Sarah suggests that writing about place can help students connect with much bigger ideas; after all, the goal at her institution is to help writers develop “a critical eye.” For Sarah, developing a critical perspective does not require abstract ideas or philosophical, theoretical texts. Instead, she wants students to understand “that no matter where you're at in place and whatever place you're in, you can look around yourself and

observe carefully and think deeply about being connected.” Teaching her students that where they are from has currency in the academy is one benefit Sarah finds in her place-based approach to writing. As she told me, “It’s helped me draw students to more critical thinking about things. You don’t have to read Descartes or whatever to think critically. You can just sit where you are and look around yourself. If you have that critical eye, [then] there are rich things for writing.” Sarah believes that a place-based approach to writing can help students develop a critical eye about the mundane and local events of their lives. One way to understand her conceptions of place may be to consider the benefits Megan finds in her writing courses that deal with place.

Megan believes that students gain “a sense of relevance” by working with place-based approaches to writing. Megan spoke about the relationships between identity making and writing and how important both are for students who are trying to write themselves into places and communities. In asking students to position themselves in a place, she asks students to “write out of that,” which gives them

an opportunity to talk about issues that are important to them and to talk about places that are important to them and to establish a sense of authority about those places and about those identities. They’re writing about something that means something to them. If I can get them to write about communities they’re a part of, if I can get them to write about places that they’re familiar with or get them to choose a new place to explore, [then] that would make the writing for them more meaningful.

Like the other teachers, Megan wants students to consider the contexts of their experiences and their authority. She wants them to identify the topics that interest them, so they can learn

how to make knowledge from writing and how writing might have purpose in their daily lives. She went on to explain that she hopes engaging with places over the course of the semester enables students to be “a bit more critical about the places that they go.”

Ultimately, Megan believes writing about place can offer students more than just the critical skills necessary for critiquing the places they encounter in their daily lives. After writing a textbook and exploring places with her students, Megan reached a final conclusion: “Place gets us to think about some of those traditional questions—gender, sex, race, some of that stuff—but in kind of different ways.” As I discuss in the next chapter, this “different way” of talking about traditional notions of difference can be achieved by using a matrix of difference; rather than separating discussions of gender from their context, we can use place to highlight how communities, neighborhoods, regions, and states have differing notions of what makes an individual a woman or a man, for example. By examining place as the context for other experiences (especially of difference), we can help students analyze why they might have different understandings of race relations or competing notions of social class. What Megan has come to realize by working with place in her classroom is that difference does not occur in a vacuum; difference operates in relation to place (as well as other categories of cultural difference).

Robert also has a clear sense of the benefits of a place-based approach to writing. During our interview, he said, “My sense is that behind the writing about place assignment is a different vision of how to be a citizen in the United States.” Throughout his explication, Robert notes that our current educational system is structured around a “migratory pattern.” That is, our K-16 course content and curricular strategies are “disassociated from place or from the local environment,” and, as Robert suggests, the education system as a whole is

creating educated adults who image themselves as fully migratory: “They’re able to see the skills they have as abstract and placeless and able to work as well in Boston or Pennsylvania or Ontario, wherever it is that their business world would take them.” A place-conscious focus on learning and education, according to Robert, begins from a very different premise. Rather than educating students to be migratory and rather than using a neutral, placeless curriculum, a place-conscious focus begins with a recognition

that most of the real problems facing this planet, as we look at the next fifty, one-hundred years, are ones that involve working out sustainable relationships with local environments, both physical and cultural, and that we need a different model of citizenship. Consequently, we need a model of citizenship that helps young people grow into a way of thinking about their immersion in local contexts so that the decisions they’re making about livelihood, and the relationship to local politics, and the relationship to local culture are all aimed on the assumption that they have a long-term commitment to that place.

According to Robert, the purpose of his work inside and outside of the classroom has been, in part, to consider the concept of “living well” outlined by Toni Haas and Paul Nachtigal.¹⁰

Rather than longing for another place and planning his next career move, Robert has worked to understand how “you might learn to live well wherever you end up,” an idea that has been possible for him *because* he has developed a relationship with the local community; he has worked to “envision a long-term, sustainable relationship to that place.”

¹⁰ Brooke summarizes Haas and Nachtigal’s theory about “living well” in his Introduction to *Rural Voices*. Briefly, Haas and Nachtigal argue that teachers can help students understand and participate in the web of natural and cultural relationships that define a community by focusing on five senses. A sense of place, or living well ecologically, requires students to develop a sustainable relationship with the natural world surrounding their local community. A sense of civic involvement, or living well politically, requires students to understand government as a range of institutional ways communities make decisions that affect members. A sense of worth, or living well economically, requires students to find ways they can “make a living” in their region. A sense of connection, or living well spiritually, asks students to articulate the meaning of their lives in their place. Finally, a sense of belonging, or living well in community, requires students to create a story about their places and to imagine themselves in the history and future of their community.

As a teacher, Brad doesn't focus on citizenship or sustainable relationships, but he does recognize that before students can draw effectively from their experience and authority they must be able to interrogate the mundane and commonsensical terms of their lives. By asking them to be in the world, Brad calls on students to become aware of their *individual terroir* and to place themselves rhetorically in the contexts of their daily lives. It is no surprise, then, that Brad sees the benefits of a place-based approach to writing as tied to post-process theories of location (though he does not frame the benefits this way). He wants students to know that "[w]riting is a messy process," and he sees his job, in part, as being a guide for students, someone who can help them control the mess. But he is also focused on teaching students about the rhetorical context of writing: "I'm trying to teach them to think in terms of rhetorical context, trying to teach them to realize that they have a lot of different choices as writers. The more consciously they engage those choices, the better writers they'll be. The more they learn about their context, the better off they'll be." By focusing on context, Brad connects writing to its situatedness, and he connects writing to the places his students have lived. As he told me, the concepts of place and space are intriguing for students, especially for those who have not considered their relationships to place:

One of the things that I think works well about my iteration of a place class is that . . . students find the terms interesting once they start sort of talking about them and getting into them a little bit. You know, terms like place and space and nature and culture and wilderness. I find that that's pretty effective, because they're pretty interested in those terms. A lot of students around here are hunters; they have been eating off farms for ever and ever and ever. They know how to milk cows and do all those kinds of things, so they're pretty

attached to this particular area. At the same time, they haven't thought very seriously about some of the terms and what they mean. Because [place] taps into their experiences fairly well, they can relate to a lot of the material—that they find it pretty easy to talk about. I think you could do that in any comp[osition] class, depending on where you are, and I think it would probably be just as effective in an urban area as any other one.

And I guess, too, really deep down inside—because I don't really think there's any kind of neutral way to approach a class—I at least want students to become more aware of where they are in the world, in some way, shape, or form, and how everything that they do has some kind of effect or impact. I don't necessarily want to change their thinking on anything. If they don't believe in global warming, that's fine with me. I'm not going to argue with them about it. If they don't want to define place the way that I do or anything, that's fine with me. I'm totally cool with that. But at the same time, I do want them to think about themselves as being “in the world,” so to speak. That might be the one thing they can get out of this class.

In reflecting on the benefits of a place-based approach to writing, Brad references not only the dependence of writing on a place but also the importance of teaching students to be in the world (a phrase reminiscent of *individual terroir*). He also articulates why this approach to teaching writing may work for instructors who claim to be uninterested in place-based pedagogies.¹¹

¹¹ I say “claim to be uninterested” because even if an instructor might resist the tenets of place-based or place-conscious approaches to teaching, she can never be fully out of place. Regardless of whether or not we chose to focus on place in our classrooms, teachers, students, and texts are all situated in particular places.

My project has focused on reconsidering the role of place in academic life, and I have examined this relationship, in part, by exploring the connection between place and experience (*individual terroir*), which may provide a new way for academics and students reflect on and analyze their experiences in writing classrooms; place is one way to move students from thinking of experience simply as emotional disclosure. In fact, place may serve as one way to help students write about experience in more rhetorically focused constructions, particularly those supported by qualitative observations and reflections. Place may be a way to help writing instructors (particularly those resistant to place-based approaches) teach students how the personal can be used effectively in academic arguments.

In her text *Personally Speaking: Experience as Evidence in Academic Discourse*, Candace Spigelman suggests that compositionists have long valued the use of personal writing in the classroom. As she notes, “In composition studies, scholars who use personal writing try to emphasize the complexities and contradictions implicit in experiential evidence, to recognize as [Joan] Scott does that experience is not something that we *have*; rather it is what conditions who we are” (76). Spigelman’s aim in *Personally Speaking* is to reexamine how experience-based writing might serve academic discourse, and she assumes that readers understand accounts of personal experience as “socially and culturally mediated reconstructions of context-bound events” (xiv)—a point that aligns with the perspective of writing taken by post-process theories and a critical pedagogy of place. By re-reading Spigelman’s work on personal experience with an eye toward context, and toward place specifically, I offer an alternative way for writing instructors to use place in their classrooms.

Spigelman establishes her understanding of personal writing (as well as experiential writing and personal narrative) by noting that all three terms “refer to the ways in which

writers make sense of their lives by organizing their experience into first-person stories” (3). According to Spigelman, as writers, we reflect on experience by ordering the moment or point of reflection into a story; therefore, it is important for us as writers and teachers to remember that “there is already a difference between a lived moment and our attempts to capture it in thought and words” in this ordering of experience (63). That is, as we write the narrative, we are simultaneously re-constructing the initial experience through various filters. For Spigelman, these filters include “the collective subjectivities of our social and cultural relationships, so that our interpretations of experience are not simply individual processes” (63). Our experiences, therefore, are not only constructed but they are also mediated, just as our identities are mediated by social, cultural, and spatial relations. Spigelman goes on to suggest that subjectivity is not alone in its effects on reconstructions of experience: “From the standpoint of academic evidence, we must also bear in mind that the *contexts* from which experiential writing emerges are, in and of themselves, significant” (75, emphasis added). That is, when we construct experiential narratives, they are not occurring in neutral, objective locations. In fact, these experiences are being written from locations and places, which have an effect on the experience itself.

By appreciating the dependent relationship between place and experience, Spigelman provides a pathway for considerations of *individual terroir* in writing classrooms. Teachers of writing can help their students see the “I” of a narrative as a mediated, rhetorical construction, not an authentic and dominant voice. Teachers of writing can also help students see this “I” as rhetorically situated and spatially constructed. That is, teachers can help students see themselves as already positioned in a rhetorical situation—in their current, past, or future places. By introducing students to the idea of an “I-in-place,” as an always already

rhetorical construction, teachers can help students see place as more than a setting in their daily lives; place can be interrogated as an agent in the experiences being rendered in the narrative arguments. Following the models provided by the participants in my study, teachers can use place-as-agent to complicate students' definitions of place, thereby asking them to complicate their understanding of authority. For example, Rebekah used her students' experiences with place to complicate their perceptions of other religions. By asking the students to consider the migratory and settlement patterns of their Midwestern town, she was able to highlight how a place can carry a residue of early conflicts over land and religious beliefs. She helped them see how their place could be an agent in their attitudes and assumptions about Others. More importantly, Rebekah was able to diffuse resistance to the exercise because all the students were implicated in the place-as-agent; that is, because the assignment was grounded in the local context of the university and her students' lives, Rebekah did not have to deflect concerns that she was challenging the students' ideological structures. Instead, they were engaging in historical and ethnographic investigations together. There was no "right" position to be uncovered; there was no group to be labeled "wrong." Instead, the place-based assignment asked for an investigation into how place shaped the relationships between various social groups.

Place can also be used in the writing classroom to teach students how to evaluate personal experiences by testing the validity and fidelity of each argument, as proposed by Spigelman. Building on the work of James C. Raymond, Spigelman first suggests that readers "accept or reject arguments on the basis of mutual assumptions and shared illustrative patterns, not on the strength of proof or evidence per se." To test the validity of personal experience-based arguments, readers must work to "examine common assumptions implicit

in the move from the writer's specific case to a generalization and then to the reader's analogous construction of this principle within his or her own specific experience" (100). The validity of personal experiences is based (at least partially) on how the author's rendering of the experience aligns with assumptions readers have about the experience.

In the context of a place-based writing assignment, the instructor could guide students through these steps, first asking students to reflect on the construction of place in the narrative, an exercise that may allow them to consider the perceptions and misperceptions about a given location. For example, if a student writes about her experiences in Chicago, then the readers (including the teacher) could weigh her representation of the city against their own visits to Chicago and other urban centers as well as their (mis-)perceptions about Chicago as a place. By incorporating multiple representations into a whole-class discussion about a place, instructors can highlight the multiple ways to reflect on a place (as a location, a locale, or a sense of place). Instructors can also open up discussions of difference, highlighting how the writer's previous place-based contexts (be they rural, suburban, or urban) will influence her rendering of this place-based experience. But in order for a reader to challenge the writer's construction of place, the reader must develop her own construction, which would, in turn, be subject to the writer's validity test. This see-saw validity-driven comparison of a writer's constructions and representations against a reader's experiences may help students see experience and place as social constructions subject to personal experience because as they are testing for validity, the students are simultaneously constructing their experiences of place and representing their places.

In addition to reading texts for the validity of place-based arguments, instructors can also use place to help students read for "narrative fidelity," or whether or not the story

constructed by the writer rings true when compared against the stories and experiences of the reader's life (101). Again, students will benefit from comparing others' constructions and representations to their own context-dependent experiences. The instructor can again encourage writers to identify place as a location, locale, or sense of place, and the students can use these controlling definitions to guide their readings of the stories. The students may even be better prepared to point out constructions that read as too idealistic or overly harsh because they will be working from a common definition of place. For example, a student reader who has not traveled out of the United States may not be equipped to comment on the writer's construction of herself as an Other in a new place. But, if the students can agree that the writer's opening paragraph is establishing the location of the country, then the student reader can talk about how the writer's entrance into the modern (albeit international) airport seems contradictory to her own entrance into modern (national) airports. By helping students frame moments of disjuncture within definitions of place, writing teachers may have an opportunity to help students interrogate specific misrepresentations when a writer's account of place does not ring true for a reader. In fact, the disjuncture may serve to help students consider how experiences of place can intersect with categories of difference, a move that may again help them understand that places and people are never neutral (a point Brad hopes to make with his students) but socially constructed.

Definitions of place do not depend on home sites, natural environments, or constructed spaces; in theory, any student in any class can find a way to write about her or his relationship with place. Moreover, as teachers of writing, we may find ways for discussions of place to extend and complicate our current use of experiential-based writing in our classrooms. Sure, students may resist assignments asking them to go visit new places or

re-see their current places; they may complain about the research work involved, but more likely than not, they'll find renewed interest and energy in writing from what they know, a point raised by many of my participants. Rebekah, Megan, Brad, Anthony, and Sarah all taught in very different places with very different writing outcomes. Each participant had a unique context within which to frame his or her own discussion of place. These case studies were intended to demonstrate the variety of options available to writing teachers; more importantly, I hope the case studies demonstrate how important it is for teachers of writing to begin with their *individual terroir* so that writing can finally be situated not just in the local context of our institutions but also in the contexts of our perceptions and attitudes about place.

It's about the elephant in the room.¹

-- TCU Colleague

CHAPTER FOUR

LOCATING PLACE IN ACADEMIA AND WRITING STUDIES

As usual, my colleague is correct. My project has been an exercise in drawing attention to the obvious. Place matters. It's a seemingly simple phrase, but it's also the elephant in the room that we all may see and accept but also ignore and dismiss. I began my project asking how place mattered for academics and why it might affect their professional decisions and pedagogical choices. In the process, I uncovered an important theoretical discussion about place and academe of which I have only scratched the surface in this project because my focus has been limited to demonstrating how *individual terroir* affects academics professionally and pedagogically—from accepting a job offer to planning a writing course. In this final chapter, I want to consider the implications of my research. Most importantly, I want to consider what happens when we accept my central premise: place matters.

Why Place Matters for Academia

Throughout this project, my major premise has been that place matters, and accompanying this claim is another that attachment to place isn't a dominant discourse in academe. This latter claim is, of course, tempered by academic work on the importance of place that does include personal reflection and narratives (see *Placing the Academy*, *Black Earth and Ivory Tower*, *Rooted in the Land*, *Rural Literacies*, and *From the Garden Club*).

The list of rhetoric and composition scholars acknowledging an attachment to place and

¹ I cannot resist the Wikipedia entries for this oft-used idiom. “The elephant in the room (also elephant in the living room, elephant in the corner, elephant on the dinner table, elephant in the kitchen, and horse in the corner) is an English idiom for an obvious truth that is being ignored or goes unaddressed. It is based on the idea that an elephant in a small room would be impossible to overlook. It sometimes is used to refer to a question or problem that very obviously stands to reason, but which is ignored for the convenience of one or more involved parties. The idiom also implies a value judgment that the issue *should* be discussed openly (please see full entry: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elephant_in_the_room).

considering the implications of place is short, and as the above titles suggest, a great number of these works are seen as memoirs and/or personal essays rather than texts with theoretical or pedagogical implications. There are exceptions to the rule, and if we are willing to learn from other disciplines, we may find a way to locate place in writing studies.

For example, Lyn Kerkham and Barbara Comber explore the relationships among literacy, place, and teacher identity in their 2007 article “Literacy, Places, and Identity: The Complexity of Teaching Environmental Communications.” The authors and I share very similar positions, for they too suggest that “[r]arely in educational research, or in literacy studies specifically, are teachers’ decision-making and pedagogical practices considered across time and space and as placed within a wider socio-political and material ecology” (135). To determine “what difference, if any, place makes to teaching—where teachers are located, their relationships with that place, in and out of school, and their identification with particular places” (135), Kerkham and Comber began their research project with teachers participating in the Special Forever program in the Murray-Darling Basin of Australia (a professional learning program that uses the Basin as an object of study to provide students with real purposes and real audiences for their writing). The researchers learned, among other things, that teachers held multiple relationships with place(s), which affected how they thought about their work in the classroom. This study focuses on environmental communication in a place-based program, which sets up place as a focus of conversation, but it also serves as groundwork for writing studies because the authors are focused on literacy.

More importantly, the work of Kerkham and Comber reinforces my point that relationships with place do not have to be singular, nor do considerations of place require a criticism or abandonment of previous and future mobility. In calling for work with place, I do

not aim to be critical of academics who have identified with mobility. Many academics find personal and professional value in traveling the country and the world, experiencing new cultures and entering new communities and languages. When I call on academics to confront the ethos of rootlessness dominating academe, I am not calling for a moratorium on travel or mobility; however, I am calling for an acknowledgement of the value that can be found in places. In “The Rootless Professors,” Eric Zencey not only defines the ethos of rootlessness, but he also offers concrete suggestions for how higher education might begin to change its relationship with place. The national market for “academic services” may never disappear (18), but, according to Zencey, there is no reason the academy can’t “overcome its prejudice against the local and provincial, so that its hiring committees do not include nonnative status as an *implicit* qualification for employment” (18, emphasis added). He encourages professors to include local content in their courses, and, most relevant for my study, he contends that “academics in all disciplines ought to acquire a kind of dual citizenship—in the world of ideas and scholarship, yes, but also in the very real world of watersheds and growing seasons and migratory pathways and food chains and dependency webs” (19). Zencey’s recommendations are not all that revolutionary, but they do require academics to radically alter how they think about place (and for some, the radical change may be to begin thinking about place). Much like Jim Corder, Zencey challenges academics to find meaning in the place they work and the place they live. I would also suggest that academics can form not just dual citizenships but multi-citizenships, relationships with the many places in which we live (personally and professionally).

As an MA student, I studied with a professor who wasn’t crazy about living in Central Texas, and he volunteered every summer to take students to Ireland for a study

abroad course because it meant he was free of the Texas summers and Texas residents for a few short weeks. As a native Texan, I initially found his remarks insulting. I recognize now that he likely found meaning in his trips to Ireland, both as a poet and a teacher. He enjoyed encountering a new place with students, but underneath his seeming aversion for Texas as a place is a problematic relationship between faculty and the communities in which their universities are situated. We cannot insulate ourselves from the neighborhoods and cities in which we work, taking comfort solely in a life of the mind. We should develop (even temporary) relationships with our universities and communities because these connections can create alliances, bridges between theory and practice. For example, service-learning education has a different (though potentially complementary) aim, but educators looking to develop relationships with their communities could use the service-learning approach as a model and an in-road.

One way to change the discussion about place in academia is to change the training our graduate students receive under our tutelage. In their article “Looking for Location Where It Can’t Be Found: Possibilities for Graduate Pedagogy in Rhetoric and Composition,” Peter Vandenberg and Jennifer Clary-Lemon challenge traditional graduate training which focuses on the “virtuoso performance.” The authors believe that by abstracting material locations from professional training, graduate programs in rhetoric and composition prepare students for a “hyperreality” that is “an obligation to little more than effective generalization” (92). The authors seem to support my argument that place affects identity formation, especially when they criticize the contemporary model of academic achievement:

At the graduate level, academic achievement typically follows the capacity to write one's way into a 'hyperreality,' a conceptual or transcendent 'where' whose authority in some measure derives from the perception of being cut loose from place and time. Canonical modeling implicitly proposes that both student and evaluating faculty member are located not 'in place,' but within a virtual reality populated by generalizations. Like any scholarly discourse—as it is represented by its written artifacts—composition studies must erase the particularity of place in order to have value in many places. (95)

The authors' position aligns with post-process theory claims that writing and teaching is situated in place, which is why they take issue with the generalized and placeless production of scholarship about writing. Graduate students and faculty members cannot be displaced; they write, read, research, and theorize from particular locations. But, as the authors note, the legitimacy of a discipline is often linked to its ability to be objective and generalizable.² Vandenberg and Clary-Lemon link composition's current desire for placelessness with our struggle for academic legitimacy.³

Even as they recognize that graduate training implicates students and professionals in placeless positioning, Vandenberg and Clary-Lemon leave unstated an essential part of their argument. They don't acknowledge that academics are trained to write in placeless generalizations *and* socialized out of place and, by extension (consciously or unconsciously) are potentially resistant to place-based identity associations as I discussed previously. The authors give a quick nod to the profession's "national labor market," in which they note that

² Here, I'd like to remind readers of my discussion in Chapter One about the struggle geography had for disciplinary legitimacy, a struggle that parallels the work of rhetoric and composition in many ways.

³ See Robert Connors's *Composition-Rhetoric: Backgrounds, Theory, and Pedagogy* (Pittsburgh: U of Pittsburgh P, 1997) and Sharon Crowley's *Composition in the University* (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh UP, 1998) for historical accounts of how (and why) rhetoric and composition became a discipline in academia.

a candidate's qualifications for a tenure-track job are often disconnected from "the situated acquisition of her training or experience" (96). After all,

The more successful one is "in school," the more likely one is to be employed in a location she knows little or nothing about. Thus, the most influential among a "rootless professoriate" (Mahala and Swilky 2003, 771) often unfamiliar with the implications of local political, economic, and cultural conditions, constitute a relatively privatized community that recognizes no obligation to insure that its claims for justice and action have any impact on material space (96).

Vandenberg and Clary-Lemon are right; contemporary lore surrounding the job search suggests that candidates should "cast a wide net" and go anywhere for the best job. However, my research indicates that at least some doctoral candidates are shirking this advice, opting, instead, to consider *where* they apply much more than our lore suggests.

We also need more comprehensive and contemporary research on the state of the rhetoric and composition job market. As a discipline, we need yearly national surveys of doctoral candidates searching for jobs in rhetoric and composition, and we should take the opportunity to find out if and how they are factoring place into their search so that other candidates might learn from their (positive, negative, and neutral) experiences with using place as a determining factor. Are they using a systematic approach—searching broadly at the letter writing stage and then narrowing their options down as their interview requests become more narrow? Are candidates distinguishing between the geographic location of the university and the status or type of university when considering issues of place? That is, are candidates looking for a particular place departmentally and institutionally, or are they more

interested in a particular place personally? By surveying active doctoral candidates in rhetoric and composition, we can begin to paint a more comprehensive picture of how candidates factor place into their job search and how this decision affects their first job search in academia as well as any subsequent decisions to relocate, providing the discipline with a study similar to the work of Rosenfeld and Jones (as discussed in Chapter Two). This data may ultimately allow us to provide more accurate information to doctoral students and doctoral candidates about how they might approach the job search process.

As my study noted, the current mentoring process for rhetoric and composition candidates conducting a job search has a number of limitations. First, we do not have accurate records for the number of degrees conferred each year in rhetoric and composition. The *Modern Language Association* (MLA) does track the number of earned doctorates, but these reports do not track rhetoric and composition as an autonomous discipline. In the fall of 2007, the *ADE Bulletin* published Doug Steward's "Report on the Survey of Earned Doctorates, 2005). Each year, as Steward notes, the United States government's Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED) "provides a census of doctorate recipients from United States universities" (43), which is gathered from survey material completed by degree recipients. (I completed my survey this week, and the survey had to be returned to the Dean's office when I submitted my dissertation in advance of my defense.) Based on the SED, we know that 960 doctorates were granted in 2005, compared to 933 in 2004 and 1,094 in 1997. But as a note to the report on 2005 indicates, we do not know which of these degrees were granted to doctoral candidates identifying their area of study as rhetoric and composition: "Also included under the *WebCASPAR* heading "English and literature" are classics, comparative literature, speech and rhetorical studies, general letters and other letters" (49). Just as there is

no accurate way to determine how many of the 960 degrees granted in 2005 were in writing studies, we do not have accurate information for the number of assistant professor positions advertised in Rhetoric and Composition in major publications, such as the *MLA Job Information List*.

In order to effectively mentor candidates through the job search process, rhetoric and composition mentors need reliable data. Discipline-specific mentors should be able to tell candidates entering the market that X degrees were conferred last year, and there were X jobs available. More accurate data would allow mentors to tailor advice to current circumstances. After all, rhetoric and composition candidates do not face the same employment obstacles as their literature colleagues (something mentors and candidates both know). There is no overproduction of degrees, which would necessitate a candidate's willingness to go anywhere for a job. Thus, telling our candidates to conduct a broad search or to cast a wide net may not be the most helpful advice we can supply. Yes, we should encourage candidates to increase their odds of having choices by seeking out positions for which they are qualified, but we should also be encouraging them, from the letter writing stage on, to make deliberate choices based on their undeniable preferences—something I did not do.

As a candidate in rhetoric and composition, I was cautioned that my job search might be difficult because my dissertation project did not “look” like more traditional research undertaken in rhetoric and composition. As a graduate student on her last year of guaranteed funding, I took this advice seriously. I began identifying any and all jobs that I was remotely qualified for. Looking back now—with my first-choice job secured—I realize that I was a strong rhetoric and composition candidate. No, I did not have any publications, but I did have varied and multiple experiences as an administrator and teacher. But, at the letter writing

stage, all I could hear was the voice of my mentor cautioning me. I sent out eighty-five letters and vitas for eighty-five Assistant Professor positions in Rhetoric and Composition; some asked for candidates with administrative experience, and others were seeking someone with technical/professional writing experience. I participated in nine phone interviews prior to the Modern Language Association (MLA) convention in December. I was offered sixteen MLA interviews, but one university lost funding, and I canceled one. In the end, I participated in fourteen interviews, which resulted in four on-campus interviews in addition to the two I scheduled before the MLA convention. Though I declined the invitations, I received nine additional offers to visit campus. In the end, I received two offers, and I withdrew myself from a third search before the committee concluded its search process.

My mentors thought I was crazy. One even told me I had so many requests because my search was “too big.” When we tell candidates to “cast a wide net,” we should expect that they may apply for an excessive number of jobs. When candidates read published advice lamenting the difficulty of the job market, we should expect that they’ll get caught up in the application frenzy, eschewing the cost and stress of mailing off double-digit applications in the hopes of receiving a nibble or two, as one of my participants said.⁴ I conducted research on the job search. I knew mailing out more applications would not necessarily net me multiple interviews. My data even indicated more applications were just more applications. But, I still mailed off eighty-five letters. Why? The thought of receiving no job offers was crippling, and the discourse of competition rampant in academe was impossible to dispute

⁴ The cost of a “cast a wide net” search should not go unnoted. As a graduate student, I did not earn enough money or spend enough on the search to deduct the overall cost from my federal income taxes. Thus, these costs were financed entirely by student loans. Interfolio subscription and mailings, \$387.00. United States Postal Service mailings, \$161.27. MLA Convention registration and airfare from Dallas-Fort Worth to Chicago, \$318.80. These numbers do not include personal purchases, such as suits for interviews, a wardrobe bag for the suits, and the cost of financing campus visits (a number of schools reimbursed me for airfare, but I booked and purchased the tickets).

even as I wrote up data on the job search. I had been a student for ten years, and the prospect of delaying a professional life for another year seemed impossible to bear.

I cannot say for certain that having an advice manual targeting my situation would have made a difference for my job search (or for the searches conducted by the participants I discussed in Chapter Two), but because there are currently *no published* accounts targeting the rhetoric and composition doctoral candidate's job search, I cannot be certain. I do believe that information is empowering. Thus, doctoral candidates should have access to the annual statistics: number of degrees conferred in rhetoric and composition; number of advertised assistant professor positions, classified according to rhetoric, composition, digital media, technical/professional writing, and administrative positions (to name a few possible categories); number of applications received by departments for each position, classified according to institutional type and size; and, finally, the number of positions vacant at the end of the yearly search process and classified reason(s) for failed search.

There is no easy way to collect and/or distribute these numbers, but rhetoric and composition scholars interested in the job search could take a cue from candidates and begin publishing data informally on a national wiki, which will allow department to remain anonymous if they so choose. We should also have greater transparency and sharing of information among the Consortium of Doctoral Programs in Rhetoric and Composition. When I contacted the seventy-two participating programs to determine how many candidates were on the job market in 2006-2007, I received no response from forty-three schools and refusal to share information from twelve schools. As a researcher, I certainly understand the hesitancy of a director of graduate studies to share the names and/or contact information of

their candidates, but I maintain that the directors and/or representatives could have indicated the number of candidates on the market without divulging private information.

In addition to providing greater statistical transparency for our candidates, we should also aim to improve the mentoring system by acknowledging faculty attitudes (and perceptions) about place. One important step in this process would be to conduct an internal study of rhetoric and composition perceptions about mobility—mirroring Rachel Rosenfeld and Jo Ann Jones’s study of psychologists I discussed in Chapter Two—so that we can understand if mobility really does increase career advancement in writing studies and so we can understand mobility as a more complex phenomenon. We should also track why academics are moving from one institution to another, thus distinguishing between moves motivated by professional choices and those motivated by personal reasons. It is critical that researchers and scholars come to recognize how their attitudes about place impact the kind of advice they supply when mentoring doctoral students and candidates. Rosenfeld and Jones learned that the perception of mobility was more important than actual mobility, a disturbing finding in my estimation because it indicates that we are more interested in candidates conforming to our expectations and socialized preferences than we are in helping them make informed decisions.

By re-examining our attitudes about place and mobility, we may also be able to identify a more appropriate metaphor for the academic job search. There is no clear agreement on why we rely on “cast a wide net.” In April 2007, I posted a call on the Writing Program Administration listserv, asking faculty members across the country, “When did we adopt this metaphor? How long has it been used? Any idea where/how it started?” The responses ranged from implications associated with the metaphor—the job search brings out

our dormant hunter-gatherer mentalities—to alternative metaphors, of which dating was the most popular. Respondents often answered my post by commenting on how this metaphor affected their own job searches. For instance, one faculty member shared that he was advised “to apply for jobs that [he] didn’t seem well suited for, given that job ads and actual search criteria don’t always match.” As a search committee member, he noted that the metaphor negatively affects departments as well as candidates, stating, “More than half the applications we received weren’t viable at all—many didn’t even seem to acknowledge **any** of the specifics of our job description. Sure felt to me like people were ‘casting a wide net,’ so wide, in fact, that it couldn’t catch anything.” Another respondent implicated the committees in this job ad confusion, noting how “the attitude exhibited by some of my colleagues that we should write the job description as vaguely as possible in order to, you guessed it, ‘cast a wide net’ to see what kind of candidate we could attract.” My simple question about the dominant use of a metaphor evolved into a spirited debate about the ethical responsibilities of departments and candidates engaging in a job search—a debate epitomized by the “cast a wide net” approach.

One respondent actually reiterated my working hypothesis about why we use the metaphor:

I think we’ve internalized this strategy from literature, where the pressures of the job scarcity make this a necessity. I instead advise graduate students to pick up on a different principle of the job searching in literature—assume it’s a multi-year process If rhetcomp graduate students were taught to think of the search process as a three-year arc, say, we’d have many less inappropriate applications and many less freaked out [applicants].

It seems that candidates and faculty members are equally frustrated with the “cast a wide net” metaphor; yet, we continue to use the phrase as our unifying and controlling metaphor. This respondent acknowledges that financial and personal constraints may make the “three-year arc” metaphor an impossible one for many students, but her posting also represents an attempt to construct a metaphor out of our current reality, not the reality of the past or the reality of another discipline. By examining current attitudes about place and mobility, a national study of departmental policies regarding the rhetoric and composition job search could result in a new metaphor or at least a new approach to the job search, one that accounts for the unequal power relations at play as well as unique circumstances our candidates face.⁵

Finally, in addition to providing accurate statistics for our candidates and revisiting our attitudes and perceptions about mobility, we must increase the overall transparency of the job search process, and this extends beyond the metaphors we use when addressing candidates. In Harrison Hoblitzelle’s 1964 proposal for re-visioning the job search in English, he suggested that “the simplest arrangement, the one involving the least mystery, would be best.” As I suggested in Chapter Two, committees and candidates would likely agree that the current system is cloaked in mystery, not transparency. The postings on the job search wiki certainly indicate this, as participants anxiously seek information about which universities have issued requests for more materials and solicit opinions on what affirmative action collection requests might “mean.” Committees can and should acknowledge the receipt of all applications for a posted job, even if this is a burdensome and time-consuming part of the process. Committees should also cut candidates loose when they know that they are not moving into the next round of consideration, even if this means an unsuccessful

⁵ Here I am thinking specifically about the number of candidates being asked to serve as administrators and those entering departments where they are the first (or only) rhetoric and composition hire.

search on the part of the department. Committees can also take advantage of changes in technology, implementing e-mail as a cost-effective and fast way to disseminate information.

However, all parties involved must make sure steps are in place to prevent egregious errors in the notification process. For example, during their job search, two of my participants received e-mail rejections from the same university. Neither of them was bothered by the “informality” of the electronic transmission. They were, however, disturbed by its distribution. Rather than sending individual messages, the department distributed a mass e-mailing, and while this was not a terrible faux pas, the individual responsible for distributing the e-mails failed to blind carbon copy the recipients. Thus, each of the rejected applicants saw the name and e-mail address of every doctoral candidate who applied for the job—an unnerving loss of privacy at a time when candidates are already vulnerable. This worst-case-scenario can be avoided, and I am convinced that the more information departments and candidates can share with one another, the more diplomatic, democratic, and survivable the job search in rhetoric and composition can become.

Why Place Matters for Writing Studies

As I claimed at the end of Chapter Three, the participants in my study allowed their own experiences of place to affect the pedagogical choices they made in the writing classroom. They used their own understandings of the environment, of difference, and of investment to involve their students into a critical pedagogy of place. While I do believe that place-based pedagogy can help writing teachers reach their goals and extend our understandings of post-process theory, I am arguing against a monolithic or singular definition of place, which would eliminate the importance of context and erase the input of our students. In fact, we must resist singular understandings of place so that place-based

approaches are not treated as a more natural way to teach writing. As Ball and Lai suggest, “[i]t is one thing to claim that ‘place allows educators to see the artificial nature of subject-area boundaries’ (Theobald 138), but quite another to suggest that a place-based lens is not also a cultural construct, that it is the natural lens for constructing knowledge and understanding, filtering out all artificiality” (267). However, we do need to find a common premise for talking about place. Our discussions could benefit from a shared vocabulary. In the previous chapter, Brad and Robert were both referencing perceptual spaces when talking about place with their students—both focused on how locations are invested with meaning. But because these two teachers had not read the same theoretical materials, they could not share ideas with one another. They, and the rest of my participants, may have felt they were “playing” with the idea of place because there was no controlling idea to help them interrogate this mundane and knotty term as a group of committed and invested scholars.

I hope that *individual terroir* can help academics translate place in their classrooms and their theory, providing a commonplace for our discussions across the country. As the term was theorized in Chapter One, place can be a location, a locale, or a sense of place—the three primary approaches undertaken by my participants—and place can be applied to a variety of constructed areas: from public and institutional places to natural landscapes and cyberspaces. In *The Locations of Composition*, editors Christopher Keller and Christian Weisser assert that “[n]early all of the conversations in composition studies involve place, space, and location, in one way or another,” and in many ways the authors are correct; after all, our current conversations do

focus upon the ways that places both “include” and “exclude” people based upon the particularities of their various subject positions, the tensions between

composition's roles "inside" and "outside" of the classroom in particular and the academy in general, the problematics of "real" and "imagined" places in the formation of disciplinary theory and practice, and a host of other issues that address, to some degree, where composition resides. (1, original emphasis)

This burgeoning interest in place has led to a "more critical scrutiny of how we define and are defined by our understandings of space, place, and location" (1). I believe *individual terroir* will contribute to these conversations even as it reminds us that we are first formed in relation to a material, concrete place.

The essays in *Locations of Composition* are critical of place, space, and location. Each of them adds to a vision, which Keller and Weisser summarize as an integral part of the future of composition studies: "Composition is structured by various kinds of places physical and imagined, neither of which should be privileged, both of which should be investigated, because places are imagined, arranged, represented, and distributed in discourse and texts" (2). Even as they define composition as inextricably linked to place, the editors and contributors in *Locations* perpetuate a central problem with current research on place: they forget that academics are also influenced by place and that this influence may affect their professional and pedagogical identities.

In their Introduction, Keller and Weisser define place as a bounded area endowed with human meaning (3), quoting Robert Sack, a human geographer who views places as "tools" that allow humans to carry out their "projects." In fact, Sack suggests that places are not merely the setting of projects. Places contribute to the work of humans: "That is, projects not only require place in the sense that they need a place to occur, but the place

becomes an *active agent* in the project and thereby affects it” (Sack 232, emphasis added). When analyzing this quote, Keller and Weisser acknowledge these projects include writing projects, a point I don’t dispute. I would, however, like to point out how the editors’ analysis overlooks identity development. The largest of all human projects, the development of personal and professional identities, are not included in the discussion of those projects affected by place as an active agent.

As I have suggested elsewhere, this oversight of place as a factor in identity development has several possible explanations. As Americans, we are psychologically invested in the idea that changing our place can change our lives. As academics, we are socialized to believe in a world of ideas, thus fashioning ourselves into thinkers worthy of the ivory tower. Accepting my supposition that place matters can be a risky choice in an institution where theoretical imperatives would suggest place is too essential or, worse yet, too parochial to be considered a source of identification. However, as I have argued throughout this project, place is not narrow or limiting, and, as I suggested in Chapter One, *individual terroir* is a beginning step in challenging essentialist ideas about place because it demonstrates that place is more than a setting. Instead, place is a geographical location we infuse with meaning through experiences, which we come to recognize as we develop consciousness. *Individual terroir* is not the idealization of home sites; it is the acknowledgement that our identities are formed in response to people and places.

My theory is not intended to create a hierarchy of difference, compelling individuals to believe that the locations of their past matter more than the people and experiences they’ve accumulated over the course of a lifetime. However, I do want us—as academics, as educators, and as individuals—to reconsider that we know and experience difference in

place. That is, what you know and believe to be true about your experiences with race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and ability *cannot* be separated from the places of your life. For example, I learned about being a woman in a small town in the Texas Panhandle—a place where Protestantism is the religion and heterosexual whiteness is the norm. Class, on the other hand, was a bit more complicated. There are no subdivisions or low-income housing to “contain” the poor to certain areas; there were no quick trips to the mall (72 miles away) to buy the latest and greatest in consumer products. Class depended on land wealth and family history within the community. Thus, when I read narratives about working-class academics struggling to fit in with the academy, I do *and* don’t understand their positions because my experiences with class are grounded in a different kind of place, one removed from conversations of blue-collar versus white-collar. The only thing I know about collars has to do with wild-rags and winter. But where I lived matters to my experiences with and understandings of difference, particularly gender, as Molly Ivins, the quintessential loud-mouthed Texas woman, argues in “Texas Women: True Grit and All the Rest.” Ivins suggests that Texas produces women who are “a bodacious bunch of overcomers” (701) precisely because “Texas sexism is of an especially rank and noxious variety” (699). From “*Redneckus texensis*” and a lingering sense of a confederate heritage to the realities of its geographic location on the frontier, Texas history and culture has created a static standard for Texas women, which requires us to have a sense of humor about men and their sexism, something Ivins calls a necessity not a luxury.

I bring Molly Ivins into this discussion because she is a political voice touting the intersections of difference. Rather than creating a hierarchy based on “which matters more (place or gender)?” Ivins addresses the two differences as inextricable from the other. She

recognized her identity as a woman was shaped in relation to her place. As I argued in Chapter One, we come to know who we are by being in the world. If all human experience and all human interactions occur in particular contexts, then we come to learn who we aren't (or at least who others think we aren't) by being in the world. Thus, the larger aim of my project is to open up the discussion for how academia's "holy trinity" of difference (race, class, and gender) might be improved upon via a "matrix of difference."

I selected the term matrix deliberately.⁶ The concept allows theorists and scholars to explore differences not as individual categories but as interdependent terms.⁷ Or, as the first definition notes, a matrix is an "arrangement of connected things." Thus, discussions of difference are immediately forced into identifying the connections between categories of difference (just as it is done in third-wave feminist theory). A matrix of difference compels us to see how categories of difference are interconnected and not independent or even competing. As a "substance containing something," a matrix of difference compels us to consider how our differences are grounded in context and in one another. While this definition (and secondary application) does seem to favor place as the central context for experiences of difference, the idea primarily calls attention to the reality that difference is embedded at the individual and local level. Finally, a matrix of difference compels us to see the "situation in which something develops." By focusing on situations, we must consider the full context of our experience (the time and place in which we developed an awareness of difference) as well as the circumstances that allow and encourage the development and growth of these experiences. We need more research before a matrix of difference can be

⁶ Here, I am using the readily available online definitions supplied by *MSN Encarta Dictionary*. For full-length definitions, please see the following link: http://encarta.msn.com/dictionary_1861678516/matrix.html.

⁷ As many of you may already know, there is a *Matrix* movie trilogy, starring Keanu Reeves, Laurence Fishburne, and Carrie-Anne Moss. Please see the Wikipedia entry for more details: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Matrix_series.

fully adopted as a lens, but my research opens up the possibility for this new consideration of difference because it calls on us to consider how we come to know who we are in place.

Academe may always relate subtle and overt messages of placelessness to its newest converts. Our profession and job search process may always contradict and dismiss *individual terroir*—the way in which place affects who academics are and what they do—as merely an affective experience. But by raising my voice and risking parochialism to claim that place matters, I hope the door has been opened for a new generation of academics. I hope we can begin using our attachments and connections with place to subvert the placeless assumptions dominating academic discourses about professional identity and pedagogical approaches without risking our professional advancement. I hope we can begin to see how experiences of difference are not hierarchical but interdependent.

In my Introduction, I discussed the “shed all allegiance to place” messages I received as an undergraduate student and potential academic, and I shared my concerns that attachments to place and an interest in how place affects who we are would limit my prospects on the job market. I now know that the messages I received were not representative of the job search in my discipline; the messages were also not representative of *all* academics. My project has not resolved all the intricacies of how place affects individual and professional identities, but it is a start. My hope is that having read this account of *individual terroir* in academia, you are more reflective about how the places of your past have influenced your personal and professional identity. My hope is that when you reflect on your experiences as a man, as a homosexual, as a former blue-collar worker, as a Latina, or a disabled person, you cannot help but think about how where you lived, where you are, and

where you hope to be will affect this understanding—complicating it and enriching it in ways you never before imagined. After all, place matters.

Appendix A

Subject: PhD Candidates entering the Job Market in Rhet/Comp
From: Moriah McCracken <[\[log in to unmask\]](#)>
Reply-To: Writing Program Administration <[\[log in to unmask\]](#)>
Date: Wed, 18 Oct 2006 10:46:01 -0500
Content-Type: text/plain

October 18, 2006

Good morning.

My name is Moriah McCracken, and I am a PhD Candidate at TCU.

As part of my dissertation research on the role of place in academia, I am conducting a survey of PhD candidates entering the job market in 2006-2007.

If you are a candidate on the market this year in rhet/comp, please take a few minutes and complete my 20 question survey (which should take no more than 15 minutes to complete. Below is a link to the survey, or you can copy and paste it into the Internet browser of your choice.

<http://www.zoomerang.com/survey.zgi?p=WEB225PAZNCAX5>

All responses to this survey are completely anonymous.

I appreciate your help at this busy time.

I. Moriah McCracken
i.m.mccracken@tcu.edu
Department of English
Reed Hall 314
TCU Box 297270
Fort Worth, TX 76129

Appendix B

Pre-Job Search Survey Questions

I am interested in how place matters in the academic job search, and for this survey, I define place as the geographic location of a city or university; that is, the region and state of the university as well as its larger physical environment. Below is a brief survey of your relationship with particular geographic places and your perceptions about the role geography may play in your job search.

The survey should take about **15 minutes** to complete. Participation in this survey is voluntary; there is no penalty for choosing not to complete the survey. ***By completing this survey, you are consenting to participate in this research project.*** If you choose to participate, please complete the survey. This survey is completely anonymous, unless you elect to participate in follow-up phone/online interviews.

1. Name of PhD Institution:

2. City and State of Residence:

3. Age:

4. Race/Ethnicity:

- Non-Hispanic Caucasian
- Hispanic
- African-American
- Asian-American
- Other, please explain.

5. Marital Status:

- Single
- Married / Domestic Partnership
- Divorced
- Widowed
- Other, please explain.

6. What are your areas of research and teaching interest and/or specialties?

7. When people ask, where do you say you are from?

8. How attached are you to where you are from?

- Very attached
- Somewhat attached

- Not attached
 - Other, please explain.
9. How much did geographic location matter to you when you were applying to graduate programs?
- Very much
 - Some
 - Not at all
 - Other, please explain.
10. When I was accepting offers from graduate programs, the geographic location of the university did impact my selection.
- Yes No
11. Name your top criteria for selecting jobs as you begin your search.
12. What factors are affecting your job selection? Please check all that apply.
- Partner/Spouse
 - Children/Dependents
 - Parents
 - Department Size
 - Institution Size
 - Institution Type
 - Teaching Load
 - Salary
 - Benefits
 - Geographic Location of Institution
 - Academic Reputation
 - Other, please specify.
13. Please select the statement which most accurately represents your thinking at this moment:
- I am willing to live anywhere for the right job.
 - I am open to living anywhere, but I have criteria and/or preferences in mind that I will use when considering where to take a job.
 - There are certain places I am unwilling to live.
 - Not sure.

14. How important will the geographic location of the university be when you decide to apply for a job?

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not at all important
- Other. Please explain:

15. Who (or what) are you consulting with about your job search? Please check all that apply.

- Dissertation Director
- Other graduate students
- Other job candidates
- Mentor at current institution
- Mentor from previous institution(s)
- Partner/Spouse
- Parents
- Books
- Magazines
- Academic Articles
- Blogs
- Listservs
- Other

16. What advice have you been given about location as it relates to your job search?

17. In your current view, how important will the geographic location of a job be in your decision to accept a university's offer?

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not at all important
- Other. Please explain:

18. Describe what would be an ideal location.

19. Would you be willing to participate in a brief follow-up interview?

- Yes
- No

Appendix C

Post-Job Search Survey Questions

I am interested in how place mattered to you in your academic job search. For this survey, I define place as the geographic location of a city or university; that is, the region and state of the university as well as its larger physical environment. Below is a brief survey of your relationship with particular geographic places and your perceptions about the role geography may have played in your job search.

The survey should take about *15 minutes* to complete. Participation in this survey is voluntary; there is no penalty for choosing not to complete the survey. ***By completing this survey, you are consenting to participate in this research project.*** If you choose to participate, please complete the survey. This survey is completely anonymous, unless you elect to participate in follow-up phone/online interviews.

1. PhD Institution, City, and State:

2. Age:

3. Gender:

Female

Male

4. Race/Ethnicity:

Non-Hispanic Caucasian

Hispanic

African-American

Asian-American

Other, please specify

5. Marital Status:

Single

Married / Domestic Partnership

Divorced

Widowed

Other, please specify

6. What are your areas of research and teaching interest and/or specialties?

7. How attached are you to where you are from?

Very attached

- Somewhat attached
- Not attached
- Other, please explain

8. What kind of job search did you conduct?

- National (I applied for jobs all across the US).
- Regional (I applied for jobs in a particular region).
- Local (I applied for jobs in my immediate area).
- Other, please explain.

9. How many jobs did you apply for?

10. How many interviews did you have at the MLA convention in December?

11. How many on-campus interviews did you have during your job search?

12. Did you accept a job offer this year?

- Yes
- No

13. Please select **all** of the statements below that applied to your job search.

- I was not offered a job.
- I was offered an undesirable job.
- I was offered a job in a desirable location.
- I was offered a job, but it was in an undesirable location.

14. City and State of Institution where you accepted a job offer:

15. What was the main criteria you used when accepting your job offer?

16. Please select the top three (3) factors that affected your decision to accept the job offer.

- Partner/Spouse
- Children/Dependents
- Parents
- Department Size
- Institution Size
- Institution Type
- Position Type
- Teaching Load
- Salary
- Benefits

- Geographic Location of Institution
- Academic Reputation
- Other, please specify

17. Please explain why these three (3) factors were important to you when accepting a job offer.

18. Now that you have accepted a position, how important was the geographic location of the job in your decision to accept the university's offer?

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not at all important
- Other. Please explain:

19. What advice about geographic location was most helpful to you while you were deciding which job offer to select?

20. Would you be willing to participate in a follow-up interview?

- Yes
- No

Appendix D

Job Search Interview Guide

In order to help me better understand your experiences with academic life, please tell me about your entrance into the academy. If you would like, you can tell me what your initial experiences were as an undergraduate. Or, you can focus on the experiences of becoming a professor: what has the transition from student to graduate student to professional been like for you? Have you felt like you found your home, or have you felt a bit “out of place” in academia?

In your survey response(s), how did you describe your attachment to your hometown (very attached, somewhat attached, not attached, other)? Can you elaborate on your choice? What prompted you to select your answer?

Do you think your experiences—either in your hometown or with your transition into the academy—affect your teaching and/or research interests? How so? Can you give me an example or two?

Describe your job search strategy to me. Did you conduct a local, regional, or national search? What advice were you given about the search? What advice influenced your decisions and/or approaches? What did you hope would happen? What were you afraid might happen if you did not use a specific strategy?

What kind of place did you want to live in? Were you looking to live in a traditional town-and-gown place? Did you want a more urban environment or a more rural environment? Did you have an ideal location in mind when you started the job search?

Tell me how you made your final decision about accepting an offer. What were the important factors for you? When, if at all, did place become a factor in your job search? In what ways?

Did the issue of place come up during your job search? Did where you are from come up during your interviews, either at MLA or during campus visits? What situation elicited a discussion of place? How did you respond? Did you volunteer information about your place? Did you posit a more academic orientation by identifying with your institution? Did you share stories of your hometown? Did you feel like the institutions were trying to “sell” their places to you? In what ways? How did you respond to these rhetorical moves?

Do you think there is a myth about place in the academy? A myth that tells us who we are supposed to be, what we are supposed to value, and what kind of relationships we are *supposed to have* with geographic locations? Can you give me some examples or anecdotes from your life and/or your experience on the academic job market?

Appendix E

How attached?	Type of job search?	# Jobs Applied for?	# of MLA Interviews?		# of on-campus interviews?	Accepted job offer?	I was not offered a job.	I was offered an undesirable job.	I was offered a job in a desirable location.	I was offered a job, but it was in an undesirable location.
Very attached	Local	4	1	25%	1	Yes			X	
Very attached	Local	3	0	0%	1	Yes			X	
Very attached	Local	2	0	0%	1	Yes			X	
Somewhat attached	Local	2		0%	2	Yes			X	
Somewhat attached	Local	1	2	200%	0	No		X		
Average		2.4	0.75	45%	1					
Very attached	Regional	20	0	0%	2	Yes		X	X	
Very attached	Regional	33	3	9%	0	Yes			X	
Very attached	Regional	40	13	33%	10	Yes			X	X
Somewhat attached	Regional	25	0	0%	1	Yes				
Somewhat attached	Regional	30	8	27%	8	Yes		X	X	X
Somewhat attached	Regional	12	0	0%	2	Yes			X	X
Somewhat attached	Regional	35	7	20%	4	Yes			X	
Where I'm from is not where I am.	Regional	10		0%	1	No	X			
Other, please explain.	Regional	1	0	0%						
Native of CA, attached there; not attached to IL	Regional	60	18	30%	6	Yes		X	X	X
Average		26.6	5.444	12%	3.7778					

Appendix F

How attached?	Type of job search?	# Jobs Applied for?	# of MLA Interviews?		# of on-campus interviews?	Accepted job offer?	I was not offered a job.	I was offered an undesirable job.	I was offered a job in a desirable location.	I was offered a job, but it was in an undesirable location.
Very attached	National	18	0	0%	1	Yes			X	
Very attached	National	33	4	12%	1	Yes		X	X	
Very attached	National	25	0	0%	4	Yes			X	
Very attached	National	60	4	7%	3	Yes			X	
Very attached	National	30	10	33%	2	Yes			X	
Somewhat attached	National	30	6	20%	5	Yes		X	X	X
Somewhat attached	National	70	4	6%	3	No	X			
Somewhat attached	National	52	3	6%	1	Yes		X	X	X
Somewhat attached	National	11	6	55%	5	Yes			X	
Somewhat attached	National	70	11	16%	4	Yes			X	X
Somewhat attached	National	33	10	30%	6	Yes			X	
Somewhat attached	National	18	9	50%	4	Yes			X	X
Somewhat attached	National	60	1	2%	2	No	X			X
Somewhat attached	National	50	28	56%	17	Yes		X	X	
Somewhat attached	National	40	12	30%	7	Yes		X	X	
Somewhat attached	National	90	15	17%	9	Yes		X	X	
Somewhat attached	National	70	17	24%	5	Yes			X	
Somewhat attached	National	50	7	14%	5	Yes		X	X	X
Not attached	National	40	2	5%	2	Yes			X	
Not attached	National	29	9	31%	4	Yes			X	
Not attached	National	36	5	14%	4	Yes			X	
Not attached	National	26	13	50%	4	Yes		X	X	X
Center of the world, but I don't want there.	National	50	8	16%	2	Yes		X	X	
Average		43.1	8	21%	4.3478					

Appendix G

Place-Based Pedagogy Interview Guide

How would you describe your attachment to where you are from (very attached, somewhat attached, not attached, other)? Please explain.

How did you first become interested in writing about place? How does place influence your personal writing? Your professional writing?

What made you want to incorporate a place-based approach to your writing classroom? How did you become interested in place-based pedagogies?

How do you define “place-based pedagogy.”

How do you define “place” for and/or with your students?

Could you tell me a little bit about the kinds of writing students are doing when their writing about place in your classroom?

For you, what are the guiding principles or ideas of a place-based approach to writing? What theories are you using to support your interest in place? Who are your theoretical influences in writing studies research? Outside of our discipline?

What do you think students get out of class that focuses on place that they might not get from a more traditional curriculum? That is, describe the relationship you see between place and writing. What are the benefits to a place-based approach to writing? What are the drawbacks? What has been the biggest struggle for you while incorporating place into the classroom?

Describe how your use of place in the writing classroom fits with the goals and objectives of your department and/or university.

Do you think there is a myth, or conventional wisdom, about (the role of) place in the academy?

Appendix H

Place-Based Pedagogy Survey Questions

I am interested in writing instructors who use place-related pedagogies. Below is a brief survey of your pedagogical practices and institutional affiliations. There are questions and statements (multiple-choice and short answer).

The survey should take about *15 minutes* to complete. Participation in this survey is voluntary; there is no penalty for choosing not to complete the survey. ***By completing this survey, you are consenting to participate in this research project.*** If you choose to participate, please complete the survey. This survey is anonymous. If you elect to contribute a syllabus and/or sample writing assignments, all identifying information (including but not limited to name, e-mail address, and institutional affiliation/markers) will be removed from these materials prior to analysis. These documents will also be stored under a pseudonym.

1. Age:
2. Race/Ethnicity:
 - Non-Hispanic Caucasian
 - Hispanic
 - African-American
 - Asian-American
 - Other, please explain.
3. Marital Status:
 - Single
 - Married / Domestic Partnership
 - Divorced
 - Widowed
 - Other, please explain.
4. When people ask, where do you say you are from?
5. How attached are you to where you are from?
 - Very attached
 - Somewhat attached
 - Not attached
 - Other, please explain.
6. What are your primary research areas and/or teaching interests?
7. Which of the following best describes your most recent academic level?

- Associate's degree
 - Bachelor's degree
 - Master's degree
 - ABD
 - Doctoral degree
 - Other, please specify
8. Which of the following best describes your main teaching appointment at this time?
- Graduate Instructor/Teaching Assistant
 - Adjunct/Part-Time
 - Assistant Professor
 - Associate Professor
 - Full Professor
 - Emeritus/Retired
 - Other
9. Which of the following best describes the institution where you are currently employed?
- Two-Year/Community
 - Baccalaureate
 - Doctorate/Extensive
 - Doctorate/Intensive
 - Master's
 - Specialized Institution
 - Other
10. Which of the following best describes the area in which your university is situated?
- Rural Area (less than 2,500)
 - Small Town (more than 2,500 but less than 25,000)
 - Mid-Size City (more than 100,000 but less than 500,000)
 - Urban Area (500,000 +)
 - Suburb of Mid-Size City
 - Suburb of Urban Area
 - Other
11. Please select the statement that best describes your writing course(s).
- I teach a writing course based on literature.
 - I teach a writing course based on non-fiction.
 - I teach a writing course based on argument.
 - I teach a writing course based on student-produced texts.
 - Other, please specify.

12. In my writing classes, I ask students to focus on (please check all that apply):
- Public places
 - Natural places
 - University places
 - Natural / Environmental places
 - Hometown places
 - Workplaces
 - Residential places
 - Commercial places
 - Other
13. Please include an overview of a writing assignment that best represents the types of projects your students complete. Feel free to copy and paste an assignment if you prefer.
14. Please list the 3 primary texts you use in your writing course(s).
15. Please complete the following sentence: “I define a place-based pedagogy as . . .”
16. Would you be willing to share course documents that you think represent your interest in place(s), space(s), and/or location(s)—however you define those terms?
- Yes
 - No
17. Would you be willing to participate in a brief follow-up interview?
- Yes
 - No

Thank you for agreeing to participate in a follow-up interview. Please include your name and contact information below. I will be contacting you to confirm your interest to participate in a brief follow-up interview, which will be conducted either by phone or by e-mail. Thank you for your participation in my research project.

Appendix I

ELC 140: SELF AS CITIZEN COURSE SYLLABUS

I. INTRODUCTION

In the fall, during Unit I, you were asked to consider the notion of sense of self. Now, in this fourth and final unit of your first year, we ask you to reconsider this sense of self in relationship to governance. We are particularly interested in exploring the ideas, values, principles, and practices that have been, are, or should be most influential in guiding the establishment and enforcement of rules for living together as a community, while still respecting and adhering to our sense of self. We have focused our exploration on the case of citizenship in the United States of America: our government, our communities, our families, ourselves. How do we define the responsibilities, limits, obligations, and rights of each to the other? How do we know what these relationships are or should be? How can we effect change when we have disagreements about the answers to these questions?

To inform your thinking, we have provided readings from philosophers, playwrights, poets, scientists, essayists, and political leaders; to challenge your thinking and build skills, we will assign projects and activities. Throughout the course we ask you to reflect on and deepen your understanding of citizenship and to draw on this understanding in completing assignments. We will consider the following specific themes or questions throughout the course:

1. What were the key ideas, values and principles about the self and about government at the time our nation was founded? How have these become embedded in our social, political, and economic systems? Which seem most important or controversial today?
2. How do the circumstances of our lives – especially place, family, and culture – shape our sense of ourselves as citizens? How do we negotiate individual rights and responsibilities among our families, communities, and governments? What are the risks and benefits of taking public action to support or disagree with government policies?
3. What characterizes a good citizen? Have the qualities of a good citizen changed over time? What roles can citizens play to achieve their goals? What will be the most important or difficult issues for citizens in the future?

Each year in Unit IV, we consider a significant issue or concern for us as citizens in our local communities and in this country as a case study. This year we offer you direct experiences with the challenges of democratic decision-making with the aim of strengthening and expanding your competency in group interaction.

In combination with ELC 110, 120, and 130, this unit contributes to your completion of a majority of the University general education requirements. Successful completion of the course confers credits for social science (3 credits), literature (2 credits), information technology (1 credit) and arts (2 credits).

II. COURSE STRUCTURE

A. Groups. In this unit, students will meet and work in five types of group formats:

- **Cohort.** The first of these group formats is the cohort, which consists of all students enrolled in ELC 140.
- **Seminar.** The second group format used in this unit is the seminar. Each seminar will be composed of approximately 20 students. Generally, seminars will meet on Monday through Thursday mornings (see the day-by-day schedule for more details).
- **Study Group.** Each seminar will be divided into four study groups of 4-5 students. Students will travel to Washington, D.C. in these groups to carry out the Memorial Analysis assignment. Group members will also collaborate with and support each other on various tasks assigned by individual seminar instructors.
- **Project group.** The cohort will be divided into five project groups of approximately 20 students. These groups are an integral part of your experience in this unit as they are the foundation of your group projects. As indicated on your daily schedule, several project group work sessions are built into the class schedule; however, groups will need to schedule additional working sessions for completing assignments.
- **Afternoon Phases.** We will also occasionally meet in afternoon phases in order to ensure that you are provided with the resources and guidance needed to succeed with the various projects in this unit (again, see the day-by-day schedule for more details).

B. Room Assignments

Your detailed day-by-day schedule outlines each of the weeks for this unit. The meeting rooms for cohort meetings are noted on this schedule. Seminars will meet in Johnson Center, Third Floor Assembly Rooms. You will receive a separate handout describing where to go for various afternoon rotations.

III. COURSE COMPONENTS AND EVALUATION

A summary of the course components and point values are listed below. You will be assessed on the basis of your performance on projects and activities in seminar, afternoon phases, and project groups. Refer to section IX of this syllabus for more information.

TOTAL POINTS = 1000

Graded Requirements:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1. <u>Daily Work/Writing for Seminar</u> = 300 points</p> <p>2. <u>Citizenship Essay</u> = 150 points
Phase 1 with peer response (30)
Phase 2 with peer response (50)
Final Essay (70)</p> <p>3. <u>Group Project</u> = 125 points</p> <p>4. <u>Discovery Project, Chapter IV</u> = 110 points
Discovery Worksheet (10)
Interview Qs & As; Reflection (15)
Discovery Phase 1 (25)
Final Discovery Project, Chapter IV (60)</p> <p>5. <u>Hypertext Essay on Place</u> = 125 points</p> | <p>6. <u>EndNote Weekly Journals</u> = 30 points</p> <p>7. <u>Participation</u> = 110 points</p> <p>8. <u>Group / Peer Evaluation</u> = 50 points</p> <p>9. <u>Optional Activity & Written Response</u> = 20 points
(extra credit)</p> <p>Additional Requirements:</p> <p>10. <u>Citizenship Test</u></p> <p>11. <u>Information Technology Assessment</u></p> <p>12. <u>Campus Service Project</u></p> <p>13. <u>Year-end E-Portfolio</u></p> |
|--|--|

Draft of Text (35)
 Architectural Plan with Rationale (20)
 Final Hypertext Essay (70)

Important Note: The following assignments must be completed satisfactorily in order to receive a final grade for this unit. If you fail to complete any one of these satisfactorily, you will receive a grade of Incomplete (I) for Unit IV. Your actual grade on these assignments, however, does not affect your 1000 possible points for the course.

1. **Citizenship Test:** Each student must pass a citizenship test similar to that required for immigrants seeking U.S. citizenship. Prospective citizens of the United States must pass an examination about U.S. government and history. It seems reasonable, therefore, that college students in a course called “Self as Citizen” should also know the answers to the kinds of questions asked on this exam. In addition, taking the exam provides insight into the process of becoming a citizen.

In your Reader is the entire set of 100 questions and answers (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service) for you to use as a study guide and as the basis for discussion about the requirements for U.S. citizenship. *In order to receive a final grade in Unit IV, you must answer at least 30 questions correctly from a subset of 35 questions taken from the USCIS Study Guide.* You will be given two opportunities to pass this test—during the first meeting of seminar (Monday, March 20) and at the end of the course in seminar on Thursday, April 27. Anyone who passes the test on March 20 will not be required to repeat the test.

2. **Information Technology Assessment:** Each student must complete the final information technology assessment.
3. **Year-End E-Portfolio:** To complete the integration of your first-year learning experience, ELC requires students to create year-end portfolios containing samples of work from throughout the year accompanied by self-reflection and self-evaluation. Detailed guidelines and workshops for e-portfolio preparation will be provided. Each student must turn in her/his ELC year-end e-portfolio by noon on Wednesday, May 10.

The following scale will be used to calculate unit grades:

970 – 1000 = A+	800 – 829 = B-
930 – 969 = A	770 – 799 = C+
900 – 929 = A-	700 – 769 = C
870 – 899 = B+	600 – 699 = D
830 – 869 = B	Below 599 = F

IV. UNIT COMPETENCIES

At this juncture, you should be familiar with the nine ELC competencies. In Unit IV, we will emphasize *effective citizenship, group interaction, aesthetic judgment, and valuing*. You will be expected to develop your awareness and skills in these ability areas throughout this unit; we hope that you will find opportunities to develop in several of the other five competencies as well (communication, critical thinking and analysis, problem solving, information technology, global awareness). NOTE: Be sure to keep all of the work that you create and develop for this unit (electronic and hard copies) so that it can be used in your year-end e-portfolio.

V. ACADEMIC POLICIES and INFORMATION

A. Academic Honesty and Collaboration

The integrity of the University community is affected by the individual choices made by each of us. This is especially true in Easternville Learning College. The university's Honor Code has clear guidelines regarding academic integrity. Three fundamental and rather simple principles to follow at all times are that: (1) all work submitted be your own; (2) when using the words or ideas of others, including fellow students, give full credit through accurate citations; and (3) if you are uncertain about the ground rules on a particular assignment, *ask for clarification*. No grade is important enough to justify academic misconduct. If you feel unusual pressure or anxiety about your grade in this or any other course, please talk with us or with a counselor. The university provides a range of services to help with test anxiety, writing skills, study skills, and other related concerns (section VII of this syllabus has information about a variety of student resources and support services).

Some projects are individual assignments. For these projects, you may discuss your ideas with others or ask for feedback; however, it is not appropriate to give your paper to someone else to write or revise. You are responsible for making certain that there is no question that the work you hand in is your own. If only your name appears on an assignment, your professor has the right to expect that you have done the work yourself, fully and independently.

As in most learning communities and in many other classes, you will complete a group project in this unit. With collaborative work, names of all the participants should appear on the work. Over the course of the six weeks you may find that it is necessary for different group members to take the lead on various assignments leading up to the group project. However, faculty members do expect that all group members will contribute fully and that the pieces will be conceptually integrated in the final end product.

Using someone else's words or ideas without giving them credit is plagiarism, a very serious offense. It is very important to understand how to prevent committing plagiarism when using material from a source. If you wish to quote verbatim, you must use the exact words (including punctuation) just as it appears in the original and you must use quotation marks and page number(s) in your citation. If you want to paraphrase ideas from a source, that is, convey the author's ideas *in your own words*—you must still cite the source, using MLA or APA format.

The resubmission of assignments or projects from one course in another course is not appropriate. In every ELC course, faculty members expect that work you submit has been done only for that class. An exception is made for materials included within course and year-end e-portfolios. If you have any questions not answered in this syllabus or have any concerns during the course, please feel free to ask us in class or call one of us as soon as possible.

B. Classroom Etiquette

ELC expects students to take responsibility for their own learning and for their own learning environments. The faculty team expects that you have come to understand and respect the opinions of others. During your first few days in Unit IV, your seminar leader will discuss appropriate classroom norms, and you will be asked to participate in setting guidelines for class etiquette and behavior.

C. Electronic Communication

Electronic communication is much more public than a conversation between friends. Misunderstandings occur more often and messages can also be forwarded easily to a much larger audience (including faculty and prospective employers). Thus, it is a good idea to pay

attention to tone and to avoid writing anything in an email that you would not want made public. Remember, the university maintains a permanent record of email as do most organizations.

To ensure confidentiality, the university's policy is that faculty and staff should only respond to username@university.edu student accounts. Thus, Unit IV faculty team members will use your university email accounts to communicate with you. If you are using a commercial account, be sure to set your university account to forward mail to that account. For step-by-step instructions on how to forward your university mail to another account (e.g., hotmail, yahoo, etc.) see the appropriate website.

D. Web Page Policy

When adding to your web page on the university server, please remember the educational mission of the university and ELC. It is important to understand a web page as a rhetorical space, keeping in mind the very public nature of your page. In particular, you should be careful and considerate when disclosing information of a personal nature about yourself or others. You must use the utmost care in obtaining photographs or graphics so that you do not violate copyright law. Even when visual material is not copyrighted, you must identify the source, just as you would in the bibliography of a paper.

Because you are creating a representation of yourself (and also of your college and university) for the world to view, you need to (a) be thoughtful about the information you post; (b) write clearly; and (c) edit your work carefully so there are no errors of grammar, spelling, or punctuation. Keep in mind that your web page may be viewed by a prospective employer. Text you post on your web page should be free of errors.

E. Attendance

If an emergency prevents you from attending a seminar or afternoon phase meeting, you should let your seminar leader know ahead of time when possible and contact a seminar member to find out what you missed. You are responsible for all announcements, assignments, and date changes made in class and for all material covered in class even if you are not there. A word to the wise—research on the relationship between class attendance and college grades has consistently found a strong positive correlation.

F. Group Management Plans

Each project group is required to prepare a management plan that serves the same purpose as the group contracts created in previous units. The management plan will be the foundation on which you will build a working relationship with your group members, and unit faculty members will call on these management plans if problems arise within your group. As such, these management plans are extremely important and we expect you to give them careful consideration. Group work is an integral part of this course, not only for the group project, but for the skills we would like you to further develop. These skills will serve you through your university course work and into your professional endeavors. As the unit begins, you will have the opportunity to reflect on past successes and challenges to group work as you prepare your management plan. At the end of the unit, each of you will be asked to evaluate and provide feedback on yourself and your group members. Faculty will use this information to allocate your 50 points for the group peer evaluations.

VI. WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

A. Format for Assignment Submission

All assignments must be typed (12 point font), double-spaced, and stapled. Please put your name, your seminar leader's name, and your seminar letter on every assignment. You are

responsible for keeping a copy of all assignments you hand in. Electronic media (e.g. fax or email) are NOT acceptable forms of submission. Any exceptions (e.g., Hypertext Essay, E-Portfolio, work for seminars using Web CT) are indicated in assignment descriptions or verbally by seminar instructor. If you have questions about a particular assignment, please ask for further explanation.

B. Policy for Late and Missing Assignments

You are responsible for completing individual and group assignments on time. *All of your daily work must be handed in as a hard copy by you, in person, at the beginning of seminar.* Late daily work will not be accepted except in the case of a documented emergency. For other major seminar assignments (citizenship essay, discovery project, hypertext essay), you will be penalized the equivalent of one full letter grade for each day a project is late. Assignments that are overdue by more than one week will not be accepted.

You will be given one “life happens” opportunity in this unit, which you can apply only to a daily writing.

VII. STUDENT RESOURCES and SUPPORT SERVICES

A. Writing Aids

Although you have been writing extensively over the course of this first year, learning to write well for different purposes and audiences is an ongoing learning process for all of us. Thus, we encourage you to take advantage of two resources that are available to students and faculty:

B. Disability Resources

Any student with documented learning disabilities or other conditions that may affect academic performance should: 1) make sure this documentation is on file with the Office of Disability Support Services to determine accommodations you might need; 2) provide a copy of the DSS form to his or her instructors for each course; and 3) meet with instructors to discuss learning needs.

C. Counseling Center

Counseling programs and services are free of charge for all students. The Center offers counseling, learning, and multicultural services to help students achieve academic and personal success.

D. Library Services

VIII. BOOKS AND READINGS

Bloom, Lynn Z. and Louise Z. Smith. *The Arlington Reader: Canons and Contexts*. Boston, MA: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 2003.* (AR)

Hacker, Diana. *A Writer's Reference*. 5th ed. Boston, MA: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 2003.*

Ibsen, Henrik. *An Enemy of the People*. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 1999.

O'Brien, Tim. *The Things They Carried*. New York: Broadway, 1998.*

Wilson, August. *Fences*. New York: Plume, 1986.

NCLC 140 Reader (Wingfield): Course Reader available for purchase in the GMU Bookstore. (R)

NCLC 140 Separate Packet (Wingfield): Miscellaneous readings available for purchase in the GMU Bookstore. (SP)

Handouts: Various short readings handed out by seminar leaders. (H)

GMU Student Technology Guide

* Denotes texts required in previous units

IX. BRIEF DESCRIPTIONS OF MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS

A. Daily Seminar Writing. The purpose of daily writing assignments is to help you digest, reflect on, and respond to what you have read. By thinking on paper about the readings, you should gain more insight and be better prepared for seminar discussion. Daily writing prepared outside of class should be typed, and most writing assignments should be at least two pages in length. In addition, you will be writing in class each week. Students across seminars will complete approximately the same number of daily writing assignments but some variation may exist in the types of assignments students complete. Types of assignments include:

- Analysis of ideas with considered personal response
- Rhetorical analysis
- Abstract of a reading
- Integrative log
- Plot summary (for drama)
- Character analysis (for drama)
- Analysis of a theme or themes

Please consult the Reader for a detailed description of these daily writing assignments.

B. Participation. Factors that will influence your participation grade include, but are not limited to, your responsible participation in and preparedness for seminar and afternoon activities and assignments. Constructively contributing to discussions, listening effectively, promoting a safe atmosphere for learning, and encouraging others are all forms of responsible participation.

C. Group Project. Each group will develop and present an educational workshop that informs their peers about a contemporary citizenship-related issue. (Please see assignment guidelines for more information.)

D. Citizenship Essay (final exam). During the unit, you will be asked to grapple with what the phrase “effective citizenship” means to you. Faculty will ask you to consider thoughtfully such questions as: What is responsible citizenship? What is interesting, rewarding, difficult, and/or complicated about being an effective citizen? (Please see assignment guidelines for more information.)

E. Discovery Project, Chapter IV. So far this year you have researched the life of your Discovery subject (Chapter I), learned about a scientific or medical issue related to him or

her (Chapter II) and studied a specific time period through which your subject has lived (Chapter III). Self as Citizen asks you to focus directly on this individual again and consider her or him in the context of citizenship. (Please see assignment guidelines for more information.)

F. Hypertext Essay on Place. In the past units you have created a web page, learned how to make links and create folders, learned how to manipulate images, and created a hypertext essay. In Unit IV you will add another piece to your yearlong web development project by creating a hypertext essay that represents the connection or relationship between a specific place and your values and personal beliefs about citizenship.

X. COURSE SCHEDULE

The detailed course schedule lists day-by-day readings, assignments, and activities for seminars and afternoon phases. We will keep any changes to a minimum and announce them in advance whenever possible. You are responsible for knowing about all changes and announcements made in class, through the listserv, or on the web page. At the end of this schedule is a calendar that provides the final due dates for all of the assignments for the unit. Please look carefully at the course requirements and note the dates various projects are due in the two weeks following the end of classes. Remember to allot time for completing both ELC 140 responsibilities and your year-end e-portfolio before making your travel plans.

ELC 140: SELF AS CITIZEN

Hypertext Essay on Place

People make meaning through association, and some of the most powerful associations we have are with places--the place where one's family comes from, the place where one learned to bodysurf or bake bread or bait a hook, the place where one was wounded or healed, the place where one worked in earnest, chanted in protest, or sang for joy. As part of Unit IV's exploration of Self as Citizen, this assignment asks you to present a hypertext essay on a place that has helped shape your notions of citizenship. The place can be public or private, but it should be important to you for some reason. It should be a place that has helped define who you are by informing your personal values and beliefs.

Requirements

You will write 1200 to 1500 words as a hypertext to be posted on your Unit IV web page. Your hypertext essay should have a minimum of five separate screens (text blocks), which you may link any way you like. It may also include links to relevant external sites. We shall explore a range of linking strategies; your job will be to employ a strategy that guides your reader through the essay by at least *two distinct paths*, through both of which he/she reads all of what you've written. Keep in mind that effective links serve to add meaning to your work. **Any external links and visual images you use should relate meaningfully to the subject of your essay, rather than confuse or distract your reader.**

Hypertext creates expressive possibilities that don't exist in traditional linear writing. You are encouraged to exploit these possibilities as you strive to convey the significance of the place you are writing about. Be as creative, quirky, entertaining and ingenious as you can, but remember one thing: **the aesthetic interest of your essay should never come at the expense of the intellectual content.** Your hypertext, like any other form of communication, will be judged on how clearly and concisely it conveys its meanings to its audience.

The Sequence

You won't be going into this assignment cold. We will spend a good deal of time talking about place during the middle weeks of Unit IV and you will receive feedback on your architectural plan and your draft text before you post your hypertext essay.

Due Date	Assignment	Guidelines and Expectations	✓
April 6 (Afternoon Session, Seminar)	In-class	Brainstorming and in-class writing on places that are important to you and how they may have helped shape your values Practicing with hypertext concept, storyboard and mapping of daily readings	
April 11, 12, 13 (Afternoon Workshop)	In-class	Introduction to hypertext in the computer labs, examples of hypertext essays, and review of file management and FTP	
April 14 (Friday by noon, NCC Office)	Architectural Plan with Rationale	Graphical representation of the essay (hand-drawn or computer-generated) and brief written explanation of the rationale behind the design. Construct it so that the basic content on each screen is evident, each screen's purpose is apparent and the relationships among the various screens are clear (e.g., rectangular blocks representing individual screens connected by lines representing links). Identify two distinct paths your readers can take through your essay and explain the purpose of each. Brief explanation of your essay's architecture should strive to make clear how the structure	

		suits the content. At least 1-2 pages.	
April 21 (Friday by noon, NCC Office)	Draft of Text for Hypertext Essay	The written content that will form the core of your hypertext essay. The focus here should be on providing a detailed and evocative description of your place, one that conveys to readers the importance the place holds for you. Also, this draft should clearly explain how this place has informed your notions of citizenship. Articulating this link between the place and citizenship is the most challenging--and crucial--part of the assignment. Using course texts, themes, and terminology can help you. You shouldn't select a place unless you feel reasonably confident in your ability to explain how that place relates to your notions of citizenship. At least 1200 words, broken into at least five screens. Clearly note which portions of the text will appear on each screen.	
May 8 (Monday by noon)	Final Hypertext Essay	Final Hypertext Essay should be fully functional and posted to your web page.	

Resources

We will provide a hypertext workshop to assist you with this assignment. If you need further technical support, the Unit IV see the ELC computer lab schedule for specific times.

Assessment Rubric for Hypertext Essay

Below is the rubric faculty will use in assessing your hypertext essay. Study this carefully so that you know the criteria faculty use and the standards by which your work will be judged.

1. Essay shows firm grasp of how the place described has helped shape writer's notions of citizenship. Strong essays explicitly engage themes, terminology, and texts of Unit IV.
2. Essay employs effective rhetorical strategy. Effectively "hooks" reader and makes thoughtful use of the expressive possibilities of hypertext in describing a place and explaining how it has helped shape writer's notions of citizenship.
3. Essay employs effective organizational plan. Essay is easy to navigate and organizational "game plan" relates clearly and meaningfully to the subject of the essay. All links are functional. Includes at least two clear paths through the complete text.
4. Essay meets the requirement for words (1200-1500) and screens (five).
5. Writer correctly cites sources for all quotations and images in APA or MLA format.
6. Writer has paid attention to "technique." Essay is well-written with few (if any) distracting errors of mechanics, grammar, syntax, spelling, etc. Writer has read the essay aloud and edited carefully, eliminating "accidental" errors such as missing words.
7. Overall impression. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts, and the essay is memorable.

Web Page Policy

Please read carefully over the web policies of the university in your Unit IV syllabus.

Because you are creating a representation of yourself (and also of your college and university) for the world to view you need to (a) be thoughtful about the information you post; (b) write clearly; (c) edit your work carefully so there are no errors of grammar, spelling, or punctuation. Keep in mind that your web page may be viewed by a prospective employer. Text you post on your web page should be free of error.

Appendix J

Writing 101: College Writing

Instructor:
Extension:
Office:

“Learn to write well, or not to write at all.”
 --John Sheffield “Essay on Satire”

Availability: My office hours are not set yet. I am newly elected to a committee and will inform you about when that body meets. But likely you will be able to find me in my office in the afternoons M-R. In addition to these times, I am available by appointment. I am always willing to meet with you and discuss your papers or any other concerns you might have about our class. I am also available by e-mail (see address at the top of this page). In emergencies or if you have a troubling problem that cannot wait until the next class, **you may call me on my cell before 10 p.m.** or leave a message on my office extension. Please note that Fridays are special days for me to get research and writing done. This semester I am planning on spending Monday and Wednesday mornings and Fridays at home if I can doing writing. Don’t hesitate to call me on my cell phone if you need me.

Welcome! It’s really good to have you along. I usually say at this point, Most of you are new to college, and probably mixed in with some of the excitement is a little bit of fear about what your professors will expect from you. Even if you’ve done a year of college, I suspect that you still might have some fears about my expectations. I hope that this letter to you and syllabus will ease some of those fears in regard to this class. If you read the quotation at the top of the page, you might be wondering if you’ll ever learn to “write well.” Maybe you think you’d rather not learn to “write at all!” Maybe you’ve had writing assignments before which made you think you could never learn to write well.

I believe that most people have an innate desire to communicate with others. Sometimes a writing class (even though it is an attempt at making communication easier) can by mistake actually work to stifle this desire. What I would like

“Yet writing is more public than preaching.”
 --John Milton

our writing class to do is to investigate fascinating ways we can communicate with a reader and make us as writers aware of the wide range of knowledge we can share. This class will have as few pronouncements as possible.

Rather, the atmosphere will be more of a workshop providing practice in prewriting, drafting, revising, proofreading, reading and thinking, emphasizing the importance of writing for a reader. In addition, we will be talking about persuasion and argumentation as we learn how to move readers to reconsider an issue, or better yet, to urge readers to change their minds and alter their actions. As a result of learning about argumentation, you will become a better reader and more cognizant of the ripples of propaganda which surround you every day.

Notice that our main text for this course is called *A Community of Writers*. I think we tend to think romantically about writing. You know what I mean, the poet, suffering for true love’s sake, writing on scraps of paper and weeping. The lone writer walking in nature and describing what she sees along the way. But most writing isn’t really like this at all. Most vital writing is borne out of community needs and interests—it serves and shapes community values and thoughts. It reflects what we as a people care about. Gradually, as this course moves along, you’ll find yourself doing more and more community writing, and the final project requires you to connect with a community which may be a little different than the ones you feel comfortable within. As part of service learning or experiential learning in working with that community, you’ll find your writing invigorated by ideas and people you encounter.

You will read a variety of “texts,” write multiple drafts of several papers, and also write less formally by reflecting about writing and about readings in writer’s “logs.” Your writing will be read by me and by other students in our class. Seeing how others handle the same assignment can often help improve your next assignment and your overall writing and thinking skills. You will, during this course, find yourself very busy writing, but I hope writing will become--through practice and self-awareness--an integral part of your life and, more importantly, an enjoyable activity. Yes, I do mean enjoyable!

Items you will need for this class:

- *A Community of Writers*_ by Elbow & Belanoff
- I recommend a handbook, but it is not required
- *Salvation on Sand Mountain* (used in second half of semester)
- A positive attitude!

“When I get a little money, I buy books. If there is any left, I buy food and clothes.”

--Erasmus

Course Requirements: (Meeting these requirements is mandatory before receiving a passing grade.)

1. **Assigned Readings**--you will be expected to come to class with all assigned readings and with your writer's log assignment completed.
2. **Attendance**--you are responsible for signing the attendance sheet each time you are present. If you miss more than three weeks (6 classes) of regular semester classes, you may fail the course. More than two weeks (4 classes) of absences can cause your grade to be lowered. “Excused” and school related absences **DO** count into this number. If you know you will be missing class for school related functions, be careful about your other absences. There's no way to make up the work we do in a workshop--it needs the presence of others to make it happen. If you must miss class, always try to let me know in advance. An email is the best way. Remember that the success of our writers' workshops depends on all of us being prepared and in attendance. Even the best student's performance suffers with poor attendance. And if you miss class, I don't accept late work or make-up work unless we work out something **in advance**. With all this said, I'm not unreasonable. Students who communicate with me, keep me informed of their situations and problems will find that together we can work out a solution to any problem that conflicts with this class.
3. **Writing Workshops**--a useful and critical part of the course. These are so vital in increasing your critical eye that failure to participate in the evaluation process may affect the final grade for a project.
4. **Participation**--vital to our class working as it should. Your journals, willingness to speak up in class, attitude, and attendance in class and at conferences are an important part of your contribution to the class. Even though you will not have a participation grade, your level of involvement in the class can't help but show in every sort of evaluation.
5. **Papers**--**MUST BE TYPED!** You will find computers for your use in the labs. The drafts you bring to class for evaluation also need to be typed: a nice, clean, typed draft will benefit me, you, and your evaluator(s). This doesn't mean that the paper is a sacred document--feel free to mark on a preliminary draft and even on a final draft. A few neatly penciled in corrections lets me know you are continually proofreading. Late work is always penalized unless you strike a bargain with me **BEFORE** the due date.
6. **Writer's Logs:** It is vital that you keep up with these as they are assigned. They help prepare you for class, give you a direction to work, give you practice opportunities for writing, and teach critical reading and thinking. These logs will be collected on the due date and **NOT** accepted late (again, unless we make a prior agreement). If you know you will be absent, you must hand in your log early. These logs are averaged into a general log grade.

How Grades are Calculated:

Paper #1—Collage Paper	15%
Paper #2—Narrative Sketch Paper	15%
Paper #3—Descriptive Paper	15%
Paper #4—Interview Paper	15%
Paper #5—Research Project-	20%
Oral Presentation	5%
Writer's Journals (Logs)	15%

(These percentiles are subject to slight change if we think necessary)

“Talent alone cannot make a writer. There must be a man behind the book.”
--Emerson

How I respond to papers:

Untyped Drafts: Almost never will I read these. I will listen to your description of your ideas and plans to help steer you in the right direction or clarify your approach. I, like any other reader, have a very difficult time seeing structure, etc. in a handwritten draft.

Typed Intermediate Drafts: These I will read gladly. During class workshops, I try to read as many drafts as possible. If I miss yours and you want me to look at it, please make an appointment with me. If you don't feel you need my help, that's OK with me as well although you most likely will have at least one conference with me. Also, many excellent tutors work at the writing center and are willing to help you with your papers. Those tutors are students like you who have proven that they are excellent writers themselves. Please note that I will be reading for content and organization. If I see no problems with these two areas, then and only then will I comment on style, mechanics, or grammar. I will not proofread your papers for you, but I will show you how to correct repeated problems. Of course, you may always ask me about any troubling problem in your paper.

The Final Draft: The very last thing I do is put a letter grade on your paper (or portfolio of papers). Along with the grade I will put additional comments to encourage you and help you in your thinking, planning, drafting, and revising of your next project.

I AM ALWAYS WILLING TO HELP YOU ON YOUR PAPERS AS LONG AS YOU
KEEP THE ABOVE POINTS IN MIND.

Explanation of Letter Grades:

F paper: Treatment of the subject is superficial. Theme lacks organization. Prose is garbled. Mechanical errors abound. Ideas, organization, and style are well below acceptable college writing.

D paper: Treatment and development of subject is only in the beginning stages. Organization is present but is neither clear nor effective. Sentences are awkward, ambiguous, and contain serious errors. Little or no evidence of careful proofreading exists. Reader feels writing was done in haste.

C paper: Meets the assignment, reasonably well-organized and developed, and shows some grasp of audience. However, the information delivered is thin and commonplace. Reader is not instructed. Paper is often too vague and general--general in that the confused reader asks, "In every case?" "Why?" "Exactly how many?" Opening is uninteresting to reader. The conclusion is not engaging but is pedantic. Transitions between paragraphs lack smoothness. Sentences are choppy and show little variety. Word choice is acceptable but not always precise containing tedious repetitions. Often contains errors that impede readability. Reader is not tempted to read the paper again.

B paper: Paper is more than merely competent. Idea stated clearly but with little original thought. Few errors have escaped the writer's attention. Reader feels instructed. Organizing principle stated clearly, and all points are unified around central idea. Opening draws reader in, and closing relates thematically to opening. Transitions are smoother than the C paper. Sentence structure is varied even though the prose may be a bit flabby and wordy. Diction is more concise and precise. Little is included to distract or disturb the reading process. Reading is a pleasure.

A paper: Shows unusual polish and style. Surpasses the ordinary paper and is free of serious errors. The subject is very well developed with original and fresh ideas and depth of thought always with an eye to the reader. Reader feels delighted or instructed at every stage of the reading process. The title is engaging. The opening entices the reader to read on. The transitions are artful; the phrasing is tight; descriptions are telling and not general. The reader feels--for the entire length of his reading journey--that the writer is a careful, trustworthy, craftsman. The reader feels bright, fresh, satisfied, and ready to reread the paper.

NOTE: MOST STUDENTS NEED TIME TO BECOME ACCUSTOMED TO COLLEGE STANDARDS.
THAT IS WHY WRITER'S LOGS AND OTHER FACTORS ALSO CONTRIBUTE TO YOUR FINAL
GRADE.

Important: If you need special accommodations due to a disability or if you have emergency medical information I should know about, please discuss it with me during the first few days of classes.

Academic Honesty: Plagiarism is unacceptable. Never turn in another's work as your own. If you include someone else's work in your paper, always give credit to the original author. Also, do not hand in the same paper for two different classes. If you want to use the same idea for our class that you have used or are using in another, come talk to me first. Maybe together, we can devise a way to do so and make it a fresh and more interesting project. If you are unsure about whether something constitutes plagiarism or any other form of academic dishonesty, please bring it to my attention **before** submitting the paper. That's the honest and safe way. Don't decide to do something stupid in a moment when you are tired and exhausted and frustrated. Always, always, call me first. There's a solution to every situation. Be aware that dishonesty can cause you to fail the course and be dismissed from the college. Simple communication with your instructor usually avoids any honest mistakes.

“Lectures were once useful, but now when all can read and books are so numerous, lectures are no longer necessary.” *--Samuel Johnson (1776)*

An Interesting Research Paper on “Place”

Okay. I know you read the title and thought, “Yeah, right.” And I don’t blame you. Research papers can be the most tedious of all writing assignments. If you are assigned to work on something that you don’t care about or if you pick something you really don’t care about, it’s the beginning of a recipe for disaster.

I want you to work on something that intrigues you, that you want to know more about. We are going to be reading a book that includes some amazing research and is well written—*Pine Barrens* by John McPhee. You’re probably thinking, “Oh, yeah, that sounds fun.” Or, “Why should I want to read a book about some place I’ve never heard of?” Good writers find ways to take such topics and make something of them. I think you’ll enjoy *Pine Barrens* and John McPhee’s simple style. And he can teach you a great deal about researching—both the going-to-the-library kind of research and the kind of research most people forget to do.

Part I: Finding a place to write about

In Michael Pearson’s book on John McPhee, he comments extensively on McPhee sense of place.

“Just as John McPhee’s books are filled with the stories of individuals, all different and distinct but all sharing important traits, much of his work focuses on place. A question whispers through the pages of his stories—in what kind of world, he seems to ask, will such fierce independence as we see in many of his subjects continue to thrive? The sense of where you are, which threads its way through many of his character portraits, is aligned closely to the experience of place. . . . Without a sense of place, McPhee seems to suggest in many of his books, a person cannot have a true sense of self.

“Sense of place in McPhee’s books nearly always involves a sense of journey or escape, as well, for there is McPhee the traveler-adventurer encountering the men and women who act as his expert-guides. McPhee is the archetypal wayfarer, a traveler cut from the same cloth as the prototypical wanderers from Odysseus and Ishmael to Marco Polo and Mark Twain. McPhee’s journey, like theirs are mythic ones—a departure, an initiation, and a return are always part of his pilgrimages. He is grounded in the genteel Princeton, and typically he ventures out into the wilder world—the snake-filled back roads of Georgia, the bear-haunted mountains of Alaska, the wind-swept lakes of northern Maine. His return always comes in the same form, a boon for readers and for himself—a story recounting his travels and the knowledge of people and the world he has returned to bring us. Travel, for McPhee the writer, is connected to the origins of the word, *travail*, work or ordeal, a suffering that brings some wisdom.

“McPhee is the journalist-journeyer going out to discover new worlds or a new way of looking at the old ones. . . . McPhee seems to sense that travel, as Albert Camus once said, brings us back to ourselves. Travel is a way of finding what is true in ourselves and the world around us. . . .” (62-3).

So, how do you come to your topic? The *New Yorker* is not going to send you on assignment to go spend months in the Pine Barrens tromping around. But your teacher is asking you to write with passion and interest about a place that you know or would like to know so that I and our class can experience it along with you. I'm going to help you generate ideas, so don't worry. Try to answer these. Do the following listing exercise to help you generate ideas:

- Where have you lived? List all the places. Then beside the list make some notes about what makes the place unique—industry, good things, bad things, people there, history, sights to see. I've lived in Texas, Oklahoma, Colorado, Maryland, Iowa, and Hungary. My memories are good of some of them and not so good for others. Listing and notes helps me discover those places I remember well.
- Think about places within those places. For example, I lived in West Texas, but for two years we lived in an oil company development in the middle of the desert ten miles from town. Near there was "Monkey Island." No monkeys, but a tank with water, trees (in the desert!) and lots of frogs. I loved it there. Were there any such places where you lived that you loved? Your own secret places? Maybe it was a barn? I could see if a barn was special to you, that researching the history of the barn and the style of it, what everything was designed to do would be interesting to do and fun to read. Make some notes about these places.
- What about a place you have dreamed of visiting? What attracts you? Even if you can't do there to research, maybe you could interview someone who lived there or lives there. I've dreamed of going on a cruise. A cruise ship is a kind of place that I could research if I wanted. Or maybe I'd rather research a sailing vessel—I do find that very romantic. Make some notes about how to find out about this place you are interested in.
- Where have you visited? List the places? What do you like about these places? Parks? Resorts? Nature sites? Mission sites? Friends houses? Make some notes about things that interest you about them.
- What places do you plan to visit this semester? Would any of these be good to write about? Why?

Hopefully, you'll get a place—whether big or small—to work on. We will talk about these in class. That way I can steer you somewhere else if I think it isn't going to work.

Part II: Traditional Academic and popular sources

As you can see from McPhee's approach in his book, you need background info on your place. I'm working with the library to develop this section so that you'll have lots of help working up information about your place. More about this later!

Part III: Observation

Using the techniques we learned in writing descriptions, look closely at your place. If you can visit it as many times as you have opportunity. Really look at it. Write down everything about it you can see, hear, taste, smell, touch, feel emotionally. Be thorough in your lists. Write up a description of your topic. Notice how descriptive McPhee is. He loves to list characteristics and names and all sorts of things. If you can't visit it, then look at pictures, talk to people, get them to give you these sorts of details. Or if you are working from memory, talk to others who were there as well. Rebuild your sensory perceptions about the place.

Part IV: Interviewing

McPhee uses road trips through the Pine Barrens and interviews many real Pineys to get information—some of it pretty quirky! See if you can find someone or someones to talk to about your topic. For instance, if I was researching a sailing vessel that traveled around Alaska, I might email the owner and cruiser designer a person who had actually been on the trip. I'm guessing that the cruiser owner might have such information. I might even find a travel agent who had been on the trip. But with the internet and the phone available, you should be able to talk to someone. Get as many interesting notes as possible. Record the date of your interview. Of course, if I could actually visit the vessel, see where it lay in the harbor and talk to the people there, that would be best.

Part V: Connecting

Look at the way McPhee connects his topic to other realms. Think of myths and legends surrounding your place (you might even have some family myths to tell about it!). Think of ways others have viewed it, of things that are related to it (McPhee talks about legends of visitors and of fire in the book). Think of any silliness that might be connected to the topic, of visual representations of it in art or film, musical representations. Think of who might consider this place important. Think of interesting stories connected to your topic. Think of literary allusions to it—check out the index in quotation books in the library for instances of your place. Be sure to share any unusual ones with us in class.

Part VI: Reflecting

Often McPhee includes a "Preface" even though he didn't in *Pine Barrens*. Write your own preface to your paper by describing how you landed on this topic and why you pursued it. What did you learn? What do you want your readers to know? Your preface should be no more than one page, but shorter is okay as well.

Part VII: Works Cited

Use MLA style to format all your sources in your works cited list. The Works Cited page is the last page of your paper.

Now go over all you've done and put together an interesting paper. You'll need a cover page for your project that includes some kind of visual—a drawing or picture or something. You can be creative on this page. Be sure you also include a preface and a works cited page. The paper itself should be no longer than 6 or so pages, and if it is shorter than 4 pages, you've not done enough work. So, with the cover page, the preface, the paper, and the works cited—it should be no more than 9 pages. Please include an early draft of the paper as well. Any missing part will lower your grade.

Final form and order of paper:

Cover page
Preface
Final draft of paper
Works Cited
Rough draft

Understanding Difference—a Research Project

Okay. I know you read the title and thought, “Yeah, right.” And I don’t blame you. Research papers can be the most tedious of all writing assignments. If you are assigned to work on something that you don’t care about or if you pick something you really don’t care about, it’s the beginning of a recipe for disaster.

I want you to work on something that intrigues you, that you want to know more about. We are going to be reading a book that includes some amazing research and is well written—*Salvation on Sand Mountain* by Dennis Covington. You’re probably thinking, “Oh, yeah, that sounds fun.” Or, “Why should I want to read a book about some group of religious fanatics? I thought this was a Reformed college!” Good writers find ways to take such topics and make something of them. And often along the way, the writing and thinking and talking changes the writer—and that’s when writing works its developmental magic in all of our lives. I think you’ll enjoy *Salvation on Sand Mountain* and Dennis Covington’s honest and soul-searching writing. And he can teach you a great deal about researching—both the going-to-the-library kind of research and the real human kind of research many people forget to do.

Part I: Finding something to write about

The blurb on the back of your book says this, “Covington journeyed into a place where most of us would fear to tread, and acting on his instinct, faith, and heart, he wrote a book that is unmatched in a man’s attempt to understand who he is.”

In my “best of all possible worlds” kind of teacherly hope, I want you to meet people and encounter places that will be life changing for you, both the you that is a writer and the you that is a human being connected to the Divine Presence who permeates all of our world—even the parts of the world which are unknown and strange to us. I want you to investigate a group of people who have some religious affiliation or connections, a group who might seem to spring from very different perspectives from the perspectives you hold, get to know them from the inside and from the outside and write about them in an intelligent and sensitive way, just as Covington does with the snake handlers. These people/places could be churches, service organizations, shelters, businesses with overt religious goals or missions, a group of men and women who pool their resources to do church plants, a film making company, etc. All I ask is that they allow you to join them for a brief time and that they in some way look different from the religious experiences you have had up to now. See attached list of possibilities, but realize that it is not an exhaustive list.

So, how do you come to your topic? A newspaper is not going to send you on assignment to spend weeks covering a trial in which you encounter strange and different people. But your teacher is asking you to write with passion and interest about a group of people different in many ways, but especially in religious perspective, from yourself so that I and our class can experience it along with you. I’m going to help you generate ideas, so don’t worry. Try to answer these. Do the following listing exercises to help you generate ideas:

- Where have you lived? List all the places. Then beside the list make some notes about what makes the place unique—industry, good things, bad things, people there, history, sights to see. I’ve lived in Texas, Oklahoma, Colorado, Maryland, Iowa, and Hungary. My memories are good of some of them and not so good for others. Listing and notes helps me discover those places I remember well.
- Describe your own religious background. What are you comfortable with? What makes you feel at home? I was from a very conservative and exclusivist group of Christians—our church building was set high on a hill, which now seems very ironic to me.
- Around you in those places where you lived were there groups of people that were whispered about? Mistrusted? People your parents told you to avoid? Make some notes about these places and people. In my town, we only had two Jewish families. While the men were well respected, their wives were whispered about. I grew up fearful of “Jews” even though I had no idea what that word even meant for the longest time. Were there religious groups you were ignorant of?
- Describe briefly encounters with the religious other that you remember. I can remember my first encounters with Mormons, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Moonies, even Catholics. Go through your own encounters—what did you learn from them? What do you wish you had done differently?
- Are there groups you would like to know more about? List them. Why?
- Where have you visited? What religiously connected groups have you encountered there? What was the result?
- What places do you plan to visit this semester? Would any of these be good to write about? Why?
- Do you know of any people who have banded together for a spiritual reason to create something different in worship or service? What do you think of them?
- Are there worship styles that make you uncomfortable?

Hopefully, you’ll get a place or find a group of people—whether big or small—to work on. We will talk about these in class. That way I can steer you somewhere else if I think it isn’t going to work. Keep thinking about this and making notes. Jeff will help us find connections and guide us into situations in which you can talk and learn from your selected group.

Part II: Traditional Academic and popular sources

As you can see from Covington’s approach in his book, you need background info on your place or people. I’m working with the library to develop this section so that you’ll have lots of help working up information about your place. More about this later! We will have a whole day of library instruction and a chance for you to do some looking around on your topic.

Part III: Observation

Using the techniques we learned in writing description, look closely at your place and your group of people once chosen. If you can visit it as many times as you have opportunity. Really look at it. Write down everything about it you can see, hear, taste, smell, touch, feel

emotionally. See if you can visit a worship service or some other event the group is hosting or sponsoring. Or just hang around the office one day. Talk to people. Be thorough in your lists. Write up a description of your topic. Notice how descriptive Covington is. If you can't visit it, then look at pictures, talk to people, get them to give you these sorts of details. Or if you are working from memory, talk to others who were there as well. Rebuild your sensory perceptions about the place and people. Maybe the community is a virtual one? Join them in that setting. The direction this will take will be largely determined by the nature of the community you investigate. Use Dave and me for help if needed.

Part IV: Interviewing

Covington uses road trips through the mountains and interviews with many real people to get information—some of it pretty quirky! See if you can find folks to talk to about your topic. For instance, if I was researching a organization that uses planes to fly missionaries into the wilds of Africa, I might email the people who had actually flown on the planes. Or the pilots, or whoever. Get as many interesting notes as possible. Record the dates of your interview always so you can cite them properly in your paper. Save emails so that you can reference them as well.

Part V: Connecting

Look at the way Covington connects his topic to other realms. Think of myths and whisperings surrounding your people (you might even have some family myths to tell about them!). Think of ways others have viewed them, of things that are related to them. Think of any silliness that might be connected to the topic, of visual representations of them in art or film, musical representations. Think of who might consider these people important. Think of interesting stories connected to your topic. Think of literary allusions to them—check out the index in quotation books in the library for instances of your group if there are such. Be sure to share any unusual ones with us in class. Check out their history. See if anything has been written up locally in the newspaper.

Part VI: Reflecting

Covington's "Prologue" provides us some insight into why he wrote the book and why it matters to him. Write your own prologue to your paper by describing how you landed on this topic and why you pursued it. What did you learn? What do you want your readers to know? Your preface should be no more than one page or so, but shorter is okay as well.

Part VII: Works Cited

Use MLA style to format all your sources in your works cited list. The Works Cited page is the last page of your paper.

Now go over all you've done and put together an interesting paper. You'll need

- a cover page for your project that includes some kind of visual—a drawing or picture or something. You can be creative on this page.
- Be sure you also include a prologue
- Next comes the paper you've written in its edited, revised, final form

- and a works cited page.

The paper itself should be no longer than 6 or so pages, and if it is shorter than 4 pages, you've not done enough work. So, with the cover page, the prologue, the paper, and the works cited—it should be no more than 9 pages. Any missing part will lower your grade.

No fancy covers needed—just staple it all together or put a clip on it.

Remember also that you will be making a brief presentation (5 or so minutes) on your project at the end of the year. You might want to include some visuals (pictures and such) with the paper or to add interest to your presentation.

These can be group projects if you want—groups of 2-3 are fine with me. I'll help you sort out the duties. By the middle of the semester, you should know who you might work well with if you decide to collaborate. Any collaboration needs to be cleared with me in advance. Be sure and inform me quickly of problems or Jeff—we are here to help.

Appendix K

English 101

The Symbol-Using Animal: Writing about Nature and Culture

Description:

This course is designed to help you develop your voice and authority as a writer through greater awareness of audience and purpose for various situations. It is also designed to hone your thinking and research skills. We will focus on the skills of planning, drafting, and revising, but writers cannot improve unless they are also reading and thinking. I have organized this course around readings that demonstrate various styles of nonfiction writing but are all concerned in some ways with issues of nature and culture. In this way we will be able to have lively discussions about ideas that may strike you as new, weird, wonderful, or wrong. These discussions will not be about discovering a “right” answer or getting everyone to agree; rather, they are meant to challenge your previous assumptions and get you to reflect on why you think and feel the way you do and why others may think and feel differently. That’s what critical thinking is! And this is how you will generate material for essays.

Materials:

The Norton Anthology of Nature Writing (College Edition) w/ *Field Guide*, Eds. Finch and Elder

A Writer’s Reference (5th or 6th edition), Diana Hacker

Some money for copies

Writer’s Notebook for in-class work, brainstorming, drafts, responses to reading questions, and so on

A good dictionary and thesaurus

Essays:

There will be four main papers: first a narrative, then an opinion essay, then an analytical essay. For each of these you will be provided several possibilities to choose from and tips on how to brainstorm. The fourth essay will be a radical revision and expansion of one of the first three. You will write a proposal telling me what you plan to do. You will also be required to incorporate research into the fourth essay.

Course Requirements/Expectations:

Participation—This is a writing class; therefore, your participation is crucial. This includes coming to class on time and preparing for the day’s activities in a thoughtful manner. Class discussions of readings will form the basis of the course, and you will be expected to write responses to questions on the readings. This is not a lecture class and everyone is expected to be prepared and join in.

Notebooks—Use your writer’s notebook to respond to readings, do in-class writing exercises, brainstorm, draft, take class notes, draw connections between readings and previous class discussions, and to record your questions or arguments. These will count as a part of your participation grade and they will be collected periodically.

Workshops—One key to being an effective writer is learning to critique essays AND to listen to critiques of your own work. Be present, be prepared, be generous, and be willing to venture outside your comfort zone. Provide thoughtful responses to your classmates' written work.

Essay Due Dates—Bring drafts to class on the day required and submit your papers as they are scheduled.

Missing and Late Work—You must complete all assignments—big and small—to pass this class. If you are having trouble with a deadline, please contact me early so we can work out an alternative.

Writing Center—You can schedule an appointment with a writing tutor at the Writing Center during the course of the semester.

Grading:

Essay 1: “The Storytelling Animal”	15%
Essay 2: “The Opinionated Animal”	15%
Essay 3: “The Analytical Animal”	20%
Essay 4: Radical Revision	30%
Participation:	20%

Other Important Stuff:

If a student must miss a class due to documented illness or other excusable reason, the student must:

- inform the faculty member that a written excuse is coming from a physician, coach or other authority prior to the absence if possible, but no later than the first class period after the excused absence;
- provide each faculty member with a copy of the signed excuse; (The original must be available for faculty review.)
- make up missed graded assignments or exams as soon as possible as outlined by the faculty member

In order to avoid prolonged delay of make-up of the work, a faculty member may, at her/his discretion, give the make-up work and hold it for grading until after the written excuse is received.

You are allowed three unexcused absences in this class before it affects your grade. Beyond that, your final grade will drop one full letter grade for each absence. Missing Workshop days will count double.

Academic Integrity

Disability Statement

ENG 101: Composition I
The Symbol-Using Animal: Writing about Nature and Culture

Analytical Essay

4-5 pages double-spaced, 12 pt, 1 inch margins

Workshop: 4/9

Due: 4/13

In this unit we will be looking at how humans shape spaces and how spaces, in turn, shape us and our behavior. One way to examine how a culture lives and what it values is to look at public spaces—streets, parks, monuments, churches, sporting arenas, shopping malls, ski resorts, museums—any spot people gather for business or play. How do humans construct spaces to encourage some behaviors while discouraging others? What can observations about the way people behave in public spaces, as well as who does and does not visit certain spaces, tell us about their use? What can this study tell us about American culture?

This essay marks a transition in the course from essays based on personal experience to an essay that employs the skills of analysis, interpretation, and support. For instance, in this essay you will need to give a detailed description of a public space you have chosen and the behavior of people who use it to make an argument that answers the following question:

➤ *How does the public space construct or shape the way people experience it?*

Remember that William Cronon says that we are always a part of the natural world, no matter where we are or what we do. Be sure to consider what the design and/or use of your space says about American views of nature.

This assignment has a fieldwork component, based on the handout provided, that must be turned in with the final draft. You are required to spend time in the public space you choose in order to map the space, take notes, watch people, and even ask them questions. You will almost certainly need to visit this place more than once, preferably at different times of the day or week. Your notes and observations are what you will use as evidence as you make your argument.

Evaluation Criteria

This essay counts as 20% of your grade.

Thesis/Introduction: Is the main claim stated clearly in the introduction? Is it effective—based on critical thinking—rather than predictable and obvious?

Body: Does the organization effectively develop the purpose of the essay? Does each paragraph seem to flow from the thesis, building a case for the writer's interpretation of the space?

Conclusion: Does the conclusion do more than just restate points made in the body of the essay? Does it also look at the *significance* of what the analysis found?

Detailed Observations: Is the writer's analysis based on specific details from observations of the space and the ways people use it?

Support: Does the writer make a *convincing* case, identifying relevant details and not leaving gaps?

Punctuation and Grammar: Does the essay seem polished or do mistakes confuse the reader? Is there an overall pattern of sentence fragments, comma splices, run-ons, or wrong words that is distracting?

Thesis/Introduction	20%
Body	20%
Conclusion	20%
Detailed Observations/ Support	20%
Punctuation and Grammar	20%
	100 points total

Appendix L

COURSE SYLLABUS
Rhetoric & Composition I: English 101
Spring 2006

GENERAL INFORMATION**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

English 101 is designed to help students **write papers** for a variety of general and specific **audiences**. Students will learn to recognize **features that make writing effective**, and learn different strategies writers use while **prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing**. Students will learn to **read their own work more critically and to constructively criticize the work of others**. The course also provides a **brief introduction to the writing of source-supported papers and methods of documenting sources**.

PREREQUISITE

English **placement test** score or **completion of all** reading and writing **developmental** courses.

Course Objectives

By the end of the semester, students will be able to:

1. write texts appropriate for a variety of **general and specific audiences**
2. demonstrate more **distinct voices as writers**, and vary their voices to fit different writing situations
3. build papers around a central thesis, **focus**, or controlling idea, supported by **concrete details, examples, and reasoning**
4. **critically evaluate their own work and the work of others**
5. **incorporate ideas and quotations from other sources** into their papers; and demonstrate, in writing, an **understanding of sources** (using techniques like summarizing and paraphrasing)
6. identify and eliminate, from their finished papers, most errors in standard edited English

Texts, Supplies, Computer Info

Lunsford, Andrea A. The St. Martin's Handbook 5 with Comment. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2003. www.befordstmartins.com/smhandbook ISBN 0-312-43349-2

McQuade, Donald and Christine McQuade. Seeing & Writing 3. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2006. www.seeingandwriting.com ISBN.

School Supplies: Paper, pen/pencil, pocket folder, stapler & staples, dictionary, diskette/CD/Jump Drive, computer and Internet access, student ID and library access

METHODS OF STUDENT EVALUATION

Students will produce at least **six finished papers**, 400-700 words each, most of which are the result of **substantial revision** as well as **reading logs, writings logs, and on-line conferencing**.

Grading

<u>Assignments</u>	<u>Points Possible</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Points</u>
Discussion Board (cumulative)	5 @ 2=10	A	90-100
Previews (cumulative)	5 @ 1=10	B	80-89
Exercises (cumulative)	10 @ 1=10	C	70-79
In-Class Peer Reviews (cumulative)	5 @ 3=15	D	60-69
Comment Peer Reviews (cumulative)	5 @ 3=15	F	0-59
Reflections (cumulative)	5 @ 2=10		
Essay 1: Observing the Ordinary	5	I	29 Nov.-17 Dec.
Essay 2: Coming to Terms w/ Place	5	W	absences
Essay 3: Capturing Memorable Moments	5		
Essay 4: Projecting Gender/Examining Difference	5		
Essay 5: Reading Icons/Challenging Images	5		
Possible Grand Total	100		

Posting of Grades and Comments: For this class, a web-based, class-management program called **WebCT** will be used. There **points** on assignments **and comments**, especially on essays, about how to improve on them will be posted. Once the class is instructed in how to use WebCT and access this information, students will be responsible for checking their own grades on both individual assignments and in total.

Deadlines: **Preview, reflection, and essay** assignments, like those listed in the calendar, will have due dates listed on the assignment sheets. If an essay is submitted, either **in person or thru WebCT**, between the **deadline and before the next class** meeting begins, it will be accepted **without penalty**. **These assignments submitted between the next class period and one week from the deadline may earn up to half credit**. **Any others will not be accepted. Neither will any other assignments be accepted late**. Once the **possible points** for assignments **missed reaches 31**, a student will **mercifully be withdrawn from the course**, rather than continue without passing.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

College Policy: You are expected to be present for all assigned classes, lectures or laboratory sessions. If you are absent, you must show your instructor that your **absence** has been for a **good cause [thru college, legal, or medical documentation]**. If you are absent more times during the semester than the number of times the class meets per week you may be dropped from the course at the discretion of the instructor. When a student is dropped by an instructor with an effective date before the midterm date of the class a "W" will be recorded. When a student is dropped for non-attendance by an instructor with an effective

date after the midterm date, the instructor will have the prerogative to assign a grade of “F” or “W.”

The reason for this college policy is to encourage attendance and lead to more student success. However, the instructor does understand that life does happen and a few absences can't be avoided. Should life happen on a **Thursday** and a student has computer access, logging into **WebCT and/or Comment and actively participating will be considered attending.**

Missing a class on a Tuesday (or) or not logging in on a Thursday, either day **not actively participating in an activity, not being prepared for a peer review, being tardy or leaving early, sleeping in class, use of the computers or other electronic devices other than for class reasons, discussion that distracts from class, work being done for other classes, and/or lacking timely follow-up Early Alert contact** will, however, **result in an absence.**

Once any absences interfere with a student's ability to be successful in the class, **generally after four absences, the instructor will do that student a favor and withdraw him/her.** Otherwise, it would not be kind to allow that student to continue in the class without hope of passing.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION (enhancing student success)

Computer-Assisted Instruction (CAI)

On **Thursdays**, this class meets in a **computer room**. Therefore, **assignments** on those days will **utilize technology**. Those unfamiliar with **word-processing, file management, and/or Internet usage (including email)** are encouraged to contact the instructor and/or Success Center for technology tutoring. Since computer technology **supports other aspects** of the course (and vice versa), using it well is **critical to success** in this class.

Success Center and Online Writing Lab

At the Success Center, **tutors are available to help students with writing in any course**. They will help with **any stage of the writing process** from refining a topic to assisting with MLA concerns. Should a student need help with a specific paper for this course, he/she will need to **bring the assignment description and explain concerns about the draft to the tutor**. Tutors are on-hand, waiting for students to arrive. Some days, one can walk right in to be helped; others one will have to wait or come back.

Early Alert System

If students **miss two classes in a row or miss an essay deadline**, they will be referred to the Early Alert System (EAS). The instructor expects students to **make an EAS appointment within one week from being contacted** and implement an action plan to insure they will **catch-up and keep up with the class**. If they **do not make/keep their appointments within one week of contact, one absence will be counted**. If they **do not catch-up and keep up with assignments, see the attendance and deadlines policies** above.

Special Services

The Special Services Center collaborates with faculty, staff, students and the community to provide support services and **accommodations for students and prospective students with special needs**. Special needs may be **related to disabilities, finances, academics, limited English proficiency or displaced homemaker/single parenting issues**. Persons with one of the identified needs, they can help build a solid plan for success. **Setting an individual appointment with a Special Services professional is a usual first step** in learning about services and accommodations available. Assistance is **provided district-wide**.

Academic Dishonesty:

College Policy: Academic misconduct including, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and forgery; failure or refusal to follow clinical practice standards; and soliciting, aiding, abetting, concealing, or attempting such acts; may result in one of the following being imposed by the Vice President for Student Development: **Disciplinary Reprimand, Probation, Social Probation, Suspension, and Expulsion**.

For this class, plagiarism is defined in the student conduct code as “copying, paraphrasing, or otherwise using written or oral work of another without proper acknowledgement of the source or presenting oral or written work prepared by another as one’s own.” Students who are found guilty of this academic misconduct are subject to disciplinary sanctions, which may include failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension, or expulsion.

The instructor’s interpretation of this is if a student is found to have used another person’s work or work he/she previously submitted to another class, he/she will fail the assignment. If he/she is found guilty of academic dishonesty a second time, he/she will fail the course even before the semester ends.

Phones/Pagers in Classroom

No phones/pagers are allowed in class; all phones/pagers should be turned off prior to entering the classroom. Failure to follow this policy will be considered a student disruption under the Student Conduct Code, which governs this and any other classroom behavior.

Please turn cell phones/pagers to silent mode when entering the classroom. If the call must be taken (i.e. work or a babysitter), quietly leave the room before answering or returning the call.

Preview 2: Coming to Terms with Place

For the Coming to Terms with Essay, you will be asked to write a three to five pages about a “homeplace” (Sander qtd. in McQuade & McQuade 210-214). Over the two weeks that you prepare this essay, the class will cover voice and organization. Not only will this instruction prepare you for the essay but also thinking critically by answering:

- Where is your “homeplace” located (physically, culturally, emotionally, etc.)?
- When in your life did you recognize this “homeplace”?
- Why do you consider this place to be your home?

For this preview, the beginning of your essay, you are asked to write (either handwritten or word processed) a paragraph in response to each of the above questions. These will be submitted to the instructor and may be shared with your small group and/or the class.

Length: At least five paragraphs (one for each question)

Style/Layout: MLA (See Lunsford 183, 184)

Criteria: Preview Questions (bulleted above)

Possible point: 1

Due: Tuesday, 19 Sept. at the beginning of class

Essay 2: Coming to Terms with Place Essay

Over the course of developing this essay, the class will cover voice and organization. To employ these rhetorical concepts, as you think and write about this essay, you should ask yourself, “From what perspective am I relating to my readers?” and “How have I logically and stylistically connected my points?”

Also, you should use the class content during the development of this essay as the context for writing it. This includes the essays from *Seeing and Writing 3* “Once More to the Lake” (White qtd. in McQuades 162-167), “The Chinatown Idea” (Liu qtd. in McQuades 172-175), “No Place Like Home” (Guterson qtd. in McQuades 183-189), “Homeplace” (Sanders qtd. in McQuades 210-214), and the Tone and Organization Exercises (McQuades 209, 295), and the voice and organization activities. From these, you should ask yourself, “How can I use these as models for or advice in developing my essay?”

Finally, you will be required to include visual as well as textual rhetoric as Berger does in “Ways of Seeing” and McCloud does in “Show and Tell” (qtd. in McQuades 678-718).

Final MLA Style Length: 3-5 pages (Revisions & Edits must be wordprocessed.)

Criteria: Preview 2, Peer Reviews & Reflection 2, & Writing Rubric

Possible points: 5 (The instructor grades Essay 2.)

Due: Draft, Thursday, 21 Sept.; Revision, Thursday, 28 Sept.; Final, Tuesday, 3 Oct.

Peer Reviews and Reflection 2: Coming to Terms with Place

As a group, review your Essay 2: Coming to Terms with Place drafts based on the following concepts:

- Development
- Critical thinking
- Voice
- Organization
- Clarity

During the In-Class Review, read all drafts available, and with your group, discuss how the above concepts could be improved in each draft. After hearing this feedback and giving thought to the concepts above, write-up the face-to-face review of your own draft.

During the Comment Peer Review, not only will you post your own revision but also you will offer feedback on the above concepts on the revisions of classmates outside your group. If time allows, you may also offer editorial suggestions.

For the Reflection on your essay, you should explain why you made the changes you did from preview to draft, draft to revision, and revision to final essay. The letter should address where you agreed or disagreed with some of your peer advice and why. Also, if requested this could also include feedback from a Success Center tutor or the instructor.

Appendix M

E n g l i s h 2 0 1 : I n t e r m e d i a t e C o m p o s i t i o n

“Where Are We?”

Course Overview: This English 201 course explores the idea of “place” and places that are meaningful to us: Why do we like certain places? What makes places desirable? How do we represent certain places and what other kinds of cultural symbols are those representations indebted to? Like all 201 courses, this focus is designed to help you practice writing skills, including planning, drafting, revising, and proofreading. This section does so with an eye toward professional writing since many of you may be thinking more about writing as a job skill rather than as an academic exercise. In this sense, we will build upon the concepts from your Communications-A course and/or demonstrated by testing out of Comm-A. However, we will look at writing in contexts outside of school.

Course Requirements: The bulk of your work will consist of a semester-long, self-directed, professional project on a place of your choosing. You will also write a proposal for the project, an in-class presentation on your proposal, and a mid-term progress report. All of these writings will be included in your summary portfolio of at least 25 pages of finished (not drafted) writing. Final grades are determined as follows:

Writer’s Blog	10%
Service	10%
Participation	20%
Presentation	20%
Portfolio	40%

Service Requirement: This course has as service-learning component that asks you to spend between 10 and 15 hours conducting volunteer work during the course of the semester in lieu of some course time. This volunteer work will provide you experience with a particular place, viewpoint, and/or issue that you can use to write about or inform your project.

Materials: Notebook, pens, pencils, double pocket folder, computer network access, print card, open mind, college dictionary, etc.

Required texts	Available At
Lunsford, A., Ruskiewicz, J., and Walters, J. J. (2003). <i>Everything's an Argument (Third Edition)</i> . New York: Bedford-St. Martin's.	
Reynolds, N. (2006). <i>Portfolio Keeping (Second Ed.)</i> . New York: Bedford-St. Martin's.	

Attendance Policy: I make no distinction between “excused” or “unexcused” absences. An absence is missed class time, period. I must be notified in advance of absences due to religious observances. Otherwise, should you miss more than 3 sessions, I will lower your final portfolio score by one letter grade. For each absence after that, you will be lowered a further letter grade. I may not warn you in advance of docking your grade. Attendance is your responsibility.

- Should you be habitually and excessively tardy, I will begin to count your tardiness as an absence after notifying you.
- I will also expect energetic and consistent participation by all members of the class. Should you fail to bring appropriate materials to class, I reserve the right to count this as an absence.
- In the event of either tardiness or absence from a class session, it is your responsibility and yours alone to obtain class notes and familiarize yourself with the material and instructions you missed.

Electronic Devices: Will not be tolerated during class times except for use in taking notes, giving presentations, and other class activities. Please turn off all phones, pagers, watches, etc.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of another's words or ideas. You are responsible for being familiar with and complying with the University Plagiarism Policy. Failure to do so may be grounds for dismissal from the course and/or expulsion from the University. Not only must you document the ideas or work derived from the ideas of another, but it is also considered plagiarism to use the same paper for two separate courses. While you may re-use the *research* or data set, you cannot re-use the same paper written for a history course for an English class.

Statement on Access for Students with Disabilities: Students of all abilities are encouraged to participate in this course and no students shall be graded differently regardless of ability. However, if special accommodations are required to complete any assignments or any portion of the course, it is the student's responsibility to notify me and/or contact the Disability Resource Center.

Inclusivity: Part of your service and participation grade will be determined based on your professional and respectful behavior. Please remember that not all students or people with which you work share your viewpoint and you must take care to respect them as individual human beings, not as stereotypes, caricatures, or dehumanized representations.

Errata: Please make an appointment with me if you would like to talk to me about the course, your papers, your grade, or any concerns you may have. Furthermore, if you have certain issues that may impact your performance in the course (disability, full-time job, single parent, student athlete, etc.), please inform me at the beginning of the course or as soon as possible.

You have the right to contact the administrators of the course for any reason.

Grading: (Order of listing does not indicate weight of category): When I look at a piece of writing, I use the following criteria to arrive at a decision about my response. Please do not try to address every single question with every single piece of writing. Rather, try to go over most of them and realize that each piece of writing will have different demands on it. These criteria are guidelines we can use to talk about your writing.

1. Originality of Approach.
 - a. Topic: Does the place chosen focus attention on or bring to light interesting issues? Is there a match between the chosen place and the issues under investigation?
 - b. Method: Do(es) the method(s) of research match the research questions? Is it likely that the questions will be illuminated by doing the proposed methods? Have these methods been done before in this situation?
2. Quality of argument/ writing
 - a. Style: Is the writing easy and enjoyable to read?

- b. Grammar: Are sentences written grammatically? Is spelling and punctuation correct?
 - c. Rhetoric: Is the writing persuasive? Does the writing use a combination of rhetorical methods to present a case or reality or situation that is believable?
 - d. Logic: Is the writing appropriately logical?
 - e. Audience: Does the writing appear to seriously consider its intended audience?
 - f. Research: Is the research fair, adequately conducted, and original?
3. Attention to Process
- a. Drafts: Have several drafts been produced before turning in?
 - b. Revisions: Have revisions gone beyond editing?
 - c. Workshopping: Have the revisions been workshopped?
 - d. Editing: Has minor editing for typos and punctuation been completed?
4. Clear communication w/ instructor
- a. Writing: Does the instructor know what this writing is meant to accomplish? Would the writing be clear to most people of average intellect outside this course?
 - b. Conferences: Has the student and writing been to scheduled conferences?
 - c. Office hours: Has the student come to see me about the writing during my office hours?
 - d. E-mail: Has the student sent me any e-mails or other communication asking about a particular aspect of writing or the course?

Feel free to contact me at any point during the semester to discuss your course grade, your trajectory in this course and your own goals in English 201. It is what I get paid to do, after all. My main concern is that throughout the course, you are able to demonstrate a continued engagement with the curriculum, and that by the end you can articulate a sense of your own progress or development as a writer.

Phase I: Where Are You From?
Exploring the Places of Your Past: A Memory Narrative

For this first assignment, let me make clear what I *don't* want: the standard (not to mention completely dull) “What I Did Last Summer” essay. Rather, I want you to take a mental stroll down memory lane and revisit some of the significant places of your past that have helped shape you into the person you are today. A deeper consideration of place and its relationship to identity will, I hope, lend itself to a narrative far more dynamic than any requisite personal statement you’ve written in the past.

During the gathering stage, you can approach the essay in one of two ways: First, consider some important moments in your life (and I use “moments” with the idea that you cannot, in a five- to six-page essay, explore much more than a moment in your life) and then think about where those moments took place. Second, you can reflect on some places that have been important to you—your dining room, New York City, the summer camp where you worked, the local record store, Spain, the mountains, wherever—and then think about a moment that occurred in one of those places. Ultimately, I want you to draw a connection between yourself and this place, and how this place has influenced you.

We will take many devices you might typically associate with fiction writing and apply them to this assignment. You’ll concentrate on developing characters, dialogue and details. This assignment might seem more “creative” and “personal” than some of the other writing we’ll do in this class, but let me assure you that all writing you do in any class must be “creative” and “personal” if it is going to be successful.

Having said that, don’t be intimidated by the personal process of writing about yourself: While you should strive as the narrator and character to be candid and engaging, I do not want you to feel that you must be *confessional*. Certainly some of the most difficult pieces to write and most interesting pieces to read are those that offer a glimpse at the ordinary, at the non-tragic. You are welcome to share with your audience (your peers and instructor) a memory that is rather painful; just know that this essay, like every essay you write for this class, will undergo rigorous revision that might seem more difficult given the sensitive topic. If you don’t think you can share your narrative with us or see it through the revision process, then you should choose another topic.

This assignment serves multiple purposes. It will give you the opportunity to write about a personal experience to gain insight into yourself as well as to your connections to certain places. It will also give you the opportunity to hone such crucial skills as developing voice, details, and structure. You will practice drawing on personal experience in order to convey a compelling and purposeful essay.

As you begin to take your proverbial stroll down memory lane, remember that good stories occur everywhere; they are as likely to occur in your own neighborhood as in some exotic locale. The goal is to find the tension in the story, to find the meaning in the narrative no matter how ordinary or traumatic it may be. You’ll need to really put your readers there—wherever that may be—which means putting yourself there as well. I want you and your writing to be courageous, creative, critical, and insightful. Whether or not your essay is engaging depends upon the subject, your interest in it, and the skillful ways in which you weave together the elements—characters, voice, action, detail, sequence of events, dialogue, tension—of your story.

***Phase II: Making The Transition From Where You Are From
to Where You Are Now: A Descriptive Analysis***

For this second assignment, I want you to begin to explore the city that you have chosen to live in for the next four years. For some of you, our state is “home,” and our city is a city you have been exploring your entire lives. You are familiar with the landscape, and see the city through the eyes of a local. For others of you, however, our city is a whole new world, one that you see through the eyes of a tourist. This project will give everyone the opportunity to observe this city, especially by way of the campus, so that you can (re)discover the culture of this place while also considering your connection to it, however new it might be.

The first step is to sign up to visit a place on campus or in the surrounding area. Once you have selected your place, you will visit it at least once before your first draft is due. This assignment requires you to become an explorer, and to observe in great detail your journey. I want you to record *everything*: your experiences and observations getting to your place and your experiences and observations upon your arrival. Please plan to spend at least **one hour** at your place so you can really get sense of its physical (and emotional?) landscape as well as the people who visit it. Later, when you return to your dorm or house and begin reading over your notes, you can decide what aspects or themes you want to focus on in your essay.

Thus, your second assignment is really going to be a hybrid piece, one that is part narrative, part descriptive, and part research. Indeed, over the course of your drafting process you should layer in the history of your place. I will ask you to perform primary (interviewing people) and secondary research (gathering brochures, reading articles about your place and the city). This research, along with your detailed experiences, will help you and your peers better understand this place.

In addition to writing three drafts, you will also give a short presentation about your place. (I can order media equipment if you need it (so you can log onto the Web.) Your job is to give a 5-8 minute presentation on your place—essentially, an interactive version of your paper. We’ll talk more about this final aspect of the project in the next couple of weeks.

Here are a few things to consider when visiting your place:

- How did I get here? (bus, bike, walk, etc.)
- Did I have to stop for directions?
- What did I observe while I was traveling to this place?
- What day is it today?
- What’s the weather like?
- Did I stop to eat along the way?
- Did I bring anyone with me?
- What kinds of people might be interested in visiting this place?
- Why did I choose to visit this place?
- Do I feel comfortable here?
- Is this place accessible to everyone?
- Does it cost anything to visit?
- Why is this place here?
- What is the origin of this place?
- Would I recommend this place to someone? Who?
- Would I warn anyone about certain aspects of this place?
- What is the relationship between this place and the campus and/or city?
- Does this place seem out of place?
- What other places are around this place? Restaurants? Museums? Schools?
- Are any special events happening in the near future at this place?
- Did I talk to anyone during my adventure?

Phase III: Arguing About a Place and For a Community

The purpose of writing a persuasive (or argumentative) essay is to persuade other people to (re)consider their views on a controversial topic and to ultimately convince them to agree with a particular point of view. Arguments focus on issues about which there is some debate; if there is no debate, there is no argument.

For this essay, you will need to do the following:

1. **Choose an issue that is occurring within a community of which you are a member;**
2. **Argue a position and support it with evidence in the form of personal experience, primary and secondary research, statistics, interviews, examples, anecdotes, and so forth;**
3. **Recognize and accommodate your opposition and their arguments so that you can present a balanced and responsible argument.**

You may find that your investigation of the issue will lead you beyond the polar positions toward a compromise or even a completely new solution. In other words, such an essay may reveal that the result of comparing one position against another is to arrive at yet a third position, which is now possible because both sides have been fully explored and a reasonable compromise presents itself. I don't expect you to solve a major social ill, but I do expect you to explore the debate and to provide some solutions that you generate through your research.

The form of this essay, like your other essays, will be hybrid: I want you to continue honing your creative, descriptive and analytical skills so that the result is a personal, responsible, informative and engaging persuasive essay. You might take a national topic and localize it; conversely, you might take a local issue and go national with it. You'll begin by thinking about the communities to which you belong: the university, your hometown, extracurricular activities or athletic associations, or where you volunteer or work. From there, you'll begin to answer the following questions:

- **What's your issue?** An issue is a controversy, something about which there is disagreement. If there is no debate, then you cannot write a persuasive essay.
- **What's your position?** Virtually all issues can be formulated, at least initially, as yes/no questions. It's your job then to take a position—yes/no, or pro/con.
- **What is your working thesis?** The thesis in a persuasive essay is the major claim the essay makes and defends. In persuading your position, you should state your thesis up front. It will likely change from week to week as you revise—your organization, your wording, perhaps even your position—according to your research.
- **What are your claims and counterclaims?** A claim is a statement or assertion that something is true or should be done. In arguing one side of an issue, you make one or more claims in an effort to convince an audience to believe you. Likewise, counterclaims are statements that oppose or refute claims. You need to examine an opponents' counterclaim carefully in order to refute it or, if you agree with the counterclaims, to concede on some points and then argue that other claims nevertheless remain more valid than those of your opponents.'
- **What is your evidence?** Evidence makes a claim believable. Evidence consists of facts, examples, or testimony that support a particular claim.

We'll return to these elements later in the writing process. While your topic should have personal relevance to you, your essay must also accommodate the opinions of others. Thus, you will need to have at least five sources, one of which needs to be an interview you conduct. I want you to work toward having a varied Works Cited list; try to consider many different sources (articles, web

sites, interviews, graphs) when you're researching so you can include various voices and various forms.

For the first draft, you will argue only **your** side. For the second draft, you'll incorporate the other side. Your final draft will, let's hope, be a well-rounded argument. I anticipate the final draft will be approximately eight pages long. While this length is longer than that of your other papers, it's not *that* long, so part of our work will be finding topics that you can work with responsibly in eight pages.

Good luck!

Where to Begin? In the pre-writing stage, you need to begin thinking about the following elements of your essay:

- **What's your issue?** An issue is a controversy, something about which there is disagreement.
- **What's your position?** Virtually all issues can be formulated, at least initially, as yes/no questions about which you will take one position or the other (pro or con).
- **What are your claims and counterclaims?** A claim is a statement or assertion that something is true or should be done. In arguing one side of an issue, you make one or more claims in an effort to convince an audience to believe you. Counterclaims are statements that oppose or refute claims. You need to examine an opponent's counterclaim carefully in order to refute or, if you agree with the counterclaims, to argue that your claim is more important to making a decision.
- **What is your working thesis?** The primary claim in an argument is called a thesis. The thesis in a persuasive and argumentative essay is the major claim the essay makes and defends. In arguing and persuading your position, you should state your thesis up front, with the remainder of the paper supporting it.
- **What is your evidence?** Evidence makes a claim believable. Evidence consists of facts, examples, or testimony that support a particular claim.

For this assignment, you will need to have at least **FIVE** sources, one of which needs to be an interview you conduct with someone. I want you to work toward having a varied Works Cited; try to look at many different sources when you are doing your research in order to accommodate various voices and various forms (books, articles, the Internet, interviews). For the first draft, you will argue only **YOUR** side; after you and I have assessed your argument, then you can incorporate your opponents' argument in the second draft. Aim for four pages for the first draft; ultimately, your draft will be 7-8 pages, as you will be incorporating other voices in order to strengthen your own.

Phase IV: From Where You Are to Where You Are Going:

A Vocation/Genre Inquiry

This final project will act as a culmination of the skills you have honed this semester. Think of it as a researched descriptive memory narrative in which you consider where you are from, how you got where you are now, and where you are going.

As we have learned this semester, “place” is a term that can assume multiple meanings. For this final assignment, you are going to perform an ethnographic study of a community you might belong to in the future. Here is the projected timeline. By now you (should) have selected a class to observe, observed the class, and set up an interview with the instructor. Additionally, you have completed the last few Scrapbook entries meant to get you thinking about your college experience thus far.

Like the persuasive essay, you will write this paper in stages. Here’s how I envision the drafting process:

First Draft: The first couple of pages will be mostly narrative. I’d like you to discuss:

- What the college application process was like for you how you selected U-M, and so forth. In other words, how did you get here?
- Then I’d like you to transition into discussing how college is going for you. What are your favorite classes? What interests—academics and extracurricular—are engaging you?
- Finally, I’d like you to discuss how you decided what class to observe and then share those observations.

Second Draft: In the second draft, you should incorporate the interview you conduct with the professor and/or someone else in the field you are studying

- I’d also like you do some secondary research by (1) locating a journal or magazine and (2) a web site devoted to your field. I would like you to summarize the issues being discussed.
- Based on your interview as well as secondary research, please spend some time discussing what kind of writing occurs within this field. Note the style, voice, and citation format as well as more content-based observations you make.
- Finally, can you imagine yourself in this field? What major will you declare if you pursue this interest? What kinds of classes will you take? Will you need to do internships, volunteering or other kinds of non-academic work? What kinds of jobs are there?

I encourage you to apply what you learn about your field of interest to the format of this paper. For instance, you might discover that in the upper-level econ classes, a certain form of writing is expected, and thus you may want to adopt that form for this paper, incorporating the appropriate tone and supplementary texts—like formulas, for instance. Or you might decide to further investigate a social issue you learned about in the sociology course you observed, and in that case your essay might take on the form of an argument. If you are a theatre major, perhaps your vocational inquiry will more resemble a play than an essay. If your investigation proves to focus more on you and your internal exploration, then the diary form might be more appropriate. If you’re feeling experimental with this notion of place and its various meanings, then the travel article might be an interesting rhetorical vehicle for you. See how many forms you can utilize—perhaps all within the same project?

Whatever form you choose, your project must offer research, personal inquiry, description, and analysis; I expect the same level of personal and analytical insight as you have offered in the preceding essays. Career fields and classrooms are rhetorical places in which particular artifacts and

language reflect and support a particular culture. It is your job to present an ethnography of this culture, and to reflect on your position within it. In short, do you, or will you, fit into this place, into this community? Although you must address this question, you need not arrive at any final decision. In fact, you may decide that more research is necessary before you make a decision about your fate in this place. This exercise is designed to stimulate thinking and not to necessarily generate answers; after all, I am asking you to consider some questions you might only begin to answer over the course of your lifetime.

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ABSTRACT

LOCATING PLACE IN WRITING STUDIES: AN INVESTIGATION OF
PROFESSIONAL AND PEDAGOGICAL PLACE-BASED EFFECTS

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Locating Place in Writing Studies: An Investigation of Professional and Pedagogical Place-Based Effects explores how place affects (1) doctoral candidates conducting a job search in Rhetoric and Composition (or Writing Studies) and (2) writing teachers who self-identify as interested in place-based pedagogies. Using the theory of *individual terroir*—a claim that place (as a location, a locale, and a sense of place) affects who academics are and what they do—and quantitative and qualitative research methods (surveys and interviews), McCracken describes how the participants incorporated their varied and complex relationships with place into their professional lives in spite of lore which suggests that academics are placeless and rootless.

The study's major findings include data which suggests that place is a determining factor for doctoral candidates when they apply for jobs *and* when they accept job offers, a finding which contradicts conventional wisdom and published advice for job seekers in

English. The national survey of place-based pedagogues offers an overview of the perceived benefits of place-based pedagogy according to writing studies teachers. Using a case study method, McCracken profiles six writing teachers' whose use of place in the classroom expands previous conceptions of a critical pedagogy of place.

This study demonstrates that as much as place(s) may be stereotyped and are often arranged hierarchically by social discourses, an awareness of place (as a category of difference) in academe by academics can push against perceptions about who academics are and what they value. McCracken encourages academics to use a “matrix of difference” when talking about cultural categories of difference (such as race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and ability). This “matrix of difference” may encourage students and teachers to see difference as context-dependent. This increased awareness to *individual terroir* can also create opportunities for a critical pedagogy of place in writing studies, allowing writing teachers to assert that writing is a social activity dependent on local discourses and that texts—much like places—are context-bound and context driven.