From Home to Public Homeplace:

Creating a Space for Working-Class Rhetoric in Composition Studies

by

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ABSTRACT

The topos of home is fraught with ideological baggage. This piece works alongside others that labor to rework home as a space for rhetorical topos. I spend the majority of my text analyzing three books from which I explicate the topos of "home." These books are Mike Rose's 1989 work *Lives on the Boundary: A Moving Account of the Struggles and Achievements of American's Educational Underclass*, Victor Villanueva's 1993 *Bootstraps: From and American Academic of Color*, and Ellen Cushman's 1998 *The Struggle and the Tools: Oral and Literate Strategies in an Inner City Community*. I've chosen these books for two interrelated reasons. First, these texts aided in establishing working-class rhetoric as a field of study within the paradigm of rhetoric and composition. And second, in their individual ways, each of these books is anchored in a profound sense of "home." Each of the texts also experiments and resists scholarly conventions to include some autobiographical passages. Central to these passages is the topos of home, a theme that both enriches the author's autobiographical account and informs his or her theory forwarded in that work. These features add fruitful theory building to both the authors' individual texts and the paradigm as a whole. I ground my work in working-class theory, analyzing the work of Steve Parks, Nick Pollard and Nancy Welch, alongside scholarship that analyzes those labeled as "other" in higher-level academia. The stories that Parks, Pollard and Welch quote, the works of Rose, Villanueva, Cushman and even myself, all work toward discussing and creating not only a "home" for working-class academics but also room for more working-class research and theory-building. As I argue in this

project, through these very acts of rhetorical/scholarly experimentation, Rose, Villanueva, and Cushman defied conventional standards for what counts as "good scholarship" in order to initiate a scholarly trajectory for working-class rhetoric in the academy. These authors' discussions of the "home" –specifically personal and political references to working-class homes—were instrumental tools in creating a public homeplace and space for further working-class theory building for rhetoricians in our field.

DEDICATION

To the individuals who saw me for who I really am: a working-class scholar. And to all the future working-class students of rhetoric and composition—you have something to offer.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis not only represents an academic study, but also contains personal details of my own working-class struggles. I would like to thank my committee for giving me the strength and guidance to share my past—alongside theory—in hopes of redefining home as a valued topos to aid in expanding working-class rhetoric within the field of composition studies. I extend a multitude of thanks to Elenore Long for helping me find my own agency in the existing paradigm and for *always* offering a guiding hand and encouraging voice whenever necessary. I am grateful to Duane Roen for his never-ending faith in me, as well as, his own working-class stories that always proved to spark me into more work, research and further investment in this piece. Finally, I would like to thank Shirley Rose for her consistent support throughout and extensive knowledge in feminist scholarship—and, in that regard, serving as a role model for my own work and future as a scholar in rhetoric and composition. Thank you all for your patience with me throughout this process; you are incredible scholars and I have learned so much from each and every one of you. This thesis would not be possible without you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER PAGE

"You need the man who crafts the building just as much as you need the man who is working inside." –Grandma Munson

An Introduction to my Disciplinary Question

How do we account for the emergence of working-class rhetoric in rhetoric and composition studies? In this project I argue that, central to this emergence, are the works of Mike Rose's 1989 *Lives on the Boundary: A Moving Account of the Struggles and Achievements of American's Educational Underclass*, Victor Villanueva's 1993 *Bootstraps: From and American Academic of Color*, and Ellen Cushman's 1998 *The Struggle and the Tools: Oral and Literate Strategies in an Inner City Community*. Further, by analyzing the topos of home in each of these works, I map the emergence of a public homeplace for research in working-class rhetorics and for pedagogy, particularly designed for working-class student writers.

When I was about four years old, my father sat me down and told me, "Margaret, you can do anything you put your mind to. You can be *anything* you want to be. But honestly, I don't care if you're a garbage collector, as long as you're happy doing it."

From a man who had spent the last thirty-five years working from sun-up to sun-down, scrimping and saving so he could attempt sending his six children to college on a sheet-metal worker's salary, that was a large claim. I spent the

majority of my twenty-four years thinking this dream was indeed plausible, that is, until I got to graduate school.

What do you do when you discover that you're different from—what seems like—everyone else? I'll tell you what I did—I quit. It was fall of 2011 and I had just finished a heated discussion in Elenore Long's race, gender and technology course. I was in my first semester, working towards a master's degree in rhetoric and composition when I encountered the class situation—literally and figuratively—that so offended me: Students were discussing the limited opportunities of anyone with a working-class background—the topic specifically centered around construction workers. Students in the class phrased a multitude of ideas: on consumerist-driven capitalism, the limited opportunities with moving up the class ladder—from working to middle class—and the inability to really progress when born into such a position. I sat there, listening to their compelling arguments, seething; I was pissed, and I had no idea why.

The following day when I approached Professor Long: my anger had faded, but the large gap between myself and the rest of the class was still apparent. I told her simply this:

> I don't belong here. People tell me I'm privileged, that I don't know what it's like to be poor, that I've had everything handed to me, that I'm white upper/middle class. But I've realized something, I'm not. I'm a first-generation college student; my father is a sheet-metal worker. I've always believed that I had a

> shot at doing anything in life. But now I've realized I'm working-class, and I *don't* belong here.

Professor Long listened patiently; she measured my words and then said, "That's why you're perfect for this place, Margaret, because you bring new ideas, a new perspective. You're the kind of person we need in a program like this one. Don't focus on your dissimilarity as a negative, see it as a positive, a way to expose people to the reality of other situations. You should read Ellen Cushman's *The Struggle and the Tools*; I think it will help you understand what I mean."

And so I didn't quit. I read Cushman, she changed my perspective, I decided to push on through, and now I'm writing this, the thesis to change my path, to lead me to a different life than the one that was initially laid out for me. This thesis is a representation of home, a detailed analysis encouraging a reassessment of the topos of home in a working-class rhetorical space in higher-level academia. This thesis is also a representation of me— the unfilled gaps that were prevalent in my learning career, gaps I hope to fill with this work.

A Brief History of Working-Class Rhetorics in Composition Studies

The social and political foment of the 1960s set the stage for working-class rhetoric as a field of study in rhetoric and composition. The foment insisted that the teaching of composition was inherently political:

> In the preprofessional phase of the field, up through the early 1960's, the CCCC's main journal (*College Composition and Communication*) admitted virtually no political discussion—not on

> anti-communism and the academic witch hunts, free speech, the Cold War, nor the atomic bomb. But before the end of that decade, when the NUC first entered the lists at CCCC meetings, the journal was addressing a range of issues from the noisy arena of national politics: two-year colleges and egalitarian education, racial oppression, the question of dialect and power, campus uprisings, student power, the rhetoric of confrontation, and almost everything except for Vietnam itself. (Parks xv)

With politics inserted into disciplinary debates, professional meetings such as CCCCs addressed connections among policy, pedagogy and the personal life chances of students previously excluded from higher education. In his 2000 disciplinary history entitled *Class Politics: The Movement for the Students' Right to Their Own Language* (SRTOL), Steve Parks narrates this history in terms of the politics of nontraditional students' access to higher education:

> [P]erhaps more than other disciplines, composition studies owes its current status to the counterhegemonic struggles waged around access to higher education. Without the efforts of the New Left, the Great Society, or Black Power, the reconceptualization of nontraditional students in the academy during the 1960s might not have occurred. Mina Shaughnessy's *Error and Expectations* (1977) would not have had an existing market to formulate. David Bartholomae's "The Study of Error" would not have the same

> bureaucratic and institutional framework through which to be read. (3)

Linda Flower describes the effects of 1960s open-admissions policies and the G.I. Bill this way:

> [A] growing number of underprepared working-class and minority students were appearing in mainstream colleges—which were even less prepared for them. Compositions began to realize that if the current-traditional paradigm of the 1950s (with its focus on correct, conventional texts) had failed these students, the process movement (with its happy neglect of the conventions that conferred social power) was in danger of failing them, too. (77)

Over the next fifty years, these changes in who was attending college and what college writing promised "to do" would call scholars' attention to the hidden biases in existing pedagogies, as well as open up new trajectories for action research.

My project traces the emergence of at least one of these trajectories around the topos of home. With new ideas and new individuals comes a need for new spaces, spaces that could actively incorporate the conversations that the existing canon is still lacking.

Working-Class Rhetoric as a Distinct Set of Discourses

But working-class rhetoric is not really "new" as it is new to the academy; working classes people have regularly made their voices heard independent of the

academy (albeit often under dire circumstances). In this context, working-class rhetoric refers to how working-class individuals use words in accordance with action in order to initiate change. History has often depicted this discourse as one of protest. Nancy Welch defines protest as the "collective contestation of deteriorating employment and social conditions" (231). She examines the work of working-class individuals outside of the academy and how it addresses class-based bias in the current paradigm. According to Welch "(class) conflicts [are] at the very heart of rhetoric and rhetorical genres" (237). Further, she argues scholars and teachers of rhetoric and composition could benefit from further study of these conflicts: "In writing classrooms, particularly those concerned with public writing or multimodal composition, historical and contemporary labor struggles can further enrich our understanding of what it means to compose" (237). From her economic standpoint, Welch commends the recent occupation of a manufacturing plant in Chicago by 240 of its workers as a site for rhetorical analysis:

> Their employer, Republic of Windows and Doors, claimed it had no alternative but to close the factory and lay off workers with just three days' notice because its lender, Bank of America, had cut off credit. The workers, members of United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE) Local 1110, argued back that under the 1988 federal Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act, popularly known as WARN, they were entitled either to sixty days' notice or sixty days' severance and health

> coverage plus pay for earned vacation. Pointing out that Bank of America had just received a cash infusion of some $25 billion from the U.S. Treasury, they argued that it could easily afford to loan Republic the $2 million needed to do right by its workers […]. (221)

Welch sees this sit-down as distinctive, claiming that by acting in this manner, "[the workers] claimed a rhetorical power unique to the working class" (222). She asserts that such a demonstration would provide a highly "provocative multimodal, multicultural text […] for study and discussion in composition classes" (223).

In this project, I use the phrase "working-class rhetoric" to refer to the *topoi* and values of those who labor for a living, as well as, labor, economic divide, and social discord prevalent in the paradigm. In this sense, working-class rhetoric engages labor and class as means for social change. In the past, working-class rhetors have often been portrayed primarily as victims of social exploitation. The challenge as Welch sees it is to revise this portrayal to include them also as "subjects of substantive social change" (224). As I explore later, mapping trajectories of the topos of home—from the physical to the academic—in working-class scholarship, is a method for making the shift that Welch commends.

Disciplinary Borders Defining Working-Class Rhetoric

Working-class rhetoric cannot merely be defined in terms of the economic concerns so central to Welch; it also borders studies of ethnic and linguistic diversity, along with feminist areas of study. Texts in these disciplines come in conversation with working-class theories when they center around exploitation of the "other" and work toward validating trajectories of research for those previously excluded in higher education. Working-class rhetoric helps fight for language rights within the academy, once again, focusing on the historical relevance of the SRTOL movement to working-class rhetoric as a space for study. For example, when discussing the SRTOL movement in *Class Politics,* Parks acknowledges his debt to working-class ethics throughout his college career (Parks ix). Similarly, Christopher Wilkey, like Welch, urges bringing working-class policy into the academic conversation (237). Specifically, he discusses the need for integrating more localized discourse amongst the various races, classes, and genders now prevalent in higher education:

> While creating an atmosphere of productive discursive engagement across racial, class, and gender lines may prove extremely challenging in public spheres where dominant voices effectively work to silence those on the margins, engaging grassroots social movement activities on the ground is more likely to provide substantive opportunities for discursive exchanges that challenge dominant conceptions of the lives of the socially disenfranchised and dispossessed. (256)

Wilkey challenges that formulating spaces for the socially disenfranchised must first occur in the grassroots or more private places in order to carry over into more public spheres. Below, Geneva Smitherman, scholar of African-American rhetoric, outlines additional work that borders working-class rhetoric: the intersections between class and race. She writes about working-class people of color facing daunting challenges when they entered higher education in the fifties and sixties. She writes:

> One major result of the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s was the creation of educational policies to redress the academic exclusion of and past injustices inflicted upon Blacks, Browns, women, and other historically marginalized groups. Programs and policies such as Upward Bound, open enrollment, Educational Opportunity Programs (EOPs), preferential/affirmative action admissions, and the development of special academic courses ("basic" writing) brought a new and different brand of student into the college composition classroom. *Unlike the returning military veterans and other working class white students* of the 1950s and early 60s, this new student spoke a language which not only reflected a different class, but also a different race, culture, and historical experience. (354)

In sum, working-class rhetorics are not solely focused on the discourses of white working-class individuals. Parks addresses this point in *Class Politics* when he discusses "the race line" and its direct associations with capitalism. However, to

provide an accurate definition of working-class rhetoric, it is necessary to note that while working-class rhetoric borders African American discourse, Latino/Latina discourses, linguistics, woman studies, economic theories and sociolinguistics, it does not fully encompass any of these other fields of study.

Journals currently publishing on working-class issues in rhetoric and composition range from *College Composition and Communication* that recently published, for instance, David Borkowski's, "'Not Too Late to Take the Sanitation Test': Notes of a Non-Gifted Academic from the Working Class" and the articles of Welch, *We're Here, and We're Not Going Anywhere: Why Working-Class Rhetorical Traditions Still Matter* and Parks, *Emergent Strategies for an Established Field: The Role of Worker-Writer Collectives in Composition and Rhetoric* that I've referenced earlier. Until just recently, Parks edited *Reflections: A Journal of Writing, Service Learning and Community Literacy*, another sponsor of this area of scholarship. Additionally, *Community Literacy Journal* publishes work concerned with working-class rhetoric, including "Building the Bridge Between Home and School: One Rural School's Steps to Interrogate and Celebrate Multiple Literacies" by Faith Beyer Hansen. Reviews of working-class texts, particularly those that I analyze in this project, appear in several journals, ranging from *College Composition and Communication* to *Rhetoric Review* to *The English Journal*.

Working-Class Pedagogy and My Reflections

As a distinctively pedagogical framework, working-class rhetoric also works to expose and to rectify hidden (or not so hidden) biases in composition curricula and classroom practices. "It is at these moments, when speaking truth to power becomes much more than simply protesting on behalf of "truth" against those in power, that the work of a social movement becomes the work of literacy pedagogy" (Wilkey 230). Welch describes the bias toward the middle-class values this way: "Teachers of rhetorical values and manners, Martin Luther King Jr. suggests, play a specific role in [working-class] disappearance if we promote exclusively the middle-class values and middling authority of the neatly typed CV, the letter to the editor, the committee-issued position paper" (230). We, as compositionists, teachers, administrators, policy-makers, and students, hold within our palms the ability to construct hierarchies (and lack of hierarchies) within our classrooms. If we don't make an effort to change the current class divides, composition pedagogies will be lacking a great deal of culture, information, knowledge and literate practices to which it could otherwise be enlightened and exposed.

More recently, this working-class pedagogical framework has begun to construct what Steve Parks and Nick Pollard label "the power grid." Parks and Pollard claim that in order for the working-class to assemble its own space within the academy, its constituents need to construct a power grid—one that is self-initiated and self-sustaining by working-class students, professors and administrators. They define power grids through examples of working-class

writers "[…] annunciat[ing] a sense of collective identity" (488) like the Brighton residents who resisted a community spa rebuilt as a luxury hotel simply through their locally published personal stories of living in the community (488). Parks and Pollard make the claim that working-class rhetoricians need to adopt this larger perspective when attempting to gain power for their voice. Describing an initiative to sponsor such a power grid on their own campus, Syracuse University, they write, "The goal, then, was not just the production of individual writers or writing groups, but the formation of occupational skills that could allow participants to build a structure that would make manifest the experience and insights of the marginalized working-class experience—the production of a vernacular culture" (Parks and Pollard 490). Parks' and Pollard's pedagogy integrated individual "vernacular culture" into an emerging network of working-class sponsors. They claim that this work isn't about individual writing or writers, but about the construction of a specific vernacular culture that will draw upon the "marginalized working-class experience," expanding composition as a whole and building a foundation for working-class scholars. Here Parks and Pollard are calling upon working-class individuals to draw from their own vernacular backgrounds to become a collective and to assert their collective values.

At the center of these working-class pedagogies are ideals concerning identity formation. Parks and Pollard claim working-class theory should work toward a collective goal, not just encourage the tales of individual struggle to gain individual identity and place; although, "to exercise power," Michael Zweig

emphasizes, "you need to know who you are" (qtd. Welch 228). Identity formation is a key piece of the working-class culture. To claim this identity within the composition classroom, Parks explains, networks of people need to formulate a power grid through which to articulate an identity. This can be achieved, for instance, by using one's own experience and skills to interrupt the dominant discourses of privilege (Parks and Pollard 501). Rather than focusing on the individual, working-class pedagogy attempts to organize and motivate individuals to help create a collective identity. At its best, this working-class identity is an inclusive, ever-changing representation of individuals, cultures, languages, and growth, a pedagogy to learn from, rather than dwell on, past oppression.

In sum, working-class rhetoric promotes acceptance of working-class individuals, alongside working-class thoughts and theories within the field of composition studies, and it mobilizes their collective actions within and without higher education. It considers working-class experiences and political/economic struggles and victories as potential pedagogical tools within our paradigm. In this project, I am exploring how working-class rhetoric helped authors Mike Rose, Victor Villanueva, and Ellen Cushman to advocate for expanding accepted methods, theories and genres within composition studies, and how their own working or lower class backgrounds helped to sculpt their individual research. Their scholarship continues to validate the emergent trajectories of working-class research and take rhetoric and composition far beyond the implicit assumptions of middle-class rhetoric and discursive practices.

Forging such pedagogy is daunting. "Working-class students often find their own voice and community experiences elided or passed over" (Parks and Pollard 477). As a result, they must constantly negotiate how much of their personal lives can enter classroom conversations and under what circumstances.

My first noted experience with what Parks and Pollard address in the above quotation came when I first began graduate school. Prior to that, I didn't notice a considerable divide between me and other students, although, looking back, it was always there. In graduate school it was apparent—in the stories I told, the way individuals responded in a negative manner to my optimism of "moving up the class ladder," or even just my thoughts and how I would assess various texts—my words always appeared rather simple; I was different, and I didn't fit. Composition slowly moved away from a space where I felt solace and intrigue to one where I felt, to be a valued member of the rhetorical world, I would need to confine myself to the previously drafted/accepted rhetorical canons—canons that encompass Lynn Bloom's view that composition is a "middle-class enterprise" (qtd. in Welch 224).

Oftentimes, the working-class student doesn't even recognize his or her disconnect with the students around them. Parks and Pollard document this phenomenon in the excerpts they collect from working-class students in their writing classroom. One such student is Joan DeArtimis. Artimis writes: "The strange thing is somehow, I didn't realize there would be so much of a class difference between me and other college students… age, yes, but not class" (qtd. in Parks and Pollard 497). This unrecognized disconnect can often intensify

students' academic struggle as they either begin to dissect their individual detachments, or deny the divide even further—both of which typically prove to have negative outcomes. For me, it was the former—I began to break down my differences in parallel with the individuals around me, and in doing so, I didn't see what I had to add to this paradigm, but instead, how smoothly the paradigm seemed to function without me: everyone had his/her space and each individual seemed to understand and value the corresponding middle-class students and ideas around them. However, not only is this a negative outcome for the individual (in this case, me) and his or her educational growth, but it also suppresses the addition of working-class values when those individuals cease to use their own learned practices, and instead attempt to assimilate.

To expand composition classrooms to include working-class rhetoric, Welch calls upon those classrooms to address political issues, worker strikes, sit-ins and petitions, and claims it is the working-class students that often understand this culture with unique insight. Consider deep-seated issues in the university: writing programs that simply aren't obtaining enough funding; the unmet, necessary staffing needs, or the monumental increase in class sizes. Welch contends that working-class theories and practices could help address these highly charged predicaments much more comprehensively than the letters, meetings and year-long planning that are considered more "appropriate" responses to such battles. Welch quotes Sarah Knopp when commending the use of these more disruptive tactics for such ends at her school in Los Angeles: "Some people say that what we're doing today is improper. Was it improper when they did it in the

civil rights movement?" (qtd. in Welch 237). Obviously middle-class ideas and techniques have value, but they also have a place, and that place is alongside a rhetorical repertoire that includes working-class rhetoric.

To maintain an unromaticized viewpoint, however, as scholars we must accept that each individual student should not be left alone to repeatedly carve out his or her own space within academia, regardless of whether he/she is working-class, middle-class, black, Latino, white. We must thus develop our intellectual stances that will envelope more collective perspectives. With this thought in mind, here is Welch's critique of *The New Work Order* by Jim Gee, Glynda Hull and Colin Lanshear. She writes, "Miragelike too, may be the belief in the ability of each individual worker to design a place for herself or himself in the contemporary economic social order provided she or he is equipped with a diverse literacy 'toolkit'" (qtd. in Welch 234). What's lacking in *The New Work Order* is the kind of collective organization depicted in Parks and Pollard's concept of a working-class "power grid." They write: "Vernacular culture is the successful production of a collective subject position drawn from the personal experiences and knowledge of a community" (Parks and Pollard 488). It is not a romanticization at all to consider the authority of the individual positively reinforcing a collective. Parks and Pollard also commend, "[without] such an articulation [of a vernacular culture], these local efforts remain fragmented across the city and disconnected from the university, adjacent but not integrated into each other" (487). Without a collective whole—or power grid—each individual story, each ethnography, and lessons learned from these vernacular cultures,

would influence the field of rhetoric and composition independently, but if we could combine these theories collectively, I believe, working-class literacy and knowledge would flourish in higher education. The stories that Parks and Pollard quote, the works of Cushman, Rose, Villanueva, and even my own text, all work toward discussing and creating not only a "home" for working-class academics but also room for more working-class research and theory-building. However, it is neither possible, nor should be expected, for each individual working-class academic to start at the beginning, to create an individual story, to parallel his or her struggle, in order to have an identity within composition, or academia as a whole. That is both a romanticization, and an over-expectant insult to working-class individuals. Landmark working-class texts like those I analyze below by Rose, Villanueva and Cushman add a great deal to the paradigm. Together they illustrate that individual struggle can and should end up fighting for a collective space (Parks and Pollard 490).

Chapter Two

A Background on the Authors

In this next chapter I introduce three books from which I will later explicate the *topos* of "home." These books are Mike Rose's 1989 work *Lives on the Boundary: A Moving Account of the Struggles and Achievements of American's Educational Underclass*, Victor Villanueva's 1993 *Bootstraps: From and American Academic of Color*, and Ellen Cushman's 1998 *The Struggle and the Tools: Oral and Literate Strategies in an Inner City Community*. I've chosen

these books for two interrelated reasons. First, these texts aided in establishing working-class rhetoric as a field of study within the paradigm of rhetoric and composition. And second, in their own individual ways, each of these books is anchored in a profound (but never romanticized) sense of "home." Significantly, each of the texts also experiments with and resists scholarly conventions to include some autobiographical passages. Central to these passages is the topos of home, a theme that both enriches the author's autobiographical account and informs his or her theory forwarded in that work. Both of these additions prove to add fruitful theory building to both the authors' individual texts and the paradigm as a whole. As I argue in this project, through these very acts of rhetorical/scholarly experimentation, Rose, Villanueva, and Cushman defied conventional standards for what counts as "good scholarship" in order to initiate a scholarly trajectory for working-class rhetoric in the academy. As I argue in more detail later, these authors' discussions of the "home" – specifically personal and political references to working-class homes—were instrumental tools in forming a public homeplace and space for further working-class theory building for rhetoricians in our field.

Rose's *Lives on the Boundary*

Rose earned a Ph.D. in Education from the University of California Los Angeles in 1981. Currently he is a Professor of Social Research Methodology at the University of California Los Angeles where his teaching and research interests encompass ideas on thinking and learning and the various methods we

use to study, foster and write about them (Rose, *Graduate School* n.p.). More specifically, Rose's scholarly interests broach the study of cognition in various kinds of work, especially "the skilled trades—carpenters, plumbers, mechanics, etc. and ways to bridge modes of inquiry— how we can rethink the barriers that often exist among disciplines, methodologies and scholarly and non-scholarly languages" (Rose, *Graduate School* n.p.). He's published a variety of texts. In addition to *Lives on the Boundary,* which I analyze at length here, he's also written *Possible Lives*, *The Mind at Work,* and *Why School*? Rose also has a blog, has published articles in a variety of forums, and received the Exemplar Award at the 2012 Conference on College Composition and Communication in St. Louis this past spring. Mike Rose uses his scholarship to help define a space for working-class individuals within the field of rhetoric and composition; he has come so far as to be labeled the "Working-Class hero" (Feuer n.p.). His work continuously interrogates taken-for-granted approaches to teaching, learning and literacy and encourages his readers to think more closely about the connection between institutional practices and students' life-chances for thriving, especially those students whom existing social structures most ineffectively serve.

In 1989 Rose published *Lives on the Boundary*. Here Rose challenges the definition of literacy in the academy, and uses his text to observe the work of students on the margins of the school systems. In his text, Rose examines his own "remedial" past—detailing his life as a student of special-education to his professorship at a major university—and articulates his work with a variety of students, arguing that our paradigm's *underclass* are not placed there because of

their own intellectual inadequacies, but because they are products of the environment from whence they came: where they studied, tested, and even their homes. The book's 1989 Penguin Press book jacket summarized Rose's project as such: "Remedial, illiterate, intelligently deficient—these are all the stigma that define America's educational underclass […]. Interweaving his own story and the stories of his students, Rose shows how the cycle of "despair and defeat can be broken." What's distinctive about Rose's writing (including, but not limited to, *Lives on the Boundary*) is his capacity and willingness to appeal to such a broad audience, both academic and public. Upon its release (as noted on the book jacket), *Lives on the Boundary* was acclaimed "one of the best books… on American education" (The Boston Globe).

In 1989, Jacqueline Jones Royster reviewed *Lives on the Boundary* for *College Composition and Communication* and did so with emphatic praise. She claimed that Rose's text re-narrates trajectories of success for individuals who could barely dream of that type of future. "We see before us a truth about achievement, and in interweaving his story with the stories of others, Rose paints a vision of success for those for whom success is rare, unexpected, phenomenal, but possible nevertheless" (Royster 349). She noted, too, the explicit political valence of the text, claiming that Rose's text has important implications for policy makers, scholars and teachers urging them to take action (350). She stated:

> Educational advocates-teachers, scholars, educational leaders, policymakers, etc. must be present who care and who are willing to create systems which take these students' lives and conditions into

> account in ways which respect, nurture, encourage, and which also speak clearly and specifically to the nation's promise of justice, equality, and opportunity (350).

Royster claimed that this action is up to us (rhetoricians), that we need to take into account pitfalls in our system that are limiting justice, equality and opportunity and that texts like Rose's will help guide that path. Royster clearly valued Rose's text and commended it to others in rhetoric and composition as a call to action to change the workings of the educational system to provide pathways for success for marginalized peoples.

In his 1990 review of *Lives of the Boundary* for *The English Journal*, John Rouse approached Rose's text from a more emotive point of view. He referenced individual instances from the book that spoke to that divide of being "labeled" or cast off in the academic world. Rouse wrote:

> Rose cannot forget the boy who said quietly, "I just wanna be average." Something in him [the boy] had died. "Let me try to explain," Rose remarks, "how it feels to see again and again material you should have once learned but didn't. [. . . There is the] embarrassment and frustration and, not surprisingly, some anger at being reminded again of long-standing inadequacies. (86)

In this passage, Rouse commended that Rose's text for portraying that continuous self-doubt students internalize from having felt undervalued and then concluding that they have no educational value whatsoever. The power of Rose's depiction lies in the details with which he portrays working-class children's lives: the

divide never dissipates. In this review, Rouse also referenced Rose's autoethnography in his analysis (86). Rouse highlighted the personal "battles" enumerated in Rose's text, and then drove home the significance of these repeated battles: "that failures in education are often social in origin rather than intellectual; that asking young people to become literate in the way we would like may be asking them to undergo a personality change and pull away from their community; that the effect of labeling children as deficient is to make them so […]" (87). With these words, Rouse confirmed that the social divide is what extensively affects the intellectual setting—that maybe if we could be more accepting of individual backgrounds and ideals, academia would cultivate more whole, fulfilled individuals. Rouse's review depicted a solid agreement with Rose's effort to interrogate how, within the current educational system the class divide negatively affects educational growth and opportunities for the "educational underclass."

Villanueva's *Bootstraps: From and American Academic of Color*

Victor Villanueva is currently a Regents Professor at Washington State University. In 1985, he received his Ph.D. from the University of Washington. His broad research interests include "composition and rhetoric, literacy, nationalism, pre-Columbian rhetoric, race and ethnicity, and racist theories" (Villanueva *English*). Villanueva has published a multitude of work including seven books that he authored, edited or co-edited and more than forty articles or chapters in books. His works centers on connections between language and

racism (LinkedIn). Further evidence of his stature in the field, he received the Conference on *College Composition and Communication* Exemplar Award in 2009 and is currently the series editor for the National Council of Teachers of English's (NCTE) Studies in Writing and Rhetoric series.

The book that set Villanueva's academic trajectory on its course is *Bootstraps: From an American Academic of Color*. Published in 1993 by NCTE, it received the NCTE's David Russell Award for Distinguished Research in the Teaching of English in 1995. This book is even more experimental in its style than *Lives on the Boundary*. The book jacket commends Villanueva's style to the reader this way: "Villanueva does not offer a reading in traditional linear academic discourse: he mixes voices, narrates, argues, reflects, cajoles, analyzes and ultimately calls for a sea change in the academic toward true respect for diversity in language and thought." This book-jacket description also identifies ways in which Villanueva's project follows and extends Rose's use of the autobiographical:

> *Bootstraps* is an unusual book: at one level it is autobiographical, detailing the life of an American of Puerto Rican extraction from his childhood in New York City, through trade school and the military, to community college, and ultimately, to an academic post in a university. […] At this level, the book serves the valuable end of making clear the often unattended concerns of students of color or of minority ethnic backgrounds in our nation's classrooms.

> At another level, the book examines these same issues from a rigorously academic viewpoint.

Both *Lives* and *Bootstraps* combine autobiography and scholarly analysis to push against limitations in the academy—thereby advocating for working-class rhetorical scholarship and pedagogy in the field. Additionally, *Bootstraps* extends *Lives on the Boundary* by also addressing more explicitly the political consequences of linguistic diversity and by positioning these concerns within the realm of working-class rhetoric (e.g., Villanueva, *Bootstraps* 137-39).

In 1994 Clyde Moneyhun published a review of *Bootstraps* in *Rhetoric Review,* expressing thoughts on the composition of the text, more so than the argument itself, but also clearly valuing Villanueva's rhetoric. Moneyhun, too, recognized the similarity between *Bootstraps* and *Lives on Boundary*. He wrote: "Like Rose, Villanueva uses this method to tell how a poor boy destined for life as a laborer ended up as a professor of English, and what his personal story has to say about the profession of teaching writing and more generally about the politics of education in America" (220). Moneyhun took these similarities further, detailing Villanueva's rhetorical moves and continuously comparing them to other authors who intertwine the personal narrative with the academic in order to appeal to a variety of audiences and to drive home their theoretical and political arguments. Moneyhun also previewed for readers the central place of Antonio Gramsci's Marxist politics in Villanueva's style:

> In his introduction Villanueva quotes Gramsci's pronouncement that "[a]utobiography can be conceived of 'politically'" (xvii),

> and this idea guides *Bootstraps*. In their political conceptions of their personal lives, they [Gramsci and Villanueva] both seek a place for their work as intellectuals in the struggle against the oppressive dominant ideological hegemony. (223)

Moneyhun then elaborated on how Villanueva's text instantiates Gramsci's politics—they both attempt to boycott the typical academic hegemonies and create a space in which their work and social backgrounds are more valued. In his review, Moneyhun also detailed how Villanueva persistently refuses to "go with the grain" in his text and wishes to be perceived as "an academic of color." In the final turn of his piece, Moneyhun drew upon his own experiences, describing to the reader his own working-class background and his connection to Villanueva's text. Like Villanueva, Moneyhun recognized in the academic system the elusive lure of casting oneself as a "traditional academic"—someone who holds himself above or independent of the existing social system. Moneyhun then begged the question, "But now [having read *Boostraps*] I wonder: Is there a way to remake myself as an "organic intellectual" who maintains class ties, a way to serve my original class interests from within the academy?" (224). Moneyhun's review underscored the influence of Villanueva's text on working-class academics, however hidden or stifled they may be.

In 2011 Ellen M. Gil-Gomez conducted an interview with Villanueva for *Composition Forum*. The headnote for the published interview emphasized *Bookstraps*' contribution to the field. Gil-Gomez wrote:

> Born in Brooklyn, Puerto Rican, a high-school dropout, a community college student, a Vietnam-era vet, a Ph.D.—Victor has a rich and diverse background that communicates itself most eloquently in his equally rich and diverse work: numerous edited or co-edited books [….] To introduce Victor Villanueva is to point to his own words; the best overview comes from his *Bootstraps: From an American Academic of Color*.

In the interview, Villanueva offered a retrospective account of *Bootstraps* that highlights a central point in the book: "Then, a section of 102 is devoted to 'AfroAmerican Lit,' and I realize that I had something to contribute, an understanding of the text that the teacher (a very nice man) didn't have. So—an English major" (Gil-Gomez). The interesting point here lies in Villanueva's note of "having something to contribute." It seems to me that many working-class academics feel similarly: that one makes one's place in the academy by finding that something to contribute, rather than assuming one already has a place or would be welcome by virtue of who one *is* or by virtue of one's educational preparation or class background. In the interview Villanueva spoke extensively on a multitude of subjects–for almost 20 years has passed since *Bootstraps* was published; however, another key passage significant to my project describes the experiences that frame his mindset. He said, "So here I am having to articulate quite fully the workings of the world I'm in and having to articulate even more fully the worlds I came from and that still reside within me. At this point, I'm neither fish nor foul yet both" (Gil-Gomez). In this statement for the interview,

Villanueva confirmed much of what *Bootstraps* dramatizes—that as an individual of a specific background (always an intersection of education, class, ethnic, and linguistic identifications) he cannot work only within the world he's in, but must also invoke the world from whence he came, creating his own multi-lingual space for learning. As I'll address in depth later in this project, this "world from whence he came" includes his home.

Cushman's *The Struggle and the Tools: Oral and Literate Strategies in an Inner City Community*

Cushman received her Ph.D. in 1996 from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. Two years later Cushman published *The Struggle and the Tools: Oral and Literate Strategies in an Inner City Community* through the State University of New York Press. She is a citizen of the Cherokee Nation and an associate professor at Michigan State University. Cushman's research revolves around "outreach, public engagement, service learning, community literacy, literacy studies, Cherokee language, literacy and identity and multimedia production" (Cushman, LinkedIn n.p.). More specifically, "she sees her role as attempting to be an agent of social change outside of the university and to work toward bridging the gap between the university and the community" (Cushman, *Research* n.p.). Cushman has published dozens of essays in *College Composition and Communication*, *Language and Learning Across the Disciplines*, *Rhetoric Review*, *Community Literacy Journal* and *Reflections: A Journal of Writing,*

Service Learning and Community Literacy. She is also co-editor with Gene Kintgen, Barry Kroll and Mike Rose of *Literacy: A Critical Sourcebook*.

The book jacket of *The Struggle* describes the work this way:

> *The Struggle and the Tools* explores the daily lives and language use of African-American men, women and children living in an inner city neighborhood. Based on three-and-a-half years of fieldwork, this book presents the oral, literate, and analytical strategies (the "tools") inner city residents use to gain resources, access to social institutions, and respect (the "struggle"). It honors both the types of agency present in the struggle, and the kinds of linguistic savvy present in the tools.

Of the three texts analyzed in this first section of my thesis, *The Struggle and the Tools* is the least explicitly autobiographical although Cushman does offer important glimpses into her own working-class background as I analyze in more detail later. *The Struggle* belongs within this trilogy for important reasons. First, it is a study of home: Cushman's personal home, and the homes of two working-poor families in a city Cushman calls Quayville as they struggle to keep life and dignity together under conditions neither entirely of their making nor fully under their control. Note the centrality of "home" in the introduction to *The Struggle and the Tools*:

> With so few men and their inconsistent contributions to households [Cushman later explicates the legal policies that exacerbated this dynamic] adult women became central to the maintenance of

> families and community networks. Women ran the *homes*, contributed to the area's safety, and gathered together around kitchen tables […] to exchange information and food. Since the women had to provide stable *homes*, they usually interact with public service institutions more than any other group in the community. (emphasis added, xi-xii)

Second, if Rose and Villanueva made the issues of working-class learners compelling to audiences of their time through personal narrative, Cushman made working-class rhetorical scholarship rigorous and reputable to her audience by developing a socio-linguistic method of critical ethnography. This text has advanced ideas on literacy and working-class culture and pushed understandings of critical consciousness and its place within rhetoric. Cushman documented that communities hone rhetorical tools and those tools serve specific purposes when dealing with specific struggles—not everything should be defined by or valued according to "the norm" (short-hand for values and practices that maintain middle-class interests).

The significance of Cushman's project is evident in reviews of *The Struggle and the Tools*. In 1999 Steven Gregory reviewed *The Struggle* for *American Ethnologist*. He detailed Cushman's contribution to the field of rhetoric, but more specifically, the insights her scholarship adds to literacy studies and perceptions of the existing class divide. After citing examples from Cushman's text, Gregory wrote: "In these and other encounters, Cushman deftly illustrates how the poor strategically utilize linguistics and literacy tools to

comply with the racially and class-biased expectations of gatekeepers, while subjecting the latter and their enabling power relations to critical evaluation" (1). This quotation sums up much of what *The Struggle* added to understandings of working-class ideologies in rhetoric and composition—theories that the lower classes can articulate their own agency to battle hierarchical power relations without the "help" or "guidance" of the upper-class individuals.

In 2000 Deborah Brandt offered her own appraisal of Cushman's text in *College Composition and Communication*. She emphasized Cushman's careful analytical methods. Brandt writes, "Cushman abstracts categories of language values, genres, code-switching strategies, metacommunicative stances, and other very specific linguistic re-sources that help readers see critical patterns in the discourse. The people Cushman studied are not so different from others in how they play games of power […]" (298). Because of the contributions they make to field, Brandt valued Cushman's depiction of working-class power battles and respect for these rhetorical moves. Brandt consolidated the book's argument this way: "Inadequate educations do not exempt this population from the requirements of symbol-based action […]" (299). In other words, even without effective educations, the Quayville residents were forced to take rhetorical action, and they do not disappoint. Brandt's review underscored the contributions that careful studies such as Cushman's critical ethnography of Quayville residents' home lives contribute to the field's growing understanding of how words work in the world.

Chapter Three

Methods

The Topos of Home

In this project, I analyze the topos of home in the early works of Rose, Villanueva and Cushman. I define topos drawing on Ralph Cintron's definition as treated in Elenore Long's *Community Literacy and the Rhetoric of Local Publics*. Long writes: "Topoi: *Topoi* are the commonplaces through which ideology structures the interpretive landscape of a given location, creating 'a very tight knot of emotion, reality and ideological interpretation'" (Cintron qtd. in Long 138). The rhetorical power of a single topos is its capacity to invoke both itself and its opposite (Long 138). The use of topoi in this text encompasses both the instantiation of home from a variety of perspectives and in many cases, the lack thereof: to feel displaced from home, homeless, a stranger without a home.

Home is a topos— it is indeed a location where ideology structures a landscape filled with emotion, personal interpretation and real life happenings. Using Cintron's and Long's definition on topoi and grounding it in working-class theory, I examine how both the personal and public homeplace can inform an academic home. So, to conduct this analysis, I read Rose's, Villanueva's, and Cushman's works for their references to "home."

After identifying where each author referenced "home," I read these passages in light of four interrelated questions:

1. With and Without a Home: Homelife and Early Educational Experiences: How does the author describe his or her homelife? How did this homelife affect his/her early academic years?
2. Finding a Place in the Academy: How did each author *find* a place as a learner or researcher within the academy?
3. Constructing Research Trajectories: How did each author individually construct new research trajectories as a strategy for building a sense of place in the academy?
4. Achieving Place: Where do the authors finally achieve a sense of place within the academy?

These questions were purposely crafted based on the combined autoethnographic/ethnographic genre of *Lives, Bootstraps and Struggle* and the distinctive focus on home in each of these texts. The specific genre of these texts begs for a close examination of both the authors' personal representations of home and the ethnographic studies that each author performed in writing his/her text. Throughout my project, I also include commentary comparing my own experiences with home—personal and academic—with the experiences of Rose, Villanueva, and Cushman.

To sufficiently theorize the politics of both personal and academic homes, I drew on the feminist philosophies of Iris Marion Young and bell hooks.

Feminism and the Home

The topos of home is fraught with ideological baggage. This piece works alongside others that labor to rework home as a space for rhetorical invention. Early twentieth-century feminist scholarship followed Simone de Beauvoir's argument that portrayed the home as a gendered space—trapping women in the meaningless, day to day labor of never-ending chores. Beauvoir's argument targeted the messes and meals that had become drudgery for women. She urged women to break free from that oppressive home structure and work alongside men making a difference *beyond the home*. According to this line of argument, women have been purposefully kept at home, away from publicly meaningful work and "condemned to stagnation" (de Beauvoir n.p.). This view of the home is present in the following excerpt from *The Second Sex:*

> One of the consequences of the industrial revolution was the entrance of women into productive labour, and it was just here that the claims of the feminists emerged from the realm of theory and acquired an economic basis, while their opponents became the more aggressive. Although landed property lost power to some extent, the bourgeoisie clung to the old morality that found the guarantee of private property in the solidity of the family. *Woman was ordered back into the home* the more harshly as her emancipation became a real menace. (emphasis added n.p.)

The bourgeois structure claimed a need for women in the home and men in public—both spaces needed care and to most men, the freedom of women to

coexist in public was more hindrance than a help. The home thus became an even further negatively construed space for women to reside away from public spaces.

Taking direct issue with de Beauvoir, more contemporary feminist scholars like Iris Marion Young would have us attend to the rhetorical work of the topos of home in textual sites of actual (and also discursive) political struggle. Young looks at home as a space for project-planning to come out of, rather than a retreat from public (Long 65) as de Beauvoir contends. Young reassesses ideas on homemaking. "Not all homemaking is housework," she writes (*Intersecting* 149). Young claims that by working within the space that constitutes a home, individuals form identities in the relationships, values and space they choose to surround themselves with.

This focus on identity is central to my analysis. David Fleming broaches community and home in a parallel ways in his text analyzing residents who were cast out of their homes in Cabrini Green: "So where we normally see only bricks and mortar, I look for spaces of dialogue and silence, community and alienation" (xi). This structure can then become a site for the growth of a discursive identity—one that will carry over values, morals and individuality into the socio-economic spaces of the physical public. Young states:

> Home carries a core positive meaning as the material anchor for a sense of agency and a shifting and fluid identity. This concept of home does not oppose the personal and the political, but instead describes conditions that make the political possible. The identity-supporting material of home can be sources of resistance as well as

> privilege. To the extent that home functions today as a privilege […] the proper response is not to reject home, but to extend its positive values to everyone. (*Body* 149)

Young's assessment of home parallels homemaking and identity construction as potential "source[s] of resistance" – the home she portrays actually enables individuals to fight against oppressive social constructs, rather than be confined within them.

Young's Normative Values: A Backdrop for my Analysis of the Topos of Home

"Despite the real dangers in romanticizing home, I think there are also dangers in turning our backs on home" (Young, *Intersecting* 164). Here Young acknowledges another impulse in a gendered culture: putting the home on a nostalgic pedestal where women with means spend their energies and their assets in retreat from the public world. By romanticizing home, a few women "get" to spend their lives as Martha Stewart wannabes. Young argues that this nostalgia also supports a patriarchal four-walled metaphor that negatively constructs and confines women–as-Other. It also fuels consumerism and an exaggerated sense of individuality based on that consumer-driven identity building.

In an essay entitled "House and Home," Young replaces negative connotations associated with home with four normative values that she claims should be accessible to all people (161). Elsewhere she explains: "To the extent that home functions today as a privilege […] the proper response is not to reject home, but to extend its positive values to everyone" (*Intersecting* 159). As I will

argue, Young's normative theory directly shaped my method of analysis. First, "home" as a *topos* has a rhetorical resonance with readers of Rose, Villanueva, and Cushman because it invokes some illusive normative ideal even when (or maybe especially when) actually existing home lives of these authors did not or could not instantiate these values. Second, the normative values that Young identifies assume additional political and rhetoric value in the context of Rose's, Villanueva's and Cushman's projects where they work toward creating a literal and symbolic institutional home for the research, study, theory and teaching of working-class rhetoric in the Academy. These projects were formative in creating, as I explain below, a public homeplace for this work and the constituencies it serves. Next, I discuss the normative values so important to Young's theory of home, and offer my own working theory of how these values relate to the construction of a "public homeplace" for working-class rhetoric in rhetoric and composition studies.

Safety

In "House and Home," Young references the idea of safety in the home. She claims that everyone should have the right to have a home in which they can feel safe and secure, but also recognizes it's too much to expect that everyone can be safe anywhere (161). Young also claims that in everyday life, violence often exists in the home, and that everyone should have a safe place where they can retreat from the dangers and hassles of collective life (161-62). While I agree with Young's more physical perspective on the idea of safety, I would also like to

make the claim that this idea can be perceived concurrently in a more metaphorical light. As I mentioned, Young claims that it is definitely too much to ask for every individual to feel "safe" everywhere. However, I would disagree that the physical home is the only space in which an individual should expect to retreat from the dangers and hassles of collective life (161), and in fact, I advocate in this project for the possibility of academia as a safe place for individuals residing in that "home." Academia is a space for learning, a space for individual growth—not unlike the physical home. However, while academia has the potential to allot a safe space for everyone, much like the physical home, that seems to be a privilege. There are many individuals who everyday feel a separation from the intelligent, nurturing, inquiring world around them, individuals who fear expressing their thoughts and histories because of that distinction from those around them—that fear of symbolic violence, say, a negative verbal response that would remind them they don't belong or that their inclusion is fragile and contingent on mimicry rather than their firm, full-stature positioning within the university. And yet this desire for safety is a fundamental one. Young writes, "If anything is a basic need and a basic liberty, it is personal safety and a place to be safe" (162). On similar grounds, I maintain that the need to feel safe within academia should also be incontrovertible—to feel that one's words, thoughts, values, linguistic repertoire, and past experiences will not be negatively received simply because they are different; the *basic* need to feel "safe" in expressing oneself and conducting oneself alongside others as a curious, committed learner.

Individuation

In addition to safety, Young next broaches the idea of an individual's right to individuation. She claims, "A person without a home is quite literally deprived of individual experience[… T]he individual is not allowed *to be* if she does not have places to live and to perform the activities of life, without basic routine and security" (emphasis added 162). A scholar's need for individuality and a place "to be" or exist in the Academy is self-evident. If we review pedagogies like that of the National Writing Project, Council of Writing Program Administrators, and National Council of Teachers of English newly crafted Framework for Success in Post-Secondary Writing (2011), we see that individuality-based "habits of mind" like creativity and metacognition are "essential for success in college writing" (n.p.). Identity is comprised of both creativity, "the ability to use novel approaches," and metacognition, "the ability to reflect on one's own thinking" (n.p.); it offers the growth and comfort associated with bringing the personal into the academy. It is apparent, based on the newness of this Framework and the work consistent around it; however, that personal identity development is still lacking in the academy. Individuality is something that most classrooms attempt to strive for, most theories attempt to include; however, that sense of individuality and home still seem to become a place for privilege when the actual academy is involved. Young describes individuality in the sense of surrounding oneself with material goods that reflect one's own individuation—things that mirror the personalities and interests of the person at hand. Young claims that these things

are important to the individual in order to make her feel connected with her surroundings, for they reflect her identity back to herself (and to those who know her best) as a material mirror (162). Within this argument, Young then adds this clarification: "Thus basic to the idea of home is a certain meaning of ownership, not as private property in exchangeable goods, but in the sense of meaningful use and reuse for life" (162). In the same sense, I contend that the individual in an academic space needs to see firsthand material evidence she belongs. University recruitment materials are often savvy about this—circulating, as they do, to new recruits photographs of college students' cozily decorated dorm rooms—signaling, "You, too, will feel at home here at this university." Similarly, composition readers often strive to circulate evidence of this belonging. Take, for instance, the essay by Alice Walker entitled "Everyday Use" that circulates in many first-year writing anthologies. In this essay, the protagonist criticizes her sister's objectification of their mother's quilt and butter churn. In contrast to her sister who, coincidently, has gone off to college and swallowed lots of condescending theories and romanticizes these objects as instantiations of some exotic system, the protagonist values the quilt and the butter churn for their day-to-day use in their mother's life. The question that Young's point about individuation raises for me is, what other material evidence can universities make room for that would offer to working-class scholars and students "the sense of meaningful use and reuse for life"?

Privacy

Next, Young claims "privacy" as a normative value associated with home. She defines privacy this way: "Privacy refers to the autonomy and control a person has to allow or not allow access to her person, information about her, and the things that are meaningfully associated with her person" (162). This definition addresses head on some feminists' critique of privacy. Young summarizes this line of reasoning: "Some feminists doubt the value of privacy, because they associate this idea with the "private sphere," to which women have historically been confined.[…] The traditional 'private sphere' […] confines some persons to certain realm of activity and excludes them from others" (162). She then clarifies the difference she intends: "As a value, privacy says nothing about opportunities for the person to engage in activity. It only says that whatever her social activities, a person should have control over access to her living space, her meaningful things, and information about herself" (163). Here, I see immediate relevance to the Academy. In the Academy, people should have the right to choose how much information, history, how much of the self, that they share with others. While students should have the option to keep these histories to themselves, they should also have the option to share them, as Parks and Pollard so effectively contend, power grids need to be created through which to articulate an identity— which can be achieved by using one's own experience and skills to interrupt the dominant discourses of privilege (Parks and Pollard).

Preservation

The fourth and final normative value Young discusses, embedded under the umbrella of home, is the right to preservation. Preservation entails the shoring up of the stamina required to pursue meaningful work and relationships. Because of the explicit political valence of preservation as it relates to the idea "public homeplace," preservation has an especially significant place within my analysis. Of preservation, Young writes:

> Home is the site of the construction and reconstruction of one's self. Crucial to that process is the activity of safeguarding the meaningful things in which one sees the stories of one's self embodied, and rituals of remembrance that reiterate those stories. I have argued that preservation in this sense is an important aspect of *both the individual and collective identity*. (emphasis added, 163-64)

It is here, in this final qualifier of an individual's need for a "home," that I find preservation's most direct connection to an academic home. Young's words on preservation—"safeguarding the meaningful things, stories of where one's self is embodied and remembrance of those stories"—is exactly what I'm doing by creating this text in the first place, and is exactly what Rose, Villanueva, and Cushman have done in their own works. By keeping alive our stories, by remembering and preserving the words, text, stories and histories of our own rocky paths, we are creating an identity for ourselves within the home of academia, and we are creating an identity and work site for future generations of

working-class students to come. This preservation is a political act of solidarity perhaps no better instantiated than in the status that working-class rhetoric (as an object of study, as a research trajectory, and a dynamic set of pedagogical practices) is gradually earning in rhetoric and composition.

To underscore the political relevance of preservation, Young looks to the work of bell hooks. hooks counters the idea that home is a matter of privilege and instead argues that "homeplace"—whether the slave hut or the meetinghouse—has been a space for the oppressed to resist their oppression (Young 160). What better space to *preserve* those humane social interactions that occur most readily when one is with one's own people, than a private, individual "home" space? And here is the most important turn of all: hooks contends that this homeplace—as a site of preservation—is also a site of future-oriented collective imagination and invention. Young explains, "The ability to resist dominant social structures requires a space beyond the full reach of those structures, where different, more humane social relations can be lived and imagined. On hooks's view, homeplace uniquely provides such safe visionary space." (159). Most importantly, homeplace does not invoke the nostalgic yearning for the privatized home where one evokes class and race privilege to retreat from public life. Rather, as Young asserts, "The mutual caring and meaningful specificity provided by homeplace more enables the development of a sense of self-worth and humanity partially autonomous from dominating, exploiting, commercial or bureaucratic social structures" (159). Without preservation, the individual truly would fade into that "melting pot" and

become, not a significant piece of the stew, but rather, a simple undetectable flavor within it (see Villanueva *Bootstraps*).

hooks's concept of homeplace has a decidedly public connotation. Mary Belenky, Lynne Bond, and Jacqueline Weinstock extend bells' concept to define a "public homeplace": a space that is "inclusive, nurturing, and responsive to the developmental needs of all people" (13) and further, "(1) we are all members of the human family, (2) the family should maintain a warm and supportive homeplace where the development of all the members is nurtured" (262). For Brandt, the African-American Church has been a quintessential public homeplace, serving as it has to preserve and mobilize "resistance, freedom, self-determination, and collective spirit" (*American* 108)—values in which the contemporary civil rights movement is rooted (110). hooks argues toward a framework for an entire group of people, "homeplace is the site of resistance to dominating and exploiting social structures [which] requires a space beyond the full reach of those structures where different more humane social relations can be lived and imagined" (cited in Young *Intersecting* 159). The point here is that pubic homeplaces not only preserve and protect people; they also prepare them for important political work. A public homeplace nurtures a collective people. Within such a space, nurturing often centers around story telling, connecting a people to a shared history. For instance, mothers and grandmothers in African American history nurtured others in "their effort to keep something for their own" (hooks 42), including "stories, foods, songs, and artifacts" (Young, *Intersecting* 160). This act of preservation is a political gesture and the representation of home,

a vehicle through which oppressed people have gathered strength to resist oppression (Young, *Intersecting* 160).

Relevant to my interest in the emergence of working-class rhetoric's place in the field of rhetoric and composition is that topos of home, and again the point that, along with protecting and elevating its members, a public homeplace can also prepare them for social engagement and/or activism. In her study of an African Methodist-Episcopal (AME) congregation in Madison, Wisconsin, Brandt tracks how the literate practices that members of the congregation practiced prepared them to protest past injustices. In her study of local public life, Elenore Long explicates implications of this rhetorical work:

> In the context of the African American church, the commitment to nurture its members from cradle to grave—in art, music and politics, for instance, as well as theology—has had political as well as spiritual implications, for practices that have nurtured the capacities of church members have also protested slavery and later forms of institutional racism. In the forms of "cultural support and uplift" (Brandt, *American* 118), nourishment has played a "compensatory role […] in providing against poverty and government neglect" (114). (65)

The relevant point here is that merely reclaiming the existential expression inherent in nurturing is insufficient for a public homeplace. Long continues, "In inspired contexts for literacy learning, nurturing is project-planning in the making—the premise for social engagement, not a retreat from it. […]In tending

to the space that constitutes home, residents create the space in which they enact their ever-changing identities, nurture close relationships, and clarify their values against the current social-political landscape *in order to take action in the world*" (emphasis added, 65). Thus, in my study, it's one thing for Rose, Villanueva and Cushman to identify "home" as a site of identity for a working-class writer. I am arguing that the even more significant work of public engagement and activism aligns with those individuals using their scholarship to forge a site for working-class rhetoric, theory building and pedagogy in the field of rhetoric and composition.

Chapter Four

Analysis

Constructing this thesis was about more than the completion of my master's degree; this piece was also about me, about the path that took me from my working-class family and the personal home to the submission of a work intensely focused on working-class rhetoric.

I didn't always recognize myself as working-class. I knew that I was different, but I had no idea it was because I was from a lower class than my peers. All I knew was that working hard was the only way to succeed in life. My father taught me to take pride in all that I do: "Munsons do not do anything halfway, Margaret." My family valued work over money, family over friends, and faith over, well, anything. It was not until my first semester of graduate school that I saw the inherent distinction between myself and the more outspoken students

around me. And it isn't that there weren't signs. While I worked throughout my college career, my best friends focused solely on their schoolwork always stressed about school and yet consistently getting 3.8/4.0 GPAs. At the time I was beyond proud of them, but now I wonder—as much as I love them—if having to focus only on school, made the whole process easier. And while college admissions boards direct you to send in resumes along with your grad-applications, how much do they really value the fact that you worked through college whilst taking classes? Do they really understand the 30-40 + hours that I worked during some of my college years? Do they really comprehend the amount of strain that working that much while in school can put on a person—the amount of stress you carry just trying to get through each task, each day? And do we really consider the different class backgrounds when teaching or learning in a normative-structure academic atmosphere? When a normative-structure is disrupted by others from a non-normative homeplace, oftentimes the "other" is the one who is negatively affected. In the analysis below, I trace the topos of home through the home and earlier academic lives of Cushman, Rose and Villanueva. It is through their scholarship that we can see how they used their backgrounds to push past the limitations of what is considered normative and thus, accepted.

Part One: With and Without a Home:

Homelife and Early Educational Experiences

How does the author describe his or her homelife? How did this homelife affect his/her early academic years? In this next section I analyze how Rose,

Villanueva and Cushman each characterize the homelife of his or her childhood and how it intersects with his or her early childhood education.

Rose: With and Without a Home: Homelife and Early Educational Experiences

In *Lives on the Boundary*, Rose details daily obstacles he and his family faced when he was a young boy growing up. Rose describes the living conditions of his family's house, having to share a room with his parents, and the lack of money they were able to bring in, which greatly affected their physical and emotional day-to-day life. He writes, "I was aware of my parents watching their money and got the sense from their conversations that things could quickly take a turn for the worse" (12). Even as a young boy, Rose was aware of the precariousness of life. He recalls trying to find small ways to help his family, for instance, taping pennies to the bottom of a shelf in the kitchen (12). Here Rose's account butts up against Young's normative values. Young discusses safety as one of the normative values that makes home a worthwhile entity for scholars to study. Safety encompasses that of financial security. Here we see the normative value of Young departing from the descriptive truths of Rose's own experience and it's that tension that makes Rose's autobiographical account so poignant.

Rose's description of homelife includes the neighborhood where he grew up: "It's popular these days to claim you grew up on the streets. Men tell violent tales and romanticize the lessons violence brings" (17). However, Rose depicts his home life from a different view: the unromanticized version of the streets

where, yes, there were gangs and knife fights, but the majority of time was filled with everyday people just trying to get by in life. Rose goes on to discuss the lack of children in his neighborhood, the periodic gang disturbances—although he declares he's too small to be of interest to them as either a target or a member (16-17)—but the most intense and enticing aspect of his neighborhood is ironically, in and of itself, the most boring. That aspect was the isolation he knew as a child:

> I cannot recall a young person who was crazy in love or lost in work or one old person who was passionate about a cause or an idea. I'm not talking about an absence of energy—the street toughs, and for that fact, old Cheech had energy. And I'm not talking about an absence of decency for my father was a thoughtful man. The people I grew up with were retired from jobs that rub away the heart or were working hard at jobs to keep their lives from caving in or were anchorless and in between jobs and spouses or were diving headlong into a barren tomorrow, junkies, alcoholics, and mean kids walking along Vermont looking to throw a punch. (18)

This excerpt from Rose's text portrays a hopeless existence, but does so in a compelling way. This quotation doesn't showcase what Welch calls, "collective contestation of deteriorating employment and social conditions" (231), but the lack of protest—giving up on the fight and resigning into the everyday dust bunnies of life. Here lies what's left of the fight, and it isn't much. Granted the working-class may be filled with protest when necessary, they may have the tools

to perform such work, but there are still sites like that depicted above where the fight feels lost and protest has been stifled. It is students coming from homes like these that would further benefit from discussions of the working-class battles and triumphs. Welch is so right when she commends, "in writing classrooms, particularly those concerned with public writing or multimodal composition, historical and contemporary labor struggles can further enrich our understanding of what it means to compose" (237). Her perspective is even more accurate when considering the space such pedagogy would cultivate for working-class students.

Rose later discusses where his home life corresponds with his own personal academic life. By studying this association, we can see the direct effects of the topos of home on the academic homeplace. He details, "I realize now how consistently I defended myself against the lessons I couldn't understand and the people and events of South L.A. that were too strange to view head-on. I got very good at watching a blackboard with minimum awareness. And I drifted more and more into a variety of protective fantasies" (19). It is here, in his own words, that we can see the direct effect of Rose's "home" life on that of his 'academic' life. Just as the neighborhood individuals would ignore possibilities of the future, and instead reside within their own comfort zones of working jobs day-in-and-day-out to keep their lives from caving in, so was Rose content to float through the days with minimal awareness of the potential future that lay within his educational opportunities. Rose posits that it was fear that made him "daydream to avoid his inadequac[ies]" (19), fear that he was too far behind to ever catch up. Likewise, it

seems to me, the neighborhood people were also too tired and over-worked to hope for a better future, to *protest*, and to work for change.

Rose associates being in his childhood home with being depressed. He discusses what it's like to champion the average in school, though in looking back, he recognizes the negativity associated with such a move. He writes:

> The tragedy is that you have to twist the knife into your own gray matter to make this defense work. You have to shut down, have to reject intellectual stimuli or diffuse them with sarcasm, have to cultivate stupidity, have to convert boredom from a malady into a way of confronting the world. […] It is a powerful and effective defense—it neutralizes the insult and the frustration of being a vocational kid and when perfected, it drives teachers up the wall, a delightful secondary effect. But like all magic, it exacts a price. (29)

Because of Rose's disassociation and inability to learn in school, the gap widened between him and his peers, stealing from Rose—to use Young's normative value structure—the security of knowing one belongs.

While the autobiographical aspects of Rose's text centers on his family, Villaneuva's focus is on his early childhood education and how his personal histories are at tension with that education.

For Villanueva, class separation was intensified by his ethnicity. He writes:

> But in those early years I was *el blancito*, after all. I could see myself as poor, the working class. And there is a connection between class and color, some overlap, matters to be discussed later in this book. But "color," back then meant shades of brown, black. It hadn't occurred to me that the Puerto Rican would somehow not be white, no matter the pigment. (xii)

Villanueva elaborates on the relationship between children's home and homelife to teacher's attitudes of them in school:

> Color isn't always race when it comes to teachers. It's an attitude, more an understanding of where we live than where we're from. We came from many places back on the block. A teacher would have had to go a long way to understand and convey an understanding of all those where-froms. But a teacher could have looked around and known the where-at. Few did, even among those who were racially of color. (2)

In both of these quotations, Villanueva shows just how the definition of color can influence how individuals of color are perceived. He makes note of the lack of interest in where he came from, and potentially, why he sees things the way he does. It seems interesting to focus on the label of color, but not attempt to dissect how that factor may influence his academic life. Later, Villanueva goes on to discuss the determination of how "American" individuals are, based on where

they came from, how they got here—that divide between natives, immigrants and minorities. He touches upon the idea of a 'melting pot' and what it really means. He says, "The stew metaphor maintains the violence of the melting-pot metaphor while suggesting that some of the ingredients do not lose all of their original identity […]" (20). This quotation furthers Villanueva's perception that immigrants often wish to lose connection with the "old country;" they want to "melt" into the pot, while minorities often wish to maintain some of their own culture. He portrays a clear distinction between the two and references this idea of a stew periodically; you see, in the stew all the ingredients don't meld together.

Key features in Villanueva's autoethnographic text details—as stated prior—his disassociation with that feeling of "color" or minority. He often states his belief in his American-ness and how he never noted his "difference" until he had something to compare it to in school. "Before we got the neighborhood TV, before lessons on Liberty Statues and melting pots in school, the Americans I knew were the older folks who cared for me: portoricans from the family […]" (16). Within my own autoethnographic examination, alongside those of Rose, Villanueva and Cushman, it is clear as individuals, we did not truly feel different in class, race, or even culture from those around us until there was something different to compare our homes to. Metaphorically speaking, an islander often won't see himself/herself as an islander, until so labeled by a "mainland" individual—they simply consider themselves, people. Children like Villanueva don't think to make class distinctions until exposed to the more diverse setting of school. He speaks of the other children in his classes; some he describes as

similar to himself; others as having more money, opportunity, education or even connections. This memory is a child's rendition and yet, his young worldview seems to clearly parallel the reality of today. Villanueva describes one immigrant family with almost a sense of awe, "[… the] Cigashes should have been 'new immigrants' too, but pianos and violins suggested maybe these new immigrants came from higher in the class system. Class comes into the academic's thoughts" (22). The final line of this quotation notes that it is only now he recognizes the actual definition and difference in class statuses, but as a child he clearly notes that the Cigashes surroundings and livelihood made them different than he. Villanueva earlier describes others' homes—furthering his tale of the Cigashes and how their family seems more educated, due not only to their surroundings, but the way they act, speak and live their daily lives. What's most intriguing is that Villanueva, as a child, seems to take note of the differences between his family and the Cigashes, not merely in color, money or ethnicity, but from the simple features of a piano, a violin and the divide in education that is made clear to him. For Villanueva, his childhood was marked by an ethnicity that precluded him from belonging. His childhood experience then informs his critique of the melting pot metaphor.

Cushman: With and Without a Home: Homelife and Early Educational Experiences

Unlike Villanueva, Cushman discusses more details on her feelings of separation from higher education. She notices her displacement from education

when comparing herself to other academics and surrounding locals. She entered academia as a "leap of faith," an option for a better future and, because of her past, ends up feeling so separated from this space. In her preface, Cushman discusses the path that led her to a need for higher education. She commends, "The promise of graduate funded study, and a history dotted with evictions, long stints of unemployment, educational underachievement, hard work and considerable luck" (ix) is Cushman's representation of her path leading up to school and the publication of *The Struggle and the Tools*. When referencing how she felt about her educational future, Cushman admits to not feeling at home. She observed: "I soon noticed two things about the relation I would have to the place: first, the private university to which I had been accepted sat on a hill over-looking the inner city; and, second, I identified more with the individuals sitting on their front stoops in the inner city than I did with 'my peers' at the university" (ix). Cushman goes on to describe the breakfasts she would have at a local diner and the residents' perception of the private university students, "the higher-ups" (ix). Cushman, unlike Rose, does not simply depict the extensive gap she felt existed between her and the "educated" peoples around her; rather she theorizes that disconnect. Cushman does not dwell on the negatives in her past, whether they were financial, social or academic; rather she launches a theoretical critique of why such struggles press down so hard on working-class people.

For Cushman, advanced schooling meant the threat of losing her sense of home. She says, "Between classes, *literally and socially*, I would sometimes call home, and my mother would remind me never to forget where I came from, that

in essence, blood means more than books" (emphasis added ix). Cushman obviously felt a pull from home to focus on where she came from. And like with the Quayville diner (ix), she felt more connected with the surrounding residents atop their stoops, but they seemed to have their own perception of the university students as a whole. It would appear—in some senses—she had no home. Going back to Young, Cushman's access to preservation was limited: her home life was tainted by the existence of higher education, and her presence in academia was marred by her class background. Following that thought, Cushman describes that tension: "The schism I felt between gown and town deepened in courses where I was told my writing really showed my class background and where I heard implied over and over again that people are to blame for their positions" (ix). The "schism" Cushman felt separated her from both the academic world she was supposed to be residing in, and the local world she felt more connected with. Cushman's mother openly reminded her that her education meant less than her life back home, while her teachers made it clear her "class background" was apparent in her work and that any lack of writing skill was her own fault. In this separation of 'where you're from,' 'where you are,' and 'where you should be,' which one really matters, and is it possible to exist in a space where all three are relevant and valued? Clearly for Cushman, as well as Rose and Villanueva, the opportunity for knowledge—that is, access to school—was not enough; the gap between whence they came from and where they were headed also needed to close.

These authors all comment on feeling displaced in the academy. Rose, Villanueva and Cushman all felt disconnected from their fellow classmates. This disconnect limits that feeling of "home" upon first entering academic spaces. The question to examine further then is how did these authors counter their displacement in these spaces, and what needs to be done to limit that disconnect in the future?

Part Two: Finding a Place in Higher-level Education

When one is confronted with an obstacle, how does he/she go about discovering the source tensions, and ultimately formulating a place for himself/herself within that space? The reason these texts were so interesting initially to me lay not just in their ethnographies documenting others' struggles, but even further, in the investment the individual authors had in relation to themselves. When I was confronted with academic tension, that lack of place within academia, I almost fled. Maybe Professor Long shouldn't have had to point out to me that my identity could bring new light to the paradigm, but it's lucky for me she did because I am like each of these authors in a way. We all have our stories to tell to unravel a purpose for ourselves, and a hope for the future of working-class rhetoric in academia.

Rose: Finding a Place in the Academy

Rose's story about finding a place in higher education turned on a few effective teachers seeing his unique promise. He writes:

> To live your early life on the streets of south L.A. –or Homewood or Spanish Harlem or Chicago's South Side or any one of hundreds of other depressed communities—and to journey up through the top levels of the American educational system will call for support and guidance at many, many points along the way. You'll need people to guide you into conversations that seem foreign and threatening. You'll need models, lots of them, to show you how to get at what you don't know. You'll need people to help you center yourself in your own developing ideas. You'll need people to watch out for you. (Rose 47- 48)

Rose portrays the extensive divide between those who have been conditioned for a life of academic challenges and those who have grown from a path where "street smarts" are highly valued over that of academic intelligence. The intriguing part lies in the movement between communities. If individuals like Rose had not been identified for their promise, they would have lived entirely different lives.

Rose's text above speaks directly to some of the flaws in the American educational system, particularly in reference to the variety of student backgrounds. If we are supposed to be a melting pot of a country, a mass of ideals, languages and beliefs, why are we not also a melting pot of structure? We come from these different backgrounds and spaces, and yet, we are supposed to adapt, lose one of the normative values of home: individuality (Young 162), and become comfortable within structures that we don't necessarily understand, nor

can we ever completely assimilate to without losing something of ourselves. That logic is so biased.

Rose elaborates on his own difficulties adapting to academia: "I was encountering a new language—the language of the academy—and was trying to find my way around in it" (54). From these passages, it is apparent, that not only did Rose suffer from initial difficulties in education, but that he slowly became aware of these struggles and how they connected to his background and physical homeplace. Rose felt a divide from the upper levels of American academia. Rose's disconnect with academics was in part due to the identity formed around his homelife and the lack of instruction there that could have helped close the gap between his individuality at home and the identity he was crafting for himself in school. The teachers who saw his unique abilities inspired him to continuously attempt to close this gap.

Rose casts his own struggle and later successes as a student in contrast with less fortunate but arguably, equally gifted, fellow members of the working-class:

> I've worked for twenty years with children and adults deemed slow or remedial or underprepared. And at one time in my own educational life, I was so labeled. But I was lucky. I managed to get redefined. The people I've tutored and taught and the people whose lives I've studied—working-class children, poorly educated Vietnam veterans, underprepared college students, adults in a literacy program—they, for the most part, hadn't been so fortunate.

> They lived for many of their years in an educational underclass. (xi)

The above autobiographical elements from *Lives*, draw attention to the tensions among three competing ideas: one, that education should be free to all; two, that individual learners should be recognized for their uniqueness, regardless of their class; and three, that education should translate into greater economic stability. When the educational system is viewed through Rose's personal experience, we can appreciate how tenuous these three claims are. Rose's storyline is testament to personalized writing instruction: listening to learners and what they have to say.

Villanueva: Finding a Place in the Academy

Villanueva finds his place in the academy by valuing education as a way to advance knowledge, not only of himself, but also of the field of rhetoric. Through his class and racial background, Villanueva can see literacy in a different light than many academics. He writes,

> "It's nobody's business," Mami would say. But I can't just say nothing about how it is I come to know some things, come to regard some theories on literacy and writing and rhetoric as more tenable than others, and how I come to think the ways I do about racism and ethnocentricity and the class system, and why I can believe in the chances for revolutionary changes in attitudes about

> racism and ethnocentricity and class through language and the classroom. (xi)

Villanueva's perception that the world needs to know the issues prevalent in class, racism and language in the classroom, is beautifully poised and undeniably accurate. Villanueva draws upon that need for knowledge, the need to show the world how issues with class, race etc. can negatively affect the education system—he shows a need for change. Villanueva's argument for change in academia is both prophetic and stagnant. His ideas are visionary (written in 1993) but academics still have not made the changes that will encourage a more welcoming environment for the "educational underclass," hence, the reason for this piece.

Also interesting in the above quotation, is the opinion of Villanueva's mother: "It's nobody's business," Mami would say. This perspective is such a working-class view, prevalent in *Bootstraps* and *Struggle* (ix) as well as my own past. Working-class individuals often have an extensive sense of pride—that feeling that they will work for what they get, and attempt to limit others' awareness of their daily life troubles. They wish to create their own agency and avoid the common knowledge that they have less than surrounding individuals. This conditioned way of thinking—hiding your lack-of-wealth, job situation, or limited success/class mobility—contrasts directly with the prominent academic way of thinking. If people knew the stories, the troubles and the reality, perhaps it would be more possible to broaden the space for that "educational underclass." Then again, we shouldn't have to tell every individual story in order to see value

in working-class rhetoric. It is in this sense that sharing personal stories like those of Cushman, Rose and Villanueva should work toward forming a power-grid and vernacular culture (Parks, Pollard 490) through which working-class rhetoric and stories is accepted, but not necessary for acceptance.

Weaving rhetorical theory into his otherwise largely autobiographical text, Villanueva turns to Paulo Freire and his views on structuralism. According to Freire, not only are the working/lower classes set up to fail in school through their own volition, they are also set-up to fail because of the structure of the society around them. Villanueva states, "Structuralism says that there are social, political and economic systems in place that keep us from fully exercising our freedom, systems that we see as "natural." The way out of these systems is through the *problematic*, by questioning the things we don't normally question, questioning just how natural the 'natural' is" (emphasis in original 54). Thus, for anyone to break free from the bonds that birth into a specific class allots them, they must either defy the system and move up the class ladder (as we are told early on is easily achievable) or must question the formation of the system to begin with and attempt to alter it. The latter changes things for many, rather than just the individual.

It is this ability to work to improve the lives of others, not only oneself, that Young associates with the fourth normative value of home: preservation (163). She argues that at their best, homes nurture our capacity to take on such significant and often daunting challenges.

In order for working-class rhetoric to have a valued place within the academy, definitions of rhetorical scholarship must continue to broaden in the ways that Rose, Villanueva, and Cushman extended genres for doing rhetorical theory. As Steve Parks and Nick Pollard commend, "The goal, then, [is] not just the production of individual writers or writing groups, but the formation of occupational skills that could allow participants to build a structure that would make manifest the experience and insights of the marginalized working-class experience—the production of a vernacular culture" (490).

Villanueva questions not only the overarching space of academia itself, but also his own place within higher education and how his individual story is a part of the whole. He claims his academic path is "[a] contradiction. It plays out this way: I didn't know what I was getting into, but I knew I was getting into something not intended for the likes of me" (xv). Villanueva analyzes both his class and racial background and his ability to fit within the structured space of academia. He feels that even though he earned these opportunities, he still did not belong within this space— "it was not intended for the likes of him." Shifting into the third person while also alluding to his stint in the military, Villanueva writes: "All that Sgt. V knew was that there was a kind of education possible that had to do with more than just getting to good pay: education as a way of attempting to make sense out of the senseless, *to become more, rather than to become other*. Bracy had become more black, in a sense" (emphasis added 53). Villanueva periodically discusses the idea of becoming more "black" or more of whatever you are, rather than aspiring to be something that you're not—for

example, to become more black, rather than to try to fade into the white. It is here, in this quotation and in this moment in life, that Villanueva seems to truly grasp the reason for education for himself and further, for individuals of varying classes and races: education could offer knowledge, and not just the kind of knowledge to help one blend in and become fully assimilated, but the kind of knowledge to further discover the self, and to allow that individual story to change the lives of others. When Villanueva claims "Bracy became more black, in a sense," he is arguing that education does not have to mean assimilation. Through education one can also slowly become more invested in one's own culture or past, rather than become raceless, faceless and in some senses, *spaceless*. Villanueva finds his space within the academy by not assimilating.

Cushman: Finding a Place in the Academy

Cushman defines her individual space in academia through her work with the residents of Quayville. Mentioned above, you'll recall Cushman's own battle with academia versus community— "between classes literally and socially" —she calls her mother, only to have it reinforced that her education means much less than where she came from. Cushman sets up her audience to understand that there is a divide for her because she cannot seem to find balance in her personal home and her academic homeplace (still under-established). Cushman goes on to explain her drive to find a place in academia through this text. She explains, "It seems so obvious to me now, even though it didn't just then, that this book had to be about class and race—about what people know, how they get by, and how our

critical theories don't do them justice" (ix). It is here that we see Cushman move from her own disconnect with the world of academia to a determination that a space needs to exist for all those that feel disconnected, and further, that she was going to be a part of broadening this space for lower/working-class academics.

Cushman furthers her work towards a home for herself (though that didn't seem her initial intent) with her studies of the residents of Quayville and her perspective on *their* agency. In her preface, Cushman discusses the language strategies that residents of Quayville use daily in their interactions with various *authority* figures. I will take some liberties when it comes to assumptions and make the claim that Cushman's background influenced her ability to pick up on this individual "lower class" agency—this claim will be clear later when I delve further into Cushman's analysis and work. For now, I find it interesting to address a summation of what Cushman discovered from her work with the Quayville residents; it seems to directly reflect her own push for agency and place in academia. Cushman states, "When critical scholars describe inner city residents, their daily lives, and their language use, they too often demean, overlook, and underrate the commonplace tactics individuals use to name and challenge their sources of trouble" (xviii). She furthers this idea,

> Using the idea of false consciousness, critical scholars fix individuals' political positions on society's hierarchy, calling them: the "disenfranchised," the "marginalized," the "disempowered," the "less powerful," the "underclass," the "subaltern," the "oppressed," the "dominated," the "subjugated," and the

> "subordinate" …They define individuals by what they do not have, do not do, do not measure up to. Then, as critical scholars and teachers, they claim to have theories to liberate them; to have the skills individuals need to produce change and organize together against their oppressors. Critical theories become the measuring rods for what counts as social action and agency, and too often, individuals fail to measure up. (xix)

Through this text, Cushman alludes to issues that most rhetoricians writing before her did not articulate—that identifying "lower class" individuals as such can often assist in their academic demise. Critical theorists all too often expect certain outcomes from individuals—when it comes to social action and agency—and when those individuals fail to reach that bar, they again feel the sting of their class and social position. Without a space within academia, oppressed, working-class people will continuously feel *oppressed*, particularly when labeled as such. By recognizing the divide among academics of various class levels, Cushman determines her own place within the academy. She uses this structural divide and focus on class to broaden critical consciousness to include theories on class studies, thus broadening working-class rhetoric in rhetoric and composition.

Part Three: Constructing Research Trajectories

How did each author individually construct new research trajectories as a strategy for building a sense of place in the academy? Not every working-class scholar carries the hope or ability to live individual success stories like that of

Rose, Villanueva and Cushman, and what's more, they shouldn't have to. Thus far, I have discussed how these three authors discovered a disconnect between themselves and the academy, as well as the lack of home for lower class individuals within higher-level education. However, while that is definitely notable information, it is also necessary to dissect how these authors went about creating a space for themselves and further, how we could formulate a home—not just for a singular individual—but for all working-class rhetoricians. For me, constructing a space for myself in this paradigm has to do with this thesis and trying to make a difference for other working-class rhetoricians. When Rose, Villanueva, and Cushman wrote their pieces, their texts attempted to do something parallel: to create literature based on their own lives and those struggling around them, that which could relate to the *othered* academic. To form my own place in working-class rhetoric, I take these ideas one-step further. I make the claim that rhetoric and composition should view home as a valued rhetorical topos and help create a working-class vernacular culture (Parks and Pollard) to guide working-class academics in fostering a home for themselves, a home where their histories and ideas are equally valued and preserved (Young;hooks) throughout higher education.

Rose: Constructing Research Trajectories

Rose constructs his research trajectory from the cloth of positive high school and early college experiences. He speaks highly of some former educators,

> Those four men collectively gave me the best sort of liberal education, the kind longed for in the stream of blue-ribbon reports on the humanities that now cross my desk. I developed the ability to read closely, to preserver in the face of uncertainty and ask questions of what I was reading—not with downcast eyes, but freely, aloud, realizing there is no such thing as an open book (58).

The key text from this quotation lies in the final statements, "realizing there is no such thing as an open book." Rose takes this ability to read well to his first job, teaching at-risk learners in an impacted elementary school. Instead of reading books here, however, he reads the situation and attends to the children he has been assigned to teach. In the above text, Rose discusses his feelings of gaining comfort in the academy. His research trajectories draw upon his struggles, but his success lies in his work with his students. He declares, "My students, too, were strangers in a strange land, and I wanted to create a safe section of the city and give them an opportunity to acquire the language" (142). Where other "experts" assume they already know what's going on in such educational sites, Rose entered the arena as an engaged scholar, attentive to detail and curious about what was going on beneath the surface. Moreover, he was determined to test new hypotheses as a researcher. Rose describes an encounter with a group of his students reading a scientific description of the big bang. He commends:

> I knew from my own early struggles that students who have not had a privileged education often freeze up when they see readings like these, particularly the big bang discussion with its super-

> scripted numbers, the vocabulary of its first two paragraphs, and the heady notions in the last. And they don't have the background knowledge or the conceptual grab bag of received phrases to make connections between scientific theorizing and mythic explanation. But give them time. Provide some context, break them into groups or work with the whole class, involving everyone. Let them see what, collectively, they do know, and students will, together, begin to generate meaning and make connections. (145)

This stance would serve Rose well. He constructed his research trajectory on its tenets, going on to carve a place for himself as a socio-cognitive researcher.

Villanueva: Constructing Research Trajectories

Villanueva uses rhetoric and composition as a site for constructing research trajectories from his own perspective. By refusing to assimilate, Villanueva also forces the rhetorical conversation to include a different perspective and interrupt the dominant discourse like Parks and Pollard call for. Villanueva brings in a perspective of, not just class divide, but the language barrier as well; he openly details ideas on assimilation as well as difficulties he encountered with the cultural divide. He claims that, due to his Portorican background, it is impossible for him to ever assimilate completely. Villanueva at one point states, "I have never stopped trying to assimilate. And I have succeeded in all the traditional ways. Yet complete assimilation is denied—the Hispanic English professor. One can't get more culturally assimilated and still remain other" (xiv). His viewpoint

is intriguing in that it is so honest. While he may be an intelligent and thoroughly admired professor of his field, Villanueva will, in part, always be seen by most as first, Portorican.

Due to that unwanted and unattainable complete assimilation, Villanueva must find a new path to progress as a scholar. Here we see him turn to Freire to aide in examining less dominant personal discourse within the academy. He writes: "Freire would have his students look at their individual histories and the ways of being with what they are led to believe is their place in the world, making contradictions between their worldviews and the official world views explicit" (54). He describes this as the external versus internal forces. This whole idea encompasses much of the analysis in this thesis—trying to exist in the limbo, the creation of a space between where one comes from and where one ends up. Instead of attempting to completely assimilate, if we focus on our own personal histories like Freire and Villanueva beg for, we can further entrench the topos of home and working-class rhetoric into the existing paradigm. This established trajectory can then aide other working-class rhetoricians in feeling at home in the academy and thus increase scholarly acceptance and knowledge-building.

One of the larger difficulties in incorporating class in the classroom is acceptance that class distinction is truly an issue in the academy. Villanueva reaffirms this with the following quotation: "It's hard to discuss the class system in America, because for so long we believed that ours was a classless society" (56). How is it possible to increase working-class knowledge and incorporate issues on assimilation, when many individuals refuse to admit that a division of

class even exists? Villanueva gives us some ideas on how to approach this. He quotes Floyd saying: "He outlined four preconditions for the 'true progress of oppressed people:' 1. The creation of history; 2. The raising of a mass consciousness to oppression; 3. The refusal of the people to accept oppression; and 4. The rising of the conscious intellectual" (55). If we could understand that there is oppression prevalent in our classes and our scholarship—within the academy and without—and then proceed to refuse oppression and incorporate multiple histories (and homes) in learning and teaching, maybe we can move forward and broaden the space for working-class scholars.

For working-class scholars to feel at home in academia, we have to shy away from the need for individual improvement to lead to valuation. Villanueva again draws from Floyd's work referencing that ability to succeed without a singular opportunity or luck. Villanueva allows, "Individual desires and the ability to meet those desires are not simply dictated by the individual's tugs at his bootstraps, nor are they simply matters of luck" (55). Educational success is not all about luck, it's not always about opportunity, nor is it just pulling on our own "bootstraps." From works like Freire, Floyd, Villanueva, Cushman and Rose, it is apparent that the rhetoric of the working-class cannot depend solely on individual stories; the space for working-class rhetoric needs to be expanded to include Villanueva's trajectories involving personal histories of the home. Villanueva showcases this with his own move away from complete assimilation and theorizing through his text on the opportunities that could be created by integrating home histories into the academy.

Cushman: Constructing Research Trajectories

Cushman broaches similar ideas to those of Villanueva and Rose, but does so from a different perspective. Cushman seems to draw her own research trajectories from the parallel between herself and the study of others. She describes her study of Quayville this way:

> These findings have important implications for the ways critical scholars go about studying hegemony. When critical scholars describe inner city residents, their daily lives, and their language use, they too often demean, overlook, and underrate the commonplace tactics individuals use to name and challenge their sources of trouble (xviii).

Cushman determines that everyday personal tactics that individuals of lower/working-classes use can often represent solid declarations of their own agency. Cushman gained her own agency and established research trajectories through her research with Quayville residents. She writes, "These methods of data collection, analysis and write-up allowed participants and me to make knowledge together, to engage in mutually rewarding reciprocal relations, and to appease our shared ethics of giving in equal measure to what we take" (x). Cushman further establishes her work in rhetoric and composition through the social and academic divide from her own world as well as her ethnographic research of the Quayville residents' fight against excessive power plays.

Unlike the elitist label that some locals initially attribute to Cushman, she doesn't take on that persona in her scholarship at all. Instead of focusing on what she can add to the existing community of Quayville, Cushman writes about the often unobserved rhetorical agency that the Quayville residents innately possess. She takes the agency they create themselves, and bolsters it, allowing it to be progressive on its own. She says, "The scholarly work I set forth here pushes beyond critical theory's dependence on the notion of false consciousness, and moves on to describe how individuals perceive and critique hegemony from their own critical vantage points using their own vernacular" (xix). Here Cushman focuses on the individual and the way that they make their *own* agency, using their *own vernacular*, rather than just accepting the agency power figures feel they need to *give* the residents. To further that idea, she writes: "The struggle described their perceptions of the common ways institutional representatives hindered community members' efforts to act for themselves; the tools described the numerous ways individuals linguistically strategized in their everyday strivings for resources and respect" (x). The community members of Quayville have the ability to act and speak for themselves, just as Cushman had the intelligence to make such a strong rhetorical claim on critical consciousness, both despite lower class backgrounds. Cushman's work based on these communities aides in fostering an academic "home" for herself, a method for constructing her research trajectory, as well as a stronger voice for the residents of Quayville.

Part Four: Achieving Place

Where do the authors finally achieve a sense of place within the academy? The beauty in making a claim for "home" in academia is not just in satisfying the need for the individual self, but also in increasing the knowledge-building and inclusion that will occur when working-class rhetoric becomes a more valued aspect of academia. In this piece of my project, I would like to examine, not only the influences that working-class struggles had on the autoethnographic genre of authors I am studying, but also the individuals that they taught and/or worked with. It is also intriguing to note how the authors' backgrounds influenced their perception of others: students that may have gone unnoticed, agency that would otherwise be overlooked, etc. and what those personal home influences bring to class-based rhetoric. As I explain below, Rose narrates achieving a sense of place through the pedagogy he crafts with and for working-class learners; Villanueva achieves a sense of place when he speaks back to specific educational policies; and Cushman achieves a sense of place when bolstering the agency of the urban-poor women in her study.

It is my belief when Long encouraged me to share my story and embrace the difference between myself and others, she, like Villanueva, Rose and Cushman, saw something different—something that perhaps could positively affect the world of rhetoric and composition. I also think Dr. Long has seen my thesis project as a site for my own agency and my way to connect with others from similar backgrounds. The promise of this project lies in helping change perceptions of working-class learners. Such change I believe has everything to do

with the topos of home for this change is central to making the academy more hospitable to more kinds of learners. So while I use this piece to express my own agency, I, like the authors I'm studying, would simultaneously like to parallel my own interests with helping others achieve their own purposes and sense of place.

Rose: Ethnographic Examples of Finding a Place

Rose achieves a place for himself when he sees his instruction resonating with students. Rose helps others (and himself) find a home in academia by writing about and with them—he uses their stories alongside his own to help guide his text. Rose spends much of his text discussing the difficulties of others; as noted earlier, he works heavily with those deemed vocational students, remedial or underprepared. Rose commends these individuals are not just residents of a physical and monetary lower class, but that they, "[…] for the most part, hadn't been so fortunate [to be educationally redefined]. They lived for many of their years in an educational underclass" (xi). This educational underclass is much like the class structure we see socially: mobility can be limited. It is these aspects that keep these students in the educational underclass that encompass a logic and intelligence that could greatly add to the existent paradigm. As we saw in Welch's piece, that working-class culture could add such a provocative text for compositionists to study (237). However, because this work is undervalued, these students remain in a stagnant space. Rose reinforces this:

> Every day […] young people confront reading and writing tasks that seem hard or unusual, that confuse them, that they fail. But if

> you can get in close enough to their failure, you'll find knowledge that the assignment didn't tap, ineffective rules and strategies that have a logic of their own; you'll find clues, as well, to the complex ties between literacy and culture, to the tremendous difficulties our children face as they attempt to find their *places* in the American educational system. (emphasis added, 8)

Here Rose draws upon the same ideas touched upon prior, that often, when individual students attempt a text or problem that they have not yet stumbled upon in life, they hit a barrier, and sometimes they fail. However, he counters this failure with the belief that even though these students may fail in reference to the structure set by common academic standards, they may create knowledge that was unexpected of them, or discover a logic of their own. While their logic and knowledge may not follow the standardized *guidelines*, that should not demote the knowledge gained in and of itself. While standards are necessary to fulfill, it is also essential to take note of individual agency and intelligence. Valuing knowledge in its core vernacular culture (Parks, Pollard) is one way to encourage working-class rhetorical integration into the existing paradigm.

Rose further examines the class gap in academia in his observations of students at the university level—here he discusses that idea of exposure to resources that individuals of a certain class background do not necessarily feel they deserve. Rose observes a conversation between a student and his girlfriend, "They're asking me to do things I don't know how to do. All the time. Sometimes I sit in the library and wonder if I'm gonna make it. I mean I don't know, I really

don't know… we don't belong at UCLA, do we?" (4). Here this student discusses his difficulty with understanding the requests made of him as well as his fear that he does not belong at a university like this. It is these feelings and these observations, that I deem so important in this text. If there are this many students who feel as though their logic and intelligence is not valued, or as though their patterns of learning don't have merit in a cut-and-dry examination-based type of schooling, then maybe something needs to change about the way we teach and the way we encourage learning as teachers. It is not just me, it is not just Rose, Villanueva and Cushman—it is all those people and so many others. It is individuals at public schools, universities, prep schools, colleges and any place in which learning seems to exist. In her text, Welch also focuses on that limited knowledge-building if we proceed to only value a common way of thinking or working. She quotes Michael Zweig, who says:

> […] the assumption, then, of a middle-class majority in our composition classrooms […] is some distance off the mark. […] what may be off the mark as well is the belief that, especially in schools serving predominantly working-class populations, the rhetorical education that best supports students' aspirations for economic security and social voice is one that's […] middle class. (qtd. in Welch 226)

A change needs to be made to advance learning and teaching of working-class students in an extensively working-class space. More specifically, we need to rethink the way in which knowledge, specifically working-class knowledge, is

assessed. Rose finds his place in academia, not by personal success or publications, but through those students who've been misunderstood, misdiagnosed or mislabeled. In applying his own scholarly lessons and path when teaching these underclass students, Rose finds a more peaceable existence in the academy.

Villanueva: Ethnographic Examples of Finding a Place

Villanueva studies policy and teaching in his work toward incorporating other rhetorics into the rhetoric and composition classroom. Like with Rose, through Villanueva's work, we can see that current assessment practices are negatively affecting the working-class aspects of the rhetorical paradigm. Villanueva focuses on struggles with class-divide in the classroom with hopes of changing how we critique and "test" individual students. Villanueva assesses this need for change through a variety of theorists; he focuses heavily on Freire and Floyd and their work within schools and individual classrooms. He writes:

> Class struggle concerns conflict. It concerns the point in which, in Floyd's terms, the oppressed refuse to put up with oppression. Floyd has his students take part in an anti-apartheid rally, a gesture at political action, a gesture extending students' senses of racial oppression beyond this country. For Freire, just giving voice to the consciousness is struggle, is action, is praxis. (58)

Here we can see both the need for recognition of an issue with class conflict, and a need to overrule that oppression.

Villanueva addresses options for moving toward a change in policy when he discusses the works and ideas of a man named David Zank.

> Zank's school has annually refused to administer standardized tests on the grounds that even though they measure nothing but the ability to take tests, they are too easily read as matters of the intellectual ability by the students themselves. He tells the teachers to do the same as his school's teachers—refuse to take part. The teachers say that though they agree with Zank on principle, they cannot afford to jeopardize their jobs. (92)

Villanueva looks at this idea and responds with a potential solution to teach test-taking, rather than valuing what "standardized tests" actually measure (92). He later touches upon Freire and surmises the laissez-faire ideas in that, "Students cannot be left to their own devices totally, yet they cannot be handed everything" (93). The combination of these two pieces broaches ideas on moving forward in academia, and attempting to get away from the strict guidelines of standardization. However, while Zank's idea of refusing to administer tests at all seems promising, the qualifier of Villanueva's perception of Freire—we cannot leave students to their own devices, but they cannot be handed everything—alters the perspective to a more doable, and influential idea. While we cannot hand students everything, and expect them all to understand one, singular form of testing, and fit into a cookie-cutter-mold of learning and succeeding, we also cannot turn our backs on learning as a process that broaches that "laissez faire" attitude. In other words, we cannot allow students to just sit around and learn

things as they see fit. According to Villanueva's work, we need standardization with movable boundaries. Somehow we need to figure out a way to create a standard of learning and assessment, with room still, for individual growth. It is through sharing histories and his work with policy and structural assessment that Villanueva gains a place for himself in the academy. Through his own personal story, it is apparent that Villanueva values the personal in the academy; in using this perspective to interrupt the dominant discourses (Parks and Pollard), more scholars may establish their place as working-class rhetoricians within rhetoric and composition.

Cushman: Ethnographic Examples of Finding a Place

Furthering the ideas of Villanueva and Rose, through Cushman's work, we can see that by existing only in a standardized sphere of intelligence, we may miss key agencies that other classes, languages and backgrounds have to offer. In this piece of my project, I elaborate further on Cushman studies of the ethnographic space of Quayville. She takes the time to consider the personal agency and educated interactions that inner city residents have with elitist individuals who often do not recognize any of this agency. It would seem that we discover what we look for: Cushman leads us to ask: if we only value that which we already know and understand, how can new learning take place? Cushman recognizes the work and intelligence of the residents of Quayville in the following excerpt;

> Residents in this inner city have agency—they're savvy negotiators of highly nuanced, everyday interactions with wider society's

> institutional representatives. Community members have critical consciousness that manifests itself in various linguistic events and artifacts that scholars often overlook, or simply dismiss as rudimentary (responding with silence, reading newspapers, doodling, talking with judges, completing applications). Their resistance and agency in the face of asymmetrical power relations rests in the very places one would least expect to find such agency and political awareness. (2-3)

Here Cushman notes the different and unexpected ways in which the Quayville residents invoke their own agency. She dwells heavily on this idea of critical consciousness, which she critiques for being narrow-minded and elitist. Cushman studies and documents the limited reaction to demeaning situations but how that does not diminish their expression of agency—we just need to look further.

Prior to the above quotation, Cushman relays an altercation between a welfare official and a woman—Lucy—attempting to obtain welfare for her daughter. On first glance, Cushman expresses that it would seem Lucy is beat down by the superior white woman, and that Lucy has no agency in this situation whatsoever. Cushman sharply indicates that most critical scholars would have ended their analyses there, never noting, "[…] what happened before or after this public interaction, without seeking the hidden ideologies informing Lucy's statements, without acknowledging the subtle ways in which Lucy bends her language to be both accommodating and challenging" (2). Cushman suggests that most scholars would portray Lucy as "[…] disempowered, and unreflective in the

face of these politics" (2); however, that is not the case. Lucy's rebuttal is simply hidden, traces of it seen in her *own* vernacular, her slight comments and her silence at some points. That is, Lucy may not be throwing a fit, but she is definitely challenging the system in her own way. By seeing Lucy's agency in her own vernacular, we learn something from her and the way she lives her life; it is here where we need to bring back Parks and Pollard's claim for a working-class vernacular culture in academia. Like with Lucy, if we enable students to use their own vernacular cultures to succeed, we might learn something more about our working-class students and their own representations of agency. Further, there are two key pieces to draw from this representation of Cushman's: (1) that lower/working-class individuals can maintain their own senses of empowerment and agency without needing it handed to them by some elitist higher-class individual; and (2) more hidden, that Cushman—as an individual of lower/working-class background—is the person who discovered this idea of false consciousness, someone who at some points, did not belong in the academy, herself. Cushman writes, "I see myself as a critical scholar, but of a different sort. The scholarly work I set forth here pushes beyond critical theory's dependence on the notion of false consciousness, and moves on to describe how individuals perceive and critique hegemony from their own critical vantage points using their own vernacular" (xix)—that is, in "their *own* vernacular." In this sense, Cushman allows herself to meld into the Academy, but she still has roots in her own community, roots in who she is, as a person and a scholar. I find it expressly interesting to see Cushman's role in discovering these hidden forms of agency

because I think there is a direct parallel between her own class background, and her insight into the lives of the Quayville residents.

Furthermore, Rose and Villanueva do similar work in claiming a broadened space for working-class academics by using their own disrupted learning to guide their teaching and technique. While academia can be rich with a variety of individuals, including the higher-class, often more educated intellectuals, it is clearly important to take note of those who do not necessarily follow the common path. Oftentimes only the "other" can offer the needed perspective. Rather than making working-class academics feel displaced or treating them in a manner that diminishes what they have experienced, perhaps it is time they, too, have a broadened *space* where struggles of home can be of value in the academy.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

Testament to the significance of home as a topos central to working-class rhetoric are two recent working-class publications—both with "home" in their titles: Eli Goldblatt's *Writing Home: A Literacy Autobiography* and Steve Parks' edited collection *Home*. Before I discuss my final thoughts on this project, I would like to articulate the work that the topos of home continues to do for the field of Rhetoric and Composition as witnessed in these recent texts.

Recent Works on Home

Eli Goldblatt received his PhD in Composition Studies from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1990. He is currently Director of Writing and Professor of English at Temple University (Goldblatt, *Department* n.p.). Published in 2012, *Writing Home* earned these accolades from Linda Adler-Kassner: "Life experiences, we writing teachers say, contribute to the development of rich literacy practices. In this remarkable book, Eli Goldblatt practices what we preach, showing readers how his experiences have informed his approaches to writing, teaching, listening, and living." Through Goldblatt's text, as Adler-Kassner notes, we can see that connection between the personal home and the writing classroom. Goldblatt argues throughout the book that through writing he learned more about himself and his students. While the text is labeled an autobiography, this piece also is a form of rhetorical scholarship. Goldblatt observes, "At the same time, I am reaching out beyond my personal circle in the hope that my stones offer solidarity to others who make their homes with written words" (7). Further, as a child of two working-class parents, Goldblatt broaches his inherent disconnect with academia—that space to which he is supposed to "belong," as a tenured professor, but one that he still finds alien and often inhospitable. He writes: "Yet I never feel exactly at home in our concrete and steel campus among the beautiful young people walking from class to class" (2). While readers may have assumed that one earns a place in the academy as a result of success, in his most recent book, Goldblatt speaks through his working-class values to expose the continuous disconnect that he experiences as a scholar.

Where Goldblatt has found a scholarly home is in his contributions to community literacy, a subfield that may successfully bridge working-class values in the academy and outside.

A prominent spokesperson for community literacy, Flower declares these community spaces as a site for cross-cultural dialogue, beyond that discussion of social issues: "The chief function of this imagined collective is to create a distinctive kind of rhetorical community—an intercultural, problem-focused, local public sphere designed for talking with others across difference" (10). And while many would see that as enough, Flower extends her discussion past "talking across difference," to urge action that has real consequences in the world. She writes: "As engagement moves beyond description and analysis (alone), researchers, teachers and students have had to figure out how to take literate action outside the familiar turf of academic discourse" (83). Another spokesperson for community literacy, David Coogan sees this scholarship as having a distinctly activist tenor and intent. He writes: "[…] that the making of a new public sphere ought to make room for advocacy, not just cross-cultural understanding" (480). Community literacy involves academics and community residents in literacy projects that speak to abuses of power and that imagine more just futures. Flower demands that we, as academics, not only discuss injustices of class, race, gender, etc., but that we take action outside of the safe structure of academia as well.

While Goldblatt's piece is not a community literacy project, it does examine some instances of the surrounding community and the gaps concurrent in

literacy work. "[…] And yet my educational theory seems flawed if I pay attention to one category of student but ignore the learners pressed up against glass walls that seal off my university's oversized buildings and wide plazas from the hope-starved schools and ghetto-priced corner stores at the edges of our splendid precinct" (Goldblatt 2). He then adds: "How do we wake from this dream of contradictions that comforts some and crushes others?" (2). Here Goldblatt reaffirms the disconnect that Cushman (ix), Rose (13-27), Villanueva (xi-xviii) all describe in their first books. He uses this autobiography to parallel that world from whence he came and his struggles there with the world he felt compelled to enter. Goldblatt, much like Rose, Villanueva, and Cushman, makes that claim for a home in academia: "[This book] records my search for home and my growing recognition that only in my writing life could I feel born within and borne upon the words forming the world I inhabit" (3). It is through Goldblatt's writing that he finds solace in academics; however, not all individuals feel share the same benefit from writing. As Rose, Villanueva, and Cushman remind us, there are many instances through which writing does not allot a space for home and even further, pushes against that opportunity.

Steve Parks, an Associate Professor of Writing and Rhetoric and Director of Graduate Studies at Syracuse University (Parks *Composition and Cultural*), does work that addresses just that. Parks helped lead the work on the *Gifford Street Community Press*- a press created specifically for the Westside community adjacent to Syracuse University. The introduction to the *Gifford Street Community Press* published work, *Home,* explicates its mission:

> Gifford Street Community Press intends to be a place where residents of the Westside can discuss their lives, their history, and their collective future. We believe that through publishing the voices of our neighbors and friends the deep values that are embedded in our neighborhood can be brought forward. That these values can serve as a catalyst for collective discussion and the creation of common goals. (5)

The Gifford Street Community Press worked to incorporate non-academic voices into both the academy and the publication world. By using these individual "home" stories, the *press* allowed for the local community to influence scholars and rhetoric in a way that only academics or published authors have had the opportunity for in the past. This work offers the home to be brought into the academy—in this way rhetoric and composition works towards incorporating both the non-academic voice into the academy, and widening the space for working-class rhetoric within the paradigm. As quoted prior my work, Young redefines homemaking as that "[…] material anchor for a sense of agency and a shifting and fluid identity" (*Body* 149). She furthers this idea when detailing the need for preservation in home:

> Home is the site of the construction and reconstruction of one's self. Crucial to that process is the activity of safeguarding the meaningful things in which one sees the stories of one's self embodied, and rituals of remembrance that reiterate those stories. I

> have argued that preservation in this sense is an important aspect of both the individual and collective identity (*Intersecting* 163-64).

The *Home* anthology addresses the inclusion of home in the same way—to help draw upon an *individual and collective identity*. The community literacy work was written to address that tension between communities like Westside and rather stagnant academic spaces. By studying working-class rhetoric alongside the "home," the gap between these two spaces can be bridged; we can then bring stories of home into the academy to serve as a catalyst for the creation of more knowledge.

In the piece, *I'm Really a Westside Kid,* Rosalee Jenkins offers that new knowledge when she explores her own path of Home and what it means to her: "There was no structure in home for me. I envisioned my ideal home to be more than just a house, it was the whole idea. The whole idea of family, love, support, and believe it or not, at fifty-three years old, I still have that vision in my head. I still have that vision of what home should be" (Jenkins 18). In this excerpt alone, we can see the value of home that should currently be prevalent in rhetoric and composition. Jenkins offers that a home should have support, it should be a whole idea composed of structure, support, and love—if this theory was present in academia, a structured support system from which one could learn and grow, then perhaps knowledge would prosper and working-class students would feel a sense of belonging as well. Jenkins' text speaks directly to my ideals on homeplace in academia. She elaborates further on her perspective of home, "It's amazing to me how people who don't even live in the neighborhood care about the

neighborhood. It is still my home, my heart after all these years and experiences. I hope that some part of it becomes a positive loving home for others too" (22). Through this idea we can see that working together of individuals from a specific homeplace with those who are not directly involved. Villanueva made note that teachers in his life never cared from whence he came (2), maybe if they had taken note from individuals like Jenkins, they could see the value of the neighborhood and the past in the students' present and future academic growth. Knowledge-building could increase exponentially if the topos of home was reassessed in academia and rhetoric and composition could further integrate working-class rhetoric into the theory.

In an article through Syracuse University by the College of Arts and Sciences News, Parks and others speak on behalf of the Gifford Street Community Press and the Home anthology. Parks commends, "We wanted students to understand that everybody can be a writer, but not everyone has access to publication or even sometimes to paper" (n.p.). A student working with the Syracuse Alliance for a New Economy (SANE)/Westside Residents Coalition (WRC) alliance furthers this, "We learned a lot of things that you can't learn in the classroom," says Julie Nascone, senior English and writing major. "More importantly, we learned how to interact and form relationships with people who have a very different way of life from ours. Friends, family, and community define life on the Near Westside. We learned that we are really not that different" (n.p.). The perspective that Julie addresses encompasses everything that my work is about. This new text by the Gifford Street Community Press brings the

individual lower/working-class-rhetoric and their homeplaces into the academy. They allow for knowledge growth for both the individuals themselves-through their own work- and for the students of Syracuse.

Conclusion

What sparks protest, sparks change. The topos of home, grounded in working-class rhetoric, could offer a space for study in regards to initiating a change of perspective with learning, and particularly composition. The students now have a "right to their own language," (Parks) but where is their right to their own class culture? Broadening the space for working-class rhetoric could aid in dissecting the tensions between wanting a certain path and having the ability to work towards that path, just as the Republic of Windows and Doors sparked change when their needs weren't being met (Welch 221). Studying protests like that of the working-class could assist in knowledge-building for moving away from an academic life of quiet resignation, toward one of active involvement and learning.

By focusing on surrounding communities, the individual localized home, and the personal home, and by publishing text on all of these, the paradigm of rhetoric and composition is commending the uses of the personal, physical home within the academy. Like Goldblatt's and Parks' works assert (and Young addresses), it is through this broadening of identity of home that we can finally begin to formulate Parks and Pollard's power grid for the *collective* identity and begin to shape those "[…] occupational skills that could allow participants to

build a structure that would make manifest the experience and insights of the marginalized working-class experience—the production of a vernacular culture" (Parks and Pollard 490). If we could bring this newly formed vernacular culture into the classroom, not only would working-class individuals have crafted a space for study, but as Welch contends in her work, this rhetorical perspective could also "[…] further enrich our understanding of what it means to compose" (237) and help foster further knowledge growth within the existing paradigm.

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