

IN SITES: LOCATING RESISTANCE IN COMPOSITION

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By

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For Katey

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The field of Composition has long noted that when writers interact with a new and unfamiliar discourse, the potential for friction is high as the writer learns to negotiate the boundaries of that discourse. For at least twenty years, Compositionists have borrowed from other fields to theorize the relationship between resistance and writing. Generally, however, examinations of resistance theory in Composition have been limited to individual behavioral or political resistance. Such theories of resistance provide a great deal of insight into student behavior and the political situations of the classroom, but ultimately these theories tell us more about culture and politics than they tell us about writing.

Rather than adopt a cultural approach to resistance, this work draws upon postmodern spatial theory to provide the means for relocate resistance to the act of writing itself. First, this work provides an overview of the development and current state of resistance theory in Composition. Then, grounded in past and present scholarship in resistance, this study attempts to show how we can reconceptualize resistance as a necessary aspect of writing, no matter the genre or situation. Examining one particular genre, the web site, this work theorizes how this discursive resistance can be used as a powerful teaching and learning tool.

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION: RESISTANCE THEORY IN COMPOSITION

To fight and conquer in all our battles is not supreme excellence; supreme excellence consists in breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting.

— Sun Tzu

Ultimately, the web absorbs shock and maintains its structure. Similarly, as academic discourse allows for – in fact, invites (‘come sit beside me,’ said the spider to the fly) – other ‘parent’ languages to enter into the web, it will absorb those discourses into what is and can be called academic discourse.

— Sidney I. Dobrin

Since at least the 1980s, Compositionists have been concerned with theorizing the social situations of writers. The social turn within the field of Composition eventually led to interest in links between writing and theories of resistance. Drawing from interdisciplinary sources, most notably radical educators and theorists such as Paulo Freire, Henry Giroux, and Ira Shor, among others, many Compositionists have made attempts to define resistance in order to understand its role in composition and in writing instruction. More recently, some Compositionists have questioned the need to define specific behaviors as resistance, noting that the urge to codify resistance leads to problems of representation and power, problems that become readily apparent when resistance is situated within writing instruction. Because of these problems Compositionists such as Joe Marshall Hardin argue that postmodern theories now need to be brought to bear on resistance theory in Composition.

The opening section of this work argues that the goals of resistance theorists in composition theory often have roots in modernist notions of emancipation that are temporally complicit with the “end of history.” Some postmodern theorists have noted a turn in recent decades toward the spatial organization of society, a turn which can be useful in reconsidering the goals of resistance theories and writing. In *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late*

Capitalism, Frederic Jameson claims that the postmodern concern for the spatial permeates our existence today: “we now inhabit the synchronic rather than the diachronic, and I think it is at least empirically arguable that our daily life, our psychic experience, our cultural languages, are today dominated by categories of space rather than by categories of time” (16). Such a shift in experience entails the loss of a sense of history; people operate within multiple unconnected presents. This change in the way people understand their relationships with other individuals and communities requires new ideas about the way we interact with the world: regaining a sense of history is necessary but difficult to imagine in a cultural situation so dominated by categories of space. The problem now is finding ways to connect a lost sense of history with the new spatial categories of the postmodern subject. The goal of this work is to suggest ways resistance theories in composition may be aligned with postmodern spatial theories to theorize new ways of writing that can help writers make this spatio-historical connection.

Roots of Resistance in Composition

One of the first articles in the field to appropriate resistance theory, Geoffrey Chase’s 1988 article “Accommodation, Resistance, and the Politics of Student Writing” indicates two trajectories resistance theory has often taken in Composition. Most previous examinations of students entering discourses had investigated the ways students are *successfully* initiated into discourse communities, but Chase is instead concerned with the ways students resist and oppose academic discourse communities. Borrowing Henry Giroux’s useful pedagogic taxonomies of accommodation, opposition, and resistance in order to examine the entries of three students into discourse communities, Chase defines resistance as “behavior that actively works against the dominant ideology” (15). Opposition behavior, like resistance, also works against the dominant ideology, but where resistance is “a movement toward emancipation,” opposition “does not move toward anything else” and “does not lead to a transformation of any kind” (15). Defining

resistance this way has resulted in two main consequences for resistance theory in Composition that need to be reexamined: defining resistance primarily as classroom behavior, and setting the goal of resistance as the emancipation of subjects (students) from ideological domination.

Although Chase does not limit resistance and opposition exclusively to classroom behavior, the result of defining resistance in terms of Giroux's educational theories seems to have been that resistance in Composition is generally theorized as student-teacher interaction, and not as a function of writing. The terms "opposition" and "resistance" have been useful for describing what goes on in classrooms, but the problem of representation always accompanies these terms. That is, the question arises: who gets to define what is merely oppositional and what is truly resistant behavior? Teachers should not be in the business of determining the specific ideologies from which to "liberate" students. Hardin argues in *Opening Spaces: Critical Pedagogy and Resistance Theory in Composition*, that the goal of emancipation is itself grounded in modernist Enlightenment ideals "about which set of universals offers humanity (or in this case, students) the best chance for achieving a utopic and unified social structure or a 'liberated' and 'empowered' self" (105). Reducing resistance only to classroom behavior limits resistance to the liberation of students from ideology, usually to resistance of whatever is considered the dominant ideology.

In this thesis, I will address some of the ways resistance has been tied to modernist ideals of utopian universals, and I will then suggest some ways to reconsider resistance in Composition. What follows is by no means a complete history; such a detailed examination is beyond the scope of a master's thesis, though I plan to provide a more complete historical situation of resistance in Composition in my dissertation. After a quick overview of resistance in Composition, I will turn to spatial theory to initiate the movement from resistance as a theory of emancipation toward resistance as a theory of location.

Emancipation of Resistance

Even before the introduction of resistance to the field, Composition studies has long been rooted in emancipatory agendas of liberating students from hegemonic discourses. This goal, rooted in affect, may be shared by most writing teachers, but John Trimbur warns that the emancipatory potential many writing instructors imagine in the act of writing may be “warranted not so much by a theory or stipulative definition as by a sensibility and structure of feeling that makes ‘resistance’ attractive and invests it with transformative powers” (4). This sensibility and feeling is informed by a desire for collective action and political change shared by many writing instructors, and while the motives behind it may be laudable, this view of writing instruction is in need of revision. It was around the rallying cry of collective action and change that resistance in Composition initially emerged.

When Chase introduced resistance to Composition, this was a change in direction that Trimbur says came in response to a perceived crisis in the process movement: “resistance, in other words, gave writing teachers a way to recover their equilibrium when all we had to offer failed to repair the damage we imagined the English teacher’s red pen and the authoritarian prescriptiveness of the five-paragraph theme had done to students” (Trimbur 8). The process movement had in part been a reaction to the restrictiveness of current-traditional rhetoric (or was at least adopted by some as opposition to existing current-traditional methods), and had flowered in the wake of the “literacy crisis” that followed open enrollment and the increasing diversity of the student body during the 1970s. Process gave teachers a way to codify and teach writing, and a way to resist the strictures of previous writing pedagogies. Emancipatory agendas lurk beneath the very idea that the process movement could fight back the “authoritarian” tendencies of current-traditional rhetoric.

Resistance is especially attractive because it comes bundled with a host of idealistic associations that appeal to critical writing instructors. Trimbur provides some examples of the kinds of political connotations the term “resistance” carries, developing brief histories of anti-Nazi movements and Vietnam-era draft card burners, among other left-wing political projects. The heroic tales of resistance movements offer hope that widespread social change is possible, providing a powerful organizing trope for teachers of critical writing. Of course, a primary difference between political dissidents and most writing instructors is their respective proximities to the systems they resist. The political dissidents cited by Trimbur work from outside the system, and in terms of non-compliance; writing instructors, on the other hand, have chosen to work within the system they resist. Nonetheless, the radical connotations of resistance signify the *feeling* that attracts teachers to the subversion of the very system within which they operate:

there is something ironic that this perception of how students create and inhabit gaps and fissures in schooling should give us such pleasure, for, as teachers and faculty members, we are, after all, representatives of the institutions of schooling. But that seems to me a source of the pleasure: our interest in the dynamics of resistance gives expression to our own hedges, evasions, challenges, and attempted subversions of the dominant educational mission. (7)

Pointing out that it originates as an affective desire is not an attempt to degrade resistance. Without the attendant pleasure Trimbur mentions, the motivation for resistance theory would evaporate. But carried out for its own sake, resistance is neutralized. While resistance provides a theoretical grounding for critical work against the nationalist project of the educational institution, Tom Fox cautions, “in the circulation of the term ‘resistance,’ it has increasingly been narrowed down to classroom behavior, and thus, depoliticized” (75). Taken out of any discernable political context and resituated in the space of the classroom, resistance in Composition risks becoming limited to a theory of teacher-student interactions.

It must be remembered that political resistance against hegemonic and militaristic institutions is often costly for those who resist. Resistance has consequences, and not just if the

resistance turns out to have been futile. Decontextualizing resistance in the classroom ignores the fact that resisters of authority often come to disturbingly tragic ends. The romantic vision of martyrs—what Trimbur calls the “tragic trope” of resistance—is attractive but deadly. Romanticizing resistance is unlikely to effect any kind of change in the writing classroom, as it smoothes over and homogenizes the real and disparate situations of students and their relations to hegemonic power.

In “Critical Teaching and Dominant Culture,” C.H. Knoblauch argues that in many college classrooms, students have no obvious reason to be attracted to the kind of change critical teachers desire. Knoblauch questions “the real plausibility of liberatory teaching in circumstances where there is a powerful self-interest, rooted in class advantage, that works actively, if not consciously, against critical reflectiveness” (19). Students often will not see any value in resisting the hegemonic power structures from which they already benefit (or hope to benefit with a college degree in hand), and are more likely, in such cases, to resist the pedagogy of resistance instead. Even students who are not situated squarely within dominant power structures may have good reason to resist the resistance that liberatory pedagogy seeks. Less advantaged students enter the academy because they *want* to enter the dominant culture and enjoy its benefits. They want to become part of the managerial class, and could easily see liberatory pedagogy as yet another obstacle to overcome on their way to success. For many students, then, emancipatory pedagogical agendas can rightly be accused of doing little good for students. Resistance carries a price for those who choose it; small wonder when few students respond.

Liberatory pedagogies assume there is something for students to be liberated from, but teachers have to be careful not to assume that their own ideological positions will be liberating for students. Knoblauch opposes the imposition of a teacher's own political views on students.

He contends that such imposition constitutes an authoritarian gesture inimical to the entire project of resistance in the name of student empowerment: “Such an abuse of power, whether overt as lecture or disguised as ‘discussion,’ replicates the very structures of authority that the radical teacher aims to call into question, resulting either in students' disengaged assent for survival's sake or their sullen resistance” (17). Teachers who uncritically reproduce hegemonic power structures in the classroom recreate the conditions by which students are disempowered and silenced.

Empowering students means giving them the tools and know-how to make decisions for themselves, and not trying to force a political position onto them. To do this, Hardin has followed Xin-Liu Gale’s model of the “edifying teacher.” The edifying teacher works against unifying modernist impulses, and works with students to allow them their own voices. The edifying teacher shows students possibilities for resisting hegemonic powers, including the potentially hegemonic power of the teacher; the edifying teacher takes the “position of the edifying philosopher, resists metanarratives and discourses of truth and rationality, and supports a dialogic, hermeneutic relationship with students” (Hardin 92).

For this to work, the students’ voices must become as important in the classroom as the teacher’s, and everyone involved has to be open to shaping contingent truths in the pursuit of knowledge. The most important function for the edifying teacher at first, then, is to prepare students to accept the contingency and contextualization of narrative and discourse. But teachers and scholars of resistance also have to accept that truths are contingent and must be negotiated in the space of the classroom. This requires that students and teachers each have a voice in the classroom; Fox notes that teachers report a failure to successfully teach resistance, because “missing, or less emphasized, in these accounts is the students’ political identifications outside the classroom” (82). Students bring myriad, unexpected experiences with them to writing

courses, so a single approach to resistance is unlikely to produce the desired results for either teacher or student.

Meet the New Boss

None of this is to say that critical teachers should pretend to relinquish power and authority in the classroom. Students understand the power dynamic at play between teacher and student, and that power differential will not disappear simply because a teacher wishes to ignore it. Teachers work in an institutional role, and within that institution they have the obligation to set the parameters for the curriculum and grade the work that students produce. Students expect this and are likely to treat with suspicion those teachers who attempt to abandon their role of authority. Hardin claims that teacher authority has been instilled in our educational system since its inception, and as such, it will be difficult to remove the traces of that authority within the space and time of a single class:

the positions of student writer and of writing teacher are emblematic constructions of the political, institutional machinery that has served to reinscribe the dominant ideology of national culture (at least in the U.S.) for the last 250 years. As such, the power structures of the writing classroom should not be reduced to personality or individual politics but should be expanded to include the basic issues of discursive power. (Hardin 95)

Those teachers who use the classroom to promote a single (personal) political agenda will reproduce the very conditions that resistance pedagogy attempts to subvert. At the same time, the political situation of the classroom, and especially of the writing classroom, cannot be denied. Indeed, every decision a writing teacher makes is political, and is invested with power. The decision to develop any pedagogy is political. Using the classroom to examine discursive constructions of political power requires that teachers attracted to resistance theories cultivate a different sense of what it means to promote a radical pedagogy. Ira Shor points out that resistance pedagogy is always circumscribed within its own limitations: “Since teachers can only create the conditions of democratic learning, cannot compel assent to a radical agenda

(except at cost to the very democracy they seek to establish), there are real boundaries to what critical teaching can accomplish” (Knoblauch 19). Resistance cannot function in the classroom as a simple opposition between left-wing and right-wing political discourse. As much as teachers might like others to agree with their personal political choices, it is unethical to use the political power vested in teachers to indoctrinate students. And even if it was not unethical, it is highly unlikely that such political indoctrination would be successful.

These limitations do not mean that resistance should be discarded as a teaching theory, but rather that it should be reconsidered and reworked. Teachers attracted to resistance pedagogy should not dismiss the feeling that led them to teaching, nor should they attempt to depoliticize the classroom. To do either would be dishonest; it is not possible to hold an apolitical class, as the power imbalance in the classroom is always political, but at the same time it is not desirable to give up the very passion that motivates teachers. What is needed is a different way of thinking about resistance. Teachers need to see the teaching of writing as a forum not for promoting individual political interests, but rather, “writing instruction that employs critical pedagogy and resistance must somehow challenge the political power structures of the classroom itself” (Hardin 83). This means initiating the conditions for a self-reflexive class, one that examines the production of power complicit in the production of discourse. As a site in which acculturation is always taking place, where students struggle between the discursive voices they bring with them and the academic discourses within which they are attempting to (or are required to) situate themselves, the writing classroom is an overdetermined political space where power differentials are always already in operation.

Writing instructors, by politicizing the power dynamics of their own classrooms, can see to it that the “student performance of academic rhetoric in the site of acculturation creates a space where value is alienated and disjointed in the possibility of something new, and where

space between culture and the academy is revealed and occupied by the student author and his or her text” (Hardin 33). By focusing in part on the rhetorical situation in which students find themselves in the writing classroom, teachers can help to ensure student investment in the production of discourse, can problematize the political situation of that production, and in the process can teach the conventions of academic discourses critically.

Calling for resistance theories that help teach “standard academic writing” is not a return to the product-centered standardization of current-traditional rhetoric. To teach academic conventions, teachers need not turn writing classes into training grounds for the corporate workforce or proving grounds for the “real” courses in a student’s major that typically come after early (FYC) writing courses. Writing instructions must instead teach academic discourse conventions critically, maintaining awareness of the values they inscribe on students, and recognize that “the dismal idea that we are merely training our students to be good workers or good students is not satisfying enough, but neither is the idea that we must merely teach students to resist the values of the dominant culture” (Hardin 31). Writing teachers have an obligation to teach students how to enter into and manipulate dominant discourses, but they need to do this critically, in ways that allow students to decide for themselves the moves to make within various discourses.

Knoblauch reminds us that composition instructors’ goals should be creating opportunities for students to enter an ethic of social responsibility. While admitting that he cannot predict exactly what students might gain from initiating a sense social ethic in the writing scene, he makes it clear that such uncertainty is a necessity: “the instructional challenge, accordingly, is not to force open obstinately closed minds, but to intervene creatively in processes of change that are already underway, making use of the intellectual disequilibrium that the university can foster in the interest of learning” (20). The trick, it would seem, is knowing

when intervention is appropriate, knowing when disequilibrium can be used as a creative force. The goal, according to Knoblauch, is not to create a false sense of equilibrium in the classroom dialectic, but for instructors to understand how imbalance can be wielded instead as a force for positive change.

Too often, teachers do not have success integrating resistance theories into the writing classroom. Those teachers who do not take into account the fact that the classroom is an overdetermined space, and ignore the multiplicity of meaning that students bring with them to the class, are likely to be disappointed with the results of their efforts. Hardin suggests that “these disappointments might be traced to the fact that critical scholars and teachers have often failed to fully embrace poststructuralist thought and the postmodern turn and are still laboring under ideas of liberation and emancipation that issue directly from the master narratives of modernity” (104). In the attempt to decenter the writing classroom, teachers have rightly removed themselves from the center of the classroom, only to place notions of critical thinking, individual politics, resistance, or other curricular concerns at the center of the class. This move still results in a classroom centered around authority, albeit authority displaced from teacher to curriculum.

Cultural Literacy, Resistance Illiteracy

While not situated specifically in Composition, E.D. Hirsh’s *Cultural Literacy* provides a rather extreme and well-known example of the modernist tendency to emphasize curriculum at the expense of students. Taken on its own terms, Hirsch’s desire to inscribe a unified American cultural base is understandable. “Because of modern economic needs,” Hirsch reasons, “the goals of language standardization and universal literacy become ever more urgent” (73). Underlying this economic argument for homogenization is the assumption that “economic needs” are somehow separate from discourse production, instead of constituted by it. To liberate

students for Hirsch means taking away their language, and imposing another on them in the name of harmony:

because of the demands created by technology we need effective monoliteracy more than ever. Linguistic pluralism would make sense for us only on the questionable assumption that our civil peace and national effectiveness could survive multilingualism. But in fact, multilingualism enormously increases cultural fragmentation, civil antagonism, illiteracy, and economic-technological ineffectualness. (92)

Begging and answering the question of who gets to determine our “national” literacy, Hirsch rightly points toward American pluralistic tendencies, but stunningly labels them “a moderate tradition in this country. We do not seethe with cultural animosities like warring Serbs and Croats. Our discussions have produced few influential defenses of cultural separatism” (95). This historical account seems to leave out most of American history; the genocide of Native Americans, slavery, Jim Crow, internment, contemporary segregation: all are conveniently missing from Hirsch’s utopian account of American pluralism.

Hirsch’s whitewashed vision of American cultural literacy blots out marginal groups, permanently marking their erasure, making resistance unthinkable. His need to regulate language obscures the fact that “the idea of a ‘community of discourse’ works to hide the fact that many communities include not one but several competing discourses – and that many discourses are more disruptive or isolating than they are binding in their effects” (Harris and Rosen 59). Hirsch is threatened by “cultural fragmentation,” but instead of trying to imagine ways to make it a productive aspect of culture and schooling, instead of working through ways to celebrate multicultural literacies, he imagines a utopic history “before” fragmentation, a plurality homogenized only because it is divorced from any historical situation.

In response to Hirsch’s universalist impulses, Compositionist Miriam Chaplin’s “Teaching for Literacy in Socio-Cultural and Political Contexts” takes up the argument that Hirsch’s solution for economic inequity is equally oppressive as the problem it is trying to solve. To

counter Hirsch, Chaplin forwards the idea that students should be at the center of the writing classroom. In a move away from the unitary notion of standardized knowledge, Chaplin explains:

placing students rather than curriculum in the center of instruction is a perspective that differs greatly from that espoused by Allan Bloom and E.D. Hirsch – the proponents of cultural literacy...Teachers whose classrooms contain diversified learners, however, must reject the positions of Bloom and Hirsch. These teachers must proceed from the position that the value of knowing does not reside in knowledge but in the cognitive and emotional underpinnings that determine how learners will use the knowledge they acquire. (98)

Chaplin is right to point out that Hirsch (and Bloom) need to be resisted by writing teachers, and like Fox, she recognizes the need to pay attention to students' own thoughts *and* feelings as they enter new discourses. Problematically, however, Chaplin goes on to assert that “[l]iteracy must be viewed as a means of liberating students instead of indoctrinating them” (98). This binary categorization of either liberating students or indoctrinating them is characteristic of the modernist grounding of resistance in Composition. Liberation, it seems, is always defined in opposition to indoctrination; they each “serve as two sides of the same coin” (Hardin 107). Moving beyond binaries is essential for relinquishing the deeply entrenched dependence on oppositional modernist notions of resistance.

Modernism from Current-Traditional to Process

Writing instruction has long been grounded in modernist concerns, and continues to be to this day. The process movement formed as a type of resistance to current-traditional rhetoric, but as Sharon Crowley and others have shown, the process movement did not fully escape the problems inherent in current-traditional rhetoric. To examine the lingering effects of modernism in resistance theories of composition, a brief overview of current-traditional and process methods is necessary.

Current-traditional rhetoric, Crowley notes, “defined discourse as the disinterested presentation of facts or information” (*Methodical* 158). Removed from rhetorical contexts, facts could be re-presented by anyone equally, if they had control enough of the language. Exemplified by Campbell and Blair, current-traditional rhetoric assumes that knowledge exists outside of the writer, and that this objective knowledge can be illuminated and displayed through effective writing. Because the writer already knows the information she will present in writing, writing merely serves as a means of transport for information. Because that information exists wholly outside of the writer, current-traditional adherents could “conceive of writing, and of writing instruction, as value-free processes carried on by people who somehow exist outside of ideology and culture” (159). With knowledge objectified, commodified, and depoliticized, there was little need for actual rhetoric in current-traditional rhetoric. That is to say that when knowledge is outside of the writer and can be simply transmitted, writing can stand equally in any context, and rhetorical choices become unnecessary.

Because according to current-traditional rhetoric there is one correct way to transmit objective knowledge through writing, much of current-traditional rhetoric was disseminated through lectures on the modes and grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Mechanical correctness received the most emphasis in current-traditional rhetoric because what counted most was the final product of writing. Adherents of current-traditional rhetoric value formal correctness because they see writing as a translucent window onto a writer’s thoughts. Thus individuals can be judged by the writing they produce. The current-traditional pedagogy, Robert Connors reminds us, used the product of writing to judge student deficiency, which was the teacher’s job to correct through discipline and repetition: “The easiest way to inculcate knowledge about mechanical rules, teachers assumed, was to abstract the problematical elements from their complex context (the text) and intensively practice them” (97). In *Composition in the University*,

Crowley ties the fixation on deficiency to a perception of “character flaws” in students, and describes the current-traditional necessity for writing instructors to correct these deficiencies: a “policing of character” (95). Crowley notes that student inability to conform to current-traditional discursive formalities was indicative of deficiency in thinking. The correlation of mechanistic style and depth of thought, she indicates, “reached its high point in the 1950s, when teachers failed as a matter of policy any student theme displaying more than five current-traditionally defined errors, regardless of its quality” (96). Writing reduced to surface features ceases to be rhetorical, and teachers who read writing only for mechanics are no longer “an audience in any rhetorical sense of that word, since they read not to learn or be amused or persuaded but to weigh and measure a paper’s adherence to formal standards” (97). Current-traditional writing treats writing as a way to judge students’ assimilation to the already-existing values of the academic community. Writing pedagogy centered on surface features and the policing of character de-emphasizes writing by taking writing out of context, removing the focus of writing pedagogy from the social and moving it into the individual. Writing becomes yet another commodity, something only other people do. Current-traditional rhetoric is not a rhetoric at all.

The process movement beginning in the 1960s and 1970s arose in part to counter the problems of teaching current-traditional rhetoric. The process movement seemingly made it possible to teach writing in a systematic way to large numbers of students, which became necessary with the influx of students that resulted from open enrollment. For the first time, scholarship was being produced in Composition, and much of this scholarship rightly developed around a rejection of current-traditional rhetoric. The process movement replaced the focus on the product of writing with emphasis on the process by which writers arrive at writing. This move allowed process teachers and scholars to resist the current-traditional authoritarian

impulses and to imagine a way to de-center the classroom, placing the focus on students instead of teachers or curriculum.

But the process movement was not able to completely expel the focus on formal correctness, and failed to take into account the underlying values of teaching a singular unified process of writing. In practice, many teachers never truly deemphasized the product, treating the process as a way to better achieve the same goals that current-traditional teachers had valued. The universalism of process pedagogy echoes the same oppressive tendencies of current-traditional rhetoric, both ascribing a single outcome for writing students. In both cases, for example, grading is still essentially based on the “correctness” of the finished product.

Crowley’s “Around 1971: Current-Traditional Rhetoric and Process Models of Composing,” offers a convincing and in-depth argument of the ways the process movement did not expel current-traditional rhetoric from the classroom, which comports with Joseph Petraglia’s argument that “[a]lthough the early cognitivism-in-writing tradition in which the process movement culminated always maintained that writing was a complex and recursive behavior, for both methodological and pedagogical reasons, it was rarely treated as such” (56). The process movement’s dependence on cognitive psychology located writing within the individual writing subject, deemphasizing the rhetorical situation of writing. Adherents to the process movement failed to recognize the specifically middle-class values promoted by the movement’s belief that writing emanates from the individual and expresses the true inner self, instead of being a way to “test” student adherence to standards. This was a way for teachers to “liberate” students from the strictures of current-traditional rhetoric. But like current-traditional methods, this entailed the removal of writing from its situatedness, from its location within various contexts, and relocated it in the self, waiting to be drawn out by a process of recursive reflection.

The process movement recognized writers as agents, but removed them from rhetorical situations, placing the scene of writing primarily inside the writer. The turn to social construction, which came after process and cognitivism in composition, was an attempt to place the writer back in the social rhetorical contexts in which writing takes place. Resistance is rooted in this social turn. A result of the move from process theories to social construction, resistance theories put a new face on these emancipatory goals, but in a more explicit manner than had the rhetoric of the process movement. In fact, resistance in Composition emerges as a recognition of the power differentials apparent in writing instruction, a response to the seemingly apolitical process movement that had smoothed over differences at the expense of the less advantaged.

Trimbur explains that “the tragedy of the process movement, as Delpit points out, is that its attempts to reduce the ‘power differential’ in the composition classroom only served to mask the workings of the culture of power, thereby making it difficult for those raised in non-middle-class homes to acquire the forms of ‘cultural capital’ that were never explicitly named” (Trimbur 8). Resistance offered writing instructors a way to reveal the class assumptions underlying the way writing was taught and led them to theorize new ways of conceptualizing writing that deal explicitly with the political situations of students in the classroom. Resistance gave scholars a way to consider the political nature of writing situations, and a way to think of themselves as being within a politics of collective action and social change. This allowed writing instructors and scholars to see themselves as political agents — agent provocateurs of discourse — as “the term ‘resistance’ brought with it, for left-wing writing teachers taking the ‘social turn’ in the late 1980s, a powerfully persuasive history in radical political movements” (Trimbur 9). If the process movement had as one goal a subdued yet discernable emancipatory urge, the social turn, and resistance theory in particular, made liberation its main focus.

Resistance, especially when conceived of as classroom behavior, is a temporal process, unfolding in time. Nedra Reynolds has pointed out that the process movement's concern is more temporal rather than spatial (5). Such a gesture toward the temporal is understandable, as current-traditional rhetoric's primary focus was one of arrangement, a spatial dimension of writing. The reaction against arrangement was clearly a repulsion of current-traditional pedagogy, with its "containerized" forms of writing. Still, Reynolds observes that the five-paragraph essay, a pernicious containerized form, survived and even flourished in process pedagogy. To break the containerized molds, Reynolds cites Jarratt's observation of the "spatiality of invention,' both classical *topoi* and the insistence that writers are located in time and space" (174). Focusing on the ways memory and space inform arrangement, or disposition, involves the recognition of the importance of the spatial in writing and the spaces our students inhabit: "Disposition or arrangement is important to geographic rhetorics, then, because it asks us to examine how difference is produced in rhetorical situations"; it indexes relations between the individual and the rhetorical situation (174). In opposition, the temporal movement of the process was written into textbooks, codified, and congealed into a single process. Given legitimacy as *the* way to compose, it passed through the years in a fixed form. This unity of placeless codification mirrors the modernist ideal space of the Utopia. To move resistance beyond its modernist roots, we need to examine how it can be conceived of spatially as well as temporally.

CHAPTER 2 UTOPIAN SPACELESSNESS

All utopias are depressing because they leave no room for chance, for difference, for the 'miscellaneous.' Everything has been set in order and order reigns. Behind every utopia there is always some great taxonomic design: a place for each thing and each thing in its place.

— *Georges Perec*

Heaven is a place where nothing ever happens.

— *David Byrne*

Foucault makes the observation in “Of Other Spaces” that our “present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space. We are in the epoch of simultaneity: we are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed” (Foucault 22). Unlike Hirsch, who whistles past the graveyard of pluralism, postmodern theorists like Jameson and Foucault attempt to work through the implications of our newly-discovered fragmentation (which was of course there all along). Because we now recognize this fragmentation as a condition of existence, we find ourselves in “a new and historically original dilemma, one that involves our insertion as individual subjects into a multidimensional set of radically discontinuous realities” (Jameson 413). Where do we find ourselves in the midst of these discontinuities? How do we find ourselves (in) such a space?

If we are indeed in an epoch of space, if we have made a spatial turn, then it is necessary to reconsider resistance theories of writing, because writing is a predominant way that we situate ourselves within the spaces we inhabit. We need to rethink resistance theories in light of the spaces in which it has existed, and imagine the possibilities for its existence in future spaces. The modernist conception of resistant spaces, exemplified most recently by Hirsch’s hegemonic solution to resisting economic inequity, is the space of the Utopia. It follows, then, that a brief examination of Utopias will be necessary if we are to reconceptualize resistant spaces.

Resistance theory in Composition, even in some of its postmodern manifestations, aspires to the ideal of utopian future hope. The ideals of emancipation and liberation are, like the process movement, more temporal than spatial, as they focus on the historical present and aim for a future somewhere past the edge of history. The mixed metaphors of the previous sentence indicate the tangled impossibility of the modernist space of resistance. Utopia, though a spatial metaphor, can only be located in time—or perhaps more accurately, can only be located temporally, outside of time, at the end of history. In the postmodern moment, one “looks for breaks, for events rather than new worlds, for the telltale instant after which it is no longer the same . . . [but] the moderns were interested in what was likely to come of such changes and their general tendency: they thought about the thing itself, substantively, in Utopian or essential fashion” (Jameson ix). The changes to come are solidified into an impossible presence, a place always on the horizon. As Foucault notes, the utopian vision attempts to locate “sites with no real place. They are sites that have a general relation of direct or inverted analogy with the real space of Society . . . these utopias are fundamentally unreal spaces” (Foucault 24). As unreal spaces, utopias serve as both indices to and inversions of those possible spaces in which we move about.

As the spaces in which resistance is supposed finally to be successful, utopias serve as a less-than-useful trope, as they inevitably inscribe a hegemonic unity onto the possibilities of resistance. Utopias do of course hold positive qualities, which I will discuss later, but as my epigraphs at the start of this chapter indicate, there exist some sound reasons for anti-utopian impulses. In short: one person’s Utopia is likely to be another’s Dystopia. The fundamental reason utopias tend to be derided is the dearth of change allowable in a Utopia; if conditions are perfect, stasis is ideal. This is also the reason Utopias are, or at least should be antithetical to resistance theory. Resistance is change, or at the very least a desire for change. In Utopias

resistance is unthinkable. Like the Process movement itself, Utopias point to an impossible stoppage of time and fixity of space. We have been aware of this impossibility since well before the postmodern turn, as Foucault relates,

the real scandal of Galileo's work lay not so much in his discovery, or rediscovery, that the earth revolved around the sun, but in his constitution of an infinite, and infinitely open space. In such a space the place of the Middle Ages turned out to be dissolved, as it were; a thing's place was no longer anything but a point in its movement, just as the stability of a thing was only its movement infinitely slowed down. (23)

Now, as we are aware, we cannot return to the notions of the fixity of space or time. Utopias, devoid of space, are unlivable, as Foucault reminds us, "We do not live in a void...we live inside a set of relations that delineates sites which are irreducible to one another and absolutely not superimposable on one another" (Foucault 23). The imperialist inclination of Utopias to homogenize place finds its space in the colonial enterprise of cartography. Mapping is the Utopian project par excellence.

CHAPTER 3 MAPS AND SPACE

I saw the Aleph from every point and angle, and in the Aleph I saw the earth and in the earth the Aleph and in the Aleph the earth; I saw my own face and my own bowels; I saw your face; and I felt dizzy and wept, for my eyes had seen that secret and conjectured object whose name is common to all men but which no man has looked upon—the unimaginable universe.

— *Jorge Luis Borges*

If Utopias are places without space and also without place, then it might seem at first that they would have little in common with maps, and indeed would be the opposite of maps. Maps, after all, delineate places, circumscribe place by making borders definite. Unlike Utopias, which are devoid of place, maps seem filled with place. But while maps certainly take up space, they are never themselves places. Like Utopias, maps are no place at all. Maps and utopias flatten real spaces into place by erasing what is inconvenient within a designated space. Both circumscribe spaces as attempts to make them politically usable. Maps reduce space to its smallest units of utility, and doing so, they sublimate space, conquer space. Maps proliferated during Western colonial expansion, accumulating “much of their cultural capital in colonialist and imperialist enterprise” (Reynolds 81). They inscribe a kind of cultural literacy onto their subjects, often sharing one of the historical goals of English studies: “to help unify a national culture” (Hardin 83-4). However, unified national cultures are fictions that inevitably exclude the powerless, those whose existences occupy the margins of nationalist narratives.

True Maps

Nonetheless, despite Jameson’s reminder that “there can be no true maps,” mapping can be put to many uses, not all of which are damaging in most cases (52). Whether for explicitly political, nautical, topographical, or other purposes, cartography is of course not used only for propaganda; maps often come in handy for daily use. For navigation or orientation, “good” maps have the benefit of actually working: “their value comes, of course, from the culture’s demand for

positivist, precise, measurable, and reproducible forms of ‘reality’ and representations of regions that are meaningful to people” (Reynolds 81). We have all had the experience in a new city of using a map that helps us to orient ourselves, that leads us to places we actually want to go. So while maps have the negative quality of hegemonic reduction, they are also useful insofar as they can help people plan, move about, or locate themselves.

But maps can only show so much, and can never completely represent the reality that they indicate. To be readable, they have to leave out most of the space they supposedly represent, and as a result they play a large part in determining the sets of relations within which individuals may orient themselves. Kevin Lynch in *The Image of the City* indicates several details required for a usable map, including that it “should preferably be open-ended, adaptable to change, allowing the individual to continue to investigate and organize reality” (9). The only way to leave a static representation like a map open for some future individual to revise it would be to leave “blank spaces where he [sic] can extend the drawing himself” (9). The problem for the cartographer is which spaces to leave open — the cartographer who wishes to create a perfectly revisable map would have to leave the entire map blank. Every map includes any number of blank spaces, indicating selective spatial judgments. These aporia are selected depending on the purpose of the map, but also depending on the writer of the map. For Lynch, the reader of the map is equally important as the writer, because different readers will find different values in the spaces of maps; “one will prize an economical and sufficient system, another an open-ended and communicable one” (9). Mapping for Lynch is fundamentally a mental activity. People construct mental maps of their environments, and their relative comfort and security in the world is analogous with their mental maps.

Mental maps become the interface with which people negotiate relationships with various environments. Our mental maps are often, maybe always, different from written maps.

However common it may have become, the science of cartography is not necessarily transferable to individuals' mental maps. While we have been able to map with various accuracies the spaces of cities, for example, Lynch claims the modernist condition is one of disconnection and alienation from urban environments. His study of mental mapping "suggests that urban alienation is directly proportional to the mental unmappability of local cityscapes" (Jameson 415). While people can move around the city, and can purchase scientifically accurate road maps, people are increasingly unable to locate themselves within the complexities of urban relationships. Combating this malaise, Jameson says, "involves the practical reconquest of a sense of place and the construction or reconstruction of an articulated ensemble which can be retained in memory and which the individual subject can map and remap along the moments of mobile, alternative trajectories" (51). To rectify this situation, Jameson proposes his theory of cognitive mapping to counter the "incapacity of our minds, at least at present, to map the great global multinational and decentered communicational network in which we find ourselves caught as individual subjects" (39). Cognitive mapping, if it is possible, will serve as a way to resist the imperial impulse of maps, while at the same time providing people with a means to locate themselves, to affect disalienation.

Cognitive Mapping

Jameson's cognitive mapping is conceived primarily as a way for individuals to locate themselves in the systems of relations that have emerged in this hyper-spatial postmodern era. It is a way for individuals to imagine themselves in relation to the overwhelming and disorienting fragmentary social order in a time when relations seem splintered and lost. Jameson uses Lynch's mental mapping to conceptualize the spatio-historical abyss of the postmodern condition. Jameson compares mental mapping, or "Lynch's conception of the city experience – its dialectic between the here and now of immediate perception and the imaginative or imaginary

sense of the city as an absent totality,” to the Althusserian model of ideology, that lens through which we can view the mediation of our own experiences through the totality of ISAs (415). Lynch’s concept does not necessarily provide an adequate answer, but it “has the great merit of stressing the gap between the local positioning of the individual subject and the totality of class structures in which he or she is situated” (416). His mental mapping thus describes the problem of alienation, but is unlikely to resolve it.

Instead, Jameson offers the metaphor of cognitive mapping, though he is careful to say that cognitive mapping itself suffers from the very lack that characterizes any mapping project. Still, unlike Lynch’s mental mapping, Jameson’s proposal of cognitive mapping is a conscious attempt to resist the homogenizing imperialism of cartographic operations. While political maps or mental maps attempt to represent the real by replacing certain real areas with blank spaces, and purport to index a totality by circumscribing the real, cognitive mapping takes a different approach to the real. Cognitive mapping is not an attempt to represent reality external to social relations, but instead hopes to “to enable a situational representation on the part of the individual subject to that vaster and properly unrepresentable totality which is the ensemble of society’s structures as a whole” (51). That is, cognitive mapping hopes to portray the always-changing relationships between subject and object rather than simply documenting some fixed, external structure. No longer pretending to mirror spaces that precede the subject, “the cognitive map is not exactly mimetic in that older sense; indeed, the theoretical issues it poses allow us to renew the analysis of representation on a higher and much more complex level” (51). Cognitive mapping recognizes that the reductive tendencies of modernist representation have aided the alienation that characterizes the relations between individual and social.

Even as he recognizes the limitations of maps, Jameson underscores the importance of mapping for individuals. In the postmodern moment, amidst charges of moral relativism and

nihilism from both left and the right of the political spectrum, individuals become paralyzed, unable to determine a course for political action. Just as Lynch showed us how individuals unable to map their cities became disillusioned with urban life, Jameson attempts to rectify political experience with cognitive mapping, for “the incapacity to map spatially is as crippling to political experience as the analogous incapacity to map spatially is for urban experience” (Jameson 416). Jameson's cognitive mapping is articulated as a way for individuals to gain their bearings in a world of disorientation, a way to locate the ethical standing for politics.

Still, Jameson recognizes that his metaphor of mapping is insufficient to describe the political program suggested by cognitive mapping: “what I have called cognitive mapping may be identified as a more modernist strategy, which retains an impossible concept of totality whose representational failure seemed for the moment as useful and productive as its (inconceivable) success...cognitive mapping cannot (at least in our time) involve anything so easy as a map” (409). So while the metaphor of mapping may be useful, it can only be used as a metaphor and not concretized because the social totality supposed to be mapped is also a metaphor. Instead, the goal of cognitive mapping is to highlight the relations between individuals and the (impossible) totality. Mapping the positioning and repositioning of individuals in relation to perpetual motion of the social totality is the primary aim of cognitive mapping. Therefore the mapping metaphor can only be placeholder, a trope for the business of cognitive mapping. If mapping does not get us close enough to cognitive mapping, perhaps another act that charts such relations can: writing.

Reconsidering Cognitive Mapping

Writing—an act of entering a discourse—may be a way to rethink cognitive mapping in a politically productive way. The act of writing is always a moment of hegemonic interaction, and one place where this act is easily observed is the writing classroom. Heterogeneous cultures

always come into contact in writing classes, as negotiation takes place between individuals and various cultural values. Understanding what happens when individuals come into contact with hegemonic discourses can lead to a better understanding of the political relations between individuals and social totalities. Hardin advocates examining the writing classroom because “the transcultural moment, as it presents itself in the composition class, is one of ‘repositioning’ for the student. In the language of these scholars, students entering the academy find themselves at the ‘boundary’ of a new culture, where they exist on the ‘margins’ or in ‘conflict’ with the dominant and hegemonic culture” (36).

Understanding the power differentials involved in the writing classroom might open ways to “map” the individual relations to social totalities. Compositionists understand that the “writer is always situated, always constrained. But she can work not only within but *against* the limits of a discourse to find a position she can claim as her own” (Harris and Rosen 58). Just as individuals enter into multiple discourse communities, they will require multiple “maps” to chart their relations to the discourses they encounter. Considering writing and mapping together has the benefits of retaining the spatial conception needed in the postmodern condition, while allowing multiple relations to be inscribed into that space. Because “we need stories for our maps as well as maps for our stories,” writing and mapping together can provide a necessary link between individual and social narratives and spatial experience (Reynolds 85). Cognitive mapping can lead to the reintroduction of historical narratives to the ideological locations of students through acts of writing. The potential for maps as orientation tools can be tapped if their users are aware that maps are not in fact the territory.

Mapping Utopia

Just as maps may retain political use-value, the impossible modernist space that maps resemble—Utopias—can continue to be useful in the postmodern era. Utopias are, after all, the

places where individual and social hopes reside. Without utopic ideals, political action can seem irrelevant; without the dream of a better world, the desire for political change may wither.

Jameson describes the 1960s as a point in history in which multiple Utopias emerged. While those utopic visions, or at least the movements that built up around them, may not have lasted, they may still provide a way to rethink the political efficacy of Utopias. If modernist Utopias are primarily temporal, it is because they point ahead to some time in the future when history as we know it has been transformed. Because they serve as indices that point forever into the future, they necessarily negate space and time, existing only where space, and when time, does not. In the postmodern era, the spatial epoch, if Utopias will be of any use, they will have to be conceived as fundamentally spatial; it will become necessary for us

to see in all these varied Utopian visions as they have emerged from the sixties the development of a whole new range of properly spatial Utopias in which the transformation of social relations and political institutions is projected onto the vision of place and landscape, including the human body. Spatialization, then, whatever it may take away in the capacity to think time and History, also opens a door onto a whole new domain for libidinal investment of the Utopian and even the protopolitical type. (Jameson 160)

Mapping Utopian ideals onto the body, into our spaces, then, involves an affective involvement in politics. For political action to take place at all, people must be emotionally invested in political outcomes. Only if people care will they feel obliged to take action. Utopias can provide a way for us to reconsider the political, though we will need to find new ways to think of utopias that leave behind the authoritarian and hegemonic implications of a single unitary political project for a single unified social totality.

To conceive of utopias that can be “mapped” we will need both a new concept of the utopian and a new way to think of mapping. We can no longer think of mapping in the mimetic sense, as a way to finally represent the one true reality. Instead, we need to see mapping as both a way to represent and a way to create realities, as ways to chart relations and to simultaneously

form those same relations between the individual and the social. Jameson admits that an

aesthetic of cognitive mapping – a pedagogical political culture which seeks to endow the individual subject with some new heightened sense of its place in the global system – will necessarily have to respect this now enormously complex representational dialectic and invent radically new forms in order to do it justice. This is not then, clearly, a call for a return to some older kind of machinery, some older and more transparent national space, or some more traditional and reassuring perspectival or mimetic enclave: the new political art (if it is possible at all) will have to hold to the truth of postmodernism, that is to say, to its fundamental object – the world space of multinational capital – at the same time at which it achieves a breakthrough to some as yet unimaginable new mode of representing this last, in which we may again begin to grasp our positioning as individual and collective subjects and regain the capacity to act and struggle which is at present neutralized by our spatial as well as our social confusion. (54)

So cognitive mapping, reconsidered as the spatial mapping of utopias, will have to move beyond mimesis, in an attempt to map the real relations between individuals and the global totalities in which they find themselves. Individuals are always in danger of being consumed by the totalities in which they exist, and thereby losing that sense of individuality that makes them distinct from the totality. So the location of an individual self within a consuming totality is always to some extent a relationship based on resistance.

Resistance is necessary for individuals to acquire agency, to assert difference in the face of a threatening (and inviting) homogenous totality. Utopias are inherently unchanging, inherently homogenous, and thus do not contain space for resistance or individuality. Lynch shows us that to battle the alienation and disorientation of the urban experience, it is essential that we have some way of locating ourselves in relation to the city. Jameson expands Lynch's thesis to the postmodern era of global politics, asserting that the metaphor of cognitive mapping is a matter of “practical politics,” that attempts to deal with “the enormous strategic and tactical difficulties of coordinating local and grassroots of neighborhood political actions with national or international ones” (Jameson 413). Our ability or inability to locate ourselves in relation to this (impossible) global totality will directly affect our relations to hegemonic power structures and will shape the kinds of resistance we can exert in those relations.

As Jameson notes, we need new ways to talk about resistance and politics. In the composition classroom, as in most political thought, resistance has been reduced to “Enlightenment arguments about which set of universals offers humanity (or in this case, students) the best chance for achieving a utopic and unified social structure or a ‘liberated’ and ‘empowered’ self” (Hardin 105). In such utopic manifestations, politics of resistance become yet another hegemonic force. If we continue to treat politics as sets of binary oppositions that must be resolved into some future harmony, we will paralyze real political possibility. Resistance is stuck in a modernist ideal of resolution and unity, and as such the discourse of resistance preserves the status quo, but

if critical pedagogy is to be truly radical, its practitioners must offer more than just an alternative within the same political discourse; they must offer an alternative form of discourse. In fact, these oppositional formulations – that higher education should either serve to acculturate and normalize students or that it should serve to liberate and radicalize them – both gesture, it seems, to a social totality that lies at the horizon of some utopic social unity. (Hardin 106-7)

What is needed is a new way to talk about resistance, a new way to locate our individual political possibilities in relation to the global political totality in which we now find ourselves. We need a way to begin thinking about how to maintain the hope allowed by utopian vision while at the same time creating real spaces for resistance. Foucault's heterotopias in “Of Other Spaces” provides the theoretical starting point for this thinking.

CHAPTER 4 HETEROTOPIC SPACES

Kublai Khan had noticed that Marco Polo's cities resembled one another, as if the passage from one to another involved not a journey but a change of elements. Now, from each city Marco described to him, the Great Khan's mind set out on its own, and after dismantling the city piece by piece, he reconstructed it in other ways, substituting components, shifting them, inverting them.

— *Italo Calvino*

Utopias inspire personal political vision and investment that encourages political action. Even in postmodern cultures, utopian ideals that fuel political desire will be crucial for creating resistant political spaces:

utopia is a spatial matter that might be thought to know a potential change in fortunes in so spatialized a culture as the postmodern; but if this last is as dehistoricized and dehistoricizing as I sometimes claim here, the synaptic chain that might lead the Utopian impulse to expression becomes harder to localize. Utopian representations knew an extraordinary revival in the 1960s; if postmodernism is the substitute for the sixties and the compensation for their political failure, the question of Utopia would seem to be a crucial test of what is left of our capacity to imagine change at all. (xvi)

But even as fragmentation, pervasive disconnection from history, and political apathy suggest the “necessity of the reinvention of the Utopian vision in any contemporary politics...it also must be acknowledged that Utopian visions are not yet themselves a politics” (Jameson 159). Utopian idealism is necessary, but not sufficient. Utopian space, insofar as we can say it exists, is an internal space. It exists in the hopes and dreams of individuals as a teleological endpoint, but it can never fully materialize. If postmodernity is characterized by space, then any compulsion to political action now will have to be made present in exterior, locatable spaces. For utopian spaces to be politically effective, they can no longer exist only in the internal space of dreams. Utopias, placeless yet universal, have to be externalized and located both historically and spatially so collectives can inhabit them and with(in) them generate political action.

Foucault's Heterotopias

Foucault's discussion of heterotopias indicates a way to conceive of internal utopian political vision in real external places. To introduce heterotopias, it is useful to contrast them with utopias, keeping in mind that they are not the opposite of utopias. Utopias are unreal spaces, placeless places. Heterotopias on the other hand exist in spaces we have access to, but their functions as heterotopias depend on relations between individuals and culture; they exist "outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality" (24). One can be inside and outside of a heterotopia simultaneously, since it is possible for one to be at the physical site of a heterotopia, but not be within the system of relations that makes that site a heterotopia. Heterotopias are spaces that function as relations between spaces, and while these are not historically new types of spaces, they take on new relevance in this postmodern era of disconnection.

Medieval space had been a hierarchy of fixed places, the space of emplacement. Galileo changed this sense of localized place into the space of extension, of infinite movement, of placement in motion. Utopia represented the end of this teleological motion. In the postmodern epoch of space, "our experience of the world is less that of a long life developing through time than that of a network that connects points and intersects with its own skein" (Foucault 22). Networks have no end, and in them utopian spaces (stopping points) become finally unattainable. Place as dialectical extension has been replaced by the site. Sites are "defined by relations of proximity between points or elements," so that space becomes the sets of relations between sites (23). Heterotopias exemplify these spaces that exist between places; insofar as they are composed of the ties that bind places together, they are liminal spaces that suggest infinite movement from site to site, node to node. Heterotopias derive meaning from the systems of relations within and between sites.

Heterotopias are real places where one can perceive utopias, but they are “real places – places that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society – which are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted” (Foucault 24). Not the opposite of utopias, heterotopias are utopias in real space. Utopian visions allow one to see the cosmos as it should be, but these are one-way visions, with no relation to reality. Heterotopias are real places in which individuals can see their relations to real space, but through which they also see their relations to utopias.

Heterotopias represent the cosmos as it could be, but the very set of relations that constitutes a heterotopia also allows individuals to see the order of the cosmos reflected within. In heterotopias, individuals and groups come to understand the set of relations that connect them to the utopian. Utopias rely on the desire to identify with an outside that is never present: I want to recognize myself out there, but there is no out there, so I recognize only what is in here. Heterotopias allow for identification with an outside that is present: I know I am here, but I recognize myself out there in a real place, so I am in both places. In this way, heterotopias have the peculiar function of containing multiple places in the same space simultaneously. As utopian “counter-sites,” they are the ideal spaces with which to begin thinking of a postmodern resistant (political) space. Heterotopias suggest new ways to group individuals into collectives which allow the individuals to retain their particular features and paradoxically operate within a collective.

Locating sets of relations within heterotopic databases according to these relationships will not result in setting any individual node into a fixed place within the network. Individuals are grouped in to heterotopias paradigmatically, based on some set of relations, but they may exist within multiple sets simultaneously. Because individual identities within a network depend

on particular relations to other nodes, an individual identity may be fragmented, grouped into multiple collectives differently, and yet retain its particularity across this dispersal. Heterotopias allow individuals to imagine and participate in multiple utopian horizons, each attainable by virtue of the relations that group the multiple collectives.

But this is an abstract way of talking about something that is supposed to be mappable in real space. To imagine how heterotopias can be and are already used, Foucault develops a “heterotopology,” in which he delineates the places and function of several types of heterotopias. If “our epoch is one in which space takes for us the form of relations among sites,” then heterotopias are spaces where the relations of sites converge, and because they are real spaces, unlike utopias, they can be located and inhabited (Foucault 23). Using aspects of his heterotopology as a comparison, it is possible to trace the emergence of a new heterotopia in our culture that is familiar as it is ubiquitous: the database. This heterotopia, if conceived as an act of writing, may be (re)created by anyone with access to a networked computer. Writing heterotopias with new media enact heterotopic spaces of resistance in the classroom can move resistance theories beyond the ground of modernist emancipation. The database, as Lev Manovich describes it in *The Language of New Media*, functions as a heterotopic space that can be located and inhabited—and even created—by anyone.

Database as Heterotopia

Manovich defines the database as “a structured collection of data” which functions in opposition to narrative (218). Where narratives tell stories in sequence, databases catalog information so that the information may be accessed by users in many different orders and for various purposes. As such, narrative is syntagmatic in structure and the database is paradigmatic. Syntagmatic narrative takes diverse types of elements and lays them out in linear sequences. Paradigms are sets of associated element types. Manovich provides an illustrative

example: in language, syntagmatic elements are strung together to form a series, so that a noun, a verb, and other elements are placed together in space to form a sentence; the set or paradigm of all nouns or of all verbs is never present (230). Traditionally, the syntagmatic is thought of as being present with real form in space, while the paradigmatic is unreal and exists only in theory (230). In new media, however, the opposite is true: “database (the paradigm) is given material existence, while narrative (the syntagm) is dematerialized” (231). Several sites may present themselves as alternative destinations simultaneously. The database provides a way to write in paradigms, to gather multiple sites into one place. Like the heterotopia, the database is a paradigmatic space in which all other real spaces are represented.

Heterotopias are “capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible” (Foucault 25). Foucault provides examples of real places with this function, such as ancient gardens, which are microcosms that replicate the macrocosmic order within their physical bounds. Entering the physical spaces of gardens is a way to inhabit a particular locality and the universe as a whole in the same instant. Like a fractal, the garden is a particular piece of the whole that is also identical to that whole. A more contemporary example provided by Foucault is the cinema. While people sit in the theater, they have the experience of being in multiple other places, utopian and otherwise. All other places, real and imagined, may appear in this single space, and because films represent and induce identification with the values of a culture, they reveal to the viewer the macrocosmic order. The same screen-mediated multiplicity of space that depends on the recognition of cultural values is characteristic also of the database. The database is inherently spatial, since “the only way to create a pure database is to spatialize it, distributing the elements in space” (Manovich 238). All the elements of information in a database exist in locations outside of it, though at the same time all these sites converge within the space of the database. The database contains multiple real

spaces, sites grouped according to their relations within a set.

Consider the website as a database. Websites do not exist in a single (virtual) space the way individual webpages do; even the most basic websites are collections of heterogeneous webpages. Websites exist as the relations between the accumulations of webpages they represent. A feature peculiar to websites – hyperlinking – provides one way to visualize the website as database; Manovich observes that “[t]here is hardly a website that does not feature at least a dozen links to other sites; therefore, every site is a type of database” (225). The way that websites link to one another makes the website indexical, a database which points to other sites. The website is a heterotopia; it is the paradigm spatialized, the site in which the relations of other sites converge. The website subverts “Borges’ story about a map equal in size to the territory it represents” because “now the map has become larger than the territory...the same data would give rise to more indexes than the number of data elements themselves” (225). There are more nodes in the networked map than there are sites in the network because multiple and different nodes represent the same spaces. While 2-D maps excise certain places in order to limit the information presented, heterotopic writing (“mapping”) as web-design instead both creates new places with each new link and generates ever more relations between sets of already existing places.

As ephemeral yet real spaces, heterotopic databases, websites, also function to invert or subvert the normal order of things. They may function as illusory spaces that expose other spaces as illusory because of the existence now of “the database as a cultural form” (Manovich 219). The online database exists not just in the realm of hyperspace, but in the ways we organize society: “The computerization of culture involves the projection of these two fundamental parts of computer software [data structures and algorithms] – and of the computer’s unique ontology – onto the cultural space” (223). That is, our interactions with computers, and with databases such

as websites, inform the ways we interact with the rest of the world. In this way, it is possible to see that both sets of relations are constructed, and that our relations to the world are in part constructed by our relations to the online machine. As heterotopias that are connected to a global totality at the same time they order the localities in which we reside, the website-as-database is an ideal writing space for locating oneself in relation to collectives.

Heterotopias by definition must function in relation to all other spaces. They do this in two possible ways: either they create spaces of illusion or spaces of compensation. That is, heterotopias either “create a space of illusion that exposes every real space, all the sites inside of which human life is partitioned, as still more illusory,” or they “create a space that is other, another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well-arranged as ours is messy, ill constructed, and jumbled” (27). In both cases, even though they are quite opposite cases, heterotopias expose the workings of ideologies. The act of writing heterotopic spaces, an act of discovery, reveals the relations between writer and external world, subject and object of identification. Thus the process of identification becomes the subject and object of heterotopic creation. Because ideological interpellation is both a spatial and historical process, heterotopias provide a necessary link between space and time.

The simultaneity of location points toward a paradoxical relationship with time that is shared by both heterotopias and databases. Heterotopias are linked to time, forming what Foucault proposes as heterochronies, which is to say that for heterotopias to function, people must exist in real time while they make an “absolute break with their traditional time” (26). Within the spaces of heterotopias, individuals must exist in multiple temporal modes. Foucault describes two types of opposing heterotopic spaces regarding time: those that function by accumulating all possible times, such as museums and libraries; and those that function by focusing on the absolutely present, sites of timeless time, such as the festival. While Foucault

notes that the accumulation of time represented in those storehouses of museums and libraries is a product of 19th-century modernism, it might also be said that the sites of perpetual presence represented by the festival are characteristic of postmodern temporal dysfunction.

The database has the advantage of containing both of these temporalities at once. The database is almost by definition a sort of museum or library, undoubtedly the largest of both in the history of humanity. As a convergence of disparate bits of information, the database serves the function of the catalog. At the same time, the database operates in instantaneity. On the World Wide Web, one can find not only the information of accumulating time like that found in museums, but one also finds the equivalent of the festival's spectacular oddities, games of chance, and divination. While navigating online databases, it is common enough to lose time; the passage of traditional time continues while the experience feels like time slows to a stop. Merging accumulated time (history) and timeless time (the present) is a feature of the database that can lead to productive mapping of historical ideological locations.

Of course, heterotopias are not new, but the loss of history in the postmodern era is relatively recent. Websites, many of which operate explicitly within the logic of late capitalism, often do nothing to situate their writers or readers into a critical or historically aware position. Even online educational sites typically offer non-contextual databases driven by the push for standardization and commodified, pre-packaged learning "opportunities." These circumstances could lead one to the conclusion that neither heterotopias nor the database can help writers locate themselves in relation to their spatio-historical surroundings. However, Foucault offers reason for hope: societies can and often do change the form or function of existing heterotopias. As the system of relations between places change, so can the function of heterotopias. The example Foucault provides to illustrate the second principle is "the strange heterotopia of the cemetery" (25). As a real place connected to all other places by relations (everyone has relatives in the

cemetery), the cemetery has moved from the heart of the city to the suburbs since the 18th century. In that time, cemeteries lost the charnel house, in which individuality in death was not valued; now in these cemeteries on the outskirts of town, individuals are each in their own plots. What we see is a movement in which cemeteries are “no longer the sacred and immortal heart of the city, but ‘the other city,’ where each family possesses its dark resting place” (25). If societies can change the ways heterotopias function, then even heterotopias that have negative effects on society can be changed for the better. Manovich suggests that the database may already be undergoing such a change.

While the database often operates in opposition to the function of narrative, there are ways to reconcile narrative and the database, to make the database “dynamic and subjective” by merging it with narrative (243). The way we make sense of history is through narrative. The loss of (narrative) history that Jameson laments corresponds with the postmodern spatiality of the database. As a hegemonic encounter, writing is already an act of resistance; if writing heterotopias through websites can help individuals acquire agency and coexist in political collectives, the act of writing can result in the location of resistance. Changing the function of these existing heterotopias may already be taking place in the fusion of the database with narrative in writing situations across the online network. To illustrate some ways this change is taking place, I will conclude with some promising developments along these lines already underway in Composition and new media.

CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSION: LOCATING RESISTANCE IN HETEROTOPIAS

How, then, can I translate into words the limitless Aleph, which my floundering mind can scarcely encompass?...Really what I want to do is impossible, for any listing of an endless series is doomed to be infinitesimal. In that single gigantic instant I saw millions of acts both delightful and awful; not one of them amazed me more than the fact that all of them occupied the same point in space, without overlapping or transparency. What my eyes beheld was simultaneous, but what I shall now write down will be successive, because language is successive.

— Jorge Luis Borges

In the movement from Utopia to Heterotopia, the one in the many, the many in the one, we find ourselves caught in a complex web of visual and psychological cues, a form of kinesthesia...The task of art now is to somehow speak of this plurality of 'reals' in a world moving into a polyphrenic cultural space.

— Paul D. Miller, aka Dj Spooky That Subliminal Kid

The implications of heterotopias for resistance theory in Composition are immense. Because writing is a site in which discursive power relations are negotiated, and because some degree of resistance to hegemonic power occurs as individuals situate themselves within and against a discourse in the act of writing, conceiving writing spaces as heterotopic can provide ways for critical teachers of writing to encourage resistance without prescribing a universal hegemonic path to resistance. Thinking of resistance heterotopically can allow writing teachers to work productively with resistance without codifying a one-size-fits-all process of resistance.

One of the problems with the specifically modernist process movement was its attempt to codify writing into a single form. While theories of resistance in Composition may have emerged from the social turn that was in part a reaction against the process movement, resistance theorists have often shared in the process movement's desire to systemize behavior in the classroom and in student writing. John Trimbur notes that Compositionists' affinity with resistance stems partly from the fact "that it puts events, attitudes, and identities in a system that makes them more knowable" (4). Resistance comes to Composition by way of educators like

Giroux and Shor, whose efforts to define resistance are reflected in Chase's 1988 article and elsewhere in *Composition*. Defining terms can be useful, of course, but such work is problematic because definitions necessarily congeal meanings and lock them into singular usage. Understanding resistance is necessary, but attempts to define it will always be incomplete because of the slipperiness and amorphous nature of resistance and of writing itself.

Attempts to codify which behaviors count as resistance and which are, in Giroux's terminology simply "oppositional," are risky because this sanctions some forms of resistance while suppressing other potential resistant behaviors. Knoblauch points out that in universities resistance become neutralized if the "radical teacher" settles on a single definition of resistant action. If teachers become "engaged in a seemingly trivial dramatization of utopian thought, which the university itself blandly sponsors as satisfying testimony to its own open-mindedness," then resistance serves as little more than a safety valve for the university (Knoblauch 16). Resistant behaviors in such cases allow students (and critical teachers) to participate in a safe form of resistance situated within the confines of the classroom, with no implications outside the classroom walls. Acts of resistant writing take place in the writing classroom, but students know better than to apply such writing behaviors in other classes or other situations. In such cases, no real negotiation has taken place. Thus they are locked into a situation of submission before the hegemonic discourses they later encounter. Hardin warns "if critical pedagogy is to survive in the American classroom, it must more adequately address the way classroom authority is constructed, and it must do so in a way that resists becoming 'institutionalized' resistance" (88). Institutionalized resistance maintains the dominant role of academic discourses, and keeps students from effecting any real change in the ways they operate within the academy, and consequently within society.

Compositionists, as scholars of the ways in which discourses produce meanings in

various communities, are well suited to theorize the ways in which language works to circumscribe meaning and produce the power relations that affect human interactions with one another. Because hegemonic relations depend in part upon a willingness to submit to power by the powerless, hegemony is never complete, and there exist gaps in power relations. To avoid reconstructing institutionalized resistance, Compositionists have suggested that we need to focus on specific power relations so that we might expose those gaps. Hurlbert and Blitz quote Joan Cocks, who “notes, the kinds of ideas most likely to offer ‘openings of resistance’ are those that prove to be ‘too elusive . . . too shapeless . . . to be sanctified’” (1). Unlike maps, which create closings and cover up gaps, the kind of writing that will lead to resistance which empowers students will open up spaces where students can reside within discourses in terms they negotiate. These openings cannot be predicted in advance, and must be left for the students to discover for themselves. This is why it is imperative that resistance theories move away from emancipatory goals, which prescribe the possible paths to liberation. Writing is a way for students to recognize these openings, and to use them to enter discourses. So the job of critical teachers is to maintain classrooms in which students are encouraged to find openings in discourses “without rushing to fill them with our own political expectations and with our own need to replace contradiction with unity” (Hardin 111). While we have to politicize the classroom, we must do so not to assert a specific political agenda as the path to enlightenment, but to allow students to determine where they fit into the larger political totality.

Writing heterotopic web pages can help this cause, but web writing in and of itself will not necessarily help individuals to develop a sense of place any more than any other kind of writing. Writing in new media contexts must be taught critically, as politicized discourse. The power relations between hegemonic discourses and the individual’s writing situation must be laid bare if one hopes to open the kind of resistant spaces needed for students to write their own

agency. Textual conventions of discourses be explored by students, but because new media are increasingly visual texts arrangement deserves more attention than it has been afforded by either the process or social constructionist camps. As a form of composition, web design is as susceptible to containerized notions of arrangement as any other form unless students are encouraged to take risks: “[a]rrangement was prescriptive in classical rhetoric, yet it needs to be fluid in a postmodern or material rhetoric” (Reynolds 173). Arrangement is an important rhetorical aspect of new media texts, but it cannot be taught as a set of formulaic methods. The spatial arrangement of texts must be taught critically.

Compositionists are already inventing methods to bring new media writing into alignment with resistance theories. In the excellent collection *Writing New Media*, Geoffrey Sirc and Johndan Johnson-Eilola make compelling cases for the development of writing that incorporates fragmented collections of text and image in digital media. Johnson-Eilola observes, “despite the realization that our culture increasingly values texts that are broken down, rearranged, recombined, we rarely teach forms of writing that support such production. We unwittingly (or sometimes consciously) still think of writing as a way to help the self become present to itself, as a method for personal growth and discovery” (209). Teaching textual production that relies on fragmentation allows us to teach writing as a set of relations, rather than as introspective narcissism. What the writer “discovers” is not the “self,” but the sets of rhetorical relations. Johnson-Eilola envisions writing as a method of “arrangement and connection rather than simply one of isolated creative utterance” (202). Thus writing in the database can allow writers to construct meaning by situating themselves within rhetorical contexts. Artistic creativity has a place in this conception of writing, not as a throwback to expressivism, but as a way to use arrangement to help writers enter the spaces of discursive contexts.

In the same collection, Sirc argues for a theory of “box logic” as a method for database writing. Box logic positions students as collectors of information within the database who then assemble those fragments in ways meaningful to them. Sirc foregrounds technology and aesthetics in his box logic, as “the box offers a grammar which could prove useful in guiding our classroom practice in light of a rapidly shifting compositional media: it allows both textual pleasure, as students archive their personal collections of text and imagery, and formal practice in learning compositional skills that seem increasingly important in contemporary culture” (114). Sirc’s students write original text and create images that are combined with information collected from the online database.

Both Sirc and Johnson-Eilola want to redirect the focus of Composition away from linear textual prose, but while Johnson-Eilola focuses primarily on the function of the technology, Sirc is concerned with technology as the potential for “allowing students an easy entrée into composition, a compelling medium and genre with which to re-arrange textual materials – both original and appropriated – in order to have those materials speak the student’s own voice and concerns” (113). While Johnson-Eilola’s concern for the database technology is important for highlighting rhetorical situation, Sirc’s focus on the individual writer in relation to academic discourses is important because it allows for the individual resistance to discursive convention.

Writing in the database provides opportunities to bring aesthetic judgment to bear on rhetorical instruction once again, as it was historically in many manifestations before the advent of current-traditional rhetoric. Heterotopic mapping offers resistance theorists in Composition a way to conceive writing as “rhetorical production that is informed by a conscious understanding of the links between language and ideology, between rhetorical production and the inscription of values, and between linguistic and textual representation and power” (Hardin 5). Noting the tension that composition teachers feel as they perform the dual role of encouraging resistance

while serving as academic gatekeeper, Sirc quotes artist Hans Haacke at length:

when asked why he showed his work in museums, since he hated them so much, he answered: ‘You have to be part of the system in order to participate in a public discourse...As soon as you exhibit your work in galleries and museums, you are part of the system. I have always been part of the system. I am of the opinion that you cannot act outside the system, or be on your own, and participate in discourse’. (126)

Put simply in terms of Composition, a writer must first enter a discourse if she hopes to successfully resist and change its conventions. Both Johnson-Eilola’s and Sirc’s theories of database writing, then, offer ways to “pressure the academic context in firm but subtle ways” (128).

A focus on rhetorical conventions, including arrangement and invention in new media can provide a means to “develop a poetics, aesthetics, and ethics” of the database (Manovich 219). Reynolds and Johnson-Eilola indicate ways that arrangement may be used in the service of this poetics, ways that visual media can develop a rhetoric of the database. Sirc provides an entry point for an aesthetics of the database. Hardin, while not explicitly speaking of the database, provides the reason for moving beyond modernist emancipatory pedagogy, and toward a notion of heterotopic mapping. Furthermore, Hardin’s theory of resistance provides a postmodern ethics suitable for dealing with relations between the individual and the social totality, allowing “teachers of critical literacy and resistance pedagogy to join with students and with the academy in working toward a universalized horizon of social unity whose content is always deferred and whose identity is always constructed anew in each hegemonic context” (Hardin 110).

Writing in new media can provide a way to map the real and ideal relations between individuals and the global social totality. Like Jameson, I am dissatisfied with the mapping metaphor, and believe it should be used here as a trope for writing only insofar as it is understood that mapping is not precisely what cognitive mapping, nor what I am suggesting as

heterotopic writing is really about. Maps are closed systems, fixed in space and time. New versions of maps may be printed, but individual versions of maps do not change; they are static. Still, as Lynch has shown, maps are useful for navigation, and for orienting oneself. New media writing has the advantage of being open and dynamic: “Web sites never have to be complete; and they rarely are. They always grow. New links are continually added to what is already there” (Manovich 220). This feature ensures that new relations can be written, that relations can be created as they are written, and that new information can be mapped into the database as it becomes relevant to the individual and the totality. As writers inscribe new relations into the existing database, the act of writing then becomes a way for writers to locate themselves in relation to collectives and to negotiate the paradox of mapping the impossible totality.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

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