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DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY IN THE WRITING CLASSROOM AND BEYOND

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

to the faculty of the

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

of

ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES

at

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New York

by

Michael Reich

Date Submitted: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Michael Reich

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Granville Ganter

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## ABSTRACT

### DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY IN THE WRITING CLASSROOM AND BEYOND

Michael Reich

In this dissertation I explore the consequences of adopting a deliberative pedagogy, based on the study of one or two sample courses taught in 2018 at St. John's University. The project as a whole argues that the university should be an idea place for students to develop a sense of personal and political agency, and First Year Writing courses organized around deliberation allow students to *learn to listen and reason with each other* as individuals and as citizens. My first chapter defends the methodology of a humanistic idea of deliberation (a pedagogy not based in classroom drills or Standard English) and where I also worry that the soft and fuzzy notion of deliberation that I practice collides with the measurement of my students' "progress" on objective rubrics . My second chapter is a case study describing my students' performance in a deliberative classroom where some of my best students learn to practice deliberation but are unable to define it. My third chapter explains that a deliberative classroom helps overcome student anxiety and what I call "the eyes of deficiency"---rather than thinking of themselves as dull asteroids in a neoliberal universe, deliberation helps them see their power to influence and affect each other. In this chapter I argue that students do not need to go "outside" of class to find their political agency---deliberating and interacting with peers in the classroom itself is a genuine community. Building on my critique of the urge to push our students to find political awareness outside of the classroom, my final chapter is a sustained critique of the "false" face of deliberation found in social media like

Facebook. Although many faculty have turned to using social media in class as a means of “making class real” I show the many ways that the Left’s faith in the apparently democratic technologies of social media is well intentioned but terribly misplaced: our students’ writing on social media is being harvested, sensationalized, and exploited against them, and as faculty we need to model practices of genuine listening, empathy, and respect.

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## INTRODUCTION

I would like to say my dissertation really argues one main idea overall: that in order to listen respectfully and empathetically in a way that builds deep, connected human communities, we must first let people speak their own languages, in their own dialects, with their own logics. We must do this before the chasm of difference created by political, social, and cultural algorithms make the differences between most of humanity to far to bridge.

A few difficulties come up when thinking about the proposal to let everyone speak their own truths and logics, as it could lead to unorganized human chaos. I disagree with this and argue the world is much more chaotic than ordered, and that we must allow, accept, and even embrace the chaos of disorder in order to get to any sense of order in the first place.

For example, some may say that people claiming individual logics (not proven by science) are clinging to "falsehoods." I disagree. In an unfleshed out section of the dissertation, Chapter 1, I refer to an example used by Steven Hawking that explains how scientific laws are in many ways dependent on the conditions the observer of such laws are. Hawking explains that fish in a circular fish bowl will interpret light in a different way than other fish in other types of bowls because of the curvature of the bowl. In each case, the "laws" for how light works are separate truths from fish to fish. Relating this to humans, social truths can be true but different depending on one's culture and cultural sources of government sanctioned information (according to Noam Chomsky in Manufacturing Consent, everything an American sees is not necessarily "true" except according to the government bodies who release and approve such information).

In my dissertation, I seek an answer to that problem not by changing the source of "first flows of information" (the gov. to the citizens) but rather the secondary flow of information: the people and how they can merge together with such different truths (depending on the propaganda stations they watch, whether it be Fox, CNN, Snapchat news, or Google Search results).

In Chapters one and two, I argue that the classroom deliberative sphere needs to be improvisational and empathetic in order to hold space for all of the different information students have gathered, as well as to hold space for the myriad different student to student interactions that can occur moment to moment as they speak out the different worlds they have inhabited, given to them by family, friends, and the mass media (TV or social media). Improvisation, radical listening, and empathy are needed to connect people together in both physically segregated world, and a digitally segregated world in which either redlining or Youtube algorithms created by the powerful stop everyday citizens from being able to talk and bond with each other, effectively stopping the strength against power which could be brought about by diverse communities engaging with each other.

Building community across "truth difference" can be a key move in taking power back from large oppressive communities, not just politically but also internally, as we welcome more and more people to add their unique perspectives to the pie, which just adds strength to community.

The internet is way ahead of academia on this, as they collect all of the dialect and rambly scribblings of every human who uses the web in order to keep them in the loop

of consumer algorithm manipulation (which I argue is the case in Chapter 4). Academia needs to catch up to the data managers in letting more students speak their own languages, which many scholars such as Strickland, Inoue, and Young have been doing.

Look, I know my dissertation was not an easy read, and I appreciate your "eyeball hours" (as Rushkoff says was the original metric to measure the success of the web), but reading it is an exercise of this practice. And again, it is especially important in a world where, as Yuval Harari and Andrew Yang have argued, the jobs college is training people for will soon be automated, and where the only jobs that may be left for anyone in 30 years are philosophy, law, and medicine.

Letting people develop their own paradigms and building community from sharing these odd paradigms will be an extremely important skill in the future, one academia is not preparing students for. It is lastly especially important, as I argue in Chapter 4, where media companies have unprecedented ability to turn us into shaped algorithmic machines, with little freedom outside of being cogs in a surveillance capitalistic model. where each person is showing different internet based on consumer profiles, making everyone inhabit their our own vastly unique and different "truth sphere."

This dissertation is important because it seeks to go against the grain of separating people further and further from each other. It is going to require a lot of work to bridge the gaps the media drive internet is creating. As I argue in Chapter 3, the classroom can and should be the place to connect across difference to save community, and that it's ok, both scientifically and socially, to inhabit different observer positions, because that is

what the internet is doing to humanity -- creating a little fishbowl with different laws of light for each person.

## CHAPTER 1 - (Deliberation in the Writing Classroom: A Grounded Theory Case Study)

*“Doing oral history involves telling stories about stories people tell about themselves. Method in this discipline should therefore attend to ‘our’ stories, ‘their’ stories and the connections between them.”* (Rosaldo, 1980, pg. 89)

*“Such terms as objectivity, neutrality, and impartiality refer to subject positions once endowed with great institutional authority, but they are arguably neither more nor less valid than those of more engaged, yet equally perceptive, knowledgeable social actors.”* (Rosaldo, 1989, pg. 21)

*“Because researchers are necessarily both impartial and somewhat partisan, somewhat innocent and somewhat complicit, their readers should be as informed as possible about what the observer was in a position to know and not know.”* (Rosaldo, 1989, pg. 69)

### Chapter Overview

In this chapter I define deliberation as a kind of openness to listening - an extremely fuzzy practice that I describe as improvisational. Drawing on the improvisational comedians’ language of “yes, and,” which seeks to build on others contributions rather than tear them down, I argue that deliberation has to be a flexible pedagogy always responding to the circumstances at hand. I draw on a few examples from student work done during an IRB approved study in the Fall of 2018 to show how they wrestle with deliberative problems in their interactions with each others, and admit that science, deliberation, and pedagogy need to acknowledge and embrace apparent

“failures” in its methods as well. I conclude with a call for a more human approach to teaching writing, as well as academics expression and method in general.

### **Definition of deliberation**

Deliberative Democracy as a political system typically involves communal decisions, especially lawmaking, stemming from public discussion and deliberation of citizens. This makes deliberative democracy especially participatory in nature. As James Bohman and William Reigh put it,

Broadly defined, deliberative democracy refers to the idea that legitimate lawmaking issues from the public deliberation of citizens. As a normative account of legitimacy, deliberative democracy evokes ideals of rational legislation, participatory politics, and civic self-governance. In short, it presents an ideal of political autonomy based on the practical reasoning of citizens” (Deliberative Democracy, ix).

The deliberative democratic system, as Bohman and Reigh describe it, trusts the insights and process of citizens, believing in their ability for reason practically.

Generally though, as a practice, deliberation has been theorized to involve listening attentively, examining one's assumptions, and engaging in respectful and honest dialogue. Its goals are knowledge building, creating productive inclusive solutions, and being emancipatory. For instance, Joni Doherty looks at knowledge building with active empathy and listening as key to effective deliberation. She states that a clear, logical and empathetic mind is the key to the practice, not just seeking solutions just for the sake of creating a solution. She writes,

Public deliberation requires each person to think critically and creatively, listen attentively, examine assumptions, value differences, engage in respectful and honest dialogue, and reach well-reasoned judgments. Deliberating together is about deepening understanding of the problem in order to craft solutions, not about winning a debate or standing your ground. Deliberation can be understood as the cultivation of a set of capacities that can lead to a new construction of

knowledge, one that comes out of the public's work together... further, the concept is defined as not one of civic education per se, [but one in which] students develop the commitment, knowledge, and skills necessary for creating and maintaining equitable, diverse, democratic spaces. (Doherty, 2011)

In Doherty's view, deliberation is not about winning an argument per say, but rather, deepening understanding of multiple sides to form stronger, community based solutions.

## **Introduction**

What follows in this introduction to the "methods" section, is a bit of a critique of method. You will find no hypotheses, need for study section, or theoretical rationale. I will instead lay it out with a different code of language than scientific academicism -- working within a theory something like "written" oral history and improvisation.

This chapter will showcase the method used to understand how students worked through the pedagogical lens of deliberation in the First Year Writing (FYW) classroom. The study revealed striking growth patterns in students with the use of deliberation, that despite the study's limitations, ultimately led to gains that far outweigh such limitations. As such, I will argue here that with particular utilization of Deliberative Democracy theory and practice in an FYW class, much can be added to the student growth that FYW traditionally seeks, such as building critical thinking, reasoning, and research skills, as well as person to person communication skills like empathy, listening, respect, and understanding. Also, FYW with a deliberative lens can help make grassroots democracy practical and tangible for students and possibly society, due to the "afterglow" a majority of students explain in caring more about the goings on in society and a desire to do something, anything, to be involved.

To that effect, an FYW instructor can offer up written and spoken civic topics through this deliberative lens that allow students to take their own routes to develop civic



identity and deliberative disposition. Students do identity and sensibility work as they wade through their own opinions and see those very same opinions' effects on peers when honestly expressed to the community. Students also notice their own affect change as they deliberate with themselves through the drafting process of their writing, coming to new places in thinking through free writes and brainstorming which consider new angles from hearing (and I mean really *hearing* as deliberation theory traditionally asks of participants) new opinions.

This hearing can draw a lot from Krista Radcliffe's theory of rhetorical listening. In *Rhetorical Listening: Identification, Gender, Whiteness*, Radcliffe argues that "as a trope for interpretive invention, *rhetorical listening* signifies a stance of openness that a person may choose to assume in relation to *any* person, text, or culture" (17). Rhetorical Listening "cultivate[s] conscious identifications in ways that promote productive communication" (25), and offers a "code of cross-cultural conduct" that "assumes that listeners possess the agency for acknowledging, cultivating, and negotiating conventions of different discourse communities," (34). In this case study, I argue for the development of this agency that they already possess for acknowledging, cultivating, and negotiating which they do in either writing or speaking, building a more whole and unified community. Rhetorical listening goes beyond limited concepts of identification, since rhetorical listening can "address how to identify and negotiate conscious identifications functioning as ethical and political choices" (47-48).

I should say here as I speak of what deliberation that uses such rhetorical listening asks of students, that it implies an openness that much social science doesn't generally allow. The results possible from certain methods that don't utilize rhetorical listening,

certain “nailed down” methods, may help attain helpful results in certain settings, for certain teachers, with certain teachers, etc. -- but not with all. Using this concept of rhetorical listening breaks down scaffolded methods that prop up certain identities as more powerful than others, opening up space for more fluid identity traversing and negotiating.

Further, as I will argue later, scaffolded methods may be the structure that props up forms of whiteness and white understanding, or can be helpful for achieving certain results, but that is not what deliberation is about. I take a stance in this study against such methods, as they are not helpful in regards to how deliberative ideals and techniques can be transmitted to students. While scientism does offer a way forward to achieve the most replicable, aggregable, and generalizable or data driven (RAD) results (Driscoll, Perdue, 2009) this seems to only be reinforcing the hegemony and replicability sought out by dominant white-Christian culture. The work of deliberation should fall outside of such structure as it builds from the interaction of many identities.

While I do believe in the power of the RAD method to make a pristine study, many clear results were achieved on my end without the use of such methods. In reflection at the end of the study period, I realized that it is simply that I work in a different tradition of research method and action. I have drawn mainly on Ira Shor’s work with students (*When Students Have Power*) with support from the theory of improvisation. When thinking about my method, which I will speak about more in the next section, but suffice it to say, I will call what I did, instead of a strict “scientific method” of study, for lack of a better term, “the improv method” of study, drawing slightly from the tradition of oral history. This combo to me means acting out the main

principles of deliberation in practice, with minimal focus on banking, ordering, and drilling the conceptual aspects of deliberation. More generally, we can say the study carried out a very loose form of “nailing down practice,” based in tradition of improvisation. So first, why did I use this method, and what are the benefits of it for someone like me, and to a study like this?

Well, for starters, scaffolding and nailing down deliberative methods conceptually into an FYW course, is from my review of the literature, generally new territory, and thus tricky for a researcher starting to work on combining fields, deliberation and writing studies. In terms of working with the improvisation “method” in writing studies, I was never much of a “driller” to begin with (which I in some ways associate with scaffolding). For instance, I never really do grammar exercises as I feel, from my writing center experience, that it is better to tackle grammar issues “as they arise” in student writing rather than out of context conceptually.

Students seem to, from my personal experience, retain such grammar rules more strongly “in practice,” or in the improvisational space of the game of writing. I know drilling grammar has fallen out of favor in writing studies over the years after the realization that is built from understanding some of the drawbacks of Shaughnessy’s *Errors and Expectations*, as Min-Zhan Lu points out, “Shaughnessy seems to have also adopted an essentialist assumption which dominates these theories of language: that linguistic codes can be taught in isolation from the production of meaning and from the dynamic power struggle within and among diverse discourses” (“Redefining the legacy of Mina Shaughnessy: A critique of the politics of linguistic innocence,” 3) which the field has embraced for reasons of understanding the pitfalls of the banking method

explained by Freire (*Pedagogy of the Oppressed*). Also this is the case because of the over enforcement of racist Standard American English, or SAE, favoring individual expression, etc. (Inoue, *Antiracist Writing Assessment Ecologies*). I guess I don't scaffold for the sake of all the above, but also, for the sake of on the spot, improvisational learning, or in other (Buddhist) words, taking things "as they arise."

In another way, as Lauren Esposito writes, in "Saying 'Yes, and' to Collaborative Prewriting: How Improvisational Theater Ignites Creativity and Discovery in Student Writing," "Writing instruction that overemphasizes form and formulaic writing shortchanges important processes whereby students observe, infer, interpret, and synthesize new information to develop their own claims, express their own thoughts, and construct their own arguments" (43).

My writing center experience affects my attitude to scaffolding writing concepts in the above ways, but my own lens on deliberation as a new learner tying deliberation to writing studies, can allow a similar type of fluidity in approach to deliberative methods (aka – "beginner's mind"). In other words, the "as it arises" improvisational method also affects how I approach deliberation, like it does with grammar, and the hope is to show such a mindset to readers so they can utilize this approach as well.

For instance, I would recommend students utilize deliberation *as needed* in situations as they arise, rather than me drill them out of context and in "sanitized" written environments. Again, this is because personal experience with drilling has led me to see that the results of student expression and clarity in sanitized environments are nothing compared to when they are "out in the open," so to speak. On that note, I believe the drilling method (Freire: banking) hurts student learning as opposed to helps, which I will

show in the study to come, in how students writing “in real time” flourish more, than studies showing what grammar exercises can do.

So in essence, I hope to show in this short introduction that I got some great results from my study that can be a “way in” for other researchers and teachers who want to mix composition studies with deliberation. As you can see with the writing style of this introduction, I am going against the grain of writing method, foregoing traditional social science construct for clarity of expression. There is a big push for data driven studies in the “soft sciences,” and I understand why, but that is just not how I can analyze the world, or how many students, cultures, and mindsets analyze the world. And I hope to show, that if we are to utilize deliberation as a method in writing classrooms at all, we must first accept different thinking styles, writing styles, emotive styles, political styles, etc., instead of forcing deliberators to fit into “scientific speech” before we can do the work deliberation asks of us.

So before I get to the actual data and classroom experience of the study itself, I want to mention that we will work with the theory and practice that there is always some falsehood in data-driven scientific structure of speech and method, as well as much truth in the simple yet purely qualitative as we progress in the study. In other words, I want to show my results here, but first explain while the value of the non-scientific languaging method used to begin the chapter to open space for the students to speak later in their own, searching and expressive voices outside of “science,” all against the backdrop of what is “hot” in the field of writing studies and in the burgeoning world of STEM that pushes for big data and big statistics at all costs.

Know that, as I say this, I realize I give you these results through a mixture of qualitative languaging, RAD methods (surveys, questionnaires, etc.), and “improvisation,” or “doing it on the fly/being in the moment.” While the majority of my method was “improvisational” in nature, less so than being scaffolded and scientifically/meticulously controlled and planned in nature, there was still careful and traditional planning work done to ensure deliberative concepts were at the forefront of the class, although at minimum.

Readers of this chapter will be able to see the tension of both styles, improv and traditional planning, as I recount what I did and what the students did. The scaffolding will be especially clear for readers where generalizable and replicable results fit into the “hard social science” model that is valuable right now in RAD based research models. On the other hand, the improvisational practice method, while not “hard” in the traditional STEM or social science sense, produced excellent results for this study, and, I will argue, is a more than valid research tradition valuable to academics.

This tradition, as I will explain in the following section, comes out of a sort of “improvisational comedy/jazz” method, which, while lacking a bit of replicability, does lay the groundwork of “games” for other researchers to “improvise” off of in their own right. So although some may say my research is not as concrete as current academic standards demand, I challenge them to discredit the historical method and tradition I am working from.

The theory of deliberative democracy mostly starts and ends with the speech act, and is also very concerned with the public and the “political sphere” in the formal sense of getting together and “talking through” issues. The results of this study also show how

the act of writing in deliberation with self and other is not only a groundbreaking area of research for deliberative democracy, but also how a co-creation among the two modes of communication and intertwining both deliberative writing and the speech together, can shape strong, compassionate, understanding, and critical student-made civic identities, community identities, national identities, and dare I say — human identities?

My results, through the mixed methods I introduce above, show how writing and deliberation almost belong with each other. Even further, my results indicate that writing studies can and should be one of the next avenues of deliberative democratic exploration (In all cases: mates 4 life :heart emoji:). My study highlights how deliberation in FYW leads to the very same meaningful writing experiences that Eodice, Geller, and Lerner have shown in *The Meaningful Writing Project*, yet with a backdrop of social issues, consumer health, politics, war and peace, speaking truth to power, and speaking truth to community; in every case: growth, understanding, seeing through “the veil” and stronger communal bonds (classroom, university, city, nation, international, earthly) seem to take root in students and grow.

### **Section 1 – Methods: Improv Method vs. Conceptual Method**

*In which I explain that improv music or comedy techniques can help ground a strong deliberative environment, even if it is at the expense of what writing studies social science recently seems to be striving for to keep up with the so called “hard” sciences: replicability, aggregability, and generalizability of studies and their data.*

For some reason, on my CV, I note, to this day, that I have outside experience in improv comedy. I have always wondered why I keep it there. I guess I thought it would make me stand out, especially because I was so deeply embedded in the world of improv for such a long time. In fact, during my BA and MA, I spent five years in a gigging improv comedy group in Stony Brook, New York, comprised of Stony Brook PhD

students in fields like English and Chemistry, staff members in academic advising, public health, and sports, and former students who had jobs in the surrounding area. In fact, one member in the improv group (Dr. Lauren Esposito) went on to write an amazing dissertation on the use of improv in writing classrooms, and continues to be a leader in that field today.

As I reflect on what Dr. Esposito wrote, and what I am working towards as I write this section, I begin to understand why I keep my improv experience on my CV: it plays a huge part in how I interact with the world, how I hope to teach others it is possible to see the world, and how it really ties in to the topics I have come to love: social justice, equity, (true) democracy, and deliberation.

I say all of the above not to foreshadow that I will dive into improv theory, or even suggest using actual improv games or strategies in the writing classroom, but rather to argue for using the improv spirit. I am not the expert on improv theory, but I do have a history of working within improv settings and suggest improv can open up space away from the over-rigor of the scientific method, opening up an FYW class to deliberative democracy.

What I will say, though, is that the improvisational techniques I picked up over those five years, taking classes at the Upright Citizens Brigade (UCB) theatre in New York City started by Amy Poehler and her cohort, learning how to improv in day to day life, and watching Dr. Esposito plan and carry out her study of improv in writing classrooms, all around one simple rule known as “yes, and,” definitely played a part in how I ran this deliberative study and subsequently sought to challenge the language of science-only, as she has put it, Further,



Using ‘Yes, and’ demonstrates one way of actively involving students in direct exploration of ideas through collaborative discovery, inquiry, and creativity. Students not only listen to and consider divergent views and opinions; they enact various perspectives by believing and affirming ideas that align with differing viewpoints. Applying improv as both an intellectual framework and a set of instructional practices to teaching writing reminds us that some of our best ideas come from spontaneous moments. It gives us, along with our students, a live view of the drama of inventing (46).

My improv history plays a huge role in the aversion to instantiating too many rules in deliberative social justice writing.

Improv’s core values connect to core deliberative values such as validation, empathetic listening, respect, open mindedness, and building on ideas with a group instead of seeking to tear them down. These core values also include acceptance, non-individualism, support when one is struggling (always), group problem hearing, group problem solving, group creation of forward motion, group working through stagnation, group value creation, group willingness to restart and regroup after an “ending,” as well as reintegration after feeling slighted by team members, being cut short by team members and ignored by team members, and being invalidated by team members. Lastly, improvisation ties to core values of deliberation in terms of not attaching to hateful emotions that may arise in such situations (as they will pass if we work on that next moment of recentering the community bond) and always maintaining relationships and validating the presence of others -- we always want the players there to be active, ready to engage, and be there to support.

Writing classrooms could benefit from the incorporation of the social activity of the off the cuff, exploratory, generative principle of improv, especially how it promotes the awakening of new thinking and out of the box ideas, as well as to affirm the creative

impulse they have inside of them. As Esposito writes in, “More than Just Laughs: Building Stronger Writers Through Improv Comedy,”

Like good improv, good writing doesn’t happen in a vacuum. It is a social activity that involves real readers and writers in exchanging, drafting, and communicating ideas. Developing writers especially benefit from talking about and generating ideas with others. These exploratory conversations have the power to awaken new discoveries and bolster students’ creative thinking.

But that further, improv in writing and in the writing classroom is one “guided by a central tenet in improvisation, which is to affirm, rather than negate, a fellow improviser’s idea.” As Esposito writes, “I explain to students that our goal is to create a cohesive story by accepting all ideas, which requires that we pay close attention to each person’s suggestion and respond with creative twists and turns” (44).

In this way, improv seems to be closely related to the next step of traditional “democratized deliberation,” a sort of opened up traditional deliberation, a sort of the Hegelian antithesis to traditional deliberation. Democratized deliberation offers freedom from the restrictive rules traditional deliberation theory enforces on individual liberty in hopes of creating a cohesive group, much like improv in general does with its core value of openness to possibility. Also, this is why I look at limited rule sets, such as in the last paragraph when I made sure to say “one thing to try your damndest to do” instead of “must do” in an improv scene.

To zoom out to the big picture for a second, the real reason I bring improvisation up is to ground the method I used during this study. Upon realizing, when the study was over, just how loose and free flowing the whole thing was, contrary to what I thought “it should be,” I also thought “oh shit -- I don’t have the sort of RAD research base that seems to be required be taken seriously now.” This posed immediate problems for

credibility, future job prospects, the field in general. But I have since realized through both personal experience and research that the imposition of academic research norms is a restrictive way of policing thought.

To say different methods of research are inherently invalid for the sake of their being a method is like saying oral traditions are invalid because they are primitive and backwards, or non SAE dialects are invalid because they don't follow White Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP) like traditions. No — that thinking is power imposing propagandized stereotypes on those who lack power. Each tradition is valued on its own terms, and the tradition out of which this study was raised was based on my history as an improver, and now that I really think about it, years a jazz musician as well as years as a practicing meditator in the Buddhist tradition out of Burma and India.

I value the liberty to be in the present moment and break free of rules for the sake of awareness of what is arising. This allows one to follow what is coming up naturally. Following what comes up naturally is key in deliberation which values truth and openness to individual concerns and their acceptance and validation by the group. In this sense, rules are made to be a guide that are also made to be broken for the sake of truth, acceptance, and justice.

Why bring this up at all though? Why mention the tradition I am coming out of? The fact that I come from a background of improv, jazz, and now meditation? What does this have to do with this dissertation, this study? As we will see in the analysis of the study results, there were both positives and negatives to the improv method, as opposed to more traditional banking and conceptual drilling method of learning.

## Concepts v. Bodily Knowing

How should the researcher and reader feel if at the end the study period, the participants of the study could not define the concept of which they spent the whole semester practicing and studying? To answer this question, let's look at an example:

One particular student could not define the word "deliberation" without looking on Google. This was the case even though she was one of the most enthusiastic and engaged students in the class. Funny though, *she knew what the word meant as a practice*, as play, as improvisational game, which will be showcased in a later section when we look at student writing. This type of result leaves me as a researcher at a loss and a crossroads in academia to weigh which is better: is it this sort of abstract, conceptual knowing that we should strive for, the ability to "say": "this thing is the thing!" or should we value a sort of internal knowing, a bodily and autonomic understanding of how to act out the concept, which in this case was deliberation. I feel as if higher education traditionally asks us all to recite an elevator speech on the definition of the word rather than being comfortable with one's own assurance that they do, in fact, know.

My instinct says those engaged in a certain conception of "right learning/teaching" culture would judge this type of learning as being outside of the standards of academic merit. And I mean this way beyond the Deweyian sense of experience and education. I mean the ability to forego the need to linguistically say "I have this concept" if it is clear that one has this concept bodily. This is the ability to "act out," as in an improv game, when someone calls out for a player to be a "salesman" or a "doctor," and the player has to draw on their knowledge to just act that part, to inscribe a

doctor's mannerisms on their body and interact with their improv play partner the way a doctor would if they were interacting with a patient, fellow doctor, etc. In this case, the student can inscribe "Deliberator" onto and into their body and mind, playing out the value system of open-mindedness and just listening/respect that deliberation asks for with their play partners: community. For example, the student does know the concept of deliberation, and more importantly, the practice of deliberation, because deliberation is something to be done - not conceived. It is in the doing of deliberation that healthy bonding occurs. As I write this though, I can "hear" the opposing side saying, well how could this student "do" a deliberation with another if she cannot communicate the conceptual? How could she carry out a deliberation if she could not communicate with the other how to organize, set up, and fulfill a deliberation, or tell the other what the goals of the deliberation are?

I hear that side of the argument loud and clear, but I do believe that someone can simply "do." If the person "doing" was tasked with conceptualizing for another what they "do," I personally have faith (especially the students I was honored to work with during the study period), they will be able to. I can't speak for others, so I'll take myself as an example. Me, sitting here, writing about what I just "did" during this study period: I didn't need to "tell" my study as I "did." I needed to "tell" *after* I "did." I think the same line of reasoning could be applied to riding a bike and teaching one to ride a bike.

In all, I would argue we don't need to see things in just one way. We don't need to see the line of how education works from "do" to "tell" or vice versa moving in only one way. Just as multiple cultures could read from right to left or from left to right, etc., there are multiple possibilities for how the world can work, how people can think, and

how knowledge can be transmitted. This is the thought schema in which I sought to apply the practice method, for the sake of doing rather than “knowing” abstractions.

### **A Dreadful Case of The What Ifs -- Not My Style**

The conceptual method, on the other hand, would have required drilling, etc. and that is just not my style. In improv, you just get a few rules and jump into the scene with nothing else to go by. This is basically what I did with students during the study period. Some basic ground rules for what deliberation were given on the first day or so and then we just “did.”

I more-so used writing prompts to set up deliberations that were open in nature based on the writings students did. This way I was tying writing and speech together, as well as grounding each, in practice, on the value systems of deliberation as shown above to guide classroom discussion and writing. Some other examples from the IRB approved study of prompts for open discussion deliberations were things like:

We had a pretty deep conversation about race, responsibility, society, etc. on Friday.

With a few days removed from that conversation, what do you think about it now? Is there anything you would have liked to say that you didn't? Anything you would say now that you have had time to think about it? Would you say things in a different way to be aware of certain people and their points of view or perspective, not to change your argument but to make it so that you're having a conversation with someone as opposed to speaking for or about them without them there?

Also, is there anything you wish people would have taken into account when regarding what they said that maybe they didn't say or take into consideration? What were these things, and why do you think they should be taken into account?

Lastly what were some other thoughts about last week's conversation on Friday? Let them flow out here.

Students took 10/15 minutes to write on the above and then we talked. It was hard to get students to talk at first, but after a while, one student responded that “racism was

bullshit,” mentioning it was an exact quote from what he wrote. I pushed him to expand on what he meant and he said that he finds it aggravating that people get judged just because they’re black or they’re white, for no other reason. He said,

That’s not important to me, that’s not how I was raised. It doesn’t matter what color skin you are, it just doesn’t matter. Who you are as a person, that’s what matters. And for somebody to just judge someone else just because of that and think they know they’re superior to them or something like that, it’s aggravating. [and this student was of half Puerto Rican/Caucasian descent]

I then do the best I can to ground the “place” of this thought, which I now, looking back, see as an overstep of my own moderation capacity. I do this grounding because of the amount of time it took students to be open to speaking in the beginning and I want to fill the space just in case other students weren’t listening or were afraid to work with John’s thoughts. It’s a neurotic habit of mine, as a teacher, where filling silence may model what to do to work with each other in this moment which may be uncomfortable when speaking/deliberating with each other, especially with a new group of which we may still not even know (this was only the third class of the semester).

The goal of grounding the place of thought seems just though. While Jonathan’s thought, to me, was extremely clear, I wanted to try and “model” a connective framework for everyone. I wanted to show how others can language to find common ground with John’s way of thinking. How can we language to find a connective way of thinking that can open the way for points of disagreement or confusion or finding where disconnection is to then open the cracks to heal such disconnection?

To start this process of deliberative modeling of connection in hopes of easing the process into finding disconnection and then eventual connection and healing I say, “So you would sort of come from the place that you have to go deeper than skin, right, and people would say beauty is not skin deep, which is a different thing, which means it’s

more about someone's personality..." After a short diversion on my part, again out of a bit of well-meant stalling, someone else from the class jumps into this open discussion and says, seeming to agree, but from a different angle, regarding how some people may be open to seeing beyond one's skin but how there is also a lot of people who see skin only, again showing the looseness but groundedness of the improv method of communication.

Emma responds that implicit bias is a real thing and that upbringing is important, connecting to something John said earlier, showing deliberative connection happening.

She says,

arguing that [John's point about character first and foremost] a little bit but I feel like implicit bias is a real thing. I might be the only person who believes that. We all were raised the way we were with [inaudible 5:33] us things, our parents taught us things. That's the way we do things. Maybe it's a good thing too. For me... people [are] being treated as terrorists...A lot of people probably have an implicit bias from seeing that, that a lot of Middle Eastern people are terrorists. I know that that's a big problem. It is racist and Islamophobic, but it's also implicit bias. That's something that people have to un-learn.

What I see here is Emma finding grounding connection in this loose space of talk, to her peer, on the value of character, but also the cultural training of which we are a part of that moves us to have either of the belief in one's character or their skin color. She seems to be picking up on John's words from earlier, "That's not important to me, that's not how I was raised. It doesn't matter what color skin you are, it just doesn't matter," helping me prove my point that there can be deep connectedness and work done in community in this loose, less scientific, deep listening and respect based style of communication.

I try to keep the conversation going and grounded in this topic, and step back a bit in my role as moderator, really just asking if anyone else resonates with this conversation, and asking for clarification; the goal is to let students continue this



naturally found deliberative rhythm. The way Emma and John were connecting in their conversation, to me, showed deliberative values of deep listening, connectedness and respect based on the specificity of some of the topic connectedness, and I hoped students would follow up with that. I simply ask next, “Does anyone have a response to that [Emma’s last point]?”

I also ask clarifying questions of Emma to see if there was more content students could resonate with, saying, “the questions you said you were sort of arguing against were in response to what John said. That was the first thing you said. What did you mean by that?” Emma, responds saying, “He's saying it just matters what kind of person you are, which is true. Personality matters, but it's also, there's bias in that.” This thread of conversation is something that carries us through a lot of the rest of this improvised deliberative game, a new high note, of this deliberative conversation (again, based off of student writing).

I probe deeper into the thread that John picked up earlier about depth of character and where character comes from, “Would you say that that's (bias) just a fact of life? Does that [inaudible 5:50] ? People are raised certain ways and have certain prejudices. Which, even though, as John said, it's bullshit. I think those were your words.” Emma follows up on this by saying, “I'm not saying racism is good, I'm saying it's so deeply embedded in us that it's something that we have to un-teach ourselves.”

I push this conversation about embeddedness and character out to other students, keeping the spark that John created for the other “players” of this deliberation game alive, but also wanting to connect them to questions about inner character and systemic creation of character. Here, I ended the next leg of the conversation by connecting studies

showing the prejudices we hold connected to the level of homogeneity of the environment we live in. The conversation flows to another student, an African American from Baltimore, Jared, who missed the last class and the intense conversation about race from last class. He was in a state of general confusion about where the class stood but I tried my best to include him and make him part of the deliberation.

**Michael:** “Anyone want to agree or disagree with that? Who agrees? Racism, again, is so deeply embedded that we have to unlearn it. Who disagrees? That it's not deeply embedded. OK. Tell us your point. It's Luther, right?”

**Jared:** Yes. I'm just confused.

**Michael:** You weren't here for...

**Jared:** No, I wasn't here.

**Michael:** Sorry. Again, that's an even worse curveball. That's like me pointing a four, telling you to throw a fastball and I throw an underhanded pitch to you. I don't know, bad analogy. I'm sorry. Is that your confusion? Is it because of the disconnect or is it more what Emma said?

**Jared:** I don't know.

**Michael:** Tell us about it. Tell us about your confusion.

**Jared:** I don't know how to explain it.

**Michael:** That's OK. Try. Actually, I posted mishmash for one of my assignments. I came up here and John was reading. He was stopping like, "Wait, the professor wrote this on the screen?" It's totally cool to maybe jumble up your words if you need to. Then [inaudible 8:27] .

**Jared:** I guess you said racism is kind of embedded in you. You got to un-teach yourself. I'm not racist. I don't have to un-teach myself.

**Michael:** Do you think that's because of your parents, or your upbringing, or your school?

**Jared:** Yes. [inaudible 8:50]. For me [inaudible 8:51].

**Michael:** Wait. Say that one more time. I didn't hear you.

**Jared:** Yes.

**Michael:** What would you say was different about your upbringing that might lead you to have no bias racially?

**Jared:** I don't know.

**Michael:** That's OK. That might be something you need to think about.

**Jared:** I wouldn't say I have no bias. I would say I was...I don't know.

**Michael:** This is an interesting point. As you investigate...Then, Kaitlyn, you can respond. It's Kaitlyn, right?

**Kaitlyn:** Yes.

**Michael:** OK, cool. As you thought about it a little more, you're almost agreeing with Emma's initial point. I think everybody agreed that there's some implicit bias. Maybe you feel yours in on a lesser level.

If anyone wants, I do have some data to back this up, science data. Generally, people that come from less homogeneous, which means more diverse, areas have less implicit bias. They grew up understanding and interacting with different cultures, and skin colors, and all this stuff.

Now, in examples like the above, especially for students who had not been there for previous sessions and for big concepts such as the connections between character and racism, I wonder if, had I done more conceptual underpinning of how to run deliberative writing and talk sessions, more modeling of deliberative forums, and more thinking about what deliberation actually means in practice, if the actual deliberations themselves would have been richer with less “blank time” and less confusion.

For example, if we watched videos of actual deliberations as a class and analyzed them for their procedure and method, etc., would student deliberation in writing and speech have been deeper, more productive, more meaningful, etc.? If I had laid ground rules for every class session, laid out every debate topic, written out minute by minute notes of what the class was supposed to do, or, on the contrary, out of the Inoue tradition, had the students do the same for a labor based assessment type classroom (trying to attain the “hard” social science approach all the while) would I have had “better” results that academics would have valued more as I approach the job market? More slick, pristine,

morning dew like results that were just too beautiful too pass up (all within the framework of what the “push” is for these days in the social sciences)?

I guess I can’t know now and if it is something I *could* do in the future. Again though, that’s just not my tradition, not my style. And I find it hard to believe that those in our field who argue for allowing varied dialects, languages, ways of thinking would force conformity to a specific mold and ask for deviation from heritage, written language, language of thought (one which is group oriented to begin with, and seeks accepting of others as a starting point to bat) to fit some abstract standard for some unexplained academic benefit which would do the same thing they’re arguing against.

But, as suggested by teachers at Huntington High School, one of the keys of a successful deliberation with students, is that “teachers take the time to plan activities that ensure all students have access to a broad base of information about the issue and understand what is expected of them during a forum” (Deliberation in the Classroom, 45). In the above case with Jared, his absence from the prior discussion about race (the discussion of which was also grounded in theory such as red-lining, zoning, etc., as well as his peers’ feelings on all of these topics and similar issues regarding structural racism in their lives) may have resulted in Luther’s confusion. In other words, it wasn’t necessarily that the class needed prep on how to run a deliberation, but rather a grounding in subject matter and a grounding in *each other* that helped the flow of the deliberation move forward.

On that note, I’m hopeful about what I will argue in this methods section: that there is valuable space to extend Young and Inoue’s to push the variants of SAE written and spoken language that are accepted, loved, and given water to grown in the academy,

but to add some of what Winona LaDuke, pushes for in her work, *Recovering the Sacred*. Although the lens is different in reference to the shutting down of Native ways of seeing the world through colonization, this study will use the spirit of her argument in hopes that comprhet, but more so academia as a whole loosens its grip on what is acceptable methodologically, simply through the process of hearing and widening the lens of why more than just a few methodologies should be considered valuable, especially given the backdrop of the push for STEM.

### **Why did this (failure) happen to begin with?**

*In which I argue for a more open view of the academic researcher, the research traditions they can draw from, as well as their general human-ness (in other words, the researcher as human being with defective body, social skills, and social units)*

*In which I try to show that certain lack of direction and its subsequent causes lead to a quite fruitful inner and outer direction. Plus: promotion of the value of lack of direction*

Recently, on the WPA listserv, Composition Forum put out a call for a 6-word essay on the topic of “My Mundane Professional Life.” I won’t share what I submitted here, but I will say that the theme of my 6 word essay fits with what I faced during the research period for this study, in terms of how simply “being a human” conflicted with the rigor of which academia generally demands. These are demands which, if I don’t meet, will get me almost immediately rejected from any potential hire etc., etc., and etc.). I faced a lack of resources to best understand how to run the study to meet the required university academic standards, as well as a life threatening sickness during the ethnographic study period.

Knowing what to do for the study itself, such as how to, and even if I should scaffold terms in a classroom ethnography like I brought up in the section before was a huge issue, and an unknown. The ins and outs of teaching and moderating deliberations

in a classroom ethnography, let alone an FYW classroom ethnography was also a bit of an unknown. Luckily, the Kettering Foundation's work set a strong foundation for me but did not offer definite answers for the local contexts and communities I found myself in.

Overall, I think the issues above regarding the plight of grad students as well as researcher health do have a few solutions, most of which have already been argued for in various outlets: more needs to be written and acted upon to help graduate students, lecturers, professors, and researchers of all stripes plan and prep their studies, as well as find and validate what research tradition works for them. In turn, open space should be created in the academic or popular sphere for said research to be accepted (it is a sort of deliberative social justice if you think about it!).

## **Section 2 - In which we look at the corporatization and neoliberalization of the university, how writing one's truth could fight this pattern, etc.**

The problems of researcher health and support, as well as the self-expression one has, in the end, relates to the corporatization and neoliberalization of the university. Because of the institutional structure, not only will humanities programs which promote critical thinking be slashed, but research traditions generally that are fluid and open to not only non-SAE written and spoken word but *research traditions* will also be slashed, marginalized, and unable to be heard. Those who work to validate their own experience as true for the very reason that it is "true" will always struggle to find support against the tide of STEM, a field that helped create the algorithms of technology which greatly added to the current state of polarization in this country to begin with. Those who fight to see what STEM did in this sense, be undone, who try to help students converse across stereotyped and propagandized political boundaries, who try to help students activate

each other through the creation of student-centered solutions to the political challenges of their time, and who help create space for students to become Nader-like citizen crusaders (in whatever way that means for the student) will never get the help they need.

In fact, the restrictions on the humanities, those wanting to go into the humanities, and those in composition, who could utilize their position as a mouthpiece for students to express what they feel and think, is an example of Chomskyian propaganda, and a reason why we need deliberative principles in the university, and in FYW. Much like how Chomsky explains the mechanisms utilized from both state and market power in Great Britain to stamp out the radical working class press through expensive by ins, defamation lawsuits, and status attacks by the Sunday weeklys, etc, the institution of higher education enforces both an SAE spoken and written lens *as well as an* SAE research lens through which many stories cannot be told. According to Chomsky, the radical working class papers at the time served as a vehicle for an alternative viewpoint and consciousness to the ruling class propaganda that would label any organization against debilitating power as a threat (Manufacturing Consent).

The same is as such with the humanities, who have the ability to challenge the dominant power structure. So what does the ruling class do? It seeks to literally starve out those who would aid the next generation in seeing what society is doing to squelch their opportunities and wages by speaking the truth of their stories. Such an endeavor, whether by a radical working class paper challenging the dominant corporate narrative, a humanities professor, or a radical teacher, is an outright challenge to the dominant Foucauldian institutional power structure, which as Chomsky says in his famous debate with Foucault, limits the creative potential of humans to self organize and self politicize.

So I am taking a different stance here and just laying it bare. Regardless of what the university wants me to write, how much they are paying me, if they will accept this writing or not, I have to record what I experienced during this process. I think that is what I not only asked students to do during this study, but also what I would hope more PhD students would do when they write their dissertations. In fact, it could be a movement in itself - it could be the graduate/adjunct labor force's own mass civil rights protest of today, following in the footsteps of the nonviolent boycott approach of Dr. Martin Luther King. In this case though, the PhD student/adjunct labor/civil rights struggle could recreate the bus boycott by saying "we will not follow your rules for the nothing you've given us. We're going to tell our stories about what we faced, and we don't need 1000 citations to do so." And the action will be to hand in said dissertations that do not follow the "rules" of the game that seek to put us into molds of dry, drab, nothings -- more cogs in the wheel of the neoliberal machine, the issue of which will be talked about in Chapter 2.

Without a such a movement (because what power do I really have?) I plan tell my own story of research, and legitimize the struggles for a human being in certain limiting economic and institutional settings, utilizing the "rules" and "recommendations" for what deliberation is "as a practice" and how that seemed to work in my local context. I cannot claim to have faced all that others have faced, such as racism, sexism, and the like. But that is not my story to tell. Those stories need to be written in all of their authentic languages, and in turn, we need to learn how to really hear them.

What I want to add here is that my lack of direction, in the end, lead to me what worked naturally for me. The sort of Tom Hanks "Cast-Away" vibes I got during the



research study semester in a sense helped me create my own “Winston” to make the study manageable. Finding myself relying on myself for direction (and again, my amazing stack of Kettering materials, etc.), led me to fall into my natural rhythm: improvised music and comedy.

In other words, in not getting overt direction, I figured I would try to “play” or “act out” the role of a teacher moderator, in what seemed to be the most optimal form. You will have the outline of my “acting” the role of teacher/moderator throughout this study in the transcripts of class deliberation audio, my writing and feedback to student essays, student reflections of me as said teacher moderator. From there, as I mention in methods, you can improvise off of that, giving some level of replicability and generalizability, etc. But is this enough for academia to find worthy? Is this “language” worthy for the “big leagues?”

I guess the test of that is answering the question, “was exemplifying deliberation in practice and not concept enough?” My initial argument is yes, especially due to the end of semester questionnaires we will look at (at some point in this chapter) in which students overwhelmingly said that the looser method I used worked to indeed transmit the “concept” of deliberation to them, and that they favored that looser method over conceptualization, that they would do it again/want more classes to run this way if they could have a say in the matter. Although some students at the end of the semester couldn’t identify the exact meaning of the word “deliberation,” they could say what it was when they saw it in action (or when it wasn’t -- almost like the picture of a species of tree/plant that pops up in the dictionary next to it’s name. Sure we could use language

instead of picture to say it is this or that, but the image of it “in the world” can do so much more).

### **Section 3 - The Quantum Approach to Validating the Local, Accepting Research Flaws, as well as Different Lenses/Measuring Instruments**

*(In which I argue for a quantum mechanical approach to research in the humanities -- I know, trust me it will make sense as you read)*

I am by no means a perfect graduate student, a graduate student researcher, let alone a perfect human and through saying that, I want to argue that I am also not a “cold” measuring instrument. The current push in research is to find more ways to be cold - and I understand why, for the sake of “truth.” The research I’ve done has also shown that becoming “cold” does not necessarily equate to truth, and that there are in fact, many truths that can be gleaned, scientifically from warm, flawed human data collectors.

Not only would being more accepting of “the personal” in this way would stop dehumanizing a humanizing activity such as data and data collection where the human agents in play have everything to do with the data collected. Even in the hard sciences, “cold instruments” can’t stop affecting their data (think of the Copenhagen explanation posited by Bohr and Heisenberg which shows clearly that perception alters final measurement, or that things don’t have a finite quality until being measured -- before that there is only the probability of certain measurements). This means that RAD based research faces similar, if not worse problems.

With that in mind, we might as well, in ethnography especially, where the human actors are not “cold,” realize how the person collecting data will affect the data collected. So not only will “emotional” measuring instruments affect what is observed, what data is collected, and what statistics will be displayed “as truth” to the public, but “cold,” hard,

RAD like measuring instruments will also do the same to what data is collected and what statistics will be displayed “as truth” to the public. So why even fight to try to maintain some level of objectivity? In any case, regardless of “cold” or “hot,” completely “logical” or completely “emotional,” the results and measurements will be skewed in the Copenhagen like way, and all of them are still valid. They are just two different ways of measuring, seeing, and putting lenses to the world. And as Bohr and Heisenberg would probably say, the results received were already one of the potential probabilities before measurement anyway!

Lastly, I would just say that the above argument serves to cement my point that non-traditional, non-RAD, non-“hard science” observational methods are just as valid as are traditional, RAD, and hard science ones. So we as a field, and academia in general, could learn to, as I argue in the beginning of this chapter, just accept them and hold fast to the result, in any case, allowing for whoever wants to contribute in their own tradition (again for me, I’m not a hard science data collector, but someone else is, and good for them!).

Let’s take the viewpoint that the “soft science,” or “emotional” approach is in fact wrong, skewed, etc. I would argue that what’s “wrong” isn’t even wrong! (As Hawking argues in “A Briefer History of Time” with his fish example – see preface)

Secondly, for all the touting of “hard science” methods, one thing has clearly been lost: the understanding that all of the progress made in what is “wrong” can serve, and should serve, as science progress was always designed to, to build upon what may be “mistakes” or “limitations.” It can very often be that finding dead ends or paths which

don't bear certain kinds of fruit to be the ones that lead to the most insights that can be utilized the next go around (Rome wasn't built in a day rings in my mind here).

In fact, I would have to say that the research I did *needs* a second go around, or a future iteration, for two reasons. First, because it was a trial, and it should be repeated, hammered out, taken on by another mind, more students, added to the tradition of deliberative studies and writing studies, and second, because it was made by a fallible human being struggling through what graduate students struggle through on top of the study being carried out during a time of some real personal health issues.

#### **Section 4 - Health, Struggle, and Growth - A Plea for Understanding and Considering the “Human” in “Researcher”**

*“Counterstory can also allow students, faculty, staff and supporters to define themselves and defend their interests in environments that often marginalize or erase their voices.” (Martinez, “Storytelling as #Resistance”)*

I went through a bout of being near liver failure for the last two months of the research study semester. Because of bouts of daily intense nausea, inability to get out of bed, and an incapacity to hold down any sort of food that I ate, I had been tasked with seeing my Primary Care physician multiple times a week, visiting gastroenterologists, undergoing medical procedures like HIDA scans and endoscopies, all because my ALT liver enzymes which were about 11 times higher than what is the suggested max medically and My AST were about 7 times the suggested max medically. Going through this and working within the study timeframe was slightly panic inducing (and because of the study, by any means -- that on the other hand was fun and enjoyable).

Aside from the medical jargon, let me humanize this a bit to show a situation such as this could affect a graduate student researcher's work, let alone any researcher, but a graduate student research in particular who really doesn't have the expertise to do their first classroom study, but who is also running the adjunct circuit on Medicaid and with Medicaid benefits (which are great) and with Medicaid doctors (I can tell you the story of how a Medicaid doctor caused me to permanently lose sensation in my tongue, but that's for a different dissertation).

This is where I want to argue for the humanization of the researcher, the scholar, and the study through the lens of growth through struggle, which is in fact, quite related to the point earlier about science growing from failures). Analysis work on Friedrich Nietzsche, by famed popular contemporary philosopher Alain De Botton, offers reflection on Nietzsche's philosophy of hardship. In this tradition, true growth comes from suffering, finding health, and coming out the other (Botton, "Friedrich Nietzsche...") In fact, there is biological proof of this in how things like spicy foods upregulate our endorphine (and I believe dopamine centers) in order to feel more pleasure after putting the body through stress. Joy then, is received after stress and struggle. Joe Rogan, the famous Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) fighter and comedian, would argue the same in relation to the epinephrine rush (anxiety) pre fight, the upregulation of de-epinephrine as a result, and the amazing feeling post fight, especially if it is a win, in terms of pleasure -- he says that everything feels and looks better, the floor feels better under your feet, etc. ("Joe Rogan Experience #502 - Dr. Rhonda Patrick - YouTube").

Now what I experienced was no road through the stages of syphilis that Nietzsche faced, but my body was not right. And that affected my research. And according to what

the neurobiology seems to say, I may have, and the students I worked with may have been primed in this sort of “upregulated way” to get more out of the work we did during the study period had none of this adverse stuff happened. This means, in a positive way, in a useful way, in a growth way, that our field, and academia as a whole should look at struggle, hardship, and the results of work done through such a “lens” (in a sense a “measuring instrument” to keep up the quantum mechanics metaphor) that yields valid results. It seems as though the narrative elements of the study have to be told in order for the STEM like results to come to the fore. And in the stuffing down of certain ways of writing and research, the academy would only dampen it’s search possible STEM related truths (that are all interconnected).

Now it’s only a metaphor, and I know many use quantum mechanical truths for pseudo-science, but I would say that one of the probable outcomes of this study before it was done was the one in which I was ill, using improvised methods, etc., and that that lens, while potentially flawed in many respects, just as some may say Nietzsche's whole body of work is flawed because of his eventual collapse into 11 years of madness before his death, there is some truth in what illness and struggle brought about to this study and to any other issue out there.

So my struggles with health, as well as the personal and academic issues I faced, all led to the mixed results I’m referring to above. I would also argue that you can see this in the results of successful deliberation in the classroom, as each student brought their successes and pains, hopes and fears to the classroom, and found ways to “upregulate” and growth through their pain and strength within the deliberative written and spoken community. I write all of this not as an overly self-focused exploration, but as a true-to-

life connection that should be considered and welcomed by academia and research in general. Not only should we think about the value of research tradition the researcher themselves engages within, (as well as what all writers and researchers, student or otherwise), being careful not to put it down because the “trend” is to raise one above the other. This raising of one above the other reminds me of RAD, and the social science survey and data driven revolution, which has recently been proven to be anything but based in truth. Many of the surveys and data we now rest our intimate knowledge on are extremely skewed.

Aja Martinez points out how critical race theory and counterstory helped fight against this institutionalizing narrative, as she writes in “Storytelling as #Resistance,”

CRT made way for the emergence of counterstory, a method used in scholarly and popular publications as a necessary and legitimate mode of research for marginalized scholars, particularly those from cultures where the oral tradition is valued. Counterstory serves to expose, analyze and challenge stock stories of racial privilege and can help strengthen traditions of social, political and cultural survival and resistance. (“Storytelling as #Resistance”)

What I seek to do here is look at how “legitimate modes of research” open up paths to challenge this institutionalizing languaging of which only certain types of methods are involved, especially those that seek to decimate and colonize other modes of thought by not allowing their being. In this case, I may be borrowing critical race theory to make a larger point, as someone who is white and already privileged, but I am looking at the inability of scholars to make certain personal points because of the tradition they are forced to enter into, denying the validity of others.

With all of that info, I close this section by saying that in academia it feels as if we forget that there is a human life connected to the writer, a human life with emotions and feelings and ailments and health that do, everyday, affect the output and input of

which said researcher/writer is capable. And during this research semester, for this dissertation, nothing was really on my side except my students, my amazing writing group (shout out to Sheeba and Donna), and my stubborn, persistent brain. So I do hope the reader can see the approaches to this study as both a result of a context which led to both benefits and the flaws. Benefits and flaws, all of which, to my mind, are equally as important to the scientific process. In fact, the balance of both progress and failures may be even more important and true to the traditional scientific method of study which accepts mistakes and failures as a set up for further growth, as well as, in quantum mechanics anyway, accepts the humanity of the study and calls itself out (a method we may need more of!).

So, as science used to run before the corporatization and neoliberalization of the university, let's make a call to make more mistakes, dead ends, and call them successes! Science and knowledge aren't just about finding the "right," "the perfect," or the "truth," it is equally as important to find failure, because again, to bring up the quantum mechanics metaphor, failure is just another probability waiting to happen. And to the next generation of researchers interested in deliberation, deliberative democracy, deliberative democracy in FYW, etc., please take these findings and adjust future research accordingly. With that in mind though, before we cast final judgement, let's see what the students thought of the method, the class, etc. before diving into the class as a whole, the students' process through it, and the deliberation that I, and they, saw occurring.

### **Section 5 – Was the Improv Method Successful? What did the students think?**

*In which we see that despite my fears laid out above, everything worked out fine and the students loved what we did — and furthermore, we see that according to the students, what I did seemed to work (which is all that matters right?)*



On the final day of class, I asked students four questions. Out of the 24 students enrolled, 20 were there to respond. 1 student really never came to class, so we can say that 20/23 students responded. That means that roughly 87% of students responded to this final set of questions.

The questions were as follows:

1. Would you say I did a good job explaining what "deliberation" was to you all?
2. Would you say I showed you more through "practice" (like hey, let's have a discussion, and I'll try to run it like a deliberation) or through giving you concepts (like, here, let's study this word, "deliberation" and define it and tear it apart?)
3. Would you have preferred me teach it one way or the other?

### **Results to above Questions:**

So again, 20/23 students answered this final questionnaire, and they were given about 15/20 minutes to answer. Since this was very near to the end of the semester, I began the class by trying to clear their minds of other potential worries, asking if the students had any pressing questions not related to this small activity, about upcoming things like final portfolios, due dates, or revision related questions. I did get a few questions, and after talking the students seemed to be at ease with all of that stuff. They had also been working on course reflections for their portfolios over the past few days and doing other reflecting type responses for the study the past two class periods, so I feel as if they were in a space of being ready to answer this questionnaire, as they had been thinking about the course as a whole (in a sense, the students were "scaffolded" to this - funny how that works out huh?)

Looking at each question one by one, to see the overall responses and what students say about methods, will show that the students generally felt that the improv method worked:

1. Would you say I did a good job explaining what "deliberation" was to you all?

- Only one person didn't say yes.

- That person (Michael K) said I did a good job at being a mediator
- I thought I saw other people having caveats with their “yes” but upon deeper analysis of responses, there really were no caveats.
- So 19/20, or 95% of respondents thought I did a good job teaching deliberation to them

*Note: Here we'll look at 2&3 combined*

2. Would you say I showed you more through "practice" (like hey, let's have a discussion, and I'll try to run it like a deliberation) or through giving you concepts (like, here, let's study this word, "deliberation" and define it and tear it apart?)

3. Would you have preferred me teach it one way or the other?

- Well, it turns out that only three of the 20 respondents wanted more conceptual approaches. (Nick, Melissa and Matt N), and Melissa still enjoyed practice, but would have preferred more conceptual thinking.
- That means that 85% of respondents favored the practice method, and even one person who was sort of struggling to articulate his liking of the practice method still clearly said he enjoyed it (Elias)
- Also, the reviews of the practice method were pretty glowing, as opposed to the two conceptual method likers, which weren't as in depth. I mean, Nick's was in depth but Matt's did not give insight into his reasons.

## **Section 6 - “Proof” that students learned “deliberation” conceptually through the improv method**

*In which we look at the example of practice v. concept*

What does it take to “prove” that a student “got” what deliberation was? Is it just them saying “yes” to answering question 1 above? How do we know that even means anything, seriously? Are there other ways to get proof? One way is through observation of deliberation in practice, to be able to spot it as it arises, in the student's practice, as I hope to point out in many ways throughout the rest of this study. But what about, as we wrap up talking about method, finding instances of students struggling with concept, learning it through practice, but coming to understand said concept?

For example, let's look at one student who wrote down publicly for the class to see, their struggling with the concept of deliberation, but their ultimate understanding of the concept. I want to argue that through this student's physical practice of deliberation, she came to be able to utilize it "cortically" in a way. Later, we will also see that students who did not use the term or concept "deliberation" still showed knowledge of deliberative ideals tied to deliberation's cousin, "discussion," in how they wrote about discussion, couching it in deliberative ideals, for instance, discussion with respect, discussion with listening, discussion with open mindedness and willingness to grow, etc. We'll get there. Let's first start identifying success in method by looking at this student struggling with, but then working towards, mastery of the concept of deliberation at the end of the semester, which was built on her use of the improv method all semester.

In this case, MaryLee, (one of the most engaged of the semester) in the third to last class of the semester, couldn't write exactly what the term deliberation meant. She notes that she did have a rough idea of the word before the class started, but still felt that in answering the question of what deliberation meant to her, she had to go to a dictionary. Now for me, this initially signaled nonfulfillment of my goal as a teacher. How could one of the most engaged students of the class during the study not be able to define the core conceptual term driving the class by the end of the semester? This must be a failure!

Well, her definition pre-dictionary was in fact quite accurate in terms of deliberation considering multiple viewpoints. Again though, her initial honest writing regarding not knowing the definition of deliberation at the end of the semester sent a warning signal to me as a teacher: (aka: have I been doing my job correctly? [hence the whole section explaining away my right to said methods!]) Her writing reads as thus,

“What does deliberation mean to you?- Tbh, I don't know what this word means I have to Google it. My last two brain cells can only do so much...Oh ok. So it means like thinking about something. I guess to me 3 months ago that meant like...you know weighing my options or making sure I understood all sides of the story before making a decision.”

So when the student writes that they, in the second to last week of the semester, have to google this term I hoped to spend the entire semester making the students familiar with, it signals that I did not do enough of a good job explaining this term.

But does it really? Or does it just signal a step on the way to the student's individual learning process? Is this a failure by a certain standard of assessment? Are we narrowing our view of learning by seeing such writing and need for clarification as a sign of “lack” (again this brings to mind the “west beats the rest” type thinking and it's obvious flaws for “freedom,” “diversity,” and just the potentialities of the biological human beings to be different)? What is this student's learning process (and the student is dreadfully intelligent, so learning whatever the student wants is within all probabilities, possible) The type of assessment employed to look at this situation in the negative would say that for a writing class where words and vocab are grown and utilized, it signals a failure for a certain type of teacher and certain types of learners (ones who do well learning and studying abstract concepts and terms).

Conceptually, again, we did look at the definition of deliberation, but again, probably not nearly enough. We did was go over Harriger and McMillan's easy start ground rules (cite) earlier in the semester, like I mentioned earlier, as well as talk as a big group about setting some ground rules for our discussions (see, I'm not even calling them deliberations). Though we did that, I would say that for conceptual learners, I did not do

nearly enough scaffolding of the important terms with my students and built in “usable moments” for said terms.

With conceptual scaffolding in mind for certain learners, I will say that the improv method seems to outweigh preference for conceptual banking. For instance, as we look at this issue with concepts, as well as reflect on the student responses to reflection questions above, we can remind ourselves that 85% or more relished in the practice method. Now some may argue the point of generalizability here, that the 85% favorability rating may just simply mean I had “improv method” type learners in my class, which could not be replicated out of that setting. As a slight counter to that, I would say that what I noticed among my SJU class this semester in terms of the 85% favorability also applied to my 2 Farmingdale sections. There, it was also the case that large majority of the students noted they not only enjoyed the class as it was run, but specifically pointed out the “discussions” and the “deliberative values (open-ness, respect, ability to have one’s voice and share it without judgement, etc.), and they weren’t even primed for deliberation as a concept!

Another counter here may be that well, this is New York, and may just be how liberal New York thinks in general, it is the New York culture - we’re “Deweyian” improv learners in many ways. Well, that has sort have been outstripped by common core (I could show many examples of student course reflections at both institutions where, I would say, a majority of the students wrote about the best thing about this class was not only the discussions but also the freedom to speak their mind, choose their topics (within the framework of the assignment and the course), and to follow a path of interest, not be lectured at by someone or drilled for hours without having any input.) Of course, a red

leaning state may have a different culture, and may lean towards traditional drill based schooling, but I don't have that personal experience, and I may be speaking out of turn to assume anything in these matters (what I could do here is find data on schooling types in some conservative states and student appreciation of those schooling methods, what they would like schooling to be, although who knows how those responses are skewed as to not upset their teachers, etc... which actually could be true in my case as well ie: students not wanting to upset me)

So, to wrap up, I would say this: while MaryLee's example above is interesting in that she wrote she didn't know the word "deliberation" the last day of class but then ended up using it in an actual sentence (somehow, to me, indicating learning vocab --my 7th grade English teacher, always said that if you can use the word 3 times in a different context, it means that you have learned the word) so here I am thinking that MaryLee's use of the term, now in two contexts, is her way of solidifying the knowledge of the "vocabulary"

## **Section 7 - Final Notes**

*"In the end there is no absence of irony; the integrity of what is sacred to Native Americans will be determined by the government that has been responsible for doing everything in its power to destroy Native American cultures."* (Winona Laduke, *Recovering the Sacred*, 11)

*"Xenophobia and a deep fear of Native spiritual practices came to the Americas with the first Europeans. Papal law was the foundation of colonialism; the Church served as handmaiden to military, economic, and spiritual genocide and domination. Centuries of papal bulls posited the supremacy of Christendom over all other beliefs, sanctified manifest destiny, and authorized even the most brutal practices of colonialism."* (Winona Laduke, *Recovering the Sacred*, 11)

There is a deep connection between institutional structures, the languages and ways of knowing those institutional structures allow, and the power granted by such

institutional structures. Victor Villanueva (2006) explains how we have inherited this burden, that we don't live in a post-racial society. We live in a "new racism," one that uses different terms to accomplish the same old racial hierarchies and pathways of oppression and opportunity.

I would like to argue in this final section Villanueva's new racism extends beyond far beyond racial hierarchy although it is embedded within that, to a racism on the "bounds of knowing." This new-new racism extends past language conventions to thought conventions, and that the institutional structures that allow or disallow not only expression but to suppression of knowing. Generally, languaging in itself is the expression of thought, and this new-new racism doesn't function to suppress both languaging and thought in a 1984 newspeak kind of way, but rather on the ability of minds to be in their worlds and live them.

As Winona LaDuke said, this is an affront on "the sacred," and an affront on the validity of non-Western, non-scientific ways of knowing the world and expressing that world. In fact, this war on Indigenous, non-scientific ways of knowing the world, and bringing verifiable truths from that world are some of the first casualties. There is a deep chasm between the Christian tradition, its spiritual practices, and those of the non-Christian (scientific) tradition. It became so pervasive that people practicing other ways of knowing had to go into hiding to protect such ways. She writes,

The notion that non-Christian spiritual practices could have validity was entirely ignored or actively suppressed for centuries, So it was by necessity that Native spiritual practitioners went deep into the woods or into the heartland of their territory to keep up their traditions, always knowing that their job was to keep alive their teachers' instructions, and, hence, their way of life (Laduke, 12).

But how much “truth” can a non-scientific approach to the world offer? In his book, *The Cosmic Serpent*, Jeremy Narby explains how indigenous “un-scientific” knowledge has been used and profited from, with the source of such knowledge being hidden from the public, especially in regards to the pharmaceutical industry and where they get their products and knowledge from. Narby recounts how westerners were starting to “wake up” to the “truths” of the indigenous world that don’t use Baconian science. He writes,

At the ‘Earth Summit,’ (1992) as it was known, everybody had suddenly become aware of the ecological knowledge of indigenous people." The governments of the world mentioned it in every treaty they signed; personal care and pharmaceutical companies talked of marketing the natural products of indigenous people at 'equitable' prices." (38)

What has come to be realized is that what westerners consider to be the fountain of youth of modern medicine, especially in pharmacy, has been extracted from the non-scientific. In fact, much of the nature of pharmacopoeia has been derived from indigenous ways of knowledge that use hallucinogens to derive understanding of plants, something that modern, western science would typically understand as impossible. He writes,

74 percent of the modern pharmacopoeia's plant based remedies were first discovered by 'traditional' societies... the *pilocarpus jaborandi* bush used by the Kayapo and the Guajajara had recently been turned into a glaucoma remedy by Merck, the multinational pharmaceutical company, which was also devising a new anticoagulant based on the *tikiuba* plant of the Uru-eu-Wau-Wau... Colleagues might ask, "You mean Indians claim they get molecularly verifiable information from their hallucinations? You don't take them literally, do you?" What could one answer? (41)

This quotation shows a racist attack on the "language," the non-scientific language of indigenous peoples. One has to take this seriously and then ask, for our profession, what does the ordering and stifling of minds in the indoctrination process of learning to be Western actually do to people?



What ends up happening, is that through the course of the book, Narby learns that what seems to be happening is that certain plant medicines allow to connect, read, and “be-with” the web of DNA based life (54-80), in a process that has something to do with photons (117-131).

So while indigenous people can communicate with the web of life, a feat way beyond the means of rational science, we can see that we have hurt this source of knowledge by forcing it to accept certain standards. As Narby goes on to write,

Research has shown that Western-style education does not work with Amazonian Indians. Theirs is an oral tradition. When one shuts young Indians into a schoolroom for six hours a day, nine months a year, for ten years, and teaches them foreign concepts in a European language, they end up reaching, on average, a level of second-grade primary school. This means that most of them barely know how to read and write and do not calculate a percentage (150).

This is the case for those cultures which have given modern pharmacy 74 percent of its products. How is this even possible? And we have to ask what writing teachers can do with this knowledge.

Inoue talks about this subjugation of knowing and forms of language which have been held back, which doesn't say anything in regards to success. He argues that we force people to enter into a world where they will “get more success” if they follow certain standards of the white racial habitus:

So teach Blacks or Latinos/as to speak and write a dominant discourse and they will have more power and opportunity. They'll be more communicatively successful. The logic here says that today people aren't racist toward people, but they may be toward the languages people use. (32)

But we can say that, for the previous example, the white racial habitus has swallowed up the languaging of indigenous people, not giving them remuneration, and profiting from their knowledge.

Further Inoue argues that there is real success to be had in other ways of knowing, thinking, writing, and speaking when he looks at rap music:

Consider again the hip hop example. If we really did believe that changing the language of people of color would gain them power and opportunity, make them more communicative, then again I ask why are Hip Hop and rap so popular? It's mainly performed by Blacks in the U.S., although it has become a global genre. Could it be so popular if it wasn't effectively communicating ideas and narratives? (32)

As we saw above, taking away indigenous education and forcing them to adopt a Western one doesn't bring them any power in success, it actually takes it away from them, and helps the further colonization of their knowledge and resources. That there is real success to be in an approach that respects and allows for diversity. Why then, not allow for the "global" gentrification of such ways of knowing that produce initial success? (Many might say hear that it is Western fear of being "out-powered" which one must acknowledge and retreat from as a fear principle, if it gives way to knowledge, love, and fun). Not allowing for these alternative ways of knowing, whether it be alternative ways of approach the world through what was a colonized approach, or in non-scientific ways of knowing such as what has happened to indigenous cultures around the world, only shows that this approach is doomed to fail, again, as an outgrowth of suppression of the indigenous (and in this case we can take indigenous to mean anything "home grown" and not colonized) by the western, white approach.

Asao Inoue writes that this history of stigma, is really a sign of power. Stigma comes from judgement, and judgement that seeks to stop the powerful (in both the suppression of real unscientific variations, or variations from the dominant culture):

What does it mean that Ebonics or Spanglish or some other variety of English is stigmatized already in writing classrooms? The word's root is "stigma," which the OED defines as "a mark made upon the skin by burning with a hot iron (rarely,

by cutting or pricking), as a token of infamy or subjection” (Stigmata, 2015). Thus something stigmatized is something already judged, something already in subjection, something lesser. (32-33)

Further,

No matter what antiracist motives a teacher may have, including my own motives, we all work within conditions and systems. The Function of Race in Writing Assessment that have branded some languages as less communicative, less articulate, less than the dominant discourse. No matter who we are, we always struggle against antiracist systems in the academy. (33)

The whole system of the academy itself though is a unit of conformity, of policing expression which could stop truths of the world.

How does a writing teacher understand these conundrums and move past them?

There is something that can be done in writing classrooms, to see the interconnectedness of all things, and deal with the political truths of racism that are used for exploitation.

This is really the highest level of justice that a writing classroom can aspire to, it seems.

As Inoue notes in Antiracist Writing Assessment Ecologies,

how can a conscientious writing teacher understand and engage in her classroom writing assessments as an antiracist project with her locally diverse students? My answer is to see classroom writing assessment as an ecology with explicit features, namely a quality of more than, interconnectedness among everything and every- one in the ecology, and an explicit racial politics that students must engage with.” (9)

This interconnectedness among everyone and everything is fully allowed once both the new and old racist structures policing thought and expression are broken down, allowing for individuals to fully express themselves in the ways that are most natural to them.

In essence, what I would like to do is make a connection between the “dialects” academic institutions allow, and the freedom to achieve this interconnectedness. To do this, we can widen the lens of this argument about racist argument past looking at dialect and SAE/non-SAE towards something dealing more with the freedom and acceptance of

language allowed in colonizing institutions like academia. What I'm doing here is extending the argument of the white racial habitus to include western academic convention on "truth." Generally, the type of language allowed, the dialect allowed to be spoken, is one way of getting at this problem, but another way is opening up the "language of thought."

In this dissertation, I'm taking a practical stance. I'm not speaking in a varied non SAE dialect in this dissertation, but I am tossing out academic research conventions to let myself express the story needed to be told, as a vehicle to explain how the students in this study worked to.

Also, by tossing out certain standard SAE conventions, students had the ability to find their own truths, in their own languages, with the power to express.

As Young argues, Dominant language ideology really has the message: "say whatever you want in your own dialect, but say it at home" (62). (which refers to what LaDuke says earlier, but we have to ask what happens when "home" is constantly threatened and destroyed, as is what has happened with traditional peoples all over the world as well as to people of black and brown descent in this country, aka, redlining, etc.) We must then make "home" for ourselves, even within the institutional space.

Young looks at the idea of code-switching vs. code-meshing equaling racial segregation (62). Racial segregation extends to thought and the access to privilege that certain types of thoughts allow. Dismantling scientism has the effect of opening up this, and I argue that this dissertation seeks to, be in itself, a project of code meshing, bringing together my own natural blend of thought into a place which would force me to write in another language.

Young further argues, in agreement with LaDuke, Narby, and Inoue that it is "attitudes" that perpetuate racism, where people with power (and language of power) get to view other languages/dialects in certain ways and maintain/destroy access to power (62). This is a problem, and the tradition of research that allows one to access privilege through degrees (of any type) function to maintain places of privilege by assessment of traditional structures of language and thought order: "The narrow prescriptive way messes with people because we are all taught to respect the dominant way" (65)

Young further argues that this is a problem for graduate students in particular, as they are forced to imitating high level SE because they are trying to imitate their superiors, instead of using their own voices. (67) I argue for the opposite of this in my dissertation and the language I have chosen to use, as well as the language my students were able to gain access to.

And according to what students said about the class, they'd rather have the opportunity to learn in this method, as in many ways it seemed more efficient to do so. In the end, what's the point of traditional academic learning methods and requirements when it's not enjoyed, favored, or wanted by the students forced to participate in them?

Poe, Elliot, Cogan, & Nurudeen explain that "good decisions about our writing assessment practices for all students means attending to the various ways that we understand the impact of assessment on our students" (2014, 605). In many ways, the assessment of the structures of thought allowed in western traditional schools are as limiting as the structures of language.

As Inoue notes, tests like the IQ test, created the standards by which institutions judge and assess, and Race has a strong connection to assessment because these tests

generally are a way to grant privilege (26-27). In much the same way, the Western scientific tradition grants access to privilege based on how well one conforms to the standards of scientism.

Maybe my argument here about evaluating my flaws and gains in the study is a much larger one, that the institutions and the “requirements” they enact on us, aren’t as helpful as they are traditionally thought to be for students and for teachers.

If 90% of students said they learned what deliberation was, and 85% said they enjoyed this practice, a practice which slightly breaks the bounds of scientism, allows for extreme personal reflection and collaboration based on improvised method, and wouldn’t want me to change anything about the class, articulating what they learned deliberation was, what is really the point of academic language and writing?

## CHAPTER 2: (Case Studies in Deliberation)

### Chapter Overview:

In this chapter I examine what successes and failure occurred in this class, and showed how students began to develop important listening skills and self-critical ones even though they may have struggled a bit to find them. I also examine that the notion of success in deliberation is sometimes more about the process of coming to that success rather than the finished product.

### Introduction: The Class Itself

All of this teacher method questioning and philosophizing about the point and truth of research talked about in Chapter 1 seems to beg another question, what exactly was it I really did with my class this semester? For everything I said in the previous section about certain traditions, acting them out, it seems proper here to lay out some of the frameworks for the class. The class was by all means not a free-for-all -- it had structured activities within the larger deliberative framework. So did we just sit around singing kumbaya and try to solve the world's problems? Definitely not. We put thought, speech, and writing into action. Students took the work they did in traditional essays throughout the semester and made them deeply personal (meaning written in their own language and not in the language of an academic essay) and then made them public. In our final wrap up project where students "remixed" one of their essays into another form, students were not only able to deliberate with different viewpoints of topics, but with the language of the academic institutions, new genres, different audiences, as well as their current and former identities. To start though, students built a foundation to get to this

open, deliberative writing and thinking space by grounding themselves in the writing of three traditional type essays split across the semester. While students did have the ability to let themselves speak as freely as possible, opening up genre and audience conventions at the end really moved the deliberative action to the highest level I could think of doing during the study period. This was the real “scaffold” of the course, this movement through facing one’s place in a writing/English classroom that isn’t “traditionally” free, allowing oneself the freedom to speak/write/and deliberate with others openly and honestly to get to new ideas, places, and points of expression, and then, deliberating with that expression itself in a “remix” project in order to deliberate with and through new genres and audiences.

The course that I taught/moderated/and observed was divided into three parts, with a final short segment on wrap up (so technically four parts). The projects themselves were highly based on student engagement; students were tasked with choosing their own topics from within a much larger general theme of social justice and subsequent subtopics and self-direct from there. Each paper asked students to “prepare for the writing before the writing” as well. We would set up a proposal for a topic, and write an annotated bibliography for possible sources. From there, students could start drafting by writing an outline, a formal first draft, or a free write to get down some content. Second draft and final drafts came next, all the while keeping in touch with peers and deliberating about topics, message, clarity, etc. This whole process took about a month or so for each project and you can see this in the syllabus provided in the appendix.

The three written projects asked students to, first, write personal narratives related to social justice; second, deliberate research issues related to the midterm elections of



2018;third, through a more open genre, project, explain their own meaning of happiness in today's society, and fourth, remix one of the previous three. I should note here that this course was developed by Professor Sean Murray, and I take no credit for his insight into the wonders this course set up for deliberation, student engagement, student critical thinking, student bonding, etc. Prof. Murray's syllabus does wonders for awakening student (and teacher) civic consciousness. The tweaks I've made along the way using this syllabus after three years to some of the paper themes and assignments have opened the door to my ability to single out deliberation and civic identity as a focus. Prof. Murray's creativity helped me start on that path, having been afforded the opportunity by him to freely use the syllabus, as if it were open on the digital common. With that, the ability to utilize his assignment structure for guidance, etc., Sean's work paved the way for me to make this project about deliberation with his great student civic building work as a foundation.

### **Essay #1: The Social Justice Narrative's Many Ties to Enhancing Deliberative Pedagogy**

*In which something personal is exposed, and students fight amongst themselves for its rightness or wrongness. Plus, students could clash with classmates who demean, but hey, they also may end up on the student's side, they may end up defending the student, and furthermore, they may be the only ones that give the student work the time of day!*

Back to our outline of the essays of the semester. Each of the above topics are prime suspects, if you will, for Deliberative theory to be applied pedagogically. The first essay in particular though, the social justice narrative, allowed students to get their hands, feet, and thoughts wet with Deliberation in writing, speech, themselves, and with their peers. This opening up is due to the fact that the assignment and the readings to introduce the assignment, namely, *The Other Wes Moore*, ask students to challenge themselves to

articulate deep seated opinions and feelings they may have which might not be easy to publicly express. In *The Other Wes Moore*, we see Wes, a black male from Baltimore, following his story backwards to explain how injustice reverberates across time. In one instance, an unintended strike at his sister at age five during a game the two often played and his mother's intense reaction to a man hitting a woman, lead Wes to find out and explore how his mother's domestic abuse was caused by much larger social factors. Wes learns that his mother's living circumstances, the people she met, and the opportunity they were all able to have, were all affected by the institutional racism in Baltimore. Her first husband, for instance, in the red lined, lead paint brain destroying, no opportunity for blacks in Baltimore, was a major cause of his drug abuse and domestic violence. We also learn about how, because of racial profiling of skin color and clothing, Wes's father, a well respected newscaster was turned away at a hospital, misdiagnosed for something easily treatable, and died the next day when Wes was still a young child.

With such a starting point and honesty, students that have taken this class so far, especially those who are shy, have been able to deliberate with me, the class, and themselves to open up to talk about and topics that have been painful. The narrative allows them to deliberate with that pain. Students most often come out the other side of such pain upon finding the root cause in social and societal factors and getting reinforcement, as well as identification from their peers. Such topics have been dealing with sexual, familial, and relationship abuse, drug addiction affecting family and friends, struggles with disability and disease, the struggles as a black person in America in the age of the new Jim Crow and #blacklivesmatter, showing examples of many times being afraid of losing one's life during routine traffic stops, islamophobia, etc.

While I did mention that students have gotten support and identification from their peers, that is not to say that there is the possibility for tension in sharing, which I will argue, is just a natural human reaction that should be brought to the deliberative table and worked through. To talk about these hurtful, painful, and difficult events through the lens of the social can be a danger, no doubt. In a class where we both in writing and speech, deliberate on the validity of our claims with people who could have the opposite view, there could be the chance of an attack on the validity of one's pain, suffering, or reasoning. That is not something to shun one for though, as we are doing the same thing that person is doing. We must work through that. But let's take an example.

For instance, imagine the tension in a class where one person is writing about how she/he cannot live without psychotropic medication, and another person says that they are weak and all it takes is hard work and mindset to get out of a mental health rut (this is an actual example from one of my classes). How then, do we get students to write and speak about these tough topics knowing they may be attacked and invalidated just for thinking a certain way? During the study semester, deliberative ideals were key for moving through such moments with understanding as opposed to bitterness and moving through such moments with growth and learning as opposed to being stuck and shutting down. Deliberation at heart tries to model that one's perception is valid, no matter what, as we each have our own true lens on society. That lens could be more shaped by understanding other people's feelings, truer "data, but at heart we want to validate and then create together as a deliberative community.

In essence, what I am arguing is that this narrative assignment does much for student writing, student identity, and student community. The narrative assignment

models the act of coming together in a community, and how to bring multiple valid identities that can grow and change into new valid identities as different perspectives of truth are uncovered, unmasked, and reintegrated. That is why the narrative is so important for a deliberative writing class. It allows these valid truth perspectives to be told, and for the class to grow as thinkers and citizens to see just how much “truth” is out there, and how much revision of truth is required with new information from new peer stories.

Let’s dig in deeper with another example of two students, who will come up again later on in the chapter, who have two combatting versions of truth, butt heads verbally and in writing, but in the end revise their own truths, methods of expression, and feelings of self worth in the topics they care about. They do this in deliberatively writing and talking about their social justice narratives.

### **Rachel And Nick - An Internal, Written Deliberation, A Spoken Deliberation, a Written Response, and Newly Formed Identity**

Rachel, who after much deliberation with herself, decided to write her social justice narrative on a topic that deeply affected her: the lack of representation of Asian Americans in film and popular media, got some verbal and written pushback from her peers. Rachel felt like this wasn’t a “major” social justice issue and was concerned that talking and writing about it wasn’t worth it, in a sense. Funny enough, and I don’t know if Rachel knew this as she was going through her deliberation over the veracity of choosing her topic, but this particular social issue had also been challenged by recent films showcasing casts that with Asian actors playing Asian characters playing roles made specifically for Asians, not white actors playing said roles, etc. (“Ghost in the Shell’s whitewashing: does Hollywood have an Asian problem?”)

I mentioned that Rachel was deliberating on the veracity of writing on this topic due to its being a “minor” social problem as well as its effects on her dreams, all of which showcase Rachel’s internal deliberation in the writing process with herself. So, in her proposal, we can see Rachel working to validate her own concerns, as well as the importance of her hopes and dreams of being given a real space for growth in society. She is deliberating with herself about the state of society which props one race up as “able to be stars,” which affect her choice in the proposal to mention that she is struggling with the validity of her worry (if Asians are doing so well societally [the term “model minority” comes to mind] In any case, what we see below, in Rachel’s proposal for her social justice narrative showcases her written self-deliberation in coming to this topic, feeling valid in her choice of topic, and finding a way to express why it was important to her to challenge society’s view of Asian representation in the media, because it was in fact harming her:

When the narrative assignment was first assigned to us, I thought about all these topics I wanted to talk about. I am very passionate about social justice so it was very hard for me to choose to write about just one topic. After thoughtful consideration, I decided to write about Underrepresentation of Asian Americans in the media. I know it's not the most pressing issue in our society but it is an issue that is very near and dear to my heart.

Asian Americans being underrepresented has been a big topic that has come up in the media every day since the release of the movies Crazy Rich Asians and To All The Boys I’ve Loved before. Both movies finally feature Asian Americans as leads, which made me very excited for these movies to come out. This topic is very important to me because I myself am Asian American and it’s been amazing to see people who look like me star in the movies I watch. I grew up always watching white leads in movies which made me always want to be white even though I always knew I would never be. Its sad that that's the reason I will never fully accept myself and always want to look like someone else. The movies also created a lot of backlash. Some people believe that Crazy Rich Asians was very anti-black and did not feature any brown asians. But people also need to realize that the movie was based off a book that featured chinese and singaporean asians.

The movie never meant to cause any harm, they were just trying to follow the original story of the book. I even got into some twitter arguments with people who kept bad mouthing the movie that has been such a good thing for people like me. I'm glad the entertainment industry has taken some steps to create more diversity in the media but there is still a lot of work to be done and a lot of changes to be made.

To me, Rachel is deliberating with herself about the worthiness of her cause for writing on this topic when she writes, "I know it's not the most pressing issue in our society but it is an issue that is very near and dear to my heart," and that signals... In terms of her feelings on the topic and how it creates a restriction in her own sense of possible life opportunities, Rachel writes,

This topic is very important to me because I myself am Asian American and it's been amazing to see people who look like me star in the movies I watch. I grew up always watching white leads in movies which made me always want to be white even though I always knew I would never be. Its sad that that's the reason I will never fully accept myself and always want to look like someone else.

This all suggests that seeing those like her would make her want to be her authentic self, not a white self. She is expressing this in order to come to self acceptance, and move away from stereotypes hoisted on her from society about what Asians can and should be. Here then, is a prime example of a student deliberating internally, through writing, with their ideals and the values society is pushing on them, and weighing which is the best for her, for Rachel. But, that is not the only thing happening here. This writing is also, I believe, an external deliberation with a classmate, a Deliberation in writing carried over from a spoken deliberation a week or so earlier.

Rachel's internal, written deliberation clashing with societal values also came out of a spoken deliberation in which Rachel's peer, Nick, in a previous in class discussion, said that Asians have it easy and are successful, and haven't struggled in America. This

conflict, this “right or wrong” thinking, created some tension which will be analyzed later, and I believe, would have some correlation to Rachel’s choice of topic, as well as the belief I have that Nick’s comments generally have been heard by Rachel throughout her life Nick’s comment adds to that, although he told me in a later conversation that he did not intend to be stereotypical or offensive, but it did express all the things Rachel seems to be railing against in her proposal, which is the pigeonholed idea of what Asian culture and Asian people are in America. We will spend a whole section of this chapter looking at Nick’s comments and his own deliberation, both privately and publicly, but here it is important to highlight Rachel’s side. Rachel may be, in her search for authentic Asian film, writing, casting, etc., responding to Nick, who made what Rachel saw as initial stereotyped comment in Deliberation.

While Rachel may have been in a sense responding to Nick’s comments during the in class deliberation, Nick was also the one only person to give Rachel peer comments throughout the writing process of the social justice narrative paper, although everyone was supposed to get comments at least three times. I just find this to be an odd connection, and believe that there is some deliberation happening between the two of them that went on in-officially stated but can be noted as you look back over the “evidence,” so to speak. Nick wrote in his comments to Rachel:

I think that you have a very detailed essay, it makes sense and is easy to follow. I think you could use some more statistics or outside sources to bolster your claims, but your on the right track. I also wonder what can be done to fix some of the issues you bring up/what you think can be done.

For the sake of Rachel’s side and understanding how deliberation occurred for Rachel’s writing process in the narrative paper, let’s look at what Nick says to Rachel here. What

Nick says in mind here for later though, as it is a definite contrast to his own personal writing, thinking and speaking in many ways.

In his comments to Rachel's draft, Nick asks more data for Rachel's claims. He wants a certain type of proof (western/enlightenment /scientific — not to say he or Rachel is more right, but just pointing out what is wanted). On the other hand, he is also saying Rachel is “on the right track” and furthermore, agrees with her sentiment that Asians are being stereotyped and not allowed to define themselves (which we will see, Nick himself did the opposite of earlier — he defined who Asians were as a culture, and not as how Rachel as an Asian herself saw Asians, in his remarks during an earlier spoken class deliberation). Here, in his peer comment, he agrees that discrimination and lack of self-representation is a problem for Asians, saying that, “I also wonder what can be done to fix some of the issues you bring up/what you think can be done.” Again, not what Nick has articulated a few weeks ago.

This discrepancy in articulation, opinion, and, actually, a fluidity of conversation between these two parties (Rachel and Nick) on this specific topic, highlights a few things about deliberation in FYW. To me this shows an ongoing deliberation between both Nick and Rachel in how they are navigating the tension of opposite opinion. One of these deliberations is occurring inside Nick himself (in a way which promotes Deliberative ideals such as respect, empathy, understanding and listening) as he starts to give some validity to Rachel's perspective while still keeping his sense of right steadfast (requiring a certain type of proof before he will fully agree with Rachel, etc.). Another deliberation is occurring as Rachel is putting her private writing out publicly (private writing which we saw before earlier that she had to internally Deliberate about to make



sure she was comfortable with the validity of writing it down in the first place as Asian American representation in film may not have been “a big social justice concern,” despite its deep importance to Rachel). Another deliberation is the one which occurred between Nick and Rachel on the Blackboard discussion board with the two people in the classroom that had spoken specifically about the tension of this topic and referenced each other (again I can make that assertion confidently as Rachel literally wrote about Nick’s comments on one of her Blackboard responses, that she was completely turned off and put off by Nick’s comments about Asians publicly. Nick referenced his feelings on saying what he said the following class period).

So in all, these are some of the ways in which the narrative social justice essay promoted Deliberative thinking, values, practices, and concepts. The students Deliberated with themselves on the value of their topic in relation to larger communal issues (asking and working out answers to questions by themselves such as, is my issue worthy to bring forth to the community to think about and try to solve?). The students deliberated with others as they shared their writing publicly and got peer feedback, which in turn led to deliberation internally (mulling over the peer comments in their thoughts and future writing, drafts, etc.). The written peer feedback also led to continued deliberation in terms of future classroom discussions which considered and talked about written peer feedback, or simply carried on conversations from previous days; the tension between Rachel and Nick and their written deliberation on each other’s words that lasted for a few weeks is proof of that.

Overall, in this case the social justice narrative assignment can be said to allow for deliberation for the peer commenter and the student writer/speaker in many ways. It

allows for deliberation generally in the way student writers and commenters can internally mull over their written comments and received comments, deliberating internally and externally with what was said and given to them. The social justice narrative allows for deliberation in the way the process of picking a personal social justice issue and sharing it, opening this deep issue for comments allows students to comment on sensitive issues for peers and then see, in hindsight, how the words offered effect who they were given to, and how said words affect future student writing, for example, the possible correlation of Nick's comments on generalizing Asian culture, Rachel's written disgust of Nick's comments, and her declared "I don't know if I should talk about this lack of representation of Asians but it's important and I'm going to do it anyway" decision.

## **Essay #2: Midterm Election Project - Ability to Deliberate, but to what end?**

*In which considering the other side's argument in a "helpful" or "hurtful" way can be traced to "affect" future deliberations*

Our second project written project of the term focused on the 2018 midterm elections and allowed students multiple options. Initially I envisioned the project to just be students choosing a candidate they may want to vote for and studying their platform, their history, and their opponent, and make a case as to why they should be voted in. After talking to Professor Murray Sean about this though, I realized that some students may not even be able to make use of this project, as they were not registered to vote in any particular party (in NY you have to be registered in one of the two major parties to vote in their midterms) and many did not plan on voting to begin with. Professor Murray mentioned he was opening up his interpretation of the assignment to be anything political for the "season" and I followed suit. Instead of just picking a candidate to vote on,

students had a wide range of topics to choose from, and in essence, deliberate with themselves and their peers about. They could investigate the history of political parties and the election process (was it all rigged? Which party was “better” and why?). Students could argue if they believe they should vote at all and why. In fact, two students in the same class argued both for voting as something desperately needed, as well as how it doesn't matter and you shouldn't vote. Students also talked about issues being brought up by candidates in the midterm cycle, such as climate change, stripping of abortion rights, etc.

The point is, all of this work and choice and writing and thinking about the midterm election and the students' thoughts on said topics were extremely fertile grounds for applying Deliberative Democracy in the FYW classroom. It seemed to be where Deliberative Democracy theory most traditionally applied, as students debated in writing on Blackboard forums and with each other in spoken forums about which political and social solution was right or wrong. Also, the midterm election project challenged students to incorporate a respectful, open minded tone towards the opposite side of the argument in their essays. I made one of the criteria to incorporate the other side, as if you were having a written deliberation, but to do so in a Deliberative manner — not as an agonistic struggle for the “strength” of an idea, to destroy the other side, but to speak to it with empathy, understanding, and open mindedness.

But did that happen?

Yes and No.

Here I am reminded of MaryLee and her tone in her paper on gun control, in which she took up the other side (she was pro gun control so the opposite side was anti

gun control), yet she resorted to calling the other side hicks and spoke in what some may consider a demeaning dialect. After reading her draft out loud with her in a one on one session, I felt in quite the bind as a teacher. I let MaryLee know the two sides I was personally thinking and feeling in reaction to the read, my own self deliberation as I read her draft. I explained to her that one side dealt with freedom of speech and expression, and that MaryLee was expressing herself authentically, so she should say what she needs to say. On the other hand, I was feeling and thinking that she should consider audience, and how they react. In that sense, using empathy, kindness, etc. to not offend with her message of pro gun control would be a good rhetorical strategy, even if she felt hostile towards the other side. Hostility need not be expressed in such an outright matter. The reason seems to be that anyone on the other side reading what she was writing, calling them hicks, would possibly be put off by her ad hominem attack and not hear the sound arguments she was making about gun control. This isn't to say again, that MaryLee should squash her emotions, because I find that to be a negative in itself. But is there a way to have those emotions and feel them, and express them in a way while still being respectful and understanding the humanity of the other side?

In the end, MaryLee chose to stay with what was most likely an ad hominem attack on haters of gun control, which as I pointed out has positives and negatives. In one sense, she chose her own path, was true to her feelings, thinking, and sensibilities, while still acknowledging the other side. On the other hand, the possible negative is that MaryLee left harming the other side and closing them off from further deliberation if they read her piece a possibility. So, locally, if anyone from class identified with who she was caricaturizing, they could have been offended and it may have affected their relationship,

trust, and future conversations and willingness to work with MaryLee constructively in the future. Luckily, I don't think this was the case, but it is definitely a possibility, especially in a classroom environment that shares diverse political opinions, which this class definitely had (conservatives, Republicans, libertarians, etc.).

Extending this idea to future writings beyond the classroom, say on MaryLee's Twitter feed, the same could happen. She could possibly offend others by writing things like the above, with a twinge of demeaning, even though her initial impetus is to do good and help the world. I don't think this happened, but an example in which there may be a correlation could be a time when during an after class conversation (which I unfortunately don't think I have audio transcription of) MaryLee had showed me her Twitter, it was to show me a viral video about Trump that was getting a lot of laughs. I told her about the work I was doing in my second chapter on Twitter, about moral outrage, and she showed me this one young, conservative pro gun woman named something like "CrazyConservativeGunGirl," and how she was sending out vitriolic attacks, (showcasing moral outrage). MaryLee's friend, most likely in a stage of moral outrage, and not Deliberative sensibilities (maybe deliberation at first but from what I remember it quickly descended into non productive argument), fought with this girl on Twitter.

There are many ways to handle your opponent, but I am focusing on two. A deliberative one, and a vitriolic one. The deliberative one creates cooperation and connectedness, and the vitriolic one creates moral outrage and separation. In the case of "conservativegungirl" and MaryLee's expressed disgust of her, it is possible that in her second essay, her attack of the "NRA type" could be a retributive attack towards people

like “conservativegungirl,” a young woman around MaryLee’s age.

“Conservativegungirl” got into it unproductively with MaryLee’s friend. She is not NRA friendly, against MaryLee’s beliefs, and shows that belief not with respect and willingness to deliberate and work together with the other side, but rather show vitriol. But as they say, two wrongs do not make a right!

I would argue that considering the arguments made in the previous few paragraphs, about possible demeaning rhetoric, the lack of ability to gain equal ground and maintain equality with one’s opponent (because hey, we’re all in this together), as well as how the lack of Deliberative sensibilities in regards to political and social issues can create this cycle of retribution that I hope I spelled out, it is best to use of deliberation to end cycles of escalation and violence. It is best to use deliberation this way not to only be “logical” and get to a clear logical and rational argument devoid of emotion, but to see and validate the importance of human emotion for what it is.

In MaryLee’s case, maybe the feeling was something like: “conservativegungirl” offended me and my friends, so I’m going to lash back out by attacking the representative conservativegungirl group in my paper, in a damning way. I would argue this revenge for past vitriol, cultural bias and anger, feelings of superiority can be channeled into other emotions that can cultivate space for positive deliberative cooperation, and solutions thinking “across the aisle,” as well as recognizing common humanity and shared resources (money, earth, energy, etc.). We all need these basic tenets of respect, connectedness, and natural resources, the rest is all petty. For these reasons, deliberation is a key to see common ground and the need to help all, not just demean others to prove

“rightness,” especially out of anger and retribution, which usually have harm at the end of their motive.

On the other hand, the example of MaryLee’s reaction was not a constant; in fact, many students considered the other side of the political argument in a fair, balanced, and “deliberative way” without attack (and that’s not to say MaryLee didn’t do those things, it is just that she also had this tone of demeaning which added a detrimental “feel” to her overall project to advance the argument for gun control; generally, MaryLee was an extremely kind and open deliberator. Just in this one case, she wasn’t, specifically in this one section of her essay, which was like 1% of the class.). So, for the midterm election assignment, many students did consider the other side of the argument and considered them respectfully and openly, not taking an ad hominem tone, but rather, conversing with the other side’s ideas, values, arguments, and passions to find a way to work through the whole issue and find a true solution that incorporates many different angles of thinking. One way of doing this is to respectfully say to the other side that their argument, stats, etc. are valid, but also that they didn’t go far enough or didn’t consider this angle, this potential solution, or this version of a future with this solution implemented, etc. A compromise of both perspectives, acknowledging the flaws in one’s own arguments would also be a key Deliberative moment as well.

So overall, in paper 2, while there were some instances of non-Deliberative writing practices, I think deliberation in writing did occur in considering the other side. Deliberative values such as empathy, compassion, respect, co-operation, and coordination occurred. At the same time, the results were so varied and so unreplicable, for instance, I couldn’t tell you I knew which students were going to take on a more Deliberative

writing stance; this means to me that the study has a flaw in replicability of method. Scaffolding of concepts and exercises in written Deliberative tone could be implemented in the future, say as homework or warm up exercises for class. Samples could be given to say, “here is an example of someone who works with the other side but demeans them.” “Does that add to deliberation? Why or why not? And why is adding to deliberation in this way good or bad? (To get students interested in the value and potential good of such an approach.) They could also be given examples in homework, in class etc., of Deliberative writing that works “healthily” with the other side, either logically, emotionally, or both. Students could analyze that to see the “moves” of deliberative writing. It is almost like a “They Say/I Say” template like approach to deliberative writing and speech, although in this case, I would take the postmodern approach to deliberation norms and say that they are always shifting, so a “template” approach could not stay stagnant. Students would have to “democratize deliberation” and find what works as empathy, open mindedness and respect in different social eras.

Due to unpredictable variability of the results with project two in terms of students applying deliberation in their writing dealing with the opposing sides, it is fair to say I could have gone farther in my teaching to help students work understanding what deliberation is exactly in their writing. One thing to make clear next round is how important a “deliberative” tone is when dealing with those who have opposing points of view. Another strategy is utilizing deliberative values such as respect. Hearing the other side’s argument, and I mean really hearing it, mulling it over, understanding it, and not immediately overturning it but validating it before offering their counterpoint, is key to building community. This was another failing of mine during this study. I don’t think I



communicated that this validation was important to building connection with those you are talking to (Gray, *Men are From Mars Women Are from Venus*, Carnegie, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, Hentoff, *The Essays of AJ Muste*). In a future class on deliberation, what I could do is start with some of these readings as a way to prep students for the values deliberation instills, listening, validation, respect, etc.

With that said, there may have been some student examples of this validation, but I did not teach for it, I only practiced it myself as an example while moderating, modeling the behavior for the students, validating each point of view before moving on. So there are probably some examples of student writing and speaking that do this, and they may have gotten it from my modeling, their own personality, or their upbringing, etc., but I can't say with certainty that my class transmitted those skills. Because I did not scaffold them as lessons to be practiced and utilized. And that's okay.

**Essay #3: The Happiness Project and Deliberation - Who's right and who's wrong? (In fact, maybe we're all together in this)**

*In which when it happens that something so personal as happiness comes up, tensions flare but new clear, peer forged open insights are formulated*

The happiness project got each student thinking not only about what happiness meant to them personally, but it got them thinking about what happiness means in a societal context. In this essay, the self and society clash most clearly and it is a great place for students to practice deliberation. For example, as we do a section on "can money buy happiness," students with their own experience come to different conclusions such as "yes, but to a certain extent, I have to have free time to balance it all out." Or "yes, but only if I work a job I really care about." Or the other side, "Yes, money is all that matters, I can't be happy if I don't have money. I need the Ferrari, and big house, etc.

That is the only stuff that will make me happy.” Students see what their point of views are on this question and then Deliberate with each other, sharing opinions in writing and in speech that clash, and sometimes minds are changed, sometimes minds are more firmly rooted where they originally stood.

Here is an example of the types of writing, thinking, and stances I saw for this particular topic, which led to some heated class discussions (unfortunately I don’t have audio transcripts of, or specific memory of — just the student writing).

Here we will see Emma talking about how money can be a big factor towards bringing happiness to people, but that it is not the most important thing, as it may be that people with money have a difficult time with their relationships, with their jobs, etc. Also, Emma talks about the day to day things in life what and how we eat bringing happiness:

### **Money Does Not Buy Happiness**

*Emma:*

I personally do not believe that money can buy happiness. I believe that money can have a big factor on getting things that can make one happy, but it is not a deciding factor into whether or not one will turn out to be happy. Happiness is a concept and I don’t believe money can make a concept better. People with a lot of money can still have trouble finding happiness because they are lacking other things that may make them happy such as relationships whether it be with a significant other or just family or friends, those relationships have a huge role in our perceptions of happiness. What jobs we have, what role we play in society, what we eat, how we eat, what we do with our free time, all hold significant contributions in whether or not we’ll be happy. Summing happiness down to money does not make sense because nothing can ever be that simple.

Gabe, on the other hand, talks about how the research he has done shows him that people with money are happy. He points to research on nations, earnings, and happiness, and how nations with a higher level of income are generally happier. Gabe talks about

money in reference to “personal control,” and being able to fulfill one desire. Gabe comes out strong with his opinion that money does equal happiness, to such an extent that at the end of his response, he talks about how he believes a section in the research must be fake, a section which shows how lottery winners lost friends

### **Money Buys Happiness**

*Gabe C:*

The first reading was about can money buy happiness? I believe that money can buy people happiness and after reading the article, there was a lot of reasons that show why I support that money can buy happiness. In the section "Wealthy People", it talked about how they gave a survey to rich people and out of the 49 people who answered, 47 said that they were happy. But they would talk about not because they had money, but because they can help out a lot with it. I feel like at the end of the the because that makes you happy then money can buy happiness because if you didn't have money you wouldn't be able to do those things. In the section of "Lottery Winners" the first sentence states "Rich people and nations are happier than their poor counterparts; don't let anyone tell you differently." That statement really just says it all, like it's true all anybody wants is money. Like I would love to have money so I can do what it says in the "Personal Control" where one can pay off debt and that's exactly what I would need after I am done with this college stuff. And of course the "Pleasure in Shopping" because there is a lot of stuff that I can't buy but when you have money, you can really buy anything that you want. In the "Lottery Winner" section, it talked about this one woman, Viv Nicholson, one the lottery and all of a sudden her friends didn't want to be around with her anymore because of her status. I believe that that's fake because no friend is going to push you away, if anything they will want to be more connected as in the "Social Status" section of the article says.

Finally, Matt shows a combination of both ideas, that money can and cannot buy happiness, agreeing in part with Emma that money is only part of the solution. But like Gabe, Matt sees money as a way towards “personal control,” allowing him to be able to access the goods and services he needs. Matt goes on to talk about balance, in a way. He says that being with people the same wealth as you can be a good thing, but he also talks about how having too much money can be a bad thing. In the end, Matt talks about how

happiness is “largely dependent on your state of mind,” a different perspective from the two above writers.

### **A Combination of Both**

*Matt N:*

For the first source, “Can Money Buy Happiness”, I agree that money is only a part of happiness. It can definitely help you obtain your happiness but not necessarily. It depends on what makes you happy. In my opinion though, money still has a large influence on happiness because it is something that everyone can easily compare and use to get a lot of goods and services. It easily allows people to feel better about themselves if they have more of it than others since money can still get a lot of other things. But even if you are poor, it doesn’t necessarily mean you are less happy. It is all about perspective, so if the people around your neighborhood have the same wealth and status as you, you will not feel like you are living a terrible life since other people are having similar lives as you. Even too much money can be bad though unless you know how to manage it wisely. Like this source, there are many people who ruin their lives even with so much money, while there are those seem to live their same lives even after winning the lottery. Happiness is largely dependent on your state of mind, so a person who does illegal drugs all the time and does not bode well with others is still going to get in trouble even with that much money, it doesn’t change who they are but accentuates the things that they are doing and feeling. A normal family with good relationships will most likely go about their lives in the same way after winning a lottery ticket since they are already happy. The money may just help with whatever they were doing prior, whether it be a good or bad thing.

These very different but also very similar responses made for a great month on this topic. With such views that were early relevant to students’ lives in the future (you can note Gabe above talking about how money and the access to paying off debt would immediately cause him happiness after “this college stuff”), Deliberation was ripe to take place because of the immoderate presence of relevance, much more so (quite unfortunately) than the political project immediately preceding this where only a few students seemed to see the connection between lawmakers and representation with daily lived experience (for instance, I wish there was more deliberation in that section on the importance of what Gabe mentioned regarding college debt, and how our lawmakers and

government officials could play a huge part in regulating the college finance industry if they were lobbied by students across the country!).

With that said, we can really see students deliberating with themselves in this response as they consider the question and its impact on their own lives; the topic is extremely important! In Emma's response, for example, it is an acknowledgement that money can be a factor in getting the things that are known to cause happiness, but one can still get such things with money yet lack happiness. The reason Emma puts down for that is missing those key elements needed for a healthy life such as loved ones, which really can't be bought.

Gabe's response almost "pivots" from Emma's thoughts here, saying that while he does indeed see money buying happiness, especially based on the research we looked at that over 90% of a control group of rich people surveyed were happy, they are happy mainly because they can spend their money on helping people, which ties back to Emma. So although Gabe is conceding a certain point to someone with Emma's point of view, he is still maintaining that money is the key factor. One reason for this is Gabe's acknowledgment of other studies which show that rich nations on the whole generally are happier than others. In a way, Emma and Gabe are starting a deliberation here, across the blackboard forum of ideas.

Matt on the other hand, sees a middle ground, between both Gabe and Emma, noting that "perspective" is most important, which deep into the research we looked at is proven true, as one's desire and income has to match in order for one to feel happy. (Ex: if I make 50k and have 50k worth of desires, I'll be happy. If I make 50k and have desires worthy of 100k, I'll be unhappy).

Again, while the students did not directly respond to one another, their responses to this early reading response for the Happiness Project was a deliberation in itself for two reasons: 1) it set up an introduction for the class to share their opinions on what happiness is as we started this new section (this was the first reading response of the new section), which lead to students knowing more about their peers' stances on this issue. In turn, this sharing set up for deliberation in speech and writing as this particular unit went on. 2) It got the students thinking about where they really stood on these issues, where before they might have had ideas floating around, but now they were expressing them and articulating them privately and publicly.

Also, interestingly enough, some students that took a hard stance early on in the project changed, expanded, compromised, etc., as they month went on. This change happened after deliberating with themselves and their peers and the teacher/moderator or with sources, etc. In this way, some students altered their opinion, or at the very least incorporated it in their way of thinking, clearly showing Deliberative sensibility as opposed to debate or agonistic sensibilities of destroy the "wrong." Let's take a look at such an opinion reincorporation and try to track what happened.

Gabe was really a shining example of this particular process of deliberation changing their hard stance to a more open stance through writing, speaking, and thinking as the project moved closer and closer to the final draft. By the time Gabe got to his final essay, he had made a major shift from his initial idea of having no doubt money caused happiness, to a question of where there were other things at play. Gabe did not necessarily "give up" his early ideas about how money caused happiness, but looked at a problem with this idea to test the veracity of the theory. He asked, how is it that people

with money, specifically some celebrities, have so much money but end up self harming?

Here is a section from Gabe's final essay that showcases how he looks at the

money/happiness issue from a new angle after a month of deliberating with himself and

his peers:

One thing that people don't really understand sometimes is why people who have so much money not happy. When you think about people that are famous, they usually seem like they are not happy but more in a state of depression. Yes, they can have what they want because they have the money, but there is so much pressure on the famous like athletes and actors to perform that they might have anxiety or depression. One athlete, Kevin Love, recently came out about how he would be going through depression and struggles with his mental health. As an athlete, you have so much pressure to perform and since you are making millions of dollars, people would want you to help them out. "Sure, I knew on some level that some people benefited from asking for help." (Source 2) People would start to take advantage of you for your money once you become a big shot and that's when you start having pressure to perform that way you can continue making the money. These famous people would see themselves weak when they start having depression or a panic attack and that is why they probably hide all the pain inside. "To me, it was form of weakness that could derail my success in sports or make me seem weird or different. Really I was just hoping my heart would stop racing. It was like my body was trying to say to me, You're about to die. I ended up on the floor in the training room, lying on my back, trying to get enough air to breathe." (Source 2) These are things that any person can come across and no matter if you have money or not, this is something that you can't avoid. Fortunately for Kevin Love, he met therapists that helped him deal with everything that he was dealing with. But unfortunately, a lot of the famous don't want to open up about these problems, so the only other way that they can deal with it is taking drugs. Since they have all this money, they can get these drugs easily and then they start taking it to ease their pain. Many have died from overdose and others have been hospitalized. This shows you that no matter how much money you can have, money isn't something that can make you happy because there are many other things in life.

But money does not always have to be something that can be negative, it can also bring a positive effect onto a person's life. A person that has money can pay for things than a person who doesn't. Say you go out with a group of friends to a fancy dinner and it's time to pay the check and you guys decided to split the bill but one of your friends doesn't have sufficient money, then you can help a friend pay his part. You feel good for doing the right thing and helping your friend out. When you have money, you can do so much that you can't if you didn't have money. You can do things like go to a concert that you wanted but couldn't afford a while back, can help out throughout the community. You can help a homeless

person out even by giving them a dollar even though you would know what they would use it for, or you can buy them something like a meal to help them out. Someone who has money can pay off college loans that they have which is something that a lot of the population deals with. Helping people out and also satisfying yourself somehow shows how money can bring happiness into one's life.

Gabe looks at the example of Kevin Love, for instance, who suffered from panic disorders due to the pressure he felt to perform in his sport to maintain his Sakarya and his fan base. I thought that personally this was a great idea on Gabe's part that really humanized the issue while at the same time bringing up a real life question to the theory, "does money alone buy happiness?"

Gabe also, in his second paragraph, goes further with what he learned in the first and brings up new info about what one can do with their money in order to maintain happiness. This, to me, is where Gabe really grew, not only questioning his original hypothesis, but in adding veracity to it with new examples of a theory that was different than his initial hard stance that money was all you needed for happiness. This, again, to me, shows that empathetic, open, receptive, and understanding stance that characterizes Deliberative ideals and attitudes.

Emma, on the other hand, wrote about something that really built on her initial thoughts but went a step further. She wrote about mission trips, and how one uses their money at the expense of others. How they spend money to go on mission trips, to feel good about themselves, and have good photos to show their friends back home about their good deeds, but is that money ever used to really help the people the mission trips claim to help? Emma argued no, which builds on her initial ideas that relationships are the key, and mission trips don't build relationships, actually most relationships, according to her research that are formed on a mission trip, dissolve after the trip is over, leaving



the person that needed help emptier than they began with. Another student, Matt, like Emma, built on his initial ideas of happiness from new angles, reviewing a documentary that covered the multiple facets of what made people happy, and concluded that money wasn't necessarily wasn't one.

Let's stop here with the early work on this project and take a look at the deliberation of writing essay and what lead up to the essay itself:

### **Deliberation as Part of the Essay Writing Process In General**

*In which I Deliberate with me, and with you. So even though you may not realize it, I'm deliberating with you.*

As we have seen, for the essay writing portion of this class, there were many ways the students deliberated with themselves and others. Here, I will showcase one example of a student deliberating with himself about his topic, as well as with his peers in a slightly nuanced way: by considering the relevancy of his topic with and for others.

In this particular example, a student named Martin employed deliberative thinking in a reflection on his topic and how his drafting was going. Now, Martin didn't write about money and happiness as I mentioned above, but about technology and its tie to happiness, specifically, social media/cell phones and happiness. During a free write nearing the first draft due date, Martin wrote how he felt his writing was going well, and about the relevancy and poignancy of his topics to his classmates. Martin wrote:

*My draft is going fairly well. I'm making some good progress and I see myself finishing the first draft potentially by the end of the day today. I'm happy with the topic I chose and I know for a fact everyone in the classroom can relate to my topic because as I look around the room as I right this I can see everyone has a cell phone. The genre of my paper is non-fiction. This is real life with real life repercussions as well so it will contain for the most part a plentiful amount of statistics and data gathered across numerous sources. (Emphasis mine)*

The key for me in Martin's statement above is his ability to look at the importance of his topic in relation to those around him. This shows that Martin “thinking deliberately” in a sense. It shows Martin “listening to his peers,” seeing their interests, habits, and behaviors, and valuing that as something to be concerned about for his project. It shows Martin listening to his peers either culturally in the sense of “we all have cell phones these days!” or seeing how his classmates are “with” their phones day to day (something we will question the validity of in Chapter 4). In essence, Martin incorporates the values of deliberation I tried to instill this semester in terms of valuing his thoughts alongside value of the thoughts and concerns of others, specifically, this classroom community, even going so far as meshing the two together inside of his paper topic and its importance.

Secondly here, Martin mentions the real life concerns of the topic, which to me showcases another deliberative value Martin is employing. Deliberation takes abstract concerns and makes them concrete, makes them human, makes them tangible, practical, and thus, in the end, solvable. So when Martin writes “This is real life with real life repercussions as well,” I see the value of deliberation in writing coming forth, as Martin searches for the causes of the problem, and eventually, for solutions, not only for himself, but his peers and his community

### **Deliberation as “free-written” thought, mulling over, and transition:**

In this section, we’ll move back to the example of Nick, a student whose writing and emotions clashed with his peer Rachel, but who ended up changing his opinions because of hearing her frustration. To do this, we’ll look at writing done during free write

sections of the class, as well as things that were spoken to me about after the class session.

The difference between writing privately and sharing publicly was displayed strongly, as I saw how someone like Nick may share openly with speech, may withhold their beliefs when writing. I noticed the same thing with Rachel, that she spoke her opinions strongly in private, but not publically. It was only through public acknowledging the pain created through stereotyped opinions that lead to real forward moving, healing community. I argue for a place of more openness in our classrooms that while potentially painful, can lead to deep healing and more open, cohesive, and empathic communities.

At the beginning of the semester, a free write was done on the racial wealth gap. Subsequent deliberation, where Nick wrote that he agreed with the majority of the class on paper, (that racism was ridiculous) did not agree in speech in his speaking during class discussion. In any case, after this class discussion, both Nick and Rachel, in their writing and thinking, changed their opinions and went from a stance of stereotyping, anger, and frustration, moved to a point of mutual understanding.

This early open deliberative discussion that I will showcase and analyze not only helped both Nick and Rachel “make amends” to each other, but set the stage for the open and healing environment that would come throughout this course. That environment was one in which inner thoughts were expressed, accepted, and built on by the students and me. By exposing “political tribes,” the conditions of walls between all of us seemed to be broken down as confrontations led to understanding and, for the most part, respect. If I played my cards right, the class itself could run with deliberative ideals of empathy, understanding, listening, and open-mindedness at the helm with a guiding moderator who

could still model being honest about his political opinions, showing more openness and acceptance to all.

What we started on this particular day/session was to use deliberation to “expose” one’s beliefs publicly, bring them out from the internal world to the external communal world, and finally let them be felt and reacted to by one’s peers. This wasn’t always a pleasant feeling, or an uplifting one, sometimes there was disagreement, as we will see with Rachel and Nick, and the backlash could be hurtful to one’s ego, as we will see with Rachel’s response to Nick’s initial comments. Sometimes things during deliberation were confusing for a while, especially if one of the students or myself, from the stance of “the other side” caused deep disagreement without the maintenance of deliberative principles. In those situations though, it ended up being where the most growth happened, even if students (and the teacher) didn’t yet realize it until way after the learning event itself occurred.

This type of classroom deliberation gets to communal practice and communal values, as it can hone in on the face to face of politics and publics. It can get students to share past the barrier of a social media website or through an elected representative, and just get it out to others that are right there to hear them and respond to them with accepting or non accepting body language, and for one’s body to also react in kind to their reaction (and imagine the chain of events that follows from there). This is what deliberation and growth can be about, and as I argue in Chapter 3, this is all utilizing a “space based” theory this deals with getting the inside out.

Let’s look at how this all played out on the larger scale:

## Writing and Speech - Getting “the Inside Out”

*(Does public deliberation affect the difference between the two? Yes)*

The Class: 9-14-18

### *Racial Wealth Gap Free Write*

*In which students wrote their responses to the idea of the racial wealth gap and examined their personal opinions related to the viewing of Vox Explained's “The Racial Wealth Gap” in writing and in spoken deliberation afterwards. How did student writing affect their speaking afterwards? Is what they wrote accurate to their beliefs? If writing and speech were indeed different, why would one “deliberate” differently in writing as opposed to speech, especially in an FYW classroom? Also highlighted: The importance of teaching emotional intelligence and emotional response and what happens when one doesn't teach for that emotional response (internally and externally) in deliberation. Finally - general remarks and overview of the class.*

What you see below is the writing of some of the most prominent speakers in the class discussion that followed after the written response to the Vox segment. You can read to get a sense of their private ideas to then counterpoint their public sentiments following the private.

### Private Writing

#### **Nick**

This video does a good job of explaining the history of racial segregation in this country. I think that it is bad that such atrocities have plagued a country so proud of freedom and equality. There is no place like it on Earth and we need to continue to make strides to allow all people a fair shot at making it. I think that we've certainly gotten better over time, but we still need to be conscious that people come from different starting points in life. I don't know what should be done about issues like this, but whatever we as a society decide to do about this issue needs to be made by all people for the good of all people. I don't think this issue will go away any time soon, but it certainly will get better, progress is slow when it comes to racial issues, as we have seen throughout history.

Nick later will say that he believes certain races have cultural advantages and may not have been as discriminated against as they claim. This is also the same student who

came up to me after class the following section to make informal amends and talk about how he felt politically and discuss his issues. Think about this as you read the conversation transcript later on.

Nick is the center of my focus here for the theme of public private, although the other students focused on here add a lot to this section. In all, I'm just really not sure how to organize all of this data and writing. What occurs is that this moment in writing and the following conversation is where we see Nick saying two different things. A whole other assignment, written response, and peer and personal conversation later, we see where Nick has gone emotionally. I guess I just feel like it takes way too long for me to get there without confusing the reader or having too much meaningless text before the punch line. I need to think of how to streamline all of this. I could simply start by analyzing this response and showcasing the differences in his private/public responses.

#### Rachel

I love how woke this class is. That video was very informative. It talked about racism in the real estate business. It's crazy how the real estate was so concerned about letting one black family move into an all white neighborhood. He thought all of the white families would move out and destroy his business. That's crazy. I also thought it was interesting how the video explained that sometimes when a black person graduates from college it adds to the debt of the family. Yes the family, and the student, has to pay for student loans used to pay for college. But also family member look to college graduate for financial help which puts the recent college graduate in more debt. I never thought of that. I liked the Explained documentary. I definitely want to watch more of them. I like how organized they are.

#### **Emma**

This video explained the wealth gap and how racism created it and nothing has been done to try and fix it and it probably won't be fixed. This can be seen in social welfare programs, they were created not really keeping in mind that people of color were struggling more financially. This could have made the gap even worse because if they aren't getting as many benefits as they should or as much as

their counterparts than it will put them into even more debt. When talking about the welfare gap, there was also an exclusion of other races, which was probably made so that it wasn't too much information. But other races need to be included in the conversation because either way, it's an inequality that is not trying to be fixed or anything. and a lot of the times it was created by us. Whatever race we're essentially "looking down upon" is the race that will suffer and we don't care because we are benefiting from it so it doesn't matter to us and we just write it off as the other race being too sensitive or too lazy to do anything about it.

### **Jared**

Once again, this is something that even though I knew about institutional racism, I never really knew what it referred to. It is very disturbing to really look at all the things that my ancestors went through and what some of us have to go to today. That is why when i hear people say "Just work hard and you will succeed" I get mad. It obviously is not that simple to succeed when generational discrimination has put black people very far behind whites when it comes to wealthiness. The worst part is that the gap is continually growing, and seems that it will never stop unless something miraculous happens. This video opened my eyes to why some black people really feel as strongly as they do about the wealth gap and other gaps between minorities and whites. I also understand the statement that blacks cannot be racist only discriminatory. If we look at the video you can only be racist when you can oppress the other races. That is what has been happening to my people for the past 400 years and counting. We are constantly put in bad positions and when we behave accordingly, they use that to condemn us when in fact it was their system that initially corrupted us. It is sad to see that the color of one person's skin can ultimately decide what treatment they get from others and how they are handled by the government. The color of someone's skin can make them a threat and make others look at them different. This is the reason Colin kneeled. He sees the injustice and it needs to change.

### **Jillian**

I've felt that this has been an ongoing issue within the United States that has not been addressed because there are individuals of various races that have been fortunate enough to defeat the odds and become extremely successful, however a large majority of the nation is struggling because of this wage gap. I feel that reforms should be implicated to end the wage gap amongst the white and African Americans, as well as any other racial group because the United States elicits a message of freedom and the land of opportunity and that is why immigrants make journeys to live here and start over. How can immigrants create a better/new life for themselves when there is a wage gap in 2018 and the Civil rights movement was 50 years prior? It's extremely unfortunate that for generations African Americans fought for their rights and freedom, yet still continue to suffer and the potential for this gap to close is so small. These are the issues that are overlooked, yet they are some of the most significant issues in the country, how can the United

States attempt to make other nations better meanwhile the internal issues have never been resolved in in 240 years?

### **Sarina**

This video was talking about how we live in a country where racial equality still doesn't exist. The video spoke about how no matter how hard African Americans try to gain equality, it is nearly impossible because of the factor of it being a problem for decades at a time. The video also spoke about how African Americans don't have the same opportunities even though they achieved as much as a white person has. The video compares the yearly income of white and black families and shows clearly the wealth gap between the two. This video compared the two races and showed with detail and statistics that an African American has a very small possibility of gaining the same opportunities as a White person because of race.

*Below you will find the class discussion that occurred after the free write responses above. They correspond and work together.*

### **Class Discussion in response to racial wealth gap free write: 9-14-18**

**Michael:** I would say through your narratives, you're going to learn a lot about your peers. Hopefully you will choose...Somebody had written, I think it was Matt. You wrote in response to the third essay, that that person's very brave. I think it was you. We'll look. I have notes of whatever that you wrote. It was very brave to talk about the Islamophobia issues.

In that essay, she was also very real about her own home life. Her parents would get mad if she didn't wear her hijab, things like this.

**Nick:** [indecipherable 0:45] what I was saying earlier. I know that, for example, Asians used to be really repressed in America. Today I think they're one of the most successful racial groups in America. I think they have the highest median income and the lowest unemployment rate.

**Michael:** Let's let somebody else respond. [inaudible 1:08] .

**Jared:** I get that with Asians, I think that might have happened, but I don't think that Asians were red-lined at the same time. If you look at that, you can't say that more than \$100,000 difference is all choices. Black people won't come out making different choices than white people.



If you go to a different school because you have to live in a different house, because you can't afford housing in another area, or you're not allowed to get housing in another area, you're going to be missing assistance.

**Nick:** I'm not saying that, but I just want to know more about it. I'm sure that there's lots of racism. I know, I think it's a thing, where...  
[crosstalk]

**Jared:** What's the point of bringing up Asians? Asians weren't oppressed in this country for 300 years.

**Nick:** They kind of were more oppressed, but they're doing better than...

[crosstalk]

**Jared:** [inaudible 1:54] . They wasn't 300 to 400 years oppressed.

**Nick:** I know, but they're doing better than white people now.

**Michael:** This is okay, I think. These are not easy issues to deal with. That's why people avoid talking about them. Remember, I said I was writing my dissertation on this? The reason I'm writing my dissertation on people speaking about hard issues is because it can get confusing.

It deals with like, "Wait, I'm a member of that social group. Why are you talking about me like this?" or, "I don't understand. I'm a member of a different social group. Why does someone talk about themselves like that?"

Which I think Nick actually...What I'm hearing from you is you just want to understand.

**Nick:** Yeah.

**Michael:** Which is not easy, hearing it from the other side. That can get frustrating.

I saw another hand. Unless, Jared, did you still want to respond? I saw Emma and Jared.

**Jared:** I'm just saying white people kind of make a difference. It's not something that our culture makes us want to spend money on stuff that doesn't matter. We want to have houses and cars and stuff. We want to have stuff that matters. When you're forced into situations that you cannot control...

I always hear people say, "If you work hard, you can succeed." No matter what, if you work hard. Like what Elijah said, he had individual success [inaudible 3:24] . He worked hard. He was succeeding. That's not always the case for people. If you grow up, you don't have true parents because they're both crackheads because you live in [indecipherable 3:32] or something like that.

You're not going to be able to succeed. You can push as hard as you want to. If you don't have parents, you don't have the same stuff as other people. It's not always easy to say, "Work hard, do something good and you can succeed." That's not always the case.

**Michael:** Now, remember that this is averages. I'm sorry. I keep going off on side tangents. They're very relevant, I think. I'm sure people of all social groups here can put themselves in categories like, "I wouldn't identify with this." I don't know if everyone that is on this side would identify with this in terms of their family. This is a medium.

Some people from different social groups would have way more or way less depending on...Somebody mentioned, I think it was Emma, before that the way things flow or chance, [indecipherable 4:30] , the area you live in, different states. It could even just be the wealth of your state.

We're all very lucky right now to be in New York [inaudible 4:41] . In a way, we're not also because it's extremely segregated. Also, there's a lot of money flow here. If we were in another state there wouldn't be a lot of money flow. There wouldn't be a lot of job opportunities because the market is...If you were somebody who loved, let's say, engineering or something. You're limited to being in a state that, maybe their market, in the '60s or now, is more agriculture. Maybe you could be an agricultural engineer, create cool contraptions.

[laughter]

Michael: You might not have the same opportunities. Does that make sense? [inaudible 5:30] .

**Emma:** This isn't really to respond to him but in America, it's so put into everybody's brain that the American Dream is so real and anybody can get it. Also, just a side note, a lot of people think a lot of immigrants come here for a better life for their family or to get the American Dream but some immigrants just came here because they just wanted to come here.

I feel like it's so annoying when people are like, "They came here for the American Dream" and all of that but they just came here. They're allowed to just want to come here. It's so annoying and invalidating for immigrants to come here to be like, "They're just here for that."

The American Dream is so annoying because it's not really a thing. It's so hard to be like, "Everybody will be treated equally. Everybody will get a job."

[mic noise]

**Emma:** [inaudible 6:37] . "It'll work out. Don't worry about it. You're American now," but that's not how it works.

**Michael:** There's a couple things there. Maybe what people want out of being an American, as well as if it's attainable at all, if it's a real thing. The whole thing about job opportunities. Just one more note from the video was about home ownership being the real path to the American Dream.

The woman who was a foreclosure specialist said that her parents bought a house for \$4,000 or something and now it's \$600,000. If you could not purchase a house when you're allowed to, if you weren't allowed to put down the \$4,000 and also you weren't allowed to own property on your promised property...

Remember that thing with Abraham Lincoln and the bill and everybody. Land is extremely valuable. Who migrated here from another state or country, to New York? Have you guys found that just parking lots and paying for parking has been an issue? Has anyone noticed that? Even native New Yorkers, notice paying for parking? Who has noticed that in New York?

When you guys start, I'm sure you're past 21, to go to Manhattan to get drunk, you'll realize if you have a car and choose not to take public transport, the people that own parking lots and make you pay \$40 an hour by the West Village to put your car in there,

imagine how much money they're making.

They just own a block of land. Maybe once every three or four years, they have to change the pavement, the asphalt, and have to pay a guy \$8 an hour to give you a ticket and be like, "Thanks for giving me a dollar tip."

They just own land. They don't do anything. That goes back to that whole thing with they were supposed to give you 40 acres of tilled land. Land is wealth. If you can't have land, you can't build wealth.

Houses are another [inaudible 9:14] . I'm sorry, I'm going to stop right there. I get into this shit. Housing is on land. It's literally on top of land and people want to buy it. It appreciates in value, \$4,000 to \$600,000. I don't know how many times that is. Just imagine your great-grandparents are just like, "Hey, here's this house. It's now yours, \$600,000." Did you do anything to deserve that?

You all [indecipherable 9:55] my politics. I'm very supportive of Jared's point of view. If that person who inherits a house did nothing to inherit the house and get \$600,000, then on Jared's point of view, the person who didn't get that house, it's also not their fault, if that makes sense.

Sorry. Jillian, and then Serena. Then we'll move on.

**Jill:** I think Jared [inaudible 10:26] that there are people that are trying to break the trend [inaudible 10:30] that would encompass a whole group of people. This was a socioeconomic trend that's been going on since the 1960s. There's probably thousands or even millions of people who can't break an entire trend and make everybody [indecipherable 10:47] .

I also agree with the immigration thing. My grandparents are both from Ireland. They actually met here. My grandfather had the American Dream. He came with his family. My grandmother had to come here. Her family couldn't afford [inaudible 11:01] .  
[mic noise]

**Jill:** ...to work and then send money back. I do agree with that because I know that is a thing.

I think different circumstances for everybody. My mom's a single mom. A lot of kids that have single moms don't come to anything. My brother wants to go to law school. You

have to make the best of it. You can't encompass a whole group of people.

**Michael:** Good. One quick point is that before there was talk about different cultures and races. Almost everybody has been racialized here, or culturized. Even when this country was majority just white, English, it was your religion. It was the Protestants, versus the Puritans, versus the Quakers. The Quakers were the most subjugated group of people here because they were so weirdly different than everybody. They sat and waited for God to talk to them. Then stood up and were like, "God's speaking to me." Which is, now, every Baptist church, I think.

Everybody's been racialized. My grandfather was Irish. Irish people were extremely racialized when they first came here. Yeah?

**Sarina:** [inaudible 12:18] . I think for a lot of people and a lot of cultures, the American Dream is very generalized. Nowadays, the American Dream is very different from what it was in the '60s. For a single mom that an American Dream is to get her kids in college and to see them drive.

Even if you look at different neighborhoods in Queens. You look at neighborhoods in Forest Hills and then you look at neighbors in Jamaica. We're in Jamaica. If you look at Forest Hills, the American Dream there is to buy and build a mansion, two million dollars' worth, and drive a Mercedes.

While the American Dream here is you build on what you have, like a middle class more. I think in every society, every neighborhood, every state, there's a different definition of American Dream, every situation.

Yes, it's much harder when you're African American, especially if you're in a neighborhood where there's a lot of people going through the same situation. You need to [indecipherable 13:21] and put food on the table.

You're not thinking about, "OK, my son wants to go to Harvard," or I need [inaudible 13:29] . You're thinking about surviving. That's why I think the American Dream is very generalized.

In the '60s you could have said, "The American Dream is two kids, house, car, vacation." Sure. Now, everything is so technological. Everything is so updated that everybody looks at the American Dream in a different way.

**Michael:** Good. Let's keep this idea about the American Dream in our back pocket because it's actually going to come up for our final project, the happiness project. I have a lot of students that write about the American Dream, if it's attainable, if it's real, what they want out of it, and what they can get out of it. If you're interested in that topic, keep it in your back pocket.

Sorry, I went way over time with this. The discussion got really good. Let's talk a little bit about Wes Moore. Then we'll jump over to, maybe, one or two of the samples. The good note is we don't have to go over next week's work. We already did that.

### **Emotional Response and changed speaking/Writing Patterns**

Because the conversation got pretty heated, I offered a free write that reflected on the conversation from the previous class that we just analyzed. The student writing dug deeper into The goal was to see if student writing and speech to line up, to find places to hone in on to work on deliberative skills: can students be both as open as possible, as well as accepting, open minded and empathetic when they share their thoughts to build community? This next assignment offered a private space for students to deliberate openly and honestly with themselves, before moving back to class, hoping to offer students a moment to reflect on their own shells, their own beliefs, to meditate on that before coming back to discuss as a group:

### **Private Free Write in response to racial wealth gap discussion from previous class 9-18-18**

Tuesday 9/18/18 started with a free write that asked students to reflect on their conversation from Friday which was a bit controversial because there were two opposing sides regarding struggles people face, on one side there were those who saw it mainly as society's fault and those who saw the individual's lack of hard work as deserving fault. While there were a bunch of students and ideas that stuck out from both sides of Friday's conversation as important, which I have audio recorded, the two most were the dissenting

opinions, Elias and Nick. Most people were on the side that society is structured in such a way as to set some way ahead of the race while not favoring others, especially in regards to the *racial wealth gap*, which we investigated prior to free writing and discussion. Elias and Nick did not share that opinion. Nick's opinion was the strongest, and I would say, least deliberative because he was choosing to identify particular social groups while speaking (African Americans/Asians) as being inherently a certain way due to their culture and identity in this objective way, without realizing that some of his peers were from those groups and seeing if he could get more input to inform/verify his opinion. The level of peer interaction (ie deliberation) will be watched and monitored throughout the semester, and itself is a discussion topic, but here I want to focus on Nick's change of speaking style and writing style from one class to the next, to showcase the changes and hypothesize why opening up to deliberation methods may have caused these students to not change their opinions, but at least consider them morero in their perceptual frameworks.

For today, I asked students to look back in their minds to Friday's conversation about the racial wealth gap, society's role in propping up some groups rather than others, and the role the individual has to play in their own destiny. While thinking about the topic and what was said during the last conversation, I also asked my students to focus on their speech and writing. Would they like to re-deliberate with themselves? Others? What would they add now that they have had some time to digest the topic? What would they say to others now they they have had time to digest their opinions? What would they like others to say to them now that others have had time to digest their own perspectives?

With those ideas, I wrote up a free write assignment for reflection and presented is as such:

Free Write #2:

We had a pretty deep conversation about race, responsibility, society, etc. on Friday. With a few days removed from that conversation, what do you think about it now? Is there anything you would have liked to say that you didn't? Anything you would say now that you have had time to think about it? Would you say things in a different way to be aware of certain people and their points of view or perspective, not to change your argument but to make it so that you're having a conversation with someone as opposed to speaking for or about them without them there?

Also, is there anything you wish people would have taken into account when regarding what they said that maybe they didn't say or take into consideration? What were these things, and why do you think they should be taken into account? Lastly what were some other thoughts about last week's conversation on Friday? Let them flow out here.

Students took 10 minutes to write, and I didn't look over their actual free writes unless they asked me to during discussion during the class period. I have looked over them now, after the fact, to track written deliberation and its effects on student thought. But this section will focus more on speech, the next section on writing.

After finishing their free write, the conversation we had afterwards was focused moreso on extending the opinions offered by the majority on Friday, such as going



further about why peoples/societies are racist (which was audio recorded and I can go back to for specifics). Some of the ideas that the students threw around were implicit bias, for and against or why. Do humans like to group things together for convenience? Is it a natural trait? Is it taught? Students also talked about whether racism existed definitely/ was good or bad, for what reasons/what its effects were, etc.

The reason to state the discussion topics is to show that maybe in re-deliberating, the students thought mostly about adding to the theme, which is a good thing and part of what the free write asked for. In this sense, they were almost deliberating with their own ideas that had been gestating since Friday.

On the other hand, by going the route of “deliberation through addition” (especially if it is addition to one’s own argument, even if it was strengthened through a peer deliberation a few days prior), is not ideal for the goal of peer to peer connection. In other words, by “talking to themselves” in a sense, students were not necessarily “integrating” peer viewpoints, and opposing sides, etc. I had to moderate and offer “sample opposing sides” for students to respond to, but I can’t offer all of these ideas. Plus, as we shall see, the students have things to write and say but they sometimes hide them -- the moderator cannot and should not speak for them.

With that in mind, it is important to stop and say that in this particular class, I noticed how honesty in initial feelings on a matter (I feel this way about x... yet I will lie when I freewrite not tell the whole truth... BUT I will share my true thoughts while speaking) as well as the same or similar behavior (silence in response to the initial feelings of speaker/writer 1 makes a huge difference in peer deliberation quality.

Nick was not present that day, so I did not get a written response, but he did “make up” for this by having a private conversation with me in which he discussed what happened the previous class period. But before that, let’s take a look at what Rachel said:

Rachel’s response was:

The comment that the Pi Lam guy made about Asian Americans doing better than other minorities still bothers me to this day. It was a very ignorant comment and I really wanted to speak up in class. But I was so angry and flustered that I couldn't come up with an eloquent way to fire back at him. I would have just ended up yelling at him. Not only did I want to yell at him and tell him he was wrong, but I also felt sorry for him and wanted to educate him that not all Asians are one kind. Not all Asians are smart and thriving. Not all Asians are successful doctors. I hate it when people assume things they know nothing about. I'm Asian and I'm not naturally smart. I have to work hard for my good grades. I am also not rich. I had to work hard for my money this summer. I worked two jobs. I had an internship at a real estate firm and I had a job at Nordstrom, which made the real money. I had to help my parents pay the bills. Some Asian families, like mine, are struggling. Not all of us are thriving.

The key for this 9-18-18 class was Nick coming up to me after class and talking about how he felt bad for singling out certain cultural groups for certain behaviors/achievements or non achievements. This to me was HUGE. He was not asked to talk to me, but felt somewhere inside of him like he wanted to deliberate with me and have more conversation. As we spoke, he expressed a desire to see the other side and understood possible stress he put on his peers by what he said, as well as an initial guilt after the class for realizing how things might have sounded, but also wanted to be clear that he still believed in his opinion about merit through hard work, not social standing. Further, he explained to me where his belief came from: his own experience with people that had a lot of resources and wealth but did not do well. In deliberative spirit, I listened and empathized (again which I have on tape) but with the goal of widening his perspective I offered the idea of how both ideas are probably at play (society constraints

and individual merits) and how college is meant to open us up to these confusing interplays and teach us how to juggle them in our valuations.

When Nick and I spoke after class, I could see how his body language spoke. Nick seemed to get defensive as we spoke although he was happy to be there as he stated that he was late to his math class but would rather be talking about this stuff than being in his boring math class. What made me think he felt defensive was his A) initial admission of guilt about his speech, and B) how he was hardly making eye contact with me but how his eyes were darting around the room. He also got more entrenched in his opinion, which is almost like being in a war and digging your trench even deeper to defend against the enemy (but again, I could be reading this wrong) and tried to talk more about social group identification and values -- how each group has its own cultural heritage, and thus pushes certain outcomes for its culture. I agreed but asked him maybe to look at it not as innate but as national or state cultural values, and we came to somewhat of a deliberative consensus. Performing consensus is just as important as performing deliberation, something the students clearly did in the above examples, even though they might not have been able to “define” it Overall, what is tantamount is Nick’s own development, as he wants to continue to write about the bad things regarding polarization in our country.

## **CHAPTER 3 (Deliberative Pedagogy: Space, Place, and Bringing the “Outside,” “In”)**

### **Chapter Overview:**

This chapter addresses how we might overcome the student apathy that I call “the eyes of deficiency” where students feel rather small and disempowered (ie: deficient), both in the university curriculum and in the world as a whole, as if their vote doesn’t really matter. This sense of being “less than” is one common symptom of our neoliberal moment in the west where civic participation seems to have little effect. I draw this concept from student writing, and propose a novel response: rather than push our students out into the world, as many progressive faculty do, asking their students to do volunteer projects outside of class etc, I propose that a deliberative pedagogy that asks students to listen and reason with each other is a way of bringing the “outside in” on the most basic level where students negotiate their differences on a face-to-face level, learning to value listening and respect.

### **Introduction:**

I hope to show in theory, case studies, and interviews offered in this chapter and the next that these moments of going public can be just as powerful for students and their civic identity, if not more so, than the traditional public pedagogy method of going to new locales. In essence, once students are exposed to the “going public” conversations and deliberations in the classroom, they do see, as has been told to me in testimonials (“I started talking this way and about these subjects with my roommates after class,” “and writing and sharing on Facebook!”) that they can practice deliberation with people

surrounding them in whatever place they happen to be in, whatever community they happen to be in, whatever state of mind, or political body they happen to be in, to practice democracy and civic action.

I will argue that the use of deliberation and civic identity building are pedagogical antidotes to the decline of civic literacy. The manipulation of civic education by some of the left and right free market forces talked about in Chapter 4 have caused this decline. Due to the neoliberal and neoconservative mindset of individualism and individual gain which have come at the expense of concern for common interest, as well as the manipulation of that common interest (Chapter 4), attacks on viability of government and social safety nets to achieve solutions for everyday problems of civic well-being, the wholesale selling of democracy to a small amount of the population, the moving of citizens away from participating in government due to the creation of a “high access” bar, and the volunteer-based solutions that serve to alleviate but not address structural issues, community sense is lost. Educative approaches are needed to reacquaint us to a larger sense of community. Deliberation and civic identity building can be valuable approaches in how they work with space: these approaches encourage individuals to move out of isolated space and empathize with larger communities and build stronger communal networks through integrative strategies that seek to end systemic problems. Deliberation and civic identity-building can genuinely build people-power and engagement in solving democratic issues.

K-12 education has utilized deliberation, and has had great results in achieving some of the above results (*Deliberation in the Classroom*, Molnar-Main); in First Year Writing (FYW, utilizing deliberation as a strategy to move students out of isolated space

to build networked community strategy is an emerging field. Although composition and rhetoric often deals with public pedagogy and pedagogies of democracy, FYW in its general institutional mission is still highly specialized in its transmission of the tenets of academic writing (critical thinking, deep research, etc.). I argue that through these general tenets, there is room for deliberation to become a central guiding principle. And then, in a “guilty by association” way, teaching writing through the lens of deliberative democracy can both achieve the core results of critical thinking, deep research, and clear expression as well as help build a sense of community and fight the individualizing tendencies more and more becoming a part of the modern higher education system.

In this chapter I connect FYW’s history of work in public pedagogy and theories of neoliberalism to the work being done outside of FYW in the political science fields of deliberative theory and deliberative pedagogy. I also survey the recent literature of public pedagogy to explore its goals, concepts of space, and theories of student agency. I make these connections to show how students may be pushed increasingly inward, and that the classroom can be a way to bring them outward, practicing empathy in a networked setting and fighting the trends of neoliberalism, all the while working with the core tenets of institutions: critical thinking, deep research, and clear expression.

The classroom is a valid space for public engagement. To show that although working with outside institutions and publics have many benefits to the individual, the organization worked with, and the institutional/community connection (*Because We Live Here*, Goldblatt) the classroom is a public as well. If the goal of the pedagogy is to get individuals to “go public,” we need not only ask them to volunteer or network outside the institution, but also to shift the focus within the institutional setting. If the goal is to work

on building cross institutional networks, than that strategy is useful and the right way to go. But students can also be in an “unfamiliar public” when they enter the classroom, with its own tension of individuals and their myriad different ideas and experiences. If we are seeking to fight individualism and neoliberalism whose negative effects on students I will show, we can use the “space” of the classroom to, through deliberative writing and speech, help build networked community by working with students, through critical thinking, deep research, and clear expression, bring their private inner space out “publicly” with peers, and then integrate it into an empathetic, compassionate, working community based on sensibility and equality.

This “bringing the inside out” (and later, bringing the outside-in, back-out again) can foster new civic identity, which is useful for these larger cross institutional and volunteer based missions that public pedagogy values. But I don’t seek to dismantle that goal of volunteerism and broader communal interconnectedness -- I just find a similar value in building networked community. Viewing the classroom as the “staging ground” for such action (which has been done before, such as in *When Students Have Power*) the deliberative classroom is different, as it looks at the writing classroom and the writing classroom’s mission to build an *actual* community, not a practice one. I hope to show that the emotions students are expressing are real when they share something deeply personal that rubs someone else the wrong way intellectually, or when someone changes from a stereotypical stance to an empathetic stance after rubbing someone the wrong way (Rachel/Nick example from previous chapter). A community can be formed without going outside, and communal lessons learned in the classroom can help students do the same when they go outside. One doesn’t need to go out to another “institution” to mimic

the real, everydayness of community and humanity. It's happening every day all around us.

### **FYW: Deliberative Democracy Pedagogies and their ties to Public Pedagogies in Rhet Comp**

Among FYW's richest discourses to move student communities towards democracy and more communal connection are the push for public rhetorics, community pedagogies, or community literacies. Generally, these fields are concerned with how rhetorical theory can be useful in making a difference in students going public, many times, outside of the college in which they are attending. The classroom becomes a space where the action outside of the college is prepared for and decompressed. The goal of such an act is to introduce students to the language for the many "spaces" of community, and in a tangential way, to fight neoliberal individualization.

Elanore Long notes that community literacy has worked specifically to use rhetorical theory to make a difference outside of colleges and how students have become a vehicle for such work, writing:

Over the past twenty years that community-literacy studies has emerged as a distinct area of inquiry, scholars have tested the capacity of rhetorical theory to make a difference in the world outside college walls. Working with community partners, they have prepared students in new ways to carry on responsible, effective, socially aware communication in a variety of workplaces and communities, as well as in school (*Community Literacy*, 3).

Building democracy then, for community literacy scholars, can start with becoming a productive, connected, and communicative member of society by being out in different workplaces and community spaces. Interestingly, Long focuses on speech here, in terms of "socially aware communication." Community literacy points to how learning the



communication skills necessary in different “places” outside the classroom can be a bridge between the individual and the community.

In this way, we can see how inherit in Long’s argument about communicative theory is a lot of talk about “space.” Long talks about “the world,” “outside college walls,” “workplaces,” “communities,” “in school,” etc. Communication is always bound up with place and space, and who gets to speak where. The argument I want to make about this particular strand of public pedagogy theory is that “place and space” are much more accessible in the classroom than may seem at first.

I would like to utilize this particular strand of place and space that Long talks about, with a focus on the distinction between “in school” and “outside college walls.” In deliberative pedagogy, as opposed to public pedagogy, the “space” of the classroom can also be where students bring their outside experiences (outside the walls of the college) “inside” the college, to be worked on, deliberated on, etc.

The most important thing about this distinction is not only the connection between the individual and the locale, but also the possibility this distinction opens up. In public pedagogy, one may need to constantly go “back outside” the university to do the required work, whereas with deliberative pedagogy in this sense, things that arise “in” the classroom can also be seen as “outside” issues. In other words, one who has a personal reaction to something that happened in the class but wasn’t ready to integrate it or deliberate about it with their peers, is sort of having their own personal “outside” experience, not feeling part of the community in many ways. This students’ experience, and possible feeling of alienation can later be brought up and talked about and integrated through deliberation.

In other words, while public pedagogy seeks to take rhetorical skills outside of the classroom, deliberative public pedagogy meets students where they're at and brings their private space "in," in order to build community with their peers in class. For example, a student may bring to class with them the experience of where a family member shut them down at dinner over a political talking point, even though the student had the wider picture, and the sense of helplessness and powerlessness this created (or a general hatred of politics). In a classroom deliberation in writing or speech, these experiences of disconnection can be worked through, as students and their peers discuss how such events affect their thinking about family, community, politics, and civics, as well as where they would like to build past these events in the future.

On the other hand, the classroom creates its own dynamics to be "brought in" and worked through. A student doesn't have to bring in family experiences for example, they could bring with them to class a deep reaction to something that had happened during the previous class period where one was stereotyped against to work through. Taking the time to share this experience with the class would most likely be beneficial in the right setting, because not sharing it could cause the student to shut down and feel ostracized by the class, thus pushing them out of the deliberative community.

In any case then, deliberative FYW seeks for the classroom be a "space" to integrate "outside" experiences, where students can take their individual concerns and integrate them with the class community, or as we will see later, integrate parts of the classroom community with other parts of the classroom community which comprise multiple individuals who have the same experiences or share the same belief/outlook. It should be said though that working to integrate students into a cohesive community

won't generally lead to ending conflict quickly, with neat bows. Integration can sometimes be messy, and although resolution takes time, it can happen.

In my work, I find in class community integration through writing and speaking to be more of a reasonable and noble goal of teaching FYW in these turbulent social and political times. Utilizing FYW as a staging ground to foster deliberative writing and speaking skills can be more efficient than utilizing such skills in some outside, and often volunteerist way. Using writing and speaking to unite the classroom community, with its own needs, agendas, and communal norms seems to be a paramount skill to gain in a highly divided society. If this path of learning isn't taken, students may go through FYW learning the skills of clear academic writing but leave without knowledge of how to use writing and speaking to bridge differences and unite people. Students may leave FYW without getting a glimpse of the real integrative work that deliberative pedagogy can achieve. Without such work, it is possible that teachers in FYW are helping perpetuate a cycle of "outsider-ness" that is so common in civic circles today, which can lead to hate and violence.

As a whole, I'll be arguing for widening the public pedagogy term "space" to also refer to student's personal experiences, whether they be outside of class or not. The value of this widening of terms is to focus on how a deliberative classroom can do this bringing of outside experiences in, to understand what "spaces" students will inhabit, and what "spaces," integrative deliberation can bring students and the peer community to.

In all, deliberative pedagogy works to "bring experience in," and then integrate within a single locale, the classroom. That single locale is what I call, the "classroom communal." The "classroom communal" is a term which seeks to elucidate the concept of

building networked community around and with the self, where people just feel heard, validated, empathized with, concerned about, and generally connected.

Since bringing experience in does require the “hearing” of a lot of emotion, “classroom communal” seems to be most aptly attained with deep sharing and the fostering of deep connection to peers and peer citizens (including the “undocumented citizen”). Through the deep deliberation about and sharing of the uncomfortable and the formation of communal norms, students can build community off of this hearing.

Deep deliberative pedagogy serves as an integration for individuals and their peer communities (and eventually, outwards towards other communities: civic, national, earthly). This strategy is very different than giving students rhetorical skills who’s primary benefit is to be utilized for institutions with their own norms and political bents outside the university. In this case, students may be going in somewhat blindly if they do not first have a sense of internal connection to community. With the communicative practices of deliberation though, student experiences are brought into the classroom to build community instead of helping them learn to fit into new outside spaces.

Although theorizing about space in this way is a difference in traditional comp rhet public pedagogy and deliberative pedagogy, there are many similarities in terms of end goals of the projects, reasoning, and direction to get there. A few of these goals are to fight apathy, counter neoliberal individualism, and build communal thinking. In order to enact these goals, we have to see what is in the way of achieving them, and see how each field offers paths through.

We will focus on one possible mindset of the individual student that is in the way in neoliberal society: one of political powerlessness; we will also offer some pedagogical

theories and strategies as a counter. There are many students who see themselves as powerless in the political process, unwilling to take the time to engage in the project of nation building, etc. FYW, as a discipline that seeks foster research skills, critical thinking, and academic identity can be a place to “combat” feelings of powerless individuality, fear, and loss of connection to the wider political community. Let’s take a step back and see some of the tough things students will be bringing into the classroom, and why it may be good to make FYW a staging ground to work through some of these feelings as opposed to running to another institution to solve other types of issues like public pedagogy generally asks of the student.

Going outside of the classroom is an important move in public pedagogy, but it shouldn’t be the only move. We should strive to fix the goals of the neoliberal classroom before we move out of it. Before moving on to talk about how we can reinvent the classroom to make it as communal as possible, let’s take a look at some of the arguments for moving outside of the classroom.

### **Going outside to Fight Individualism**

The move to bring students outside of the classroom has many purposes, ranging from building community/college partnerships (*Because We Live Here*, Goldblatt), justice oriented student work (*Tactics of Hope*, Matthieu), and service (*Writing and Community Engagement*, Deans et al.). For our particular purposes though, going outside of the classroom to break empathizing, individualizing, and anti-communal tendency in education is of the utmost importance. Some scholars have theorized that teachers should become aware that simply removing students from the classroom space has become beneficial because the classroom itself, has become a vehicle for training students

towards becoming cogs in a corporate wheel (Giroux). There are good reasons indeed to move students out of the neoliberal college classroom to other spaces, especially spaces that can give one exposure to non corporate civic happenings (*How the University Works*, Bosquet; Giroux, ; *Democracies to Come*, Riedner & Mahoney).

For many scholars, going outside of the classroom has become a way to break the cycle of individualized neoliberal classrooms that threaten civic community mindedness and civic community sentiment. Henry Giroux argues this very point saying, “the rise of neoliberalism should cause teachers to question the way corporations surreptitiously educate students into an individualized model that risks the tenets of democratic citizenship within our communities.” It is important to get students out of the classroom these days because the classroom has become a major factor in de-emphasizing community, togetherness, and building cutthroat capitalism (Giroux). To get students back into community thinking and community mindsets then, we need to get them out of that corporatized, individualized and consumerized classroom. This doesn’t need to be done by physically moving away from the classroom, but rather, by adjusting the tenor of the classroom itself.

It is important though, to move away from corporatized spaces, and to move towards ways of thinking, speaking, and acting that constitute the foundations of citizenship and civic agency. It is important to move away from how political elites set the parameters for debates, cause political agenda to be furthered, and drive public policy. Deliberative pedagogy can help teach students to battle consumerism and individualism, opening them to “a process through which a range of stakeholders come together to share ideas and perspectives and then make collective decisions that form the basis for public

action” (Deliberative Pedagogy, xix). But to help bring student stakeholders together to form collective decisions for public action, it is helpful to dig into what it takes to move beyond the idea of locale and to make in-class conversation a public space.

### **Fighting Individualism/Return to Space Argument: Everywhere is a “Town Hall”**

The argument that Giroux is making is very “place based.” He talks about a hard move in terms of shift from one locale to another (“the classroom” to “outside the classroom”). How about instead of shifting locales, we reinvent what the classroom space is supposed to and can do in this neoliberal market controlled age? Let’s attack it from the inside-out instead of calling it a failed endeavor. To this end, I argue in essence for turning the classroom into a town hall rather than asking students to go out to a town hall.

Deliberation and deliberative pedagogy can happen anywhere. It could be in a classroom, a local town hall meeting, or on global Facebook/Twitter. But that doesn’t mean I am arguing one way of thinking about democracy or civics is more right than the other. Understanding both going “public” in terms of changing locale, or “public” in terms of in-class community, and combining them/separating as needed in our own pedagogies and classrooms can have outcomes that build basic democracy. Only going public in a way which engages students in democratic communal participation plays a part in moving our world towards deliberative democracy. Moving students towards community building builds empathetic and compassionate understanding with people of difference. Overall, to move towards more connection, we must cut across and beyond political ideologies to form both new personal and communal civic identities.

Again, as a whole, many public pedagogy practices are ways to fight privatized neoliberal education models by moving students outside of the safety of the classroom towards unruly publics, while using the classroom as a processing center for unknown publics (Holmes, 2016/Giroux). I do agree with this space and place based approach, but the side I will be arguing for is not that we must necessarily leave the classroom in all scenarios in order to enlarge student sense of community, but that we can use the classroom to discuss publics of any kind in an open setting.

In other words, students may not have a sense of particular “worlds outside” in terms of having never attended a town hall meeting or a particular volunteer space, etc., but they don’t necessarily need that experience to have “public beliefs,” as there are many experiences students have that are, in a sense, “public.” For example, while I can and should ask my students to go to “public places” or “community places” where we normally think of community gatherings happening, or where some civic action is happening, like a soup kitchen or protest, we don’t really have to do that as teachers. What we can do is talk about, discuss, and (key word) deliberate about those already held beliefs that students have which affect their public sentiments before asking them to go to new spaces.

To do this we have to ask what can happen when students interact with each other and create messy publics in their classroom discussions and writings. These messy publics are where the differing (and similar ideas) of already known publics are put out on the table, critically investigated, and deliberated about in the classroom. The good thing is that the resolution of messy publics can happen before we introduce students to new spaces, or have space based pedagogy and assignments become a capstone to a



writing course. We can structure our classes around deliberation in this way, introducing students to the concepts of deliberative democracy as opposed to strictly public pedagogy. Students in this pedagogical framework may act in service but may never form consensus, clash openly with differing viewpoints, and build tolerance for competing beliefs, not just create tolerance and methods to serve different walks of life. In other words, as opposed to a whole semester of publics, we can stay in class and work with students to build critical deliberative skills and comfort with sharing one's inner most thoughts with the class before they move to new spaces.

This section and the dissertation as a whole then is arguing for a teaching environment that includes the skills of critical deliberation so that these public experiences for students are made all the more powerful because of the work they have done in the classroom. Although this prep work done to move help move students to the community argues some type of transfer, I think the other way works as a transfer argument too. Is it wrong to say that we can transfer the classroom to the public but not the public back to the classroom?

### **More reasons we need public pedagogies - the worth of every individual, not the market value of every individual**

Why do we need public pedagogies to begin with? One reason mentioned earlier was the fight against an individualist, corporatized system. This is a major part of the need for public pedagogies, but an offshoot of this is specifically how these individualizing classrooms diminish student knowledge of the empathy for differing viewpoints. An example of such a phenomenon occurred at Oberlin College in March 2013 where negative attention followed hate related incidents like racist, anti Semitic, and anti gay messages. The university responded with a desire to reiterate the values of

inclusion and respect/worth of every individual. Ashley Holmes argues such events are why we need public pedagogies, to teach students methods for questioning and addressing injustice, to communicate through our actions a sense of respect for individuals locally and the community beyond. Holmes' argument about teaching students to question and address injustice as well as communicate that respect is key to my argument because it is where public pedagogy and deliberative pedagogy intersect (Holmes, 2016).

Once we see how deliberation is a useful practice, it is important to understand what forces cause issues with deliberation, and what we can do as teachers of writing and rhetoric to fight against such forces in our classrooms. Riedner & Mahoney, in *Democracies to Come*, argue how market based, neoliberal literacies and frameworks create obedient workers and imposes a type of deliberation that that enforces rigid orientation, sometimes unknown to the deliberators in the system. According to Riedner and Mahoney, as a countermeasure to these neoliberal discourse shapers, "rhetorical action [can] intervene... in struggles between practices that seek to deepen and expand democratic deliberation and participation and those market-based literacies that seek to produce disciplined workers for the global market..."(*Democracies to Come*)

What does it mean to enact "a market-based literacy that seeks to produce disciplined workers?" Let's answer this question by diving into the mental space created by neoliberal ideology that is crushing student potential to self actualize in non market ways.

## Eyes of Deficiency

One of the major stumbling blocks of student agency is the sense they are inadequate or too weak to contribute to society. One student writes,

“I just think as of right now there is not much that I can offer... What I need to be doing is learning and figuring out what my role is and just figuring out what my views are because I’m not really sure of a lot of things. Besides voting, I think that is pretty much the only thing I can do now... It is kind of hard if you don’t have the money and you don’t have the power and the prestige to really get involved and to make a difference.” (Harriger and McMillan, 2007, 41)

In the above quote, from a 4 year study of students exposed to deliberation practices in college, we can see that while some students feel they have the “space” and “place” to vote once they hit 18, that feeling is suspect, because as this one particular student says, participating in the system requires a particular knowledge. But it is a knowledge that not only could take decades to learn if one takes the endeavor seriously, but is also deeply tied to power.

The feeling of being “less than” in terms of knowledge is just part of the student’s overall claim though — what seems to be their overall claim is that they live in a civic world where “average” civic knowledge is not enough. Part of that insecurity is age and knowledge acquired simply as a result of time on earth and subsequent experience, but it is also that what has been learned about being in the world doesn’t apply. In other words, *that knowledge gained, and the right to vote with said knowledge simply isn’t enough.* What makes someone enough in this system, according to the student, is not everyday, “regular” knowledge, but power. And by power, the student means “money.” Subsequently, the roundabout claim the student is making, knowingly or unknowingly, is that money equals knowledge: “it’s kind of hard if you don’t have the money or you don’t have the power to get involved.” Thinking that way about how you can contribute

to society is an interesting mental space to enter college in. How do these mental “spaces” get created for students when they enter college? And what civic “places” are created that students foresee themselves able to enter?

It is my belief that the student mental space of weakness and powerlessness, as well as the belief that “power = money” has in many ways been defined by law. Specifically, it is a law like Citizens United that affects the citizen consciousness which is able to be inhabited. It is not just Citizens United itself though, but all of the legal steps leading up to it that slowly allowed corporate “persons” and their wealth to not only have more and more “personhood,” but also the type of “personhood” which substitutes for knowledge that created powerless civic students. With each step towards the Citizens United finale, the more money a corporate “person” had, the more allowed they were able to act on the communal stage and “write” with money. Their ability to speak and write with money allows them to take up the communal “space” that everyday citizens would have been able to inhabit. Communally, corporate persons dominate, as their bigger and bigger bloated size push citizens like the student above who feels more and more like they can’t/shouldn’t participate, out of sphere of possibility of deeply contributing in a fundamental way, because they lack what these “giant persons” have.

In essence, the more person-like corporations are, the more rights they have. The more rights they have, the less rights regular, everyday people feel like they have in comparison. I think that’s what the student above is expressing when he says that it’s hard to do anything besides vote if he doesn’t have money or power. This feeling of it being hard to do anything but vote is one, in essence, occupying the space of the eyes of deficiency, which inevitably must lead to apathy and inaction on the part of citizens.

Apathy then reduces voter/political action -- it turns the individual towards the self because people feel less and less “good enough” and able, as they are out of practice, to act in the community and have less and less power to do so as they face the insurmountable amount of strength of corporate person institutions that can act in the space of “selves.” The neoliberal market wants this -- it wants powerful institutions that represent “the people” while slowly stripping away the rights that “liberalism” fought for people to have, until it may only be those institutions that have those rights and no longer the people.

In other words, neoliberal free market forces have invaded the political consciousness of many individuals like the student we just looked at, giving power to institutions and not people, and have also helped pit people against each other, all making it harder to work as a community. The only value “space” left to occupy seems to be the eyes of deficiency, seeing individuals with power and money as those with the power of choice as opposed to communities which represent populations.

This individualistic space blocks off connection, and makes it harder to bridge boundaries and work towards getting civic representation and power for communities instead of for individuals with power. When people don’t communicate with these principles in mind, society runs on seeing others as roadblocks to capital access -- something Tocqueville saw in America in the 1800’s (Tocqueville, Bevan, & Tocqueville 2003). Mainstream society makes others deficient, a means of capital access, or a potential market to manipulate. So where do our fundamental rights, like the right to “life, liberty, and happiness” go when such a state exists?

The right to “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” seems null and void in such a market based situation for people, or at least “real people,” not corporate people; nothing happens in a vacuum: economics, politics, and culture are all intertwined. Because we live in this capital-focused understanding of government which is deficient in multiple ways, we need to explore its effects and ways out, so that our rights to life, liberty, and happiness are no longer trampled on, and that students no longer need to wear the “eyes of deficiency” when seeking to attain those rights. Breaking the “eyes of deficiency” means creating the “eyes of empathy.”

Before we get to creating “the eyes of empathy” it must be noted how the “eyes of deficiency” color interactions in communities, raising one person or population over another based on their status on the free market, or their monetary and social capital. If students can’t feel comfortable contributing to the community unless they have sufficient money or power, it signals a floodgate of such trends possible around this free market lens. Tinged with this market type thinking then, many students most likely have been trained and propagandized (Chapter 4) into embodying certain moral judgments based on market value.

As communities are trained to access market judgment more than any other judgement , many can lose the ability to understand and build community with people of different ethnic statuses, cultural traditions, and belief systems, because as the student at the head of the section shows, power and money equal communal access beyond the symbolic citizen act of voting. Beyond voting, there are many things that contribute to one’s communal sensibility, the things they do to create their individual selves and help build their community. What they do religiously for example, is a great contributor, and

the right to one's religion to not be curtailed by the state is enshrined by the American constitution, but there are other ways American culture has to "shut down" that which it does not approve of -- ie: the market. The market-driven value of one's religion can be judged on the "free-market of ideas" and the "status" of the culture the gazer is initially looking from, for instance.

Market resources and the control of them as such is priority to communal participation — market resources can't be shared communally by real people, they have to be controlled and distributed by the mitigating institution (Chapter 4). The problem is that the one with the power and the money, the one who does the distribution is rarely gazed at through the "eyes of deficiency." In fact, as we see in Chapter 4, they are the ones setting up the view from those eyes. In this case, privilege now runs deep, and it seems natural and unquestionable. It's very possible that these structures are causing deeper and deeper divides, deeper "spacing apart." I hope the critical thinking skills and deep questioning/honesty practiced in deliberation can change that.

This view, with its lack of understanding of others, generally leads to moral categorizations, where the different is simply "morally bad." This occurs when different perspectives and moral codes are unable to be heard and seen. In this way, the ability to empathetically communicate with our neighbors is lost, and deliberation can be a skill which starts to open up pathways to this type of communal understanding.

In education, these ideas can only play out in reduced time spent building empathy, or if empathy is built, it can only be market empathy. The abilities to empathetically understand the experiences of others, as well as a lack of ability to

prefigure the consequence of society choices and imagine others' experiences before they happen.

Jennifer Clifton talks about this lack of communication and deliberative skill in our most recent American times, as well as how it affects our consciousness towards each other in “Embracing a Productive Rhetorical Pragmatism: Teaching Writing as Democratic Deliberation.” Clifton notes how we are at a point (and seemingly have been for a long time) of judging each other harshly because we really can't understand each other, how we are in a sense “occupying different spaces.” How we are so far apart that we don't know similarities between the spaces anymore, the divide of which deliberation sees to heal and integrate, or at least make said deep difference in occupied space comfortable and non-divisive again. She writes,

Our current points of stasis in American politics make clear: we are facing a deep crisis of imagination in public life. Our (in)ability to imagine the interests and experiences of others limits not only how we understand domestic and global citizenship but also how we enact that citizenship with others. In talk and in practice, the inability to take seriously the interests and experiences of others leads Americans – in English Language Arts classrooms and in public life – to cast those who disagree as deeply flawed in character – unpatriotic, ungodly, lazy, irresponsible, or criminal (62).

This deep crisis of imagination creates difference in occupied space and real “distance” from each other. In teaching, the crises of empathetic imagination helps deepen the trend of disconnection, creating systems where disconnection and the lack of emotions that stem from disconnection, such as seeing those who you are disconnected from, or disagree with, or don't understand, as “bad,” or as Clifton says: “deeply flawed in character.” And deeply flawed in character is just the tip of the iceberg in terms of characterizations of someone that breeds spatial disconnection psychically. Ungodly,



criminal, etc.:: these types of characterizations breed deep distance from people and can have disastrous personal, communal, and societal effects.

These characterizations of people lead more and more to deeper and deeper creations of “eyes of deficiency” type lenses, which cause people, like the student at the head of the section to most likely feel unable to participate in their communities. Coming from a point of stereotyping which has been internalized rather than being empathized with and understood must be at the heart of the inability for constructive political solutions in America. Take the immigration debate. If people are seen as criminals, distant, or threats because they are unheard or unknown, they are unwanted, and literally, they are desired to have “another space” outside of America. The recent ICE raids of 2018/19, which are forcing people of Latin descent out of America are a case and point of this theory being lived out in real time: that two types of people can’t occupy the same space

Political solutions may calm down the tension but political solutions alone won’t build the empathy required to build hateful divides. There are a plethora of examples to show the violence that occurs on a daily basis from social stigma, moralizing and stereotyping. In my own writing classrooms for example, I have had students write narratives about social justice issues in their lives in which market moralizations have affected their lived experience and created “eyes of deficiency.” These stories range in tenor from the impact of drug overdoses due to over prescribed pain pills, an effort led by the medical advertising family giant, the Sacklers, who controlled the flow and information given to patients about those drugs (Glazek, 2018), students who were afraid to show themselves wearing their hijab in public due to the violence towards Muslims in

the United States, and the need to retreat onto social media to create a “hijab-free” alter-ego, to the story of a young girl whose mineral rich natural water source in her home village in Mexico was eventually ruined by the privatization of it by water companies.

The above are just a few examples of the real, everyday impacts that happen to our students and our neighbors because of our market ideology and eyes of deficiency.

Jennifer Clifton puts it best when she writes,

As we’ve seen on the Senate floor, casting disagreement as morally wrong brings democratic deliberation to a screeching halt. More disturbing, the suicides of gay youth across the nation (Erdely) remind us that casting disagreement as immoral is a kind of annihilation that makes difference – and anyone who embodies difference – an enemy to be squashed (62).

After telling these stories though, there was no squashing in my classroom, rather, civic identity and empathy was built between classmates that I hope to show an example of in the next section.

### **In the Classroom - Deliberation in Action**

*“Through the sharing of information and knowledge, and careful listening to people’s personal narratives and perspectives, public deliberation can transform individuals understanding and grads of complex problems and allow them to see elements of an issue they had not considered before.”*

The above quote will be the guiding theme for the next few classroom examples, and I feel what has happened so far in my classroom is that writing about one’s story, sharing about one’s story, connecting one’s story to society, and then deliberating about the reasons, claims, and best ways to express the validity of that story have created in my students, so far, a wider understanding of the complexity of social issues. They have come to see that things are not so black and white, sometimes literally. Sometimes

students see parts of themselves in someone who they deemed completely different at first. Or at the very least, students can open up to a new angle, a new sideways glance at looking at a problem and a person — a new angle and glance that may affect all of their future conversations with people. Here is one example from a class in 2018 that gave such outcomes.

When speaking of deliberation in action in the classroom, it would be helpful to look at some examples to see this type of space and how it plays out. One of the most heated debates I had all semester in the Spring of 2018 illustrates the outcome of talking about deeply held private beliefs in a deliberative pedagogy setting. During a class free write that was an aid to narrative writing, we looked at a conversation with Yance Ford and clips of his documentary, *Strong Island*. *Strong Island* deals with the story of a black transgender director whose brother was murdered in cold blood by a white man yet did not receive justice legally.

One of the students, who I will call Aaron, was a young white male, a devout libertarian, pretty rough around the edges, and a bit awkward when it came to social manners and graces. While I would say about 90% of the students felt that the man who killed Yance's brother and the subsequent lack of justice for Yance's brother from the police was completely worthy of disgust and outrage, Aaron thought people should basically "just shut up" and "stop crying." He shared this belief publically on our class Blackboard discussion board during the writing portion and then during open discussion following the writing, which I had to moderate because 6 or 7 students, most of them black, like Yance and his brother, the other, latina, were outraged that Aaron couldn't see

the blatant injustice happening before him, and that he would even have the nerve to respond in such a way. Yance and his brother's pain was their pain.

The conversation got heated, with students leaving any sense of calm in their voices behind when talking with Aaron to express their outrage that he could hold this belief. Aaron held his ground and it seemed like he either could not understand their point of view, didn't want to see it, and most likely, felt as if he didn't need to see it. Aaron did not come around that day, or the next day, or the following week or month. In fact, on this particular issue, I don't know if he ever did. But something happened slowly in Aaron over the course of the semester. As we started work on our "conscious consumer" project mid semester — Aaron found he did have a "classroom communal" concern: he was deeply concerned with how he and his peers were so consumed by their phones and mobile devices that they were missing the beauty of the outside world.

The other students in class were supportive of his feeling and encouraged him to write about this issue. While doing this, Aaron realized connecting to this issue led him to see a problem that transcended color and cultural barriers. Aaron's peers helped him dive into these ideas further in draft response, peer review, and in class conversation to help express him express the concerns he had, while finding egalitarian solutions. As this process went on, Aaron started becoming friendlier with some of his peers and me as a teacher. I noticed him smiling more, and it seemed he had found common ground that transcended the borders that were erected within him, stopping his connection to others.

Whatever happened may not have been due to me, that earlier moment of deliberation, his peers expressing their raw views, etc. But what did happen was that over time, Aaron and his peers found a way to connect across difference. They all cultivated

open mindedness through repeated moments of deliberation that were sometimes raw and jagged edged in their honesty, but which eventually lead to a deeper place of helpful, forward moving community.

The example of Aaron and his classmates above are just one example of the benefits of open public deliberation that see the classroom as a productive space to build community. It showcases how this particular class didn't necessarily have to go outside to look at justice and injustice, different spaces of belief and action, etc. The students brought enough with them to class to share such that they didn't need to go out to bring something back. Working through Aaron's beliefs with his classmates and finding a productive space was... At that moment we were able to parse out what different views of justice and injustice were, why each person held their belief, if they should do anything differently, how they felt society operated, etc., and some of them changed and were able to find common connections with each other through the sharing of such belief, connecting each other's outside spaces together in this new classroom space.

It is important to give students the sense of being experts in their own experiences to allow for community building, deliberative moments to happen. Nancy Welch hints at this in *Living Room*, when she says that our field needs to “stand against constructions of expertise that have already dramatically narrowed the place of who is authorized to argue about pressing public concerns” (144). I think part of the reason my students got so heated in the deliberation surrounding “Strong Island” isn't just about how they saw injustice and justice that mirrored their prior experiences in life, but also the very fact that they were allowed to debate such pressing issues while were being intently listened to by each other and by their teacher.

An overwhelming majority of Americans and students may feel helpless against constructions of expertise when it comes to matters of public debate. They feel that yes they can vote, and yes they can fight on Twitter, or form groups dedicated to enacting justice, but in the end, they think, “does any of this really make a difference against dominant constructions of power?” I personally think that part of the raw energy of classroom public deliberation can help negate these feelings of weakness because in passionate deliberative moments, students are enacting justice by exposing their pain and forcing public interaction, with compassion, in spite of dominant power structures.

And while minds may not ultimately be changed, seeds have been planted and learning about deliberative practices, empathy, understanding, and formulating debate within different communities has occurred. The ultimate payout of justice may be slow (deliberative forums in a classroom won’t give access to the power a senator has to cast a vote for or against a bill), but students are, slowly, over deliberative time, seeing their peers change in manner and relationship to each other. In this sense, to deliberate is really the total opposite, and frankly, the enemy of individualism and privatization which seeks to divide people and keep people isolated.

### **Conclusion**

What this chapter has talked about were ways that we can use deliberation as a pedagogical strategy to build empathy, bridge divides, and erase difference, but it is very hard to do so when there is so much hate and polarization. Composition can apply many of these strategies, and without working on a theory of transfer, we can see them at work in conversation in the real world. Take the mother of Heather Heyer, Susan Bro,

describing her daughter's action and her deliberative pedagogical strategies to build divides before she was killed during the Charlottesville Unite the Right Rally in 2016.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Susan, did you think of Heather as an activist?

**SUSAN BRO:** She was a quiet activist. She was very passionate about her beliefs, but she was only passionate in small groups, in one-on-one conversations and in small family groups or on Facebook. That was her method of changing people's hearts and minds. And what she would do was what she was actually taped doing that day. She walked up to one of the girls as the neo-Nazis were leaving, a girl in a black helmet, and she said, "Talk to me about why you're here. Why do you feel this way? What made you want to come? Why do you hate people? Can you talk to me about it? Can you explain to me?" and, you know, tried to be gently pulling the girl out of her belief system to talk to her. All the girl would say to her was "No comment. No comment," because that's what they're trained to do. But that was Heather's method of converting people, was talking one on one. ("Mother of Heather Heyer, Killed 1 Year Ago: Everyone Needs to Pick Up the Baton & Stand Against Hate." *Democracy Now!*)

## CHAPTER 4 - Long Live The Free Market: The Post-Truth Left and Right's Way of Stifling Deliberation

### Chapter Overview

In this chapter I take up the political challenge posed by colleagues to make our writing courses “matter” through the use of social media. I argue that a pedagogy of deliberation is currently caught between two unhappy alternatives: first, a reactionary and nostalgic façade of deliberation posed by right wing think tanks; and secondly by a technocratic professoriate that sees social media as the new frontier for student agency. The majority of this chapter critiques the illusions of deliberation posed by technocratic solutions. I show that faculty who employ social media run the risk of exposing their student not to deliberative agency, but to a false mirage of deliberation. Social media both magnifies conflict rather than thoughtful reflection, and it harvests user data to build even further walls between users. (Note: there is a promised a critique of the Right that I have been unable to shoehorn in here due to chapter shaping concerns. See Appendix for said critique.)

### Introduction:

Charlottesville, Virginia, August 12th, 2017. I had been tracking hate crimes since the 2016 presidential election, and I could see that something was happening in this country. The Charlottesville rally was supposed to be about a Confederate monument, but anyone who was paying attention could see that it was about more than a single statue. It felt like a national reckoning around race was coming. And being here would help me understand it. I came here to ask questions, but as the day unraveled into chaos around me, one thing became clear: This was not a place to listen or understand; Charlottesville was a crime scene. (A.C. THOMPSON, (*Documenting Hate*))



What is leading to such a lack of ability to ask questions of those who differ, a lack of space where such questions can be asked, understood, and resolved? Is it, as the above, the Charlottesville rally of 2016 shows, that rage has just become too much and that our primal brains have taken over our empathic parts/ our parts that reason? And is the ground for this overtaking just the fact that the demographics in our country are changing so quickly that those who have held power for so long (whites) are just at this point in history (“Francis Fukuyama’s case against identity politics,” Ezra Klein), more volatile than ever on both sides? If so, it can’t just be the phenomenon itself that causes such volatility and hostility -- those emotions have to be put through filters to amplify their effects, or given a stage to stand on. This chapter seeks answers to questions such as: what are the most recent underlying causes for the volatility and hostility of emotions? What is it, in today’s society that causes such dehumanization and lack of empathy for “the other side?” Most importantly, what is at work to unravel the civic and social spaces around us into a day to day chaos that is used for ad revenue, political revenue, and social capital for the powerful? And finally, how are we, as composition scholars playing into this, and maybe, what can we do to fight against it?

This chapter hopes to answer the above questions, and will be divided into two sections, one which looks at how “the left” shapes discourse and stifles deliberation that could potentially ease the tension alluded to above, and one which looks at how forces from “the right” shape discourse and trap deliberation through traditional policy work. For the left, I will focus mainly on the companies out of Silicon Valley which have used their technology to shape how deliberation occurs on and off social platforms, which for all the positives of connecting people, do a lot of harm as well. This tech has now been

proven to narrow debate and people's viewpoints, turn users into unwilling fodder for advertisements at the expense of their privacy, consumerize debate and opinion, and use political power and might to reach more and more audiences while also using that same power and might to stifle potential opposition from ever reaching said audiences (Lanier, *Ten Arguments for Deleting Your Social Media Accounts Right Now*, Tristan Harris & Aza Raskin, "Your Undivided Attention" [Podcast], Siva Vaidhyanathan, *Anti-Social Media*, Douglas Rushkoff, *Team Human*).

For the Right, I will focus on large, long term American institutions like the Heritage Foundation and how the political lobbying might they wield stifles debate by changing what is acceptable in law, secretly moving politicians while regular citizen/voters generally have no idea this is the case, and how they deem a privatized, consumerized, and individual rhetoric as the only acceptable one. This leaves deliberation based compromise without room to have any say in the process, thus thwarting the idea that America is a true democracy. We'll see it's almost impossible to deliberate in a democratic vein because of the literal control such powers have over policy (13<sup>th</sup>, DuVernay). These powers could never "debate" with average wage earners and cultural minorities, as the powers that be intend to keep it hidden that the masses the only ones studied and proven to have any effect whatsoever on the political system (Ralph Nader, *Unstoppable & Breaking Through Power*).

In doing so, I will argue in the section looking at the Left and technology that those in the field of rhetoric and composition who want to use online writing for the sake of tech and keeping up with the Jones's, so to say, are potentially causing harm because they put student writing up for companies to steal and data-mine (Blackboard Privacy

Policy, Facebook Privacy Policy, Twitter, etc.). And if they do, they need to have a lengthy discussion and deliberation with their students about the privatization, data theft, and surveillance they will be submitting their students to. One can ask, if students will use these technologies at home anyway, what does it matter if they are using them in the writing classroom? To that I would say it is one thing for students to do things on their own time, but we as teachers of writing have a responsibility to educate, if not at the very least, discuss, with our students the dangers they open themselves up to every time they write or post anything on their phone, tablet, social media page, search engine, etc.

In the section looking at the right and right wing rhetorics, I will argue, that although there is much talk in rhetoric and composition about the privatized, individualized, and consumerized student, a new angle of conversation can open up regarding policy. When we look at the locus of national debate on issues such as the privatized student, we can see where the language is created that sets up what comes down from on high to education, for example (The 13th). Upon discussing this, we can talk about how to counter such strains of language if one chooses. Again, students can make a decision to fall into the fold of the tech they use on their own time, but those working in rhetoric and composition have an obligation to let them know the effects of the writing technologies they will use will have on them, as well as how following opinions set from on high in these backroom deals are just a product of agenda setting by the powerful.

Going through these arguments will set the reader up to discuss how to implement deliberative pedagogies in class that was both online and in real time (hey it's a start). The discussion in this chapter will also set up the discussion for how, more generally,

deliberation is key for educators in composition and rhetoric to transmit the messages to students about what they're up against in today's world, specifically why on the ground deliberation free of powerful elite forces is necessary. Knowing about such forces allows for the counter strategies to be devised and utilized to fight against private manipulation of democratic education in higher education, and in FYW specifically. Finally, I argue that the knowledge gleaned in this chapter shows what steps have been taken to limit "free speech" and "freedom of liberty," as well as what steps, rhetorically, are necessary to reclaim such valuable ideals, if we as educators, and students are so inclined.

### **Section 1. - The Left and Tech: Tech Controlling the Limits of Deliberation**



Tech companies can in many ways control debate just as much as a traditional right-wing think tank can, under the guise of progress, innovation, and lifting up the world, but really, on the surface, and at core, as we will see, it is being used to stop deliberation through corporate, neoliberal control. We need to get our students thinking about this for a few reasons: 1) if they are the most "writerly generation" on the planet the writing they are doing, which is online and technological is not just done "for the sake of writing." This writerly generation, as we will see in this chapter, is being monitored and surveilled to such a deep extent, that everything they are putting online is being used against them for corporate interests (Andrews, *I Know Who You Are and I Saw What You Did: Social Networks and the Death of Privacy*, Zuboff, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism*).

What's worse is the technological corporate state is taking the things our writing students are putting online and in their computers to create a predictive mold of who they want to these students to be, with 80% prediction accuracy (also known as captology). We will see that the corporate technological predictive state is taking stock on the data that students are inputting in their devices and online, to kick back to them ads they are predicted and pushed to want. In this way, identity and choice are fundamentally being revised and re-authored. For the purpose of this dissertation, we're also going to consider how that "re-authored self" is also messing with community, and deliberation within communities.

Any time a student is consumerized in such a way, when each time they put most any information online, the result is a narrowing of their deliberative lenses by only showing them what FB or Google algorithms, for example predicting they will "want" to see. (Rushkoff, "Team Human," Episode 138, 4-7 mins roughly & Harris Your Undivided Attention Podcast, "Down the Rabbit Hole by Design") Further, deliberation can't happen fully in a place where, as Zuboff claims, "unilaterally claims human experience as free raw material for translation into behavioural data." (Zuboff, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism*) As behaviors are manipulated on both individual and societal scales, students are losing themselves and their ability to connect with each other on a deep, true level as anxiety builds and builds, of which manipulative tech is mainly to blame (Cal Newport, *Digital Minimalism*).

Our profession is tasked with engaging this new generation of writers as digital writing has come to be idolized and even at times somewhat religiousized through "digital rhetorics" and the "multimodal." We need to be aware as FYW instructors and

teachers that every time we ask students to deliberate with popular technologies such as Apple, Google, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc., there is a danger. This danger, again, is that student content is not just being shared, but consumerized. Student data is being analyzed through the tech in order to create, sell, or readjust products students will never see a dime for (Some argue for data remuneration for the use of such data, like Lanier in *Who Owns the Future*), or for more nefarious reasons, such as how the CIA took child voice data from a popular doll to build anti terrorism software without the parents knowing (Atlantic, Crazy/Genius Podcast, “Why Should We Care About Privacy”). With this in mind, if we ask students to participate on digital platforms we are actually in more ways than not, hurting them and helping these companies.

Because of this state of affairs, we FYW instructors are helping these companies in their advertising, tracking, and big data goals when we ask student writers to submit their writing to them and through them. When we ask for this submission from our students, we are asking them to become more deeply entrenched consumerized cogs in the corporate wheel. We are also, for the point of this dissertation, helping them lose the ability to really see and hear each other, which is what deliberative democracy asks for. In our profession, we need to understand and incorporate said knowledge into our teaching so the stakes are clear: student writers are submitting their bodies and minds to surveillance and monetization by the privatized NASDAQ state when they write online, simple as that.

The NASDAQ state makes unmitigated, “free” deliberation almost impossible by controlling the media that students see and respond to, limiting deliberative frameworks, and getting student writers and readers of all stripes to have their data used against them,

selling them more shit they don't need at prices they can't afford, all the while never giving them "real" opportunities to talk to those they disagree with to build political coalitions with.

### **Section 1 Argument 1 :**

Tech companies that generally lean "left" can in many ways control debate just as much as a traditional right wing think tank can, under the guise of progress, innovation, and lifting up the world. Really, on the surface, and at core, as we will see, big tech companies stop deliberation through corporate, neoliberal control in much the same way as any right wing think tank.

### **Deliberation by isolation and theft**

By stealing someone's personal preferences and activity, tech companies create a model of a person to deliver content back to. This causes the person to get "stuck" in a mold of themselves, created for them by the company to which they hand over their data. After stealing this data, the company delivers their stolen content back to them, betting on a newly created predictable "continued" model of self, a "continued" model of wants and needs (Rushkoff, Team Human, Harris, Your Undivided Attention). We will see this is a large project of getting the consumer to identify their community with "products" rather than with human beings (Rushkoff, Team Human Episode 128), which is the opposite of deliberation which asks people to communicate with other humans rather than with products. This anti-deliberative tendency is made all the worse by companies getting into the deep minds of people as they post their most personal thoughts online. Companies use this hijacked information to hook people to products that will end their frustrated feelings of disconnection, albeit temporarily (Rushkoff, "*Sad By Design*," Harris, "Should Have

Stayed In Vegas 1&2”). We’ll see this “hooked,” “addicted” person is just a corporate creation -- it’s an authoritarian way of person making, of putting someone into a deeper and deeper hole of ideology, wants, and even needs, in which one becomes so isolated in their “self” that it becomes harder to talk to others of different stripes (Harris, “Rock the Voter,” LA Times, “How Facebook Exploited Us All,”).

How does this work? Well, according to Rushkoff the internet is just a long outgrowth of the Marxist concept of alienation of labor. As people are disconnected from the means of production and no longer trade locally, there is a disconnection from the means of production, the products themselves, but also, other producers. Because of this disconnection and lack of connection between people that would result from separation, media has historically stood in to connect people to products that used to be bought and sold between community members. This buying and selling developed connections between people, as you could look at a seller in the eye and see the pride in their work, know a bond of trust that if something broke that was bought, there would be some discussion that would have to be had between community members. Instead of this human to human deliberative process based on trust, mass media has traditionally stepped in to help deliver “a relationship” to the anonymous, non communal product before it gets to one’s door. The problem with this is that mass media seems to have “hooked” people on the non-communal web of disconnection. As Rushkoff says,

“We needed a way to get people to buy these plain brown box goods instead of the goods they used to buy from their own neighbors. If Ron was the oat miller in my town and I used to buy all my oats from him now I’m supposed to buy it from a plain brown box that’s in the store. What do they do? Well, mass marketing. Put a Quaker on that box so I can have a relationship with the Quaker instead of that box. Actually, “Ron I don’t know what your religion is but Quakers seem good.” But in case I didn’t know who that Quaker was what did we get so I could have a pre-existing relationship with that Quaker when his box came to town? Mass



media. “When I was raised I thought mass media was so that Bing Crosby and Lucille Ball could reach the whole nation with their comedy and music. No, mass media was so that I would have a relationship with the brand mythology of that Quaker before it got here. Mass production disconnects the worker from the value they create. Mass marketing disconnects the producer from the consumer. Mass media disconnects the consumers from one another. (Rushkoff, Team Human, Episode 138 from 14:40)

As we can see, using the example of an “oat miller” that one used to buy product from, a relationship that would build not only a trading bond, but also a communal, peer to peer, eye to eye bond with another human being, and be part of a web of communal connection, all of a sudden, a random symbol - a Quaker - who some may care about and some may not, is placed on an anonymous box that comes to your door. Since the box is totally anonymous, and there is no deep web of connection tied to that (we will see it has something to do with the mammalian social neurotransmitter, oxytocin) product. Mass media steps in, showing on TV, newspapers, etc., a manufactured relationship, created by the advertising industry, to keep you buying anonymous brown boxes of oats from a central hub of power rather than from your neighbor Ron, as he loses his job and finds a new career, most likely in the advertising industry that promotes the same central oat industry that cost him his job. As Rushkoff beautifully says, “that’s the function of TV - alienate and isolate, so that we need products to stand in for those human relationships.” (Team Human, Episode 138)

When the internet’s popularity dawned in the 1990s, it seemed it would be a place that would fix this unequal relationship of power, as people would be able to connect to each other rather than to some central hub. But what happened was that the same extractive capital, disconnection economy model was applied to the internet. According to Rushkoff:

So then I thought, as a TV person who understood all this when the internet came, Yay! We're gonna reconnect. Now the screens instead of just giving us propaganda and isolating us, we're gonna reach through the screens and touch other people and connect. I'm gonna have conversations with kids in Israel and Tokyo and mean people in other places and we're all gonna kumbaya together. But no, instead what we did was we enacted the sort of Vanaver Bush through wired capitalist reification, we doubled down on extractive corporate capitalism. We started to call the internet an "attention economy." (Team Human, Episode 138)

Here we see that through the very ability to connect with people of different stripes, from different places, there was the hope that the initial lost connection, the repercussions of the Marxist alienation from labor, would be broken. But instead, what happened was that the channels of the internet that were supposed to build this connection were actually made into an economy, the "attention economy."

The attention economy is built on theft in many ways. First, it is the theft of one's "attention," "soul" even, away from local communities and towards the internet. The metric of the internet economy was "eyeball hours." The metric of the web, like a spider web, an increase "stickiness." Again, a stickiness that moves people away from connection with each other and towards some virtual world, nay, a virtual economy. Rushkoff says, a metric used to show how much people were getting stuck on the internet.

It's a really awful thing. An attention economy is measured - do you remember the metric for the attention economy was: eyeball hours. Isn't that spooky? How many hours does a human eyeball land on the screen? And the metric we were trying to increase was called "stickyness." So the web was like flypaper, so you get your eyes stuck on this thing. And we have a lab at Stanford, one of the most popular labs, it's called "captology." You're a computer scientist, a developer, you go through captology where you learn, "how do we take the algorithms from slot machines and embed them in people's newsfeeds in order to addict them to media?" Right, that's where the streak feature of Snapchat and all these things come from. (Rushkoff, Team Human, Episode 138 from 14:40)

And actually, we see that the internet isn't connection at all. The people who thought that were wrong. "Connection" is something the human body does with real people -- you can never truly connect on the internet. This is where theft comes in. The attention economy is based on the stealing of people's data - the "hooking" of people into loops where they are no longer just not seeing the person making oaths that used to be their neighbor, but now they can't get away from the anonymous brown box. In fact, made it worse with the use of mathematical algorithms designed to get people addicted to the very same mass media that helped the process of disconnecting people from their communities. Again, according to Rushkoff:

People mean to connect with one another through the internet, but you can't actually connect to other people through the internet. You cannot connect to other people. You can connect to other people's data, but not to other people. Even if you're using Skype, say, you're using Skype, when you're using Skype, when you talk to another person and they agree with you, agree with you, and you click off, your body doesn't know they agree with you. Why? Because no matter how good the resolution is you can't see their pupils are getting bigger or smaller as you speak, you can't see the micromotions of their head, the flushing of their face, you can't sync up your breathing so you can't establish rapport. So the mirror neurons never fire, the oxytocin doesn't go through your bloodstream, you hear the words "they agreed with you," but your body says, "but did they agree with me?" And then what happens? Do you know intrinsically, instinctually "oh that's because I'm using a digital medium that doesn't provide that fidelity? No! What you think instinctually is "I don't trust that person. They say they're agreeing with me but I don't really feel it." So we engender distrust. And then that feeds back into all the people who say, "oh well human beings are the problem and technology is the solution, because people can't be trusted." The more we use the stuff, the less we engage, the less rapport we have with other people, the more we want to make technologies that manipulate other people. (Team Human, Episode 138)

Here, we see that regardless of how much one wants to think that the internet is connective, it, by its very nature is the human opposite of connection, as it is cold and sterile, and does nothing to put into the bloodstream the chemicals that make people feel alive. Mirror neurons don't fire, connection isn't made, one can't "feel" another person,

regardless of how much resolution is in a screen. It's still a screen. And the more we use that screen, the worse and worse this disconnection becomes, which I believe, is the cause of the hyper-polarization of America today, the inability to not just understand an opponent, but a real distance, a flood of space between people, growing wider and wider with each minute they connect to each other online, where less socially connective oxytocin is made, and the more likely it is that one will see someone as other.

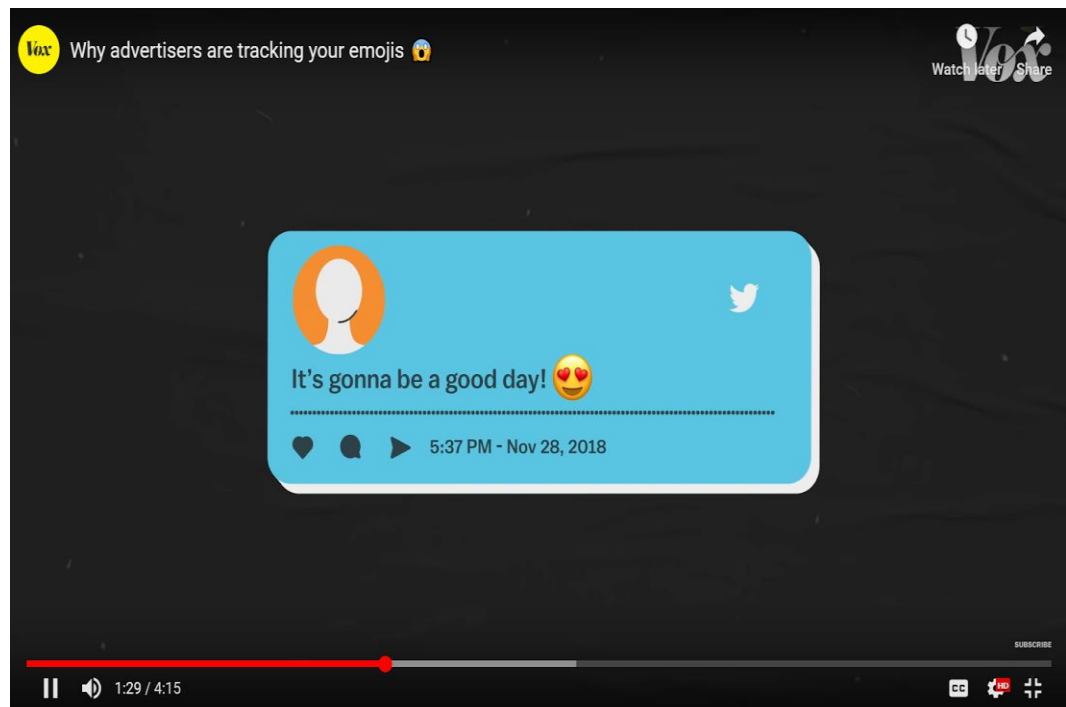
In a different world, this wouldn't have to happen. Face-to-face community would still be intact, oxytocin-based interactions would produce trust and we could all live "happily ever after." Disconnection wouldn't be the norm and people would be connected to each other and their labor. Mass media wouldn't need to stand in to "create relationships" for the Citizens United "corporate person" whose rights need to be protected and image created as something "real." Personal preferences could be shared with true oxytocin-based relationships and community rather than there need trackers to create content that connects people to products instead of people. Stealthily stolen data wouldn't be needed to further isolate people from one another by sending, not only broad range advertisements to groups of people about products like did in TV days, but people and the tools they create could be deliberated and valued in the communal landscape in town meetings and squares where the best choice of action could be decided upon.

This no longer seems to be possible though, as the disconnection strategies of mass media have only gotten worse as the time people spend on their devices has exponentially risen. It is no longer communal, group wide advertisements that are being created, where at least people are sharing some of the same experiences they could go talk about, "such as: "Oh hey! Did you all see that new Quaker oats commercial where

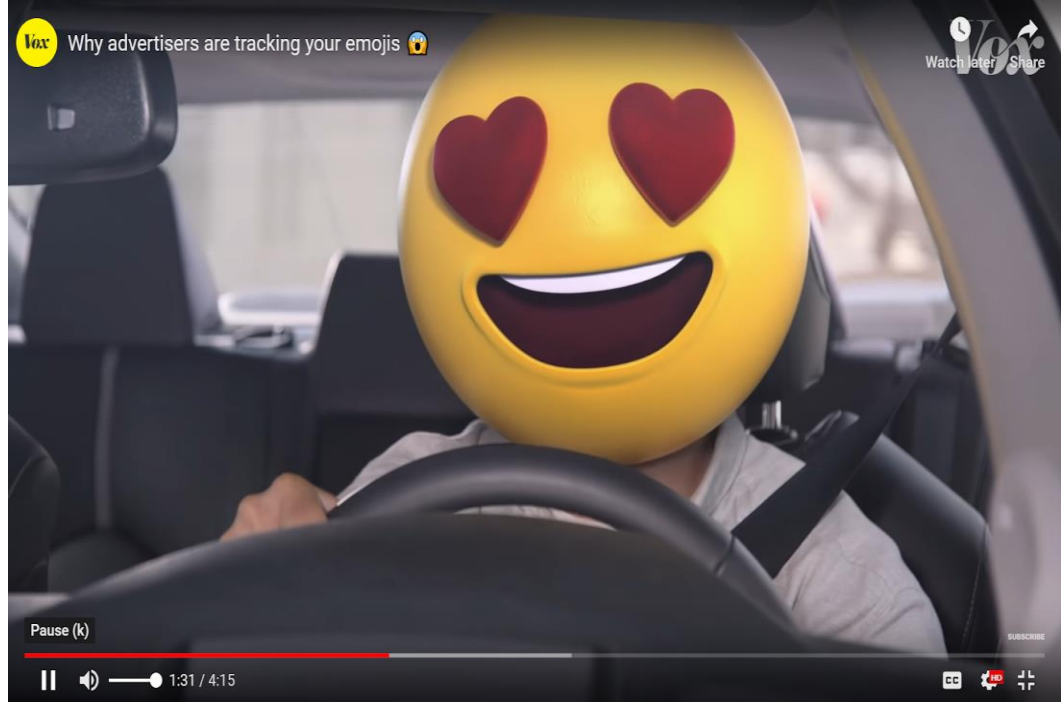
the guy is sporting the new hat? Cool huh?” Now what is happening is that extremely hyper personalized advertisements are being delivered straight to the viewer in a way of which they may never see what someone else sees. Shared experiences are dying, and connection to the product is tantamount, in this world.

As Vox has explained, companies like Toyota and many others are no longer just releasing one type of ad. They are releasing something like 83 different versions of a single advertisement on Twitter using different emoji faces. This difference of emoji faces to caters to individual users specifically, based on the use of their personal data on Twitter (Vox, “Why advertisers are tracking your emojis”).

For instance, if someone uses a happy face emoji in a Tweet, such as:



**They’ll end up seeing an advertisement later from Toyota that uses that emotion:**



We have to ask, as writing teachers, what does this mean for our students who write their lives on Twitter, Snapchat, Facebook, and Instagram? What writing do we ask them to do that companies will steal in an effort to get them further hooked on particular products all in the end destroying the communities they are a part of?

What I argue for is a different way forward for writing teachers. I argue for the classroom as a space to “un-wire” and get students to connect in person, talking about both the easy and difficult things, working them out face to face, even it is uncomfortable. But most importantly, I am asking them to “write” face to face relationships that build bonds of trust and release human hormones, rather than the cold unconnective space of the internet. I argue that this not only works, but it produces fantastic results of community and relationship building, as well as human qualities that counter attention economy isolation and relationship degradation such as empathy and compassion. I argue that this really should be the path forward for writing instructors, in

terms of “staying human” as opposed to engaging with digital tech, because of the very dystopian future such digital tech seems to clearly be creating in our lives,

I argue for the human take on the concern of the human, a movement away from “cold” measuring tools, because to me in many ways it signals what the internet is doing to human relationships. I ask the reader to step away from academic, scientific tradition and engage both the researcher and student as human. I try to show the value of this in the face to face talking and negotiation work that can be done in the deliberative space of the writing classroom, which counters the strain of technology induced isolation. In cases such as this, instead of the theft of personal preferences, students can choose and work through, as a human community with body language and felt emotion any issue that comes up. The internet can’t do this, and has seemingly made things worse. The internet can’t replicate what face to face deliberation can do, and in fact, the internet makes it worse, as Molly Crockett argues (Crockett, “Moral Outrage in the Digital Age”).

### **Digital Deliberation = Death of the Author Part 2**

In essence, the online forums most use to communicate today are predicated on this up for grabs, person making and shackling system; there could be another way. There could be a deliberative system which honors and respects the “free” person as well as the “free” community they are a part of. A way which honors the 20% of decisions captology says are open to change. A way which honors the unmanipulated self and community to choose. A way which honors the hyper local instead of through the NASDAQ federal. A way which allows the individual and their “felt,” “lived,” and connected community to choose, in these safer, unmanipulated spaces. But it seems that we can’t do this online, at least in it’s current state, because, as we have seen major tech companies have built

manipulation into their systems. Further, they are changing the very notion of authorship itself, and manipulating the “author’s” actions in the real world. All of this makes an ideal deliberation “virtually” impossible.

Facebook has been noted to manipulate as such, not only taking things from one “as author,” but adding to the author’s repertoire things of which they would never have written in the first place. In these cases, in which the author themselves never had in their mind to “write,” the things Facebook writes for them we can say that Facebook make’s one’s online profile an unwitting space for them to become a mouthpiece for advertising content without one’s consent. As this shows up on the Facebook feed, as we will see, it looks as if the person is authoring, yet Facebook is the “real author.” Such a case occurs specifically with Facebook promoting “related posts” as if the person themselves wrote it, while they never did. As Anthony Wing Kosner writes in *Forbes*, “Facebook is now recycling users' Likes and using them to promote "Related Posts" in the news feeds of the user's friends. And one more thing, the users themselves have possibly never seen the story, liked the story or even know that it is being promoted in their name.” (Kosner, “Facebook Is Recycling Your Likes To Promote Stories You’ve Never Seen To All Your Friends.”) So what is happening is that Facebook takes ones’ likes and shows them in posts to friends, so that friends are “reading” the authorship of the person, yet they never did to begin with. What is even worse about this is that although Kosner writes that Facebook is recycling likes, many of the related-post things have not been liked by users in the past, so Facebook is actually creating a story about the person (Condon, “Craig Condon on Facebook’s Misleading ‘Related Stories’”).



Below, you will see an example of this, of how it works. The blue highlighted text is the “related post” of which the person owning the profile never posted to begin with, and further, in this case, never even “liked” the material of which Facebook chose to post, or “author” on their behalf.

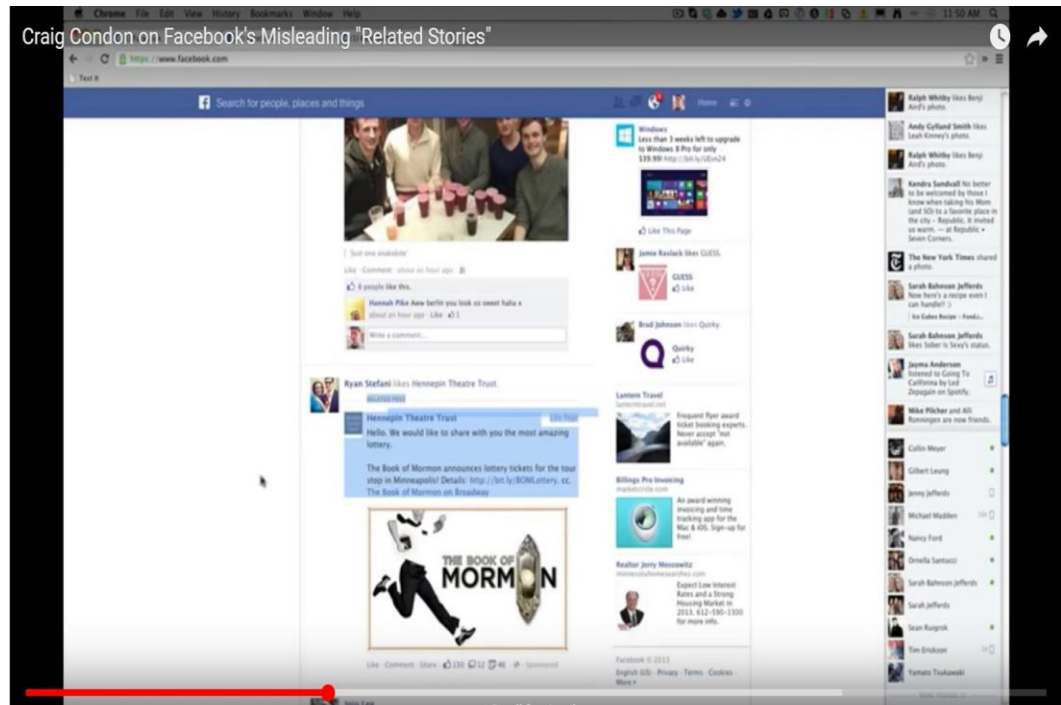


Image taken from “Craig Condon on Facebook's Misleading "Related Stories"”

To the untrained and incautious eye, it looks very much like the related post is coming from Ryan. The small text of “related post” allows the liked profile to post an advertisement for another piece of content, all without Ryan’s consent. Not only is this an example of the Facebook system using captology, consumerizing the individual to become a mouthpiece for market concerns, to spread the “interest” in something to consume, but it is further killing the notion of authorship.

In the above case, we see the death of authorship: Ryan, the unwilling poster/author, has become a neoliberal mouthpiece for “Book of Mormon,” something which Condon notes Ryan didn’t even “like” on his page. This turns the isolation of the

person that we looked at in the previous section on its head. Someone like Ryan is further disconnected from his community because they are seeing a version of him that he doesn't even know or want to exist. How is he supposed to connect with his "real-life" peers and talk about liking Book of Mormon when he holds no such value in himself? This is another killer of deliberation and something we have to make our students aware of as a possibility of "their writing."

In a weird way, what we can also see from the above is that Ryan has lost a connection to himself. This is an alienation of the alienation. As we saw before, the online medium serves to disconnect someone like Ryan from his peers. Now what is happening is that Ryan, and his presence online, is being used against him to disconnect from his very own identity. Imagine what this does to deliberation: how can one connect to the wider community when one's personal identity and preferences are being toyed with in such a way?

One may argue that none of this should matter, as the only value that exists is of the market. Ryan's connection to his community doesn't really matter unless it produces some sort of good that can be traded on the market (which is exactly what the above example seems to be doing to Ryan's "being"). In such a case, where someone has become a free, unremunerated advertisement to friends (in this case, for the Book of Mormon, people like Jaron Lanier argue that since Ryan just acted as an old time person holding a billboard, he should be getting paid (Lanier, *Who Owns The Future*). But this isn't all humanity is about. We have to widen our ethical framework here to see the horror inherent in one doing unwitting work for a company that disconnects them from

their peers and themselves, and having their very identity, the self they present to the world, authored by the NASDAQ state.

Just how deep do such “re-authoring,” disconnecting problems go though? How is that tied to the market? And how does the pervasiveness of the attention, market economy affect the deliberation that could be happening in our writing classes and in our communities? The problems go deep. They are so entrenched in our lives, the way people are hooked to the internet and the amount of time spent on it, as well as the personal information offered, that we can simply say the digital economy and digital life generally works this way, in this anti communal, anti deliberative, and dare I say, “anti-life” way.

The internet, as it stands today, is really a place where any communication someone has is unwittingly offered up “for the market” not, as Facebook says in their mission statement, “to bring the world closer together.” (Techcrunch, “Facebook changes mission statement to ‘bring the world closer together.’”), but rather, to split them apart and have capital based products try and fill the hole. And products can’t fill the hole, the internet can’t fill the hole of human connection and community, because as we have seen above, it is impossible to connect to other human beings on the internet.

Sites like Facebook make this all the worse as they re-engineer both authorship and identity. Sites like Facebook show, to me anyway, the final stage or plateau of consumer driven America. Consumer driven society has re-authored the self, and destroyed the community of which that self was a part.

How? Let’s dive a bit deeper into the attention economy and what our writing, our student writing, done on the internet, is actually used for. What we see is that all data freely given up to media sites, such as relationship status, or favorite books, all becomes

part of the larger web of “targeted ads,” targeted ads which work to not strengthen community again, but to get people hooked on products that seek to take the part of community. Later, we will see that such an attention economy is also affecting the very brain the human works. As Lori Andrews writes in “Facebook is Using You” (New York Times),

Facebook makes money by selling ad space to companies that want to reach us. Advertisers choose key words or details — like relationship status, location, activities, favorite books and employment — and then Facebook runs the ads for the targeted subset of its 845 million users. If you indicate that you like cupcakes, live in a certain neighborhood and have invited friends over, expect an ad from a nearby bakery to appear on your page. The magnitude of online information Facebook has available about each of us for targeted marketing is stunning. In Europe, laws give people the right to know what data companies have about them, but that is not the case in the United States.

So here we see how Facebook generally take things from users, their most personal details, secretively, in order to fan the flame of desire in the user for a product and create “demand” and create capital for big player advertisers.

The most innocent desire to share with friends and family, online, that you like cupcakes will inevitably, as strange as it sounds, be used against you. In the old days, if someone said to a family member, “I like cupcakes,” that might may result in said person getting a cupcake for a birthday or special occasion. It never meant what it means now: that one’s written information, harmlessly uttered to “stay connected” and truthful to friends, will be used against them to create an unnatural desire, a forcing, through advertising, “leading one to a cupcake.” In essence, we can say that anything written on any website is up for grabs in this way. Any data entered is kicked back to the writer to fan the flames for the advertising industry while most internet consumer/writers are not

privity to what is happening: that the inner workings of the back end technology is meant to manipulate desires.

Again, this is the both the self and the community re-authored. What we can come to notice is who such authoring is done by and how it is done by. The corporate state controls the media one sees, which changes the relationship to the objects/products one engages with, as well as one's ability to "deliberate" with all of the above, all via theft; Americans don't have the same protection as Europe who have a legal right to know where and how their data is being used.

This goes way beyond social media though - this problem is embedded in the highest levels of internet technology. It's Google as well that is contributing to this "re-authoring" of the individual through the manipulation of desires by theft of personal content. Google's revenue what more than 10 times that what Facebook made, and all of it was done with "cookies or other tracking mechanisms" (NYT, "Facebook is Using You") that are embedded in people's devices and browsers, just going to show that the architecture of the internet is made to be this way. Andrews writes further on this,

Facebook made \$3.2 billion in advertising revenue last year, 85 percent of its total revenue. Yet Facebook's inventory of data and its revenue from advertising are small potatoes compared to some others. Google took in more than 10 times as much, with an estimated \$36.5 billion in advertising revenue in 2011, by analyzing what people sent over Gmail and what they searched on the Web, and then using that data to sell ads. Hundreds of other companies have also staked claims on people's online data by depositing software called cookies or other tracking mechanisms on people's computers and in their browsers. If you've mentioned anxiety in an e-mail, done a Google search for "stress" or started using an online medical diary that lets you monitor your mood, expect ads for medications and services to treat your anxiety. (New York Times, "Facebook is Using You")

If we take the above information, which shows just much money is made off of the "writing" done on the internet, we can see how unjust this all is. People's emails aren't

safe, Google searches aren't safe, as shown above, as they will be used against you to move you towards product, deeper into the net, and away from community.

I say this full well knowing I am writing this dissertation in Google docs, but there is a culture in academia which values such writing. There is an amazement at the collaborative potential of Docs, but without counterbalancing that with the hidden back end of the technology. I wish I could write differently, by hand even, but it would take more time, and academia has "deadlines" that need to be met where such writing is out of fashion, and out of step with the demands of the intellectual market. So I am writing in this program, knowing full well that Google is learning about my mind, deeper than anyone I know personally -- and using that information to make me more of the person Google's advertising partners want me to be.

To close, we can say that most people can't see the above theft happening because law doesn't require it be explained to people. What should happen to these companies? Imagine a scenario of a similar situation happening person to person, imagine the above scenario playing out in human day to day relations to think about the question of justice here. If someone took stuff (aka "stole") from a friend, or let's say even, a mentor they trust, that's bad enough. This action would in most cases ruin a friendship, and stifle further ability to come together and communicate, let alone deliberate and discuss best ways to move forward past difficult personal and communal problems. But than image a scenario in which that initial theft was compounded not just by selling that stuff for a profit, but selling the *info about what that person liked*, selling parts of that person's personal identity, to make them "change" to fit the mold of the person sold to. As we can see, this is basically what Facebook is doing, which stifles any true deliberative process

because first things are based on manipulation and a lack of trust, and how can a healthy, honest direction forward for the person or community develop from a ground of things which so lacks integrity?

While some may say the no integrity, theft based, communicative business model is just some strange, chance outgrowth of company policy, I disagree. I have been arguing above that the internet was built this way, and I want to go deeper into that notion, as it has been noted that the core business model of Facebook was made this way, to be exploitative. This very fact is what we have to keep in mind as writing teachers asking our students to write online. But we need to know first, the background of such technologies and the way many tech insiders are responding themselves: by getting off tech. Once we know this, we have to ask if we also want our writing students to do the same.

To begin, we can look at the way tech was built to be manipulative, and for what purpose. We will see that Facebook founders looked at the exploitation of human social vulnerability to keep them engaged with the technology in order to collect more data to make more ad revenue. While ad based revenue is the way most of American society works, we have to keep in mind that many other communicative situations don't lead to the buying or adopting of products. Values may be shared, problems may be shared and taken on, things may be weighed, but there is no inherent need in the communicative sphere for a "product" to be the end goal, especially built off of the exploitation of human sociality. Olivia Solon offers us insight into this by reiterating the words of Sean Parker, one of the founders of Facebook's views on what Facebook does, how it keeps people addicted to feed into the advertising by theft loop. Solon writes,

He explained that when Facebook was being developed the objective was: “How do we consume as much of your time and conscious attention as possible?” It was this mindset that led to the creation of features such as the “like” button that would give users “a little dopamine hit” to encourage them to upload more content.

“It’s a social-validation feedback loop ... exactly the kind of thing that a hacker like myself would come up with, because you’re exploiting a vulnerability in human psychology.” (The Guardian, “Ex-Facebook president Sean Parker: site made to exploit human 'vulnerability'”).

If we connect this information about social validation feedback loops to the Rushkoff-like argument from above, we can see how the internet “product” is now almost fully standing in for human relationships. No longer are we creating a connection to a Quaker on a box instead of your neighbor through mass advertising campaigns, but we have stepped beyond that to the point where we don’t need any mass advertising campaigns to keep you separated. The like button does that, stepping in for “lived community” and pushing one to continue to consume more media, and deepen the attention economy in a loop like fashion.

So while we see here the mechanism for keeping people on device, the dopamine hits of “likes” that keep people engaged in the social/dopamine feedback loop, we also have to ask what the telos of this system is. It’s as I’ve been talking about, to manipulate behavior, getting people to like things, to create more data for companies to use against the individual. Developer Justin Rosenstein is a techie who sees a “smartphone dystopia” which seems to be the telos, the “ever expansive market” of the internet. Rosenstein, as a techie and developer, sees the internet as theft model as something to get away from at all costs, removing himself from any and all social media sites. I would argue, this is the model writing instructors should follow when engaging with their students about online writing, avoiding the internet as theft based model the internet is built on. Paul Lewis writes on Rosenstein’s decision to get away from the attention economy,



A decade after he stayed up all night coding a prototype of what was then called an “awesome” button, Rosenstein belongs to a small but growing band of Silicon Valley heretics who complain about the rise of the so-called “attention economy”: an internet shaped around the demands of an advertising economy. (Lewis, “Our minds can be hijacked’: the tech insiders who fear a smartphone dystopia”)

What is strange is that we see this advertising by theft model as creating a feedback loop, a continual pressure on the individual to stay on the app, or to keep engaging in certain thought patterns or activities. With this, comes the notion of “hacking,” or “hijacking” the mind, as the article cited above is named for. This is a consequence of the data theft which is kicked back to the individual to give them the option of choice with 80% captological accuracy of person creation. In other words, the advertising revenue based decision to steal data in order to direct action, in a Skinner-behaviorist sort of way, creates a “hackable mind. We can see this language about “hacking” the mind in the words of Tristan Harris, former Google Design Ethicist:

“All of us are jacked into this system,” he said. “All of our minds can be hijacked. Our choices are not as free as we think they are.” (The Guardian, 'Our minds can be hijacked': the tech insiders who fear a smartphone dystopia”)

Yuval Harari has also put it as such:

“Now, people—some people—corporations, governments are gaming the technology to hack human beings. Maybe the most important fact about living in the 21st century is that we are now hackable animals.” (Wired, “When Tech Knows You Better Than Yourself.”)

Even Arthur Brooks, president of the American Enterprise Institute, someone not in the tech community has gotten in on the language. When talking to Paul Zak, a neuroeconomist, who looks at the ability of oxytocin developed through storytelling to get people to take action (in this case, take action by donating to St. Jude children’s hospital). Zak notes that his methods are based on the 80% captology framework,

Arthur Brooks: “Paul why is it so hard to get people to care about something, and what’s the hack? How does storytelling make it easier to get people interested in something, to care about something they might not necessarily care about?”  
Paul Zak: I’m all about that hack. So our brains consume about 20 percent of our calories, it is a very expensive organ to run, and it modulates that high energy overhead by idling whenever possible. So the last thing my brain wants to do is engage with anything that will take metabolic resources away. Looking at data, listening to you talk, so I’ve gotta break through that inertia, and I do that at human scale, with real emotion, with passion, with conflict, with something that we can’t avoid looking at because as social creatures we learn from each other all the time (Arthur Brooks Show, “Tell Me A Story”)

In this case, it is clear that someone like Paul Zak’s research is based on “gaming the system,” creating hacks that can increase advertisers creating stories to be spread so that more oxytocin is created and more action taken by the “feeling” of connectedness. Again - it’s a hack.

Funnily enough, I recently had looked at this talk with my students, in the Fall of 2019, and discussed with them afterwards how emotional advertisements just don’t work on them anymore. They spoke of how the emotion is “so powerful” and there are “so many” of these advertisements, that no one is really called to action.. In other words, the market for empathetic stories has been oversaturated, and the knowledge of the hack, the manipulation of oxytocin in the brain, creating emotion and passion, just doesn’t work anymore. Funny enough, my students mentioned that if it was someone they knew personally who was struggling and came to them with an emotional story, they would go out and help, which seems to work just a tiny bit towards proving Rushkoff’s theory about disconnection and the internet, and possibly, a way to think about unhacking our students off of the manipulative “metric of eyeball hours” web.

How can there possibly be healthy deliberation in a forum that is meant to be exploitative in the above ways? Does deliberation include hacking? Of spy-based theft, thought control, and manipulation? I would argue that no, it doesn’t. Deliberation doesn’t

seek out to exploit human vulnerability but rather build on any and all human strengths. The platforms we have been looking at, like Facebook are the opposite, and some of the most public examples of this antithesis.

As of the writing of this chapter, is an example of Facebook's core exploitative principles in allowing app developers to work with their platform and manipulate human behavior. Again, deliberation is not meant to manipulate, but rather bring together and talk, not secretly persuade under the radar of rational knowing. The example of Cambridge Analytica, which stole data for "psychological warfare" for the Trump campaign (The Guardian, "The Cambridge Analytica Files") shows this manipulation in action:

Facebook encouraged app developers "to get maximal access to FB to personal data and activity, not just from people who volunteered to be watched from these app developers, but all of their friends, which no one understood except Facebook themselves and the application developers... this was basic Facebook policy... this line was lost in the storm over Cambridge Analytica" (Dem Now 8-1-18 around 17 mins)

So, what Facebook does is change the public sphere and the deliberative social media sphere by hooking you in with dopamine pulls (Harris, "Your Undivided Attention," & Guardian "Ex President Sean Parker...") and then feeds people certain news to make them more and more of a particular person with a particular mind (Guardian, "The Cambridge Analytica Files," LA Times "How Facebook Exploited us All"). Because no one understands what is going on behind the scenes except the app developers, people using the website just see the worlds according to the newsfeed, and the lens they see on the world narrows, which eventually hurts the ability to talk to people that differ from them and deliberate and build community healthily. One could even say this has been an anti-communal process long in the making as far back as August 4th

1987, when the Reaganites repealed the Fairness doctrine requiring two sides to be shown in a debate on the public airwaves (New York Times, “F.C.C. VOTES DOWN FAIRNESS DOCTRINE IN A 4-0 DECISION,” & Washington Monthly “How the Repeal of the Fairness Doctrine Gave Us Donald Trump.”) Deliberation, on the other hand, asks for all sides to be heard, listened to, respected, and understood. Facebook’s strategy of manipulation and corporate propaganda on the other hand take the repeal of the Fairness doctrine to a whole new level, only allowing app developers to know that they are sending citizens one sided stories and targeted news.

Basically, in order to turn citizens into “digital serfs” or big data commodities (Lanier, *Who Owns the Future*, etc.) a site like Facebook changes and hurts the public, deliberative sphere. This is especially important since the public, deliberative square has for all intents and purposes migrated to social platforms as opposed to face to face interactions, which is having horrible results for the psyche of the individual in terms of anxiety, depression, etc. (Cal Newport, *Digital Minimalism*). Sites such as Facebook harvest your data to reinforce your beliefs and hook you in, and in essence you see a “reflection of yourself.” These algorithms reflect things you already want, and keep you, seeing “you.” (Wired, “When Tech Knows You Better Than You Know Yourself”) This narrowing of your viewpoint is the antithesis to deliberation for two reasons.

First, you lose the ability to hear differing viewpoints, because as the algorithms predict what you want to hear, you lose the ability to hear and deal with things you don’t want to hear, as well as integrate them into your life. In the real world then, and on social media, as we can see from the fights people engage in on Twitter on any random day, you can’t converse with what you can’t see, hear or know. This must breed loneliness, and in

turn depression. And that's exactly what has come to be studied. ("No More FOMO: Limiting Social Media Decreases Loneliness and Depression")2.

Siva Vaidyanathan talks about weakening of our sense of humanity, of the lessening of our ability to deal with those who differ from us in a compassionate and respectful way when we try to learn about the world through social media platforms such as Facebook when talking to Amy Goodman on *Democracy Now*; Well you could, but you won't hear anything back, or at least anything accurate back,

This has a number of effects, but it definitely makes us less able to interact with those who differ from us in a humane way, in a respectful way, it's not the only contributor to this phenomenon but it certainly doesn't help and the more that we perform our politics and the more that we try to learn about the world through Facebook the more we are denying ourselves a broad lens, a broad vision, and that's a shame. (Democracy Now, 8-1-18, around 31:45)

Denying this broad lens, and seeing the shame in it for humanity in general is especially frightening when I ask my students at the beginning of the semester where they are getting their news from and most of them tell me that they get their news from Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, etc., all of which borrow the formula of manipulation and of exploiting human vulnerability, and which, in essence, seem to all be pushing us to be more and more isolated, alone, afraid, and unable to communicate and in the most literal sense, "be with" other people in the real world.

The trouble with these technologies is that once we get used to them, we become dependent on them. For myself, I know that sometimes when I've been interacting with someone through a social platform and then I actually "see" them in person, I find that I have a hard time navigating the experience. There are so many more senses at play, and I find that I struggle to conform to the "ego" I created on social media in front of the

person now, that the interaction becomes confusing, and I'd rather just be alone, behind a screen again, where things are easier.

It reminds me of the *Black Mirror* episode, "Arkangel," where the mother in the plot has a chip installed in her daughter that can "blur out" any cortisol spiking events. The daughter becomes unable to deal with these tough emotions and then finds the world without the blurring to be very difficult to cope with. My sense is that these social media technologies will irrevocably damage the human psyche to the point that, when we truly *need* to interact without them, at whatever point that is, for whatever scenario, we will find ourselves truly handicapped. It would be like trying to communicate or work in groups without the tool of common language at our disposal.

Now, like in Arkangel, the daughter does get used to the world without the blurring eventually, but not everything is blurred. Imagine if all human social interaction is put through these filters described above, if every deliberation at some point is mitigated through these technologies that exploit human weaknesses? What will we become?

### **Maximizing Engagement and Warp the Deliberative Sphere: Keep You On but Keep You in Hate**

In terms of exploiting human weakness, we have to also ask what emotions Facebook and other sites use to pull us in, as we see not only what type of consumer and voting citizen these platforms can make us become, but also what type of emotional beings Facebook and others can make us become; we can also ask what type of deliberative emotional sphere these sites create. Facebook and other social media platforms work by not only stifling the people or ideas one comes across and engages with, but also by employing strategies to maximize "time on device," which exploits

human emotional “weaknesses” through manipulation, as well as weaken the deliberative sphere while doing so.

The main goal of these platforms is to keep one’s attention (Newport, *Digital Minimalism*, Harris & Raskin, “Your Undivided Attention”). As the services are free, those hosting the service want people on longer and longer to collect more and more data from people in order to sell them more and more things, as well as create more “manageable,” predictable people (Rushkoff, “You Are Not Facebook’s Customer”). One of the ways to keep people on these sites longer is to, as we looked at Sean Parker saying above, to “exploit,” and some of this exploitation comes down to human emotion and the desire to fit in (Harris, “Social Media’s Dark Side: How Facebook and Snapchat Try to Steal Our Self-Worth”).

Again, we can see that in the manner expressed by Harris here, that communication is being altered and funneled through these manipulative algorithms, which would in essence affect and communal decision making and deliberation. Some may say that these technologies are just speeding up the process of who someone would eventually become faster and that we are “getting out of the way” the process of a person “becoming who they are,” a person that would eventually enter the deliberative forum and discuss their ideas with the community, but taking aside the fact that the deliberative community and forum itself is skewed, we have to also see that this person making is doing something to the human “that would have been,” without the nature of these deep addictive, manipulative mechanisms at play.

What’s worse is, we can track how the manner of this exploitation of the human psyche and emotion seems to have just been building *as an academic study* employed in

the means discussed above, with the most current expression of it being the vitriol we can see on social media forums today. To begin, we can choose the starting point of Edward Bernays, Sigmund Freud's nephew, who created the Public Relations industry (a euphemism for propaganda). Tracing Bernays' ideas to the present time is useful because they have been distilled into the technologies we use today. Tristan Harris, who I have been citing and talking about, a former Google Design Ethicist, studied at Stanford's persuasive technology lab at Stanford read Bernays as a primer to think about creating the technology we are seeing to be so manipulative today, and that many writing instructors are asking their students to partake in, or to bring to the classroom.

The history of this begins with Edward Bernays, who is credited with exploiting the human vulnerability of emotion such as "want of status" or "want to fit in" for lack of a better term, by helping women "earn the right" to smoke, after being paid like Lucky Strike cigarettes. After payment, Bernays organized a group of "high society" women to stage a demonstration during a protest of the Suffrage movement claiming that the right to indulge in cigarettes, or "torches of freedom," should be part of the women's rights movement in and of itself. Bernays also manipulated people's vulnerable "appeal to authority" in having doctor recommendations making bacon and eggs the staple diet of America. This is similar to what we see today in toothpaste commercials: "9 out of 10 dentists agree [insert brand] is the best on market!"

Finally, Bernays is credited with securing United Fruit's "claim" to the banana plantations in Guatemala by stoking anti-communist war fervor among Americans, going so far as to create fake newspaper articles to build support for a coup that overthrew the worker uprising against United Fruit (Curtis, "Century of the Self"). Anyone buying



Chiquita bananas today is supporting Bernays' war fervor and propaganda techniques of the past.

What we see from the above is that human desires to fit in, take recommendations from authority, and follow the crowd are all vulnerable; Democracy itself and deliberation which asks the participants to show their true nature and creative character must ask whether the person they are bringing forth, the ideas they are bringing forth to the table has been manipulated in any way by an unjustifiable, unworthy source. I would say that a platform which delivers news and content based on the theft of your data and the turning of the person into a predictive, and we will see, emotionally vulnerable state, is unjustifiable and unworthy.

In these cases, we have to remember that deliberation, and I believe democracy ask that trust be earned and respect be put out there as people share themselves in the "deliberative forum" (as well as the deliberative forum earning the respect of the participants, which I start to try and argue for in Chapter 1). Regardless, participants, nay, citizens in both a democracy and in deliberation have to ask questions such as, "what is authority?" and "what type of authority deserves respect to be listened to?" in the spirit of the type of anarchism that Noam Chomsky has advocated, in which people need to question the legitimacy of institutions before blindly following the appeal to authority ("Chomsky explaining real anarchism," "Anarchism 1")

This is an issue again, of maximizing attention for advertising revenue on a social technology or app. But it is also clearly an issue from a deliberative standpoint because it stifles one's ability to be "in the marketplace of ideas" and be their own person. In the last chapter we talked about the "procedure of debate" and how to break out of that, to let

new voices “be heard” in the deliberative forum. Sure, new voices are able to be heard on social platforms, but deliberative theorists and those who are pro the right to free speech are also clearly against the use of what is “said” in open media being used to “shape” a person into a future person for the sake of advertising revenue. That defeats the purpose of deliberative democracy, and is part of the issue when only looking at the “rational” thinker in deliberative procedure and losing the emotional and ethical considerations when bounding debate.

Facebook and other social technologies maximize attention by using whatever emotion is available in this data stealing. This shapes the future human and the deliberative forum of the social media platform for the ends of maximizing attention. Unfortunately, hateful, anti-communal bonding emotions are the most powerful for maximizing engagement. To start, we can look at how even a site like Twitter does this.

We can look at the example of BlackLivesMatter on Twitter, which was hijacked from a movement to build awareness around an important issue of justice to an emotional pack fight which on the back end of the technology was just an expression of the forum getting people to stay on the device longer, using human emotion as it’s kindling. Jaron Lanier argues #BLM something that raised important awareness of unarmed black people being killed, and not only being killed but law enforcement officers committing the act getting no punishment. Eventually though, that initial success at raising awareness is turned into an algorithm to maximize engagement by turning people into competing packs. These competing packs are then drawn to use more and more of Twitter, for what they see as deliberation and civics, but in reality, their deliberation is being framed by the

social media site or app solely for the purposes of revenue. (Lanier, “Jaron Lanier on the future of our digital lives”)

In terms of Facebook, we can see that issues become emotionally charged, and an echochamber of hate is created. According to Siva Vaidyanathan:

Facebook has the ability to get hijacked, because what it promotes mostly are items that generate strong emotions. What generates strong emotions? Well, content that is cute or lovely, like puppies and baby goats, but also content that is extreme, content that is angry, content that is hateful, content that feeds conspiracy theories. And this hateful, angry conspiracy theory collection doesn't just spread because people like it. In fact, it, more often than not, spreads because people have problems with it. If I were to post some wacky conspiracy theory on my Facebook page today, nine out of 10 of the comments that would follow it would be friends of mine arguing against me, telling me how stupid I was for posting this. The very act of commenting on that post amplifies its reach, puts it on more people's news feeds, makes it last longer, sit higher. Right? (Vaidhyathan, Democracy Now, 8-1-18)

When Vaidhyathan talks about items that generate strong emotion, he refers to both “cute” things, as well as hateful things, and hateful things can tend to feed conspiracy theories. Here, it is not the conspiracy theory itself that is the issue to me as a researcher, but the anger generated at seeing the conspiracy theory and the pushing out of the person from “the herd,” as well as the shame one engages with, shame that isolates people more and more into their isolatory, depressive bubble that we looked at early. This process is also very reminiscent of what the youth are told to do with thought criminals in 1984. In this case, “social media” as a term works great. It is not the media that is tasked anymore with setting the appropriate bounds of acceptable opinion, but rather, all of us, who do what Parson's son does to him at the end, one of Big Brother's real “faithful,” calling him out for thinking outside of the box, with a tinfoil hat, causing him shame, and in the end, sending him to room 101 (Orwell, 1984).

All of which, is the antithesis to the deliberative process. There is no shaming for people's opinions of knowledge. There is listening, respect, and hearing. There is the seeking of integration rather than of pushing one out into isolation. It seems Facebook is more modeled off of 1984 in many ways than of the model of deliberative democracy. This is again, why I would argue, that when we ask our writing students to participate on any of these platforms, even ones with cookies that eventually feed social media data in some tangential way, we are doing so at the risk of our students. Siva Vaidyanathan continues,

So the very act of arguing against the crazy amplifies the crazy. It's one of the reasons that Facebook is a terrible place to deliberate about the world. It's a really effective place if you want to motivate people toward all sorts of ends, like getting out to a rally. But it's terrible if you actually want to think and discuss and deliberate about the problems in the world. And what the world needs now more than anything are more opportunities to deliberate calmly and effectively and with real information. And Facebook is working completely against that goal (Vaidyanathan, Democracy Now, 8-1-18)

In the end, what we see here is that a site like Facebook is horrible to "deliberate about the world," but it is a good place to motivate people to do something like go out to a rally (albeit, from what we're learning from Cambridge Analytica and other examples, this motivation is probably coming from a propaganda based source). If Vaidyanathan is right, and "what the world needs now more than anything are more opportunities to deliberate calmly and effectively with real information," studies of deliberative theory are the best avenue for any communication scholar, and why I feel it is important that I be writing this study, and this chapter.

### **Why the emotional pulling of FB is anti deliberation: Moral Outrage**

According to research compiled and a literature review done by Molly Crockett of Yale University, moral outrage is "a powerful emotion that motivates people to shame

and punish wrongdoers.” This has gone on since human communities have been a thing but the issue with moral outrage is when it goes to it’s next level beyond simply punishing wrongdoing. Moral outrage as a human emotion can bring out a dark side by exacerbating conflict and dehumanizing others, way beyond simply building trust and cohesion in a community. According to Crockett, although moral outrage is as old as civilization itself, this type of exacerbated, dehumanizing moral outrage has gotten worse with the spread of digital and social media. With the rise of social media and extreme moral outrage, “viral shaming has cost companies millions, candidates elections, and individuals their careers overnight.” (Crockett, “Moral Outrage in the Digital Age”)

People are not only involved in strengthening community by witnessing moral outrage in its original intent, but they are participating in this exacerbated version so strongly as to be a regular occurrence and a thing that “just happens on the internet. In fact, it seems that this next level of moral outrage has become a “subgenre,” as Jodie Nicotra has said: “spontaneous public Internet shamings occur so regularly now that they’ve acquired near-subgenre status” (Nicotra, “Disgust, Distributed: Virtual Public Shaming as Epideictic Assemblage”)

Is it something about the internet that makes this exacerbated moral outrage worse online than in person? According to Crockett moral outrage is stimulated by a drawing of attention to moral norm violations which seem to happen much less in person than they do online. There must be something about the online platform that is encouraging people to do this. Crockett writes,

moral outrage is triggered by stimuli that call attention to moral norm violations [which] evoke a range of emotional and behavioural responses... People become outraged when they think a moral norm has been violated, while a study in the US and Canada suggests that encountering norm violations in person is relatively

rare: less than 5% of reported daily experiences involved directly witnessing or experiencing immoral acts, but the internet exposes us to a vast array of misdeeds... People are more likely to learn about immoral acts online. (Crockett, “Moral Outrage in the Digital Age”).

But as exacerbated, dehumanizing moral outrage spreads and has become a subculture, we have to ask again if it is something inherent in the social technologies that makes this worse, something that affects what type of deliberation happens online. We will come to see that it is, as we have been talking about, strong emotions that generate user activity, a business plan by those who own the deliberative forums to keep people engaged on them to generate ad revenue - it is a gaming and hacking of the human communicative system, more so than any other content. As Yuval Harari puts it “Now, people—some people—corporations, governments are gaming the technology to hack human beings. Maybe the most important fact about living in the 21st century is that we are now hackable animals.

Let’s take a look at how moral outrage has come to be exacerbated in this “gaming” and “hacking” way. On this, Crockett writes that what used to be news spreading, in person, through local social networks has metamorphosed into an algorithm that doesn’t seek to reinforce communal trust, but rather promote content that keeps people on device longer through the repetition of the most morally outraging forms of human behavior. She writes,

Before the internet existed, gossip served a purpose of spreading news about who could be trusted within local social networks . By this logic, information should be shared as a function of its ability to reinforce trust and cooperation within the community. But online platforms have profoundly changed the incentives of information sharing. Because they compete for our attention to generate advertising revenue, their algorithms promote content that is most likely to be shared, regardless of whether it benefits those who share it — or is even true.

Research on virality shows that people are more likely to share content that elicits moral emotions such as outrage. Because outrageous content generates more revenue through viral sharing, natural selection-like forces may favour 'supernormal' stimuli that trigger much stronger outrage responses than do transgressions we typically encounter in everyday life. Supporting this hypothesis, there is evidence that immoral acts encountered online incite stronger moral outrage than immoral acts encountered in person or via traditional forms of media. These observations suggest that digital media transforms moral outrage by changing both the nature and prevalence of the stimuli that trigger it (Crockett, "Moral Outrage in the Digital Age").

Before the internet, gossip was about spreading news about trust and credibility, which reinforced cooperation. Online platforms have changed this with their capitalist bent of revenue behind communal spread of information, as what tends to go viral are those things of which elicit moral emotions such as outrage. In effect, the deliberative, communicative, written sphere has become a sphere dominated by rage -- the system has been gamed to foster the emotion of which most forms of justice want to mitigate, or at least not let dominate.

Having this emotion of rage, or outrage, front and center affects the deliberative written and spoken sphere since any information people are getting is no longer to serve the bonds of what is best for the community in terms of trust, fairness, solution, and justice, but rather, as Crockett shows us, for the furthering of capital extraction from those using the digital deliberative platform (Facebook, Google, Twitter, etc.).

At this point we, as teachers of writing have to ask ourselves a few questions. We have to ask ourselves if we want our deliberations to happen through these gamed platforms online, or if we want any of what happens online to be taken into our day to day, as it is clearly building emotions in people that are difficult to resolve and sustain. And then what is our solution? Should we find alternative online platforms? Should we go back to having all writing done by hand? This is a discussion I think the field needs to

take up as we move forward with more awareness of how our discipline of composition is also being hacked by the platforms of which most writing is migrating to, and the societal pressures of which tell us to participate in.

Let's go a bit deeper into the issue of the platforms and the way they game/hack the system and why we should do something as composition teachers about this. I believe this is a time where, as Sarah Chinn writes in *Radical Teacher*, "scholars might transmit the tools of liberation to students, through new texts, new approaches, and new ways of reading." ("Moving without 'The Movement'") I believe there is a tool of liberation in explaining the systemic injustices in the mediums for text that we have come to hold on high, a new way of reading these media to offer our students, a new subtext to offer our field of what these mediums do for the very act of writing, the kairotic moments they create (ones of polarization and rage). We have to think hard, as a field, if we want our "medium of the future," to be gamed in such a way as to help generate ad revenue for a company that steals data from children to sell them ads for profit (New York Times, "Google Is Fined \$170 Million for Violating Children's Privacy on YouTube"), or if we want to say no to this unjust situation and help build a coalition for another "writing future" for our students and for higher learning in general.

Again, the facts are that information most likely to be shared is information that elicits "moral emotions such as outrage," as Crockett writes. This means that the "system" behind the medium, the algorithms which deliver content to people in the digital deliberative sphere, will be flooded with content that elicits this emotion. As a result, writing and communication, especially that which seeks to be "for the betterment of the community" will be "betterment for the community" through the lens of hacked



algorithms towards moral outrage for the revenue generating stream of the tech company, to just get more outraged, unable to talk with others with deliberative values, and thus more isolated and depressed as we looked at above. more alone, leading to a whole host of social problems, of which the polarization of our society is a major manifestation, as well as, I would say, things like mass shootings. Do those in writing and composition want their students writing for and with technologies that do this?

Further, as we saw earlier, companies seek to get you hooked increasing one's "time on device" We can look at this with how YouTube algorithms pull people into holes with outrageous content they didn't want:

these systems are kind of out of control and algorithms are kind of running where 2 billion people spend their time. Seventy percent of what people watch on YouTube is driven by recommendations from the algorithm. People think that what you're watching on YouTube is a choice. People are sitting there, they sit there, they think, and then they choose. But that's not true. Seventy percent of what people are watching is the recommended videos on the right hand side, which means 70 percent of 1.9 billion users, that's more than the number of followers of Islam, about the number followers of Christianity, of what they're looking at on YouTube for 60 minutes a day—that's the average time people spend on YouTube. So you got 60 minutes, and 70 percent is populated by a computer. The machine is out of control. Because if you thought 9/11 conspiracy theories were bad in English, try 9/11 conspiracies in Burmese and Sri Lanka and in Arabic. It's kind of a digital Frankenstein that's pulling on all these levers and steering people in all these different directions. (Wired, "When Tech Knows You Better than Yourself")

Further, these types of hackable human traits and the algorithms that exploit them are a threat to democracy, as Yuval Harari points out:

**NT:** And, Yuval, we got into this point by you saying that this scares you for democracy. And it makes you worry whether democracy can survive, or I believe you say the phrase you use in your book is: Democracy will become a puppet show. Explain that.

**YNH:** Yeah, I mean, if it doesn't adapt to these new realities, it will become just an emotional puppet show. If you go on with this illusion that human choice cannot be hacked, cannot be manipulated, and we can just trust it completely, and

this is the source of all authority, then very soon you end up with an emotional puppet show. (Wired, “When Technology Knows You Better than Yourself”)

So do we want to understand how these platforms game human choice when we write into them and spread content which is skewing human emotion, or do we want to understand that they cause an exponential rise in moral outrage, moral outrage that is now being shown to be much worse than what would have been produced face to face?

On that note, according to Crockett, there is evidence that the moral outrage generated online is even worse than what would have been generated face to face, so the exponential rise of the feelings of divisiveness, rage, disconnection, etc., is all being manufactured at an alarming rate that would not have been done so otherwise had there not have been this capital revenue generating stream built on the back of moral outrage to begin with.

While Crockett notes that there are benefits to moral outrage, such as holding bad actors to account, especially in how “online platforms put these tools in the hands of everyone, enabling traditionally disempowered groups to check the behaviour of more powerful interests [and] expressing outrage online may heighten people’s adherence to a cause by publicly committing themselves to action.” (“Moral Outrage in the Digital Age”) I agree with her overall in how these benefits are blunted by how “ideological segregation... prevents the targets of outrage from receiving messages that could induce them (and like-minded others) to change their behaviour.” It is the echo chamber we looked at above. It shows how the deliberative sphere is not functioning the way it could online-- that the echo chamber the online deliberative sphere functions in does not allow for communication across difference, but only within agreement. It is the “cloud-based” form of land segregation. So when people say that segregation never died, they are right,

and not only in the sense of looking at housing in places like Baltimore where you can see the same maps of redlining mapping onto where people live today, but also the online sphere, where systems of power are working to keep people ideologically separated and working against each other, all again for the powerful (who control the lanes of opinion and thought formation) to make revenue by allowing people to work within their online deliberative forum and connect, like America would say “come live in this land or town” and connect with each other and form a community, but then be segregated while doing it. It’s the same thing as these online forums, and it’s the reason why the deliberation falters and people feel they can’t talk.

I would argue that in the future, this is going to have much deeper and scarier implications for communication in general unless we do something about it and understand and learn how to connect across tension, and how to connect with someone from whom we really have nothing in common with (or so we may think). We must find ways to create bridges (instead of building walls, as Bernie Sanders would say during his presidential campaigns) in a sense for the future health of communication in the country and in the world. And there are ways to do this. Many of them are couched in deliberative values such as active listening and respect. And we can also do away with certain things like this increased online moral outrage that Crockett describes, as we know that we would never shame a person to their face that way, or that we should be very careful not to move outrage based online behavior into our physical interactions with people. I find, personally, bringing warmth, openness, and willingness, with a background of love and a desire to build connection and acceptance always works. As a friend said to me recently, “People always want attention, they love attention. It may be hard for them to accept

attention when they have it, but at heart they really love the feeling.” I agree with this sentiment but would also say that what people, men especially, really value is acceptance. And I think this simple value in our conversations would do much to build bridges between people, if we see that people just want to be heard, accepted, and have their values brought into the fore, like deliberation asks of interaction, not have values and thoughts pushed aside, which it seems like moral outrage online does, communication across difference may have a chance to build out of this state.

### **What to do?**

David Matthews argues that the best way to remedy situations of political alienation is to work “with” citizens. Unfortunately, many types of democracy have increasingly taken a working “for” model, in which citizens feel more and more separate from the process of a working democracy (*With the People*, 5), and become cogs in a larger wheel of bureaucracy, much like we have seen in the above examples where citizens and citizen concern become part of a larger web of advertising revenue. In this system, the symbiotic relationship of government and citizen “becomes weaker... citizens don’t join to produce public goods, if they delegate much of what they must do to government agencies.” (*With the People*, 7). And if they do join, as we have seen above, the “public goods” created are not based in real communal concerns, but are co-opted by larger forces to increase extraction of data to increase consumer sales. We have to work out a way in which working with becomes much more front and center, and the interaction of citizens is decolonized to not take “from” for consumer sales, but to work “with” in collaboration and creation

What stops this process of collaboration and creation? Matthews explains this from the angle of NGO's which he calls Squares, and the communal groups they fund, which he calls Blobs. Blobs are "the cellular building blocks of democratic life" ("A Question of Culture," 2) and at heart want to run locally and communally, but Squares tend to "dominate or colonize them [Blobs] in their efforts to help them" (Ibid, 2) Squares have not been able to prevent this colonization of on the ground, civic groups (blobs) because of a lack of respect for the culture of blobs and ends up dominating them, and robbing their civic legitimacy ("A Question of Culture" 2-3). In the end, this is a matter of hierarchical, colonial concern - and operates much like the scale of Facebook which manages its' citizen users captologically, ending up dominating the flow of their actions through algorithms rather than by flow of funding.

One of the ways to do this is to move towards a "working with" model, and a model that sees the centralized, bureaucratic model of institutions that also "developing cultures in Squares that will support experimentation with Blobs." (Ibid, 9). In this case, moving away from NGO's and on the ground, community civic groups getting their funding, we could say that generally, we would need to step away from digital institutions that are controlling the data of people and limiting their freedom of choice by "making them" more of the person that the digital institution wants them to become.

We have to be careful of working "with" though - because what can happen is there is a two-sided, power based relationship, in which the institution is leveraging power against citizens in order to control the flow of media such that that allow the civic groups are working "with" to communicate, but in the background, their message is being hijacked with the purpose of using their content to generate more ad revenue (Rushkoff,

“You are not Facebook’s Customer”). As Bogost says, talking about BJ Fogg, the head of Stanford’s captology lab, an originator of destructive internet persuasion,

Perhaps [persuasive technologies] offer valid ways of using technology to alter behavior. But not one of them deploys rhetoric. Instead, all of Fogg's techniques use technology to alter actions or beliefs without engaging users in a discourse about the behavior itself or the logics that would recommend such actions or beliefs. (Bogost, Ian. *Persuasive Games: The Expressive Power of Videogames*. MIT P, 2007 60-61)

Matthews’ definition of working “with” is, I think, at heart, antithetical in definition to the above examples of an unfair, dual sided power relationship based on data extraction for capital and of moral outrage in the digital age. The reason I believe this is because of Matthews’ definition of public goods, and the clear goals inherent in “working with.” In Matthews’ system, it seems there would never be a place for the type of hidden revenue streams of content that increase rage and hurt individuals, societies, etc.,as well as overshadow the positives of digital deliberation such as rallying people to a goal or bringing unjust power to account are overshadowed by isolation, anger, and lack of communication.

Let’s look at Matthews’ definition of a public good to see why, as well as how that interacts with “working with.” Then, we’ll follow up with some examples of how to apply this “working with” model to the digital deliberative sphere. Matthews speaks of how working with is based on people (not algorithms), and how the public goods created from such interactions are things that make life better than everyone. He writes, “the first ‘with’ strategy was people to people,” where “democracy began and continues as a political system in which... citizens must work with other citizens to create things - “public goods” - that make life better for everyone.” (*With the People*, 6). If we take the last part of that idea, that public goods are things which make life better for everyone, to

be the jumping off point at which we move forward in our analysis, we would have to say that things such as captology, which work for powerful companies, or the digital companies that control the lanes of communicative, deliberative expression, are not living up to the most just potential of “working with.”

If it is true that digital media companies are not living up to the highest potential of “working with,” then we have to either alter our use of technology, the platforms themselves, or the algorithms behind them. We would also have to interrogate the amount of time we spend on the platforms and the mindset that we take to the platforms both to these platforms, in the overwhelming belief that create a “public good.” We must question if the interaction between institution and civic group, Square and blob, is creating something that makes life better for everyone. We have to ask if, instead of creating a “public good,” are we creating a “public bad:” more moral outrage, more rage, and more isolation.

Citizens should have a say in this process, not just the hierarchical tech companies that are creating the lanes for our expression. Getting citizens involved, and allowing them to experiment with alternatives, especially local alternatives, is a step in the right direction. Matthews agrees, writing how citizens can’t be relegated to the sidelines for this “good” to be created by governmental institutions, for governmental institutions to plan the outline of what civic groups should do. Instead, citizens must be actively involved in the process of shaping the political ecosystem (*With the People*, 7). Most importantly, we must recognize that they can only do so *if they haven’t already been captologized* in a certain manner, if their freedom is still intact

Stepping back from the last question of citizen's needing to recognize their captological relationship, how their agency as citizens may already being shaped by Squares, how Squares may already be colonizing Blobs in the digital deliberative sphere, let me point to an example of a good institutional/citizen deliberative relationship. A good relationship to the digital deliberative landscape here is the structure of the "Your Undivided Attention" podcast. Harris and Raskin will pause during the middle of the show, step away from the main interview, and offer suggestions for ways to make the tech ecosystem better for all. An example of this would be in episode... such as a way to slow down your engagement with apps such as Youtube when you are caught in a loop instead of doing it because "one wants to be there."

As opposed to just talking about solutions proposed by tech experts, they ask listeners to send them any feedback/creative ideas to solve similar problems, inviting them to take part in the "political ecosystem, bringing this sort of deliberative participatory democracy to the tech world instead of just letting the tech designers, design humans. They invite feedback from the users of technologies, not just designers, to stop the tide of designing tech towards the purpose of maximizing time on device for revenue and getting new, user based solutions for ways to helping get one off the device and back out into the world, rather than staying on and producing more moral outrage.

In this way, Harris and Raskin let listeners "write" into the design landscape, and writing teachers could model that way of thinking for larger social issues as we ask students to think about how they participate on digital platforms. We could go further by not only asking our students for input on digital issues, but for input on any conflict in their lives and what solutions they may have, realizing their voice as a necessary part in



the democratic process, one that has been continually stamped out in the move to neoliberal, institutional control and direction over the “unruly communal.”

Through the valuing of the individual, giving strength to writing students to voice their opinions and feel valued as citizens who are necessary parts to communal creation, as opposed to just cogs in an institutional machine, we can get people to start working together again in a deliberative, co-creative way, in a way in which I hope to just catch a glimpse of in my case study and grounded theory chapter.

This building of the individual out towards the group is the very essence of “working with” and goes against the siloed, outraged, algorithmically made opinions that work to keep us isolated from each other. Matthews says, referencing the fact that this “with” strategy doesn’t include only working with those in our echo chamber, we work together because our very survival depends on it. He writes,

a *with* strategy encourages collaboration through mutually beneficial or reinforcing efforts between the citizenry and the government. And it fosters collective work, not only among people who are *alike* or who *like* one another, but among those who recognize they *need* one another to survive or to live the lives they want to live. (*With the People*, 8)

We want to work together for the very nature of survival, especially in an age which as Harris puts it, AI is basically controlling our lives, so in this case, the act of survival isn’t about finding the best foodstores or watering holes, it’s about retaining control of the human psyche without the pull of AI. Harris says,

People think that what you're watching on YouTube is a choice. People are sitting there, they sit there, they think, and then they choose. But that's not true. Seventy percent of what people are watching is the recommended videos on the right hand side, which means 70 percent of 1.9 billion users, that's more than the number of followers of Islam, about the number followers of Christianity, of what they're looking at on YouTube for 60 minutes a day—that’s the average time people spend on YouTube. So you got 60 minutes, and 70 percent is populated by a

computer. The machine is out of control. Because if you thought 9/11 conspiracy theories were bad in English, try 9/11 conspiracies in Burmese and Sri Lanka and in Arabic. It's kind of a digital Frankenstein that's pulling on all these levers and steering people in all these different directions."

But what we can do about this is get people to start working together again, rather than people working with machines, which is actually what is going on when people are interacting with the digital deliberative sphere.

To explain this, Matthews uses a metaphor of human beings learning to "work with" each other again, talking about how pine trees grow at such fast rates that they are treated as a crop instead of a tree. Seeds are planted like crops, in neat rows, so the trees can be cut easily. But before the machine equipment was available, people had to pull a long saw back and forth to cut it. "Their efforts produced a result that neither laborer could have achieved by working alone. They worked *with* each other." (*With the People*, 8). It is this human to human relationship, that serves a public good in the end, of which the two people are working towards similar goals of the same public good, the chopping down of the tree. But both people must be working with the same tool, gripping it at the same time. They are not pushed apart, away from the tool, because of outrage of each other. They come together for long enough to achieve the goal of survival and the desired work goal.

Matthews notes that governments and citizens should work this way. I believe that the corporate state and the government are basically the same thing (Chomsky, *Understanding Power*), and this is especially important when thinking about what to do in regards to students working with moral outrage when engaging with their writing online. If people are working towards some political goal online, and think they are harnessing the tool of "the long saw" to cut "the tree" of racism, yet their writings only create further

division which helps build revenue for a service that builds further division, and will most likely create more segregation in the outside world as well as in the digital sphere itself, we must halt that process and think about what we can do to counter outrage on these platforms with our students.

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## VITA

Name: *Michael Reich*

Baccalaureate Degree *Bachelor of Arts, Stony Brook University, Stony Brook, NY  
Major: Philosophy/English*

Date Graduated *05/2010*

Other Degrees and Certificates: *Master of Arts, Stony Brook University, Stony Brook, NY  
Major: English*

Date Graduated: *05/2014*

