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This dissertation examines the relationship between hospitality theory and Writing Studies. Contemporary Writing Studies scholarship approaches hospitality through a traditional lens viewing it separately as either theory, practice or pedagogy for the composition classroom (Dale Jacobs, Richard Haswell, Janice Haswell, Glen Blalock, Matthew Heard, Joanna Lin Want). As the practice and pedagogy of hospitality are promoted in Writing Studies, the binary metaphor of the host and guest provides the dominant way of discussing this work. In this binary metaphor the instructor is often designated the host, and the students the guests; however, this configuration obscures the important influence of the university upon the classroom relationship. I argue that recognizing the additional influence of the university on the relationship between the instructor and students is necessary because it impacts the instructor's ability to act as a host. Following pragmatic influences like William James and Ann E. Berthoff, I argue for a disruption of the binary metaphor of hospitality. Returning to hospitality theory I focus on Levinas' identification of a third position in the hospitable metaphor. Using this third position, which for this conversation I call the "Preparer," to apply a triadic metaphor of hospitality to the composition classroom reveals how the institution must create the conditions necessary for the instructor to act as the host.

The triadic metaphor of hospitality supplies an analytical perspective to be applied beyond the classroom to the additional work of Writing Studies as well. Viewing the position of the writing program administrator in the context of the triadic metaphor

untangles the multiple, often conflicting, positions the administrator occupies. The peripheral position of the writing center at the edges of the university provides a space in which the writing center administrator can create an environment in which a hospitable encounter between the consultant and writer is possible.

EXPANDING THE METAPHOR: A PRAGMATIC APPLICATION OF

HOSPITALITY THEORY TO THE FIELD OF WRITING STUDIES

by

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Approved by

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For Bradley

Your love, comfort, support, and –above all– patience made this possible.

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of

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Finally, thank you is not nearly enough for all the Browns and Grabows, whose love and support never wavered.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: PRAGMATIC THINKING, HOSPITALITY, WRITING STUDIES,
AND FINDING A PLACE IN THE CONVERSATION

The most tender place in my heart is for strangers.
~ Neko Case

In nearly every discipline in the university a tension exists between the theoretical

knowledge of a field and its practical application. For a discipline like Composition,

which traces its beginnings specifically to the practice of teaching writing, the

relationship theory and practice is particularly fraught. In 1999 Lynn Worsham described

what she saw as a rhetoric of theory at work in the field of composition. As a part of that

rhetoric, Worsham identified what she called the "pedagogical introduction," which she

says,

> inevitably makes a case *for* theory—for example, by supporting its movement
> from one place to another, by translating its foreign terms into a given disciplinary
> vernacular, and by securing the promise of its practical effect in the classroom
> [emphasis original]. ("On the Rhetoric" 390)

The pedagogical introduction effectively translates theory into the familiar realm of

practice in a well-intentioned effort to make theory accessible and approachable for

teachers ("On the Rhetoric" 390). As a rhetorical convention and tool, however, the

pedagogical introduction, perhaps unintentionally, reaffirms the existing tension between

theory and practice by insisting that theory always be in service to its practical application.

The pedagogical introduction is a representation of a broader concept Worsham calls the pedagogical imperative. Worsham contends that the desire to make every theory of writing of use in the classroom prevents compositionists from engaging theory in other ways that might be beneficial to the field. As late as 2007 in an article about theory and practice in composition, Kory Lawson Ching discusses the continued presence of the pedagogical imperative in composition and reminds readers that the "alteration or affirmation of pedagogy need not be the primary goal of our theorizing" ("Theory and Its Practice" 457). Ching instead promotes an integration of theory and practice that understands, "Theoretical discourse does not drive practice; it is practice" ("Theory and Its Practice" 463). I would extend Ching's statement to include the point that practice is not solely the implementation of theory, it is itself theoretical. The pedagogical imperative described by Worsham and Ching unfortunately reinforces the long standing tension created by the perception that theory and practice can be separated and function in isolation.

Ching is only the latest compositionists to call for an integrated relationship between theory and practice. Ann E. Berthoff challenges teachers to bridge the misguided divide between theory and practice in her 1981 book *The Making of Meaning: Metaphors, Models, and Maxims for Writing Teachers*. Berthoff encourages teachers to become their own researchers, to form their own theories about the practices that are effective in their classrooms, and she argues to shut down the NCTE "Activity Swap"

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because it promotes implementing practice without theory. Without the theory instructors attempting a new practice are unable to account for their unique context, and the activity fails. Berthoff argues that instead, we should be like her friend who, when asked to share an activity with a colleague says, "Sure—but you have to take the theory too" (*Making of Meaning* 34). At the top of each assignment Berthoff's friend shares she provides a summary of the theory that went into its formation (*Making of Meaning* 34). When a teacher understands the theory that influenced the development of the assignment, she is better able to adapt that assignment to ensure its success in her classroom, and to recognize how her practice might re-influence the theory on which the assignment was based.

The circularity of influence in Berthoff's conception of theory and practice is evident in her claim that "…theory is not the antithesis of practice, and in fact, can only serve an authentic purpose if it is continually brought into relationship with practice so that each can inform the other" (*Making of Meaning* 3). For Berthoff, theory is a valuable tool for developing practice; practice is a valuable tool for testing theory. Integrating the two "bring[s] together what we think we are doing and how we are doing it" as a means to constantly test and re-evaluate each in a process Berthoff labels method (*Making of Meaning* 4). A method then requires beginning with what we think we are doing – the theory, and bringing it together with how we are doing it – the practice, then re-assessing what we think we are doing in light of what we learned doing it.

Worsham, Ching, and Berthoff all highlight the difficulties associated with the conception that theory and practice are elements which can be separated from one

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another. The separation of theory and practice creates the perception of a pedagogical

imperative that positions theory constantly in service of classroom practice. If classroom

practice is, as Ching describes, "the primary goal of our theorizing," that practice is seen

as the end point of the relationship ("Theory and Its Practice" 457). The final recursive

turn of Berthoff's method, in which practice re-informs theory becomes impossible. As

the timeline of this discussion indicates—1981 (Berthoff), 1999 (Worsham), 2007

(Ching)—the perceived separation between theory and practice is deeply entrenched in

the academic conversation. In this dissertation, however, I hope to make a move toward

ameliorating that divide, by resisting the pedagogical imperative and applying a

theoretical perspective to the other work happening in Composition studies, namely

writing program administration and writing centers.

To reflect this expanded view of the work to be theorized I use Susan Miller's

label Writing Studies to refer to the field at large, and composition to refer to specifically

to the teaching of writing. After open admissions, composition programs struggled to

define themselves within English departments used to seeing literary analysis as their

primary focus, and as a result accepted the label composition for the field. Miller's article

calling for a new identity for the field represents the end of a period of time during which

she claims, "…. much of our collective energy was spent arguing that pairing

"intellectual work" and "composition" did not constitute an oxymoron" ("Writing

Studies" 41). Thus, for Miller Writing Studies represented a label that more easily paired

with intellectual work, and "promote[d] attention to the production of texts over their

interpretation" ("Writing Studies" 41). Agreeing with Miller, I find Writing Studies

serves as a better description of our field because in addition it can encompass so much more than simply the production of text. The label Writing Studies represents the production of texts, the interpretation of texts, the teaching and learning of writing, the individual work done between writer and consultant in the writing center, and the administrative and scholarly activities of writing program and writing center administrators.

The theoretical perspective I apply to Writing Studies is a pragmatically influenced hospitality. While hospitality theory has influenced Writing Studies in recent years, it has done so through the filter of the theory/practice divide. Authors have either promoted a practice of hospitality without overtly discussing the theory, or used hospitality theory as a lens through which to view the teaching of writing without discussing a hospitable practice. The result has been that neither approach has yielded a successful application of hospitality in the institutional setting of the university. In this dissertation it is my contention that only when hospitality theory is actively integrated as a part of hospitality practice can a place for hospitality be found in the university.

Pragmatic Thinking: Allowing Experience to Confirm Beliefs

Berthoff's insistence on the recursive influence theory and practice should have upon one another is a reflection of a Pragmatic influence upon her thinking. American Pragmatism, as conceived by Charles S. Peirce, and popularized by William James, is a philosophy concerned with action and consequence as opposed to traditional philosophical to establish first principles. Pierce argued against the prevailing belief that

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"self-consciousness was to furnish us with our fundamental truths, and to decide what was agreeable to reason" by stating that experience, not self-consciousness, confirms what is "agreeable to reason," and determines the fundamental truths in which we can believe ("How to Make" 27). In other words, Truth is not something individuals can determine by tracing ideas and concepts back to their origins; Truth does not exist as a first principle separate from ideas. Individual experience confirms, or disproves, the truth of an idea. Pierce's friend and champion William James paraphrased this tenet of Pierce's thought in the phrase, "Truth *happens* to an idea" ("Pragmatism's Conception" 88). For each idea then the potential consequences of putting the idea into practice should be considered, because eventually the truth of the idea "happens" when it is confirmed through experience. The pragmatic conception of truth is a radical departure from tradition because it makes truth an element of experience.

Understanding, and anticipating, the consequences of an idea is an important element of Pragmatism because Peirce asserts that once an idea is confirmed by experience it becomes a belief which then guides an individual's future actions. Pierce defines belief according to "three properties: First, it is something that we are aware of; second, it appeases the irritation of doubt; and thus, it involves the establishment in our nature of a rule of action, or say for short a *habit*" [emphasis original] (Pierce, "How to" 33). The irritation of a doubt leads to an idea, which when proved true through experience, becomes a guide for future action, or in Peirce's term a "habit" or "belief." Before adopting a belief then, it is important that an individual consider what actions might stem from holding that belief. Additionally, if the habit of action stemming from a

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belief leads to undesirable results the pragmatic individual must be willing to revise, or perhaps discard, the previously held belief. For Peirce, James and the pragmatists that followed, truth and belief are fallible and malleable; they can be disproved based up on our lived experiences of their consequences, and change over time and with any alteration in circumstances.

Consider Berthoff's skepticism about the indiscriminant swapping of lesson plans and classroom activities in light of pragmatic ideas of truth. When a classroom activity or lesson plan works well it has been proved true in that classroom with that set of students. It becomes a guide for action within that same set of circumstances. If another teacher attempts to replicate the activity in a different classroom with a different set of students, there is, however, no guarantee that it will still work. If the teacher understand the ideas that influenced the development of the activity, then she will be better prepared to adapt the activity for her own circumstances. As a new instructor, my own experience confirmed this idea when I realized how differently an activity could be received from semester to semester. Each new group of students responded differently to assignments, which meant I needed to be ready to adapt activities and lesson plans to work with the new group of students.

My own early experience reading Peirce and James supports this pragmatic conception of truth. One of the first texts assigned as I began my doctoral coursework, Peirce's "How to Make Our Ideas Clear" perplexed me. The text veered off into mathematical formulas, diagrams, and was nearly impenetrable the first time I slogged through it. Through class discussion however, I began to understand Pierce's argument,

and I came to the shocking realization that Pragmatism was an unnamed belief I already held. The density of the text, the unfamiliar mathematical formulas and dated style of prose made the work difficult to read, but the central ideas in the work represented common sense to me. My previous experiences confirmed Peirce's assertions. During my undergraduate work, I studied and worked in theatre, which meant immersing myself daily in an effort to recreate truth, and nightly experiencing how a single change in context, changed everything. The fallibility of truth and the consequences of actions had, during my years in the theatre been memorized, experienced, and imprinted into my muscle memory.

Referring to theatre work as a recreation of truth perhaps sounds farfetched. From the audience, acting appears like pretending, even a little like lying. Back drops and set pieces are created to look like another place or time. Lines and movements are memorized until they are rote, or robotic. Costumes and make-up hide the actor, turning her into someone, or something, else. On stage, however, acting is fundamentally about creating truth. Back drops and set pieces create the façade of a world, and then, hopefully, become mundane. Lines and movements are memorized until they become reactions. Costumes and make-up transform the actor, creating a physical representation of a character. All of this fakery is done in pursuit of the truthful moment. In the truthful moment the characters respond honestly to each other, and when it happens, that moment is magic. The audience suspends their disbelief and watches as the proscenium arch disappears, the actors "become" their characters, and a new world takes shape.

My theatre training confirmed other readings during that first semester of doctoral work. In addition to learning about the American Pragmatists, that semester I spent three hours a week at the other end of the 20th century studying cosmodern literary theory. The openness to others, and the willingness to give of oneself learned through the "Yes, and …" game found philosophical expression in Emmanuel Levinas's *Totality and Infinity*. Like the pragmatists, Levinas situates his work in contrast to traditional Western philosophy. Levinas suggests that it is not individual self-consciousness that makes us aware, rather it is our relationship with the other. His work is at its core an ethics of how we interact with the other. For Levinas, the ethical response to the other is complete acceptance, particularly of any differences. He claims the traditional approach of Western Philosophy produces "a reduction of the other to the same by interposition of a middle and neutral term that ensures the comprehension of being" (*Totality and Infinity* 43). In an attempt to classify the other in a familiar way, I apply a term to the other constrains the other to the identity I constructed for him. Levinas's ethics challenges traditional philosophy because it is not "rationalist self-legislation and freedom (deontology), the calculation of happiness (utilitarianism), or the cultivation of virtues (virtue ethics)" (Bergo). Instead, Levinas defines ethics as the resistance of the reduction of the other to the same as the self. To be ethical is to engage the other in conversation without, "neutraliz[ing] the other who becomes a theme or an object" (*Totality and Infinity* 43). Refusing to see, and define, the other through my own terms allows the other to maintain his difference, his infinity.

Levinas describes the ethical encounter as a face-to-face meeting, and in doing so extends Martin Buber's conception of the I-You relationship. Buber argues there are two basic word pairings that shape our world I-It and I-You (Buber 53). The word pairings describe how we relate to our partner in the pairing. Thinking of an It conjures up a tangible, manipulable object. Buber argues that we also relate to other people in an It capacity when without thinking, without connecting, we often treat other people as objects, factors in our own agenda, something to be manipulated. In contrast, when being open, seeing, accepting another person Buber claims we partake in an I-You relationship. Buber describes this relationship, "Whoever says You does not have something; he has nothing, but he stands in relation" (Buber 55). Whoever has nothing has no agenda, no need to manipulate the other, he is able to see the other as more than an object. Buber's conception of our relationships differs from Levinas's because for Buber the I determines the kind of relationship to have with another; the I chooses to say It or You. Levinas sees the I-You relationship as limited, as a "shock, a comprehension, but it does not enable us to account for (except as an aberration, a fall, or a sickness) a life other than friendship" (*Totality and Infinity* 69). Levinas argues that for Buber, when I choose to address the other as "You" it is always out of friendship or kindness. Levinas seeks to establish a relationship between the self and other that encompasses every other aspect of life. Levinas opens up Buber's conception of You by completely embracing the alterity of the other, defining it as infinite and making it essential to ethics.

To provide a framework for being in relation to another, Levinas describes the face-to-face relationship between the self and other using a hospitable metaphor in which

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the self is the host and the other is a guest welcomed into a home[1]. Accepting completely the alterity of the other, refusing to reduce him to sameness, is for Levinas like saying "Yes" within the terms of the "Yes, and …" game. By welcoming the other into his home, the self also shares a part of himself, adding to and continuing the exchange with "and …". The game, like the face-to-face, encounter breaks down when one partner attempts to force his agenda on his partner, in Levinasian terms when one partner reduces the other to sameness. In interpersonal relationships the breakdown of the face-to-face relationship leads to the objectification of the other. In improvisations situations the failure of the "Yes, and …" game leads to awkward, uncomfortable moments for the actors and the audience.

Since providing an example of the philosophical failure of the face-to-face encounter is difficult, let me provide an example of a failure of the "Yes, and …" game. Recently, just such a failure proved a comic gold mine for the CBS sitcom *The Big Bang Theory*. The episode provides a wonderful illustration of what happens when one partner fails to open up to the other. *The Big Bang Theory*, episode 4. 14 "The Thespian Catalyst," provides a prime example of this type of failing ("TBBT Season 4"). In an effort to improve his teaching skills the brilliant, but socially awkward, theoretical physicist Sheldon Cooper, turns to his neighbor Penny, a waitress/struggling actor, for acting lessons. To help Sheldon connect with his students Penny suggests he be more spontaneous, and to help him develop spontaneity she suggests they begin his lessons by

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[1] This is, admittedly, a simplistic description of Levinas's use of the hospitable metaphor. The full complexity of his work is thoroughly explored later chapters.

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working on improvisation skills. She begins their scene by establishing that she is a sales

clerk in a shoe shop, which led to the following exchange:

Penny: Can I help you?
Sheldon: I'd like a frozen yogurt please.
Penny: Yogurt. Nh…um…ok…sure, luckily we sell both shoes and yogurt
                here.
Sheldon: You do?
Penny: (in teacher mode) Yes, look up at the sign – and remember improv
                is always about saying yes.
 Sheldon: (as self) Alright. (in character) Yes. I see a sign it says Camarillo
                State Mental Hospital.
Penny: (exasperated) What?!
Sheldon;   It's the only explanation I can come up with for why you think you
                sell shoes and yogurt. (Pomalo18)

The "Yes, and …" game goes awry in this scene because Sheldon refuses to accept his

partner's premise. He does not open himself up to Penny, and instead forces his own

agenda upon her. First, instead of working with Penny's established premise that they

were in a shoe store, Sheldon asks for frozen yogurt. Despite appearing to finally accept

Penny's premise, by actually responding "Yes" to her, Sheldon again imposes his own

framework on her and the scenario by attempting to re-establish their location in a mental

hospital. When played well the "Yes, and …" game represents both an acceptance of the

contingency of the world, and the acceptance of alterity and welcoming of the other; the

failure of the "Yes, and …" game illustrates how the self imposes his own framework

onto the other.

Hospitality in Writing Studies

Since 2008 journals of Writing Studies published five individual articles that use the hospitable metaphor to describe classroom activities and one special issue of the *JAC: A Journal of Rhetoric, Culture and Politics* that uses philosophical hospitality to theorize the composition course[2]. Using the hospitable metaphor to describe the composition classroom remains popular, in November 2011 the journal College English celebrated the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) Centennial by publishing a "Symposium: How I Have Changed My Mind." In the special section editor John Schilb asked several "veterans of English Studies to write briefly about how they have changed their minds during the course of their careers" (106). Chris Anson, Anne Ruggles Gere, Keith Gilyard, Susan Miller, Nancy Sommers, and other well-known members of the field all contributed[3]. Chris Anson shares a dialog between two sides of himself, trying to choose between qualitative and quantitative data to research the composition classroom, and ultimately comes to the view that mixed methods are the answer (Schilb et al. 106-08). Susan Miller attempts to chronicle what she calls her "changed minds," by articulating the necessity of asking "What if that's wrong?" as a means of exploration (Schilb et al. 120-121). In addition to chronicling changing minds, the contributions also identify current conversations in the field. Everything from ideas about the proper forms and techne of writing, to the nature of specialization and disciplinarity finds its way into the volume.

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[2] According to a January 2012 Compile Search of hospitality and composition.
[3] Given the number to submissions, for clarity contributions to the symposium will be listed under Schilb, John et al. "Symposium: How I Have Changed My Mind." *College English* 74.2 (2011). 106 -130.

As a part of his reconsideration of his early work on community, Joseph Harris uses the hospitable metaphor to describe the work of composition. In his early work Harris defines community as a "seductive and powerful" way to think about composition because it "offers us a view of shared purpose and effort" (Harris in Vandeberg 68). Harris claims that defining oneself as a member of a community provides the perception of a stable base from which to "[deal] with the various discourses that make up the university" (Harris 14). Identifying myself as a member of the Writing Studies community provides me with a position from which to interact with other members of the university community. Harris called for a more critical use of the term in Writing Studies. Harris' initial stance was "that thinking of disciplines as discourse communities downplayed the conflicts that drove much of the work that went on in them" (Schilb 117). The favorable implications of the term community implied a consensus among participants that failed to account for disagreements in the group. For the "Symposium" Harris considers the problem with community from a new angle:

> The problem is that we tend to use *community* to refer to a received state of affairs—a set of norms to which others must assimilate. And so, for instance, the academic discourse community gets imagined a something that students must learn the ways of, or the department or program community as something to which new faculty must adapt. The role of the teacher - or chair or director - becomes that of the host who welcomes guests to the table, who invites them to learn our ways (Schilb 118).

Harris links his new understanding of the difficulty with the concept of community by linking it to the hospitable metaphor because he claims that the composition course serves as a means of welcoming students into the university community. In the metaphor

Harris uses the composition instructor acts as the university host for students by teaching them the conventions of academic writing. Harris's new suggestion, where he has changed his mind, is that "the gesture of community needs to be more than a welcoming in; it also needs to be a reaching out" (Schilb et al. 118). Harris envisions his reaching out as "ask[ing] what the students in our classes and the teachers in our programs can tell us about the work we do together" (Schilb et al. 118). Harris's suggestion that composition reach out to build its community is as powerful and complicated, as is his choice of metaphor.

By choosing the hospitable metaphor to discuss the "welcoming in" and "reaching out" activities of composition Harris reflects the trend toward using a hospitable metaphor to describe composition. Harris complicates the typical application of the metaphor slightly by identifying many possible hosts within the university: the instructor, the writing program administrator (WPA), the department chair, the dean. Yet, he leaves the guests unidentified, open to interpretation. In some cases, as with the classroom instructor, who has a direct relationship with students, it is possible to infer the identity of the guests she hosts. However, the metaphor does not work as well with some of the other hosts Harris suggests. In the broadest sense each hosts students, without whom the university, department, or program would not exist; however, unlike the instructor the writing program administrator, department chair, and dean lack consistent contact with students. While they may see students periodically throughout the semester, the administrators in Harris' list teach the student about the community of the university sporadically and sometimes only when they must enforce policy. If as Harris' implies

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hosting requires a direct relationship through which the host welcomes the guest by

teaching her the ways of the community, then the current metaphor does not account for

these sporadic methods of hosting he listed. Looking for a direct relationship, such as that

of the instructor and student, then it is possible to at least identify the guest of the writing

program administrator. By hiring, training, and supervising other composition instructors

the program administrator teaches them the ways of the university, and is in effect, the

instructors host. The result is a kind of chain of hosting, the writing program

administrator first helps the instructor to assimilate to the university community, and then

the instructor teaches those norms to the students.

When applying a hospitable metaphor to the university as Harris suggests, there is

another discrepancy between the typical forms of hospitality and this institutional setting.

The traditional hospitable metaphor describes a temporary relationship, and in fact, the

guest pushing the boundaries of "temporary" represents a significant violation of

hospitality. In contrast, Harris describes the welcoming of the host as a means of

assimilating the guest into a new community. The description is apt because whether the

guest is an instructor seeking employment, or students seeking a particular form of

knowledge, they come to the university specifically to be assimilated into its culture.

Joining the university community, instructors receive pay, possibly tenure, and the

prestige of having been labeled a part of that community. Although students may

graduate and physically leave the university, their diploma, whether displayed on a wall

or tucked in a drawer, labels them a permanent member of the university community.

Bringing in new faculty and students to the university community is essential because it

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is their sense of allegiance that sustains the university. Without faculty and students a university is just a set of buildings, symbols on letterhead, and a web address. That the instructor and student desire to gain status as a permanent member of the university community is at odds with the implied temporary nature of the traditional hospitable metaphor.

As Donna LeCourt's work shows, the permanent nature of joining the academic community can have serious consequences for students. *Identity Matters*, LeCourt's 2004 book, identifies the way students entering the university from working-class backgrounds must often choose between their new university community and their home communities. Students from every class back ground must make choices about how they will adapt the university. LeCourt's work and Harris's 1989 article illustrate how those choices result in different consequences for working class students. The result for some students, LeCourt argues, is that "working-class and academic discourses exist in a dichotomous relationship where one discourse is depicted as in almost complete opposition to the other" (*Performing* 30). The opposition between these two discourses is confirmed when students when students are censured for using the speech standards of their home communities in class, and shunned at home when using the speech standards of the ademic community.

Harris provides an example of this phenomenon by quoting a student who is describing the different languages she speaks and the relationship between them. Harris's student explains, "According to my mother anyone who speaks in 'proper English' is 'putting on airs'" ("Idea of Community" 18). Of course, "proper English" is standard

academic English. Consequently, connecting students welcome into the academic

community with their ability to learn its ways (speak its language), means that students

who do not do well may find themselves in the position of having alienated themselves

from their home community, yet not done well enough to earn acceptance into the new

academic community. This reality complicates the benevolent view of the work of the

composition course and might force Writing Stuides scholars to reconsider both

"welcoming in" and "reaching out" as metaphors to describe the composition course.

Situating Myself: Finding a Place in the Conversation

Before 2008, hospitality appeared sporadically as a subject in composition

journals through the 1980s and 1990s primarily as a way to view working with

immigrants (Skutnabb-Kangas 1981, Tremel 1984, Waxman 1991) and other

marginalized communities (Wenzel 1990, Winslow 1996). In 2008, *JAC: A Journal of*

Rhetoric, Culture and Politics published Dale Jacobs' article "The Audacity of

Hospitality," which marked the beginning of the current trend to approach the

relationship between Writing Studies and hospitality either practically or theoretically.

While hospitality has a rich historical tradition across many cultures, when applied to the

university it typically stems from a Judeo-Christian influence. Often practical hospitality

stems from the Catholic Benedictine tradition, is focused internally, and is presented as a

personal way of being or acting in the world. The work of Emmanuel Levinas provides

the basis for theoretical hospitality, and, while still deeply personal, its focus is external,

our relationships with others; as a result, this form of hospitality often provides the

foundation for proposed hospitable action towards others. Each form of hospitality promotes a different type of action in the world, what I call practical hospitality represents a personal form of action that influences internal decision making; whereas, theoretical hospitality externalizes action by focusing it on the individual's response to others.

The intersection between hospitality and Writing Studies continued when in 2009, *JAC* released a special issue about the relationship between Levinasian hospitality theory and rhetoric, and in 2010 and 2011 published two separate articles responding to Jacobs. The intersection of hospitality theory and practice also lead to at least one article attempting to define a hospitable pedagogy for the composition course. The *College Composition and Communication* (*CCC*) journal published a 2009 article co-authored by Richard Haswell, Janice Haswell, and Glenn Blalock entitled "Hospitality in College Composition Courses." Jacobs, his respondents, and Haswell, Haswell and Blalock form the core of my literature review of the intersection between hospitality and Writing Studies.

Because a Catholic hospitality informs the work of Jacobs and his respondents it is necessary to explore the principles of that hospitality. Unlike other cloisters that may hold themselves apart from the world, for centuries monks and nuns of the Order of Saint Benedict have followed his Rule, "All guests who present themselves are to be welcomed as Christ" (*Rule of St. Benedict* 53:1in Holman and Pratt title page). Benedictine hospitality "is not a mere social grace; it is a spiritual and ethical issue. [Hospitality] is an issue involving what it means to be human" (Homan and Pratt 5). For Benedictines,

hospitality is not just the physical act of opening their doors to strangers, it is a spiritual and ethical belief that guides the behavior of the individual. In their book *Radical Hospitality* Fr. Daniel Homan O.S.B. and Lonni Collins Pratt label hospitality radical because it "places a higher valued on relationships and community than it does on commerce and productivity—this is counter to how most of us have been taught" (xxv). The accepting and valuing the others around us, according to Holman and Pratt, will bring love and solace into our lives. Benedictine hospitality is an individual response, a choice to value relationship and community over other pursuits.

For Benedictines the rewards of hospitality are also individual and eternal. The Bible contains numerous stories, like that of Lot, who inadvertently welcome angels into his home, protects them from the men of Sodom by offering to sacrifice his daughters to the crowd, and is rewarded by being spared during the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (*The Holy Bible, TNIV* Gen 19:1-16). However, the rewards of hospitality do not come without risk. The Bible and the world also have numerous stories about the risks of hospitality for the guest as well as the host. The traveler welcomed to the fairy feast and tricked out of time by accepting either food or drink from his hosts. King Duncan welcomed into MacBeth's home only to be murdered in his sleep. Welcoming a stranger into the monastery is a spiritual issue because it demonstrates faith in the face of risk, and an ethic of supplementing yourself for the protection of the guest.

Before the rise of the hospitality industry guests: family, new and old friends, acquaintances and occasionally even strangers, stayed in people's homes. Now, with so many hotels, even intimate friends and relatives rarely stay in our homes. Having lost the

material dimension of physically welcoming other into our homes, hospitality is instead

an open and available stance individuals choose to take towards others. It is, to

paraphrase Father Daniel Holman OSB, a willingness to respond to the strangers

knocking on the door to your heart. Father Holman emphasizes each response is different,

"My response will be different from yours and different from a monk[4]" (*Radical

Hospitality* 17). The individual emphasis of Benedictine hospitality ensures that even for

each monk the practice of hospitality might look different. A pragmatic approach toward

Benedictine hospitality reveals that not only is ever individual response different, but my

hospitable response may also look different in any given situation. One response to this

level of difference is to prepare to respond by attempting to always be open and available

to others.

Like John B. Bennett Dale Jacobs argues that as an individual stance hospitality

should provide the basis of our professional lives, and should guide our interactions with

colleagues, their research, and students. Bennett argues that hospitality is a "key virtue

for the academy," and defines it as "the extension of self in order to welcome the other by

sharing and receiving intellectual resources and insights" ("Academy and Hospitality"

23). Jacobs sees hospitality as more than a virtue, it is "the key to activating the kind of

intersubjective hope for change of which [he] spoke in [his] earlier article"[5] ("Audacity"

564). Within hospitality, Jacobs sees a focus on relationships that gives him hope, and

within the spiritual hospitality for which he advocates he sees an emphasis on personal

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[4] Father Holman works outside the monastery, so was attempting to differentiate himself from monks living in cloister.
[5] Jacobs is referring to his earlier *JAC* article on hope, "What's Hope Got to Do With It?: Toward a Theory of Hope and Pedagogy. "

change and responsibility that provide a foundation for systemic change. For Jacobs, acting hospitably towards colleagues, their research, and students means "Being open or available in this way means that we have to put aside what we think we know about our students and colleagues and actually listen to what they say in a way that gives serious consideration to their ideas" ("Audacity" 569). Since the individual is in control of how he or she listens to others and the depth of consideration given to their ideas, the change instigated by this form of hospitality begins with the self. Because personal change often appears a more plausible goal than institutional change acting hospitably in our professionals lives represents hope for Jacobs. While a person might not feel like she can change an entire system on her own, it seems within her reach to choose to act hospitably to those around her. Perhaps, her model of behavior will even inspire others, eventually leading to change.

Jacobs asks the reader to consider integrating hospitality in his or her professional life by adopting a hospitable, open and available stance. According to Jacobs, "Being open or available in this way means that we have to put aside what we think we know about our students and colleagues and actually listen to what they say in a way that gives serious consideration to their ideas" ("Audacity" 569). A practical application of this consideration could play out in instructor/student conferences. Let me provide an example of an instance where, in retrospect, I failed to act hospitably. In an effort to make the most of the limited time together, when preparing for conferences with students I would collect drafts then read through them marking them up so that my end notes could become a guide for the conference. Although I opened every conference with a

series of question I hoped demonstrated my openness to follow where the student would like to guide the session, my pre-written comments meant I had a previously set agenda for the conference. Of course, then the conference would typically end up as a discussion of those comments. First, I have to wonder how usefully our time was spent by me just re-hashing comments the student could read on his or her own later. Additionally, I now see my pre-conference agenda as an inhospitable move on my part. Thinking of Jacobs's advice, I realize having my own agenda prevented me from being open and available to the student.

Jacobs' advocacy of openness and availability comes with a caution. He argues that giving serious consideration to others ideas does not mean "we smile and nod while others espouse their ideas, ideas with which we may or may not agree. Rather it means 'laying our cards on the table' in such a way that our guests know what our positions are" ("Audacity" 569). Being open and available then is being forthright with our own agendas, making sure that others know where we stand. Extending my own example in light of this caution, I see the inhospitable move on my part was not necessarily my pre-set agenda, but not acknowledging it with the student at the beginning of the conference. One example Jacobs gives as a space in which it is possible to practice this style of openness is the contentious faculty meeting. In a contentious meeting Jacobs would argue that we must both give serious consideration to all sides and make sure those involved know where we stand.

What Jacobs's scenario does not account for is the power dynamic present between senior and junior, tenure track and non-tenure track faculty in this situation.

"Laying [ones] cards on the table" as an untenured faculty member is a very different risk than doing so as a tenured senior faculty member. While the senior faculty member may risk offending colleagues, resulting in an unpleasant working environment for a while, the untenured faculty member risks her ability to achieve tenure and promotion because the colleagues she offends will ultimately vote on her tenure and promotion. My intention here is not to imply tenured faculty do not face risk as well, but to highlight some of the power inequities at play in the meeting that might impact an individual's ability to lay her cards on the table.

To support his claim that hospitality requires participants to make their positions known Jacobs quotes Father Henri Nouwen, who says that those seeking to be hospitable must not "[hide] ourselves behind neutrality but [show] our ideas, opinions, and life style clearly and distinctly" (Nouwen 70 in Jacobs 569). Our hospitality must then be visible to those around us, which in Jacobs's example of the contentious faculty meeting means the potentially risky move of making our positions known. Not acknowledging the power structure in his example is a strategic choice in and of itself, one that allows Jacobs to ignore situational context of relationships between instructors and students, and instructors and colleagues. The context of these relationships, however, remains important. Although he continues the quotation, Jacobs does not engage with the second half. Nouwen says, "No real dialogue is possible between somebody and a nobody" (Nouwen 70 in Jacobs 569). In the relationship between the instructor and student, or an instructor and her colleagues there is always "a somebody" and "a nobody"; there is always someone with power and someone with less, or none. The instructor has the

power to evaluate the student. Even departmental colleagues are ranked and decide upon

each other's promotion through the ranks. Promoting a hospitable stance in these

relationships requires addressing their material context within a system of power and

rank.

Jacobs is right that making public where you stand on a particular issue is a

hospitable move. In addition to demonstrating to your colleagues where you stand, their

reactions will help you determine if the department is the right place for you. Ignoring the

influence of the institutional power circulating in a room, however, is impossible because

it determines whether or not a person feels comfortable to act hospitably by laying their

cards on the table. In addition to the influence of power in a meeting, there is also the

issue of interpretation. The hospitable move of making ones position known must be

recognized by others as hospitable in order to be seen as representing openness and

availability. Making one's position known has the potential to be read instead as a move

of aggression, an attempt to influence others to adopt the same stance. Inequities of

power and the potential misreading of the hospitable act impact an individual's ability to

choose to act hospitably in a situation like the contentious faculty meeting.

In this way the hospitality for which Jacobs advocates is much like the rhetoric of

silence. A choice that is powerful only when acknowledge or supported by others. Cheryl

Glenn asserts that remaining silent represents a powerful rhetorical choice, particularly in

our raucous contemporary moment (*Unspoken*). While I agree with Glenn remaining

silent is a powerful rhetorical choice, I question her assertion that "we can use it

purposefully and effectively" (*Unspoken* 13). Silence, like Jacob's hospitality, is only

powerful when it is recognized as a choice by the rhetor; it is too often misread as acquiescence, or tacit approval, rather than as purposeful dissent. Glenn acknowledges this point when she quotes Jean Bethke Elshtain "those silenced by power—whether overt or covert—are not people with nothing to say but are people without a public voice and space in which to say it" (*Unspoken* 10). When silence is expected of, or imposed upon, a particular group it is no longer a rhetorical option. The same is true of hospitality. In a room with individuals who have institutional power over a person, taking the risk of *laying ones cards on the table* may be radical and brave, but perhaps not really plausible. In the end, while I find myself agreeing with the core of what Glenn and Jacobs say, I find the practical application of their work difficult to envision within existing power structures.

The omission of context in Jacobs' work allows the hospitable metaphor to fit neatly, but falsely elides the considerable power relationships at play among colleagues or instructors and students. Just as silence and listening are not always a rhetorical option for those without power because they mean remaining unheard, it is not always possible for the student to make his position clear to an instructor who is evaluating him; nor is it always possible for the junior, or adjunct, faculty member to lay all her cards on the table in a faculty meeting in front of colleagues who will evaluate her tenure application. Making this kind of full disclosure leads to an unequal vulnerability for the person without power, because there is always the chance that the person with power will use the information gained in an unsanctioned manner.

In her response to Jacobs, Joanna Lin Want illustrates one danger of enacting personal stance hospitality in an institutional setting. It is too easily characterized, not as a deliberately chosen, radical stance, but as an emotional response. In an institutional setting, particularly the university, where any link to emotion has been used to label certain forms of work as "women's work," and subsequently relegating it to be performed for less pay, benefits, and status, branding hospitality as an emotional response is unproductive. Looking closely at Want's response demonstrates how easily the hospitable stance for which Jacobs advocates is co-opted into a language of emotion and caring which has historically been used to marginalize work done by compositionists[6].

Want's response begins with a metaphor to help readers visualize Jacobs' connection between hope and hospitality. In his article Jacobs asserts that "hospitality is an essential element of hope and how availability and listening are in turn essential elements of hospitality" (Jacobs in Want 241). Want extends this logic to argue that availability and listening are only possible through love.

> So we might imagine concentric circles, like those formed from a pebble thrown into a pond, with listening and availability as the center circle, out of which hospitality emanates, and in turn hope. However, this metaphor begs asking: what is the water itself, the medium through wish these circles emerge and low outward? Aided in my understanding by Jacobs's inquiry, I believe the answer is love. ("Listen to Strangers" 241)

Want interprets what Jacobs calls openness as listening to the other, and argues that the willingness to listen requires love. Love is the medium through which listening and

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[6] For a detailed discussion of how the work of composition is feminized see Miller "The Feminization of Composition" and Schell *Gypsy Academics and Mother-Teachers*.

availability flow. Want's assertion that love is the medium which makes hospitality

possible is supported by the Benedictine hospitality underscoring Jacobs' argument.

Holman and Pratt suggest listening, which is "the core of monastic life," and making

ourselves available to really listen to others is a radical act of love in direct opposition to

the fear and isolation of our daily lives (xiii).Listening and availability are too easily

characterized as passivity, too easily, as in Want's article linked to emotional states like

love, and within the university the consequences of this characterization are too great.

Publishing, speaking at conferences, defending one's position, and a rigorous,

challenging attitude towards students are desirable traits in the university. Listening

because it is perceived in opposition to speaking (or publishing), and availability because

it is perceived in opposition to staking a claim or position, and love because it is

perceived in opposition to intellect are not valued within the university. When discussed

at all, they become a part of the justification for the poor working conditions of part-time

workers. Part-time workers are said to be teaching "for the "love" of the subject," or out a

love for their students, or simply for the prestige of working at a university, all of which

comprise a kind of psychic income that is supposed to make up for the abysmal wages

and lack of benefits given many part-time instructors (Mayhew qtd. in Schell 40, Schell

40). The emotional labor of love, listening and availability too closely mirrors these

previous claims made that women, and the other low paid workers, chose composition for

the emotional satisfaction they gained.

Within our personal lives, the Benedictine hospitality advocated for by Jacobs and

Want is a powerful and radical stance to take in the contemporary world. Taking the time

to make ourselves available to others and to really listen to them subverts all the ways in which we typically distance ourselves from each other. As Holman and Pratt contend when someone listens to us and acknowledges us it makes us feel real. It is an antidote to feeling unheard so much of the time because people speak to each other over a laptop screen, or do not speak at all and communicate only through texts and messages. By personal lives, I specifically mean lives outside of work, the interpersonal connections made there are not typically influenced by institutional power structures constantly circulating in the work place. At work, however, the power structure of institutions changes the context significantly. While accepting risk is certainly a part of what makes offering or accepting hospitality in our personal lives a radical act, at work there is a point at which the risk becomes too great for hospitality to be an option. The power structure of a work place is a context for which neither Jacobs nor Want account. Starting with the individual in the university means starting with the instructors, and since composition instructors rarely have the protection of job security, or tenure, it means asking the most vulnerable population to take on the most risk in order to inspire change[7].

For instructors who do seek to implement a hospitable practice in the composition classroom, Haswell, Haswell and Blalock published, "Hospitality in College Composition Courses" in 2009. Haswell, Haswell and Blalock identify three ancient forms of hospitality Homeric, Judeo-Christian, and Nomadic, and discuss how each might be employed in the composition course. While the Judeo-Christian hospitality seems rooted

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[7] According to the 2012 Coalition on the Academic Workforce's report "Portrait of Part-Time Faculty Members" "The contingent academic work force now represents close to seventy percent of the faculty" (5). Data collected from the 2010 survey revealed that 42. 3% of survey respondents taught in the humanities, and 16. 4% of those taught English language and literature courses.

in a type of charity, giving without expecting anything in return, the reward it offers is linked to a specific belief system. From the Old Testament to the New, hospitality is represented as the ability to welcome strangers regardless of their rank, feeding, and sheltering them, with the promise that "those who welcome strangers into their earthly homes will be welcomed into an eternal home" (Haswell, Haswell and Blalock 713). Judeo-Christian hospitality involves taking on a risk that might seem unmanageable if the host does not believe in an eternal home. The far older Nomadic form of hospitality as represented by Haswell, Haswell and Blalock is not just charity, but an exchange between the host and the stranger. One offers food and shelter in exchange for what is considered of equal value: information from the larger world (713). Questioning whether or not instructors could ever really participate in an equal exchange of work with students, Haswell, Haswell and Blalock decide Nomadic hospitality does not fit the classroom either. Homeric hospitality, as represented in *The Iliad* binds allies against a common enemy through gift giving (712-13). Gifts are reserved for those with the potential to be allies, which makes Homeric hospitality exclusionary as Haswell, Haswell and Blalock point out "anyone marginal…has no place at the feast" (713). Despite the exclusionary elements of Homeric practice, they decide that of the three classical forms of hospitality "it is Homeric hospitality, with its praxis of group work aimed at a public goal that seems to fit current writing pedagogy best" (720). Using this form of hospitality, the writers argue students form alliances with instructors as they learn the ways of the institution.

In the end, Haswell, Haswell and Blalock promote a new form of hospitality, they call "transformative hospitality" that "situates a new triad of pedagogical R's: *risk taking*,

restlessness, and *resistance*" [emphasis original] (720). However, they also fail to take into account the institutional context in which they propose that an already vulnerable population take on such pedagogical risk taking. By situating transformative hospitality in the classroom, Haswell, Haswell and Blalock expect vulnerable instructors to take on the primary risk of enacting hospitality in an attempt to transform the university. Composition instructors, who already inhabit an insecure place in the institutional structure, may find it impossible to partake of the "risk-taking, restlessness, and resistance" Haswell, Haswell and Blalock advocate (720). In Chapter II, I provide a closer reading of the Haswell, Haswell and Blalock article to demonstrate difficulties I see with the form of hospitable practice for which they advocate.

While some compositionists propose practical applications for hospitality within departments or classrooms, others favor a more theoretical approach. In his response to Jacobs and Haswell, Haswell and Blalock, Matthew Heard argues that the practice of hospitality they describe is better labeled a pedagogy of generosity. Heard claims readers better understand the concept of generosity; he says "Generosity is within reach: one can choose to give up one's resources, and one can be instructed in how to give *better* or how to give *more*" (emphasis original "Hospitality and Generosity" 317). Not only are instructors better able to understand how to act generously, like community, generosity is a seductive way to think about composition, reinforcing the benevolent image of the composition instructor. Advocating for generosity is Heard's way of "attend[ing] closely to [the] tension between hospitality as a practice and hospitality as an impractical ideal" (316). In this case theory represents the impractical ideal, the goal to be attained rather

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than a vital aspect to our practice. Heard's greatest fear is that by attempting to put hospitality to use puts the field in "danger of foreclosing the very "radical" difference we ostensibly seek" (321). His answer is to leave the theory alone, to let it be "an ideal that must be pursued endlessly" (319). While it is true that I also question the pedagogical utility of hospitality, the path I choose to explore reflects the pragmatic influence on my thinking. Rather than promoting a further separation of hospitality theory and practice, like Berthoff, Peirce, James, Dewey and other pragmatic educators I search for a method that recognizes the integral, essential part hospitality theory must play in the identification of where hospitable practice is best implemented, and by whom.

In what was most likely a fluke of publication dates Heard's plea in *JAC* 30. 1 & 2 appeared a little dated because *JAC* 29. 3 was a special issue dedicated to the work of hospitality theorist Emmanuel Levinas. The issue focused not on the practice of composition, but relationship between Levinas and rhetoric. Given that as guest editor Michael Bernard-Donals put it "Levinas didn't have much good to say about rhetoric" devoting a special issue to address how his work might affect a field so closely aligned to rhetoric is slightly ironic ("Rhetoric Vexed" 471). Articles in the issue ranged from addressing the philosophical elements of Levinas' work, "Reading: Otherwise than Being: Asking after Patience" to linking that work to the philosophy of teaching "The Ethics of Teaching; or Beyond Rhetoric." For this dissertation the most important factor about each of these articles is that none of them dealt with any sort of hospitable practice for rhetoric or Writing Studies. Each article took up Haswell, Haswell and Blalock's "other route," focusing on the theory of hospitality to the exclusion of practice (708). The

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result is a set of articles that, while interesting, might lead an instructor to think of hospitality as just another instance of what Berthoff described as theory for the sake of theory without practical application to the classroom.

At the end of "The Present Dilemma in Philosophy" William James says "I hope I may lead you to find [pragmatism] just the mediating way of thinking that you require" (23). Throughout this dissertation, pragmatism acts primarily in this mediating fashion by compelling me to "[focus] on what is possible here and now and what would be achieved by doing it differently" (Miller, Skeffington 127). Reading Dale Jacobs, Haswell, Haswell and Blalock, Matthew Heard, and others who attempt to bring the philosophy, or practice of, hospitality into the composition classroom I questioned the consequences of these ideas. Each attempt to put hospitality into practice I read appeared flawed in some way, yet the idea of an intersection between hospitality, pragmatism, and composition continued to 'irritate my doubt' (Pierce, "How to" 33). As I read, the ideas all called and reached toward each other from the corners of my mind, but nothing I read put them into a configuration which soothed the doubt in my mind.

When scholars bring the Pragmatists and Levinas together they focus on specific issues like pedagogy and their differing conceptions of time because the pragmatic emphasis on usefulness, and immediacy oppose Levinas's insistence on infinity and the eternal. Determining someone, or something's, usefulness represents, for Levinas, a form of totalization because it traps the person or thing into the useful identity. Claire Elise Kats' article "The Presence of the Other is a Presence that Teaches: Levinas, Pragmatism, and Pedagogy*" explicitly explores the connection she sees between Levinas and

pragmatist educator John Dewey. Katz argues, "Dewey needs an account of ethics that is pre-political, that will allow the political to emerge and Levinas needs an account of education that will bridge his essays on Jewish education and his philosophical project" ("Presence" 99). According to Katz, Levinas's emphasis on the face to face meeting of individuals reinforces the Talmudic approach to learning that "takes for granted" what is "typically lacking in public education, namely, the desire to learn" ("Presence" 107). Levinas's ethics brings an interpersonal dimension to Dewey's educational project, which Katz sees as overly focused on the "cultivation of the citizen" ("Presence" 107). Katz's desire is not to supplant Dewey's educational method, or desire to educate the political body, but to supplement that political education with Levinas's ethical one. While my focus here is the intersection of pragmatic and Levinasian thought in the university, Katz confines her focus on the public school system.

Sandra B. Rosenthal's article "A Time for Being Ethical: Levinas and Pragmatism" connects Levinas to the Pragmatists through their concepts of time. Acknowledging the different eras in which they wrote or the "major difference in context" between Levinas and the pragmatists, Rosenthal identifies the key similarity in their work as their belief that in the "inherently social" nature of time ("A Time for Being" 197, 199). The primary difference between Levinas and the pragmatists, Rosenthal argues, is in their sense of continuity, of how we experience the passage of time; Levinas's conception of continuity stemming from Henri Bergson's concept of duration. Rosenthal characterizes duration as "composed of, is decomposable into, a discrete series of self-contained instants" ("A Time for Being" 193). The passage of time

is experienced by the passing of the discreet instant. Rosenthal characterizes Mead's pragmatic conception of the passage of time as stems from "the novel, the emergent, the different" ("A Time for Being" 199). Rosenthal argues that the pragmatic "[view of time], like that of Levinas, requires a rethinking of the meaning of freedom" ("A Time for Being" 199). Rosenthal sees the Pragmatists as a way of ameliorating Levinas's "utter passivity in encounter with the face of the other" to provide "the proper balance between creativity and passivity, self and other" ("A Time for Being" 199).

In this dissertation, I assert that hospitality and pragmatism provide a transformative lens through which to view Writing Studies. Rather than remaining an unsullied theory, or be forced into service as a pedagogy, I argue hospitality should be, as James' said of pragmatism, "a mediating term" (*Pragmatism* 23). A mediating term brings together separate elements, creating a new point for reflection. In their book *Reason to Believe* Roskelly and Ronald argue pragmatism acts as the kind of reflection that allows theory and practice to influence each other. They state, "Just as the relationship between word and meaning is mediated by the referent that puts the two together, so theory and practice are mediated by the kinds of reflection that allow each to be influenced by the other" (*Reason to Believe* 15). I agree with Roskelly and Ronald, and extend the argument to include hospitality as a similar kind of reflection, using hospitality as a mediating term, a referent, a frame for analysis reveals the context so essential to pragmatic action.

Currently, the traditional hospitable metaphor appears an appropriate lens through which to view the composition classroom because it seems to describe the reality of the

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space. The dyadic positions of host and guest are assigned easily to the instructor and students, while the idea of welcoming students into our community appeals to a noble sense of the mission of composition. Extending that metaphor the host is responsible for offering hospitality to the guest. In this case the instructor is responsible for offering hospitality to the students; however, when looking closely at the practical suggestions made to instructors wishing to practice hospitality in the classroom many of those elements are often outside the instructor's control. Using the traditional hospitable metaphor to describe hospitable action in the composition classroom does not stand the test of experience. As James might counsel us, figuring out why it is necessary to understand how the context of the composition classroom is different from other applications of the hospitable metaphor.

The difference is that the composition classroom is located within the institution of the university. In traditional applications of the hospitable metaphor the host offers the hospitality of his own home, of an environment which directly under his control. In the classroom the instructor does not share that sense of control. While the titular head of the course, at the broadest level the classroom belongs to the institution. As the ultimate "owner" of the composition classroom the institutional presence of the university is always felt in the relationships there. The traditional hospitable metaphor does not provide a way to acknowledge and account for the influence of the institution in the relationship between the instructor and student. Hospitality theory establishes a triadic hospitable metaphor that better accounts for relationships which occur within institutional settings. Using the triadic hospitable metaphor establishes mediating position through

which to analyze relationships, making more informed pragmatic decision making possible.

In Chapter II, through a close reading of Haswell, Haswell and Blalock's "Hospitality in College Composition Courses," I examine how the institutional location of the composition classroom and the material working conditions of composition instructors impacts the implementation of a hospitable pedagogy. I argue institutional influence in the classroom prevents instructors and students from fully engaging in a hospitable relationship. The instructor's working conditions within the university further undermines the potential for hospitality in the composition classroom. Instead, I propose the audacious and radical potential of hospitality in the institution occurs not as a practice, but as a means of analysis.

In Chapter III, "Determining Agency: The Triadic View of the Writing Program Administrator," I apply hospitality as a means of analysis to the position of the writing program administrator. The application reveals that while she is best positioned to make a hospitable pedagogy possible in the composition classroom, her own position in the university often mitigates her ability to do so. The application of hospitality is expanded in Chapter IV to include the work of the writing center. In "The Possibility of Hospitality: Visiting the Writing Center" I argue that the writing center provides a unique location in which to integrate hospitality as a mediating term and practice. The writing center is a part of the institutional structure, yet outside the influence of the typical circulation of power. Just as the writing program administrator could best create conditions to allow a hospitable pedagogy in the composition classroom, the writing center administrator has

the best opportunity to prepare the writing center to allow a hospitable relationship between the consultant and writer. The conclusion, "Hospitality: A Program for More Work" reveals why I feel the need for hospitality to find a place in the university is timely, and how I think hospitality could be useful for the composition classroom, writing program administration, and the writing studies.

CHAPTER II

THE HOSPITABLE METAPHOR AND THE COMPOSITION CLASSROOM

The claim behind Jacobs and Haswell, Haswell, and Blalock's desire to create a hospitable practice in the university is that it could be radical and transformative. Dale Jacobs argues that individuals adopting a hospitable stance or practice might "transform" departmental interactions, approaches to scholarship, and actions in the classroom (Audacity 567). The following year Haswell, Haswell and Blalock propose what they call transformative hospitality. Transformative hospitality, as described by Haswell, Haswell and Blalock, adopts John Bennett's "awareness that however initially strange, the perspective of the other could easily supplement and perhaps correct one's own work or even transform one's self-understanding … that different and even foreign perspectives can provide breakthroughs" (Bennett in Haswell, Haswell and Blalock 720). Haswell, Haswell and Blalock turn to traditional hospitality to provide a metaphor through which to describe how Bennett's awareness might function in the classroom. In an extended note at the end of the article, Haswell, Haswell and Blalock describe the many metaphors used to describe composition over the last century, and why they chose hospitality as the metaphor for their transformative pedagogy.

We note that where these metaphors of writing instruction include two or more people usually one of these persons is pictured as in control. The alpha member is always the teacher, seen, for instance, as shepherding the flock, tending the garden plants,

liberating the oppressed, or hosting the dinner. In only three tropes do two people of equal status image the composition classroom: marriage partners, traveling companions, and debatably, social dancers. Our return to traditional hospitality adds a fourth pair of equals—host and guest. ("Hospitality" 724)

In traditional hospitality Haswell, Haswell and Blalock see a metaphor of two equitable positions. The equality between the host and guest is essential for the authors because they propose that "For teacher and student alike, transformative hospitality situates a new triad of pedagogical Rs: risk taking, restlessness, and resistance" ("Hospitality" 720). The transformation of the proposed hospitable pedagogy stems from its influence on "teacher and student alike" ("Hospitality" 720). The influence of Paulo Friere, and other liberatory pedagogues is evident in Haswell, Haswell and Blalock's claim that the willingness to let others influence our ideas and self-understandings described by Bennett forms a foundation for a "relationship of dialog" between the host and guest who must remain open to one another (*Pedagogy* 69). In traditional hospitality Haswell, Haswell and Blalock see an extension of liberatory pedagogy that potentially addresses circumstances in which students are not as overtly oppressed as the Brazillian peasants with whom Friere worked.

While agreeing with each of these authors that hospitality has the potential to transform, I believe their adherence to the traditional metaphor of hospitality limits that transformation. In attempt to visually represent the relationship between words and ideas, Ann Berthoff describes a "curious triangle" in which the sides represent the relationship between a word, reference, and referent. The reference, the object, sits at the top of the

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triangle and the sides that connect it to a word and referent are solid; but the base line connecting the word and its referent is dotted. Demonstrating a post-structuralist perspective, Berthoff says:

> The dotted line stands for the fact that there is no immediate, direct relationship between words and things (including other words); we interpret the word or symbol by means of the idea it represents to us. It takes an idea to find an idea. We know reality in terms of our ideas of reality. ("A Curious Triangle" 44)

Berthoff reveals the power of words; words represent the ideas that shape reality. She argues that the curious triangle she describes "[helps] us keep in mind that we must include the beholder, the interpreter, in our account of texts; that texts require contexts and that contexts depend upon perspective" ("A Curious Triangle" 44). For Berthoff, the curious triangle represents a way to be aware of the context individuals bring to criticism. As more and more Writing Studies scholars argue that hospitality is the word that represents an idea that should shape the reality of teaching writing, I argue that it is necessary to remain aware of the context the term hospitality implies. Hospitality in its traditional configuration influences our perspective of the composition classroom, but does not allow for the institutional context of the classroom.

Hospitality in Literary Studies

Jacques Derrida made hospitality an element of discussion among post-modern theorists first by deconstructing *Totality and Infinity* in Writing and Difference, which was translated and published in English in 1978, then by continuing to explore Levinas's

ideas in later works such as the eponymous Of Hospitality and the eloquent and touching

Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas. Levinas's influence on Derrida even lingers in "On

Forgiveness." When Derrida closes his essay by describing his version of forgiveness he

says, "What I dream of, what I try to think as the 'purity' of a forgiveness worthy of its

name, would be a forgiveness without power: unconditional but without sovereignty," he

describes the type of infinite relationship towards which Levinas constantly pushes us

("On Forgiveness" 59). Forgiveness without power, as Derrida describes, would require

an acceptance of the other that does not pass judgment, or exert authority. Levinas's

influence is felt more subtly in Derrida's push toward the infinite and impossible, and his

hope that the impossible will happen. The likeliness of developing a new forgiveness is,

as Derrida says, "not around the corner, as is said. But since the hypothesis of this

unpresentable task announces itself, be it as a dream for thought, this madness is perhaps

not so mad …" ("On Forgiveness" 60). The infinite responsibility Levinas claims the

other requires of the self could also be cast as a "dream for thought;" Derrida, like

Levinas, conceives of the infinite, and perhaps impossible, not as a means of judgment,

but as a hopeful goal towards which to strive.

In *Of Hospitality* Derrida uses ancient texts to examine the foreigner's "right to

hospitality" and his impossible situation. Analyzing Socrates discussion of the foreigner

in the court, Derrida highlights that the foreigner "has to ask for hospitality in a language

which by definition is not his own, the one imposed on him by the master of the house,

the host, the king, the lord, the authorities, the nation, the State, the father, etc." (*Of

Hospitality* 12, 15). Forcing the other to use the language of his hosts is an attempt to

make the strange (the stranger) familiar. Having accepted the student's application, the university must then make the new student (the stranger) familiar to the existing community. Requiring all students to take composition demonstrates that the course is one attempt to integrate the new (foreign) students with the rest of the university community. While compositionists might argue against this view of composition, the perception persists as is evident every time a professor in another discipline declares students incapable of writing, and wonders what they learned in freshman composition.

Given the influence of deconstruction and Derrida on literary criticism, the hospitable metaphor quickly made its way into literary studies. In reaction to M.H. Abrams citation of Wayne Booth's claim that deconstructive readings of texts are "parasitical " (Booth's phrase) to the "obvious" (Abraham's phrase) reading of the text, J. Hillis Miller undertakes an exploration of the term "parasitical." Miller argues that both Abrams's "obvious" reading and a deconstructive one come from outside the text, and are therefore both guests and/or parasites of the text ("Critic as Host" 444). Miller goes on to describe the relationship between the text and the two readings as a "triangle, not a polar opposition" he refers to a "third to whom the two are related, something before them or between them, which they divide, consume, or exchange, across which they meet" ("Critic as Host" 444). Miller's argument is that the univocal and deconstructive reading cannot be separated from each other and therefore the text becomes the third element between them.

Miller's reference to this third presence, one which is related to but also consumed by the readings, mirrors Derrida's own discussion of the relationship between

the host and guest in "A Word of Welcome." Parsing the multiple means of the French

term hôte, which refers to both host and guest, Derrida says,

> The hôte who receives (the host), the one who welcomes the invited or received hôte (the guest), the welcoming hôte who considers himself the owner of the place, is in truth a hôte received in his own home. He receives the hospitality that he offers in his own home ("A Word" 41).

The assertion that the host is, in fact, a guest in his own home is a clear indication of

Levinas' influence on Derrida. Levinas says:

> The isolation of the home does not arouse magically, does not "chemically" provoke recollection, human subjectivity. The terms must be reversed: recollection, a work of separation, is concretized as existence in a dwelling, economic existences. Because the I exists recollected it takes refuge empirically in the home. (*Totality and Infinity* 154).

In order for the I to exist in Levinas's configuration there is a third, a presence that

welcomes the self into dwelling; it is the welcome of the self that turns the dwelling into

a home. Only after the self is recollected in his own home can he extend that welcome to

others (Totality 154). Within literary studies, the triadic nature of hospitality identified by

Levinas is preserved in this discussion of the third element existing between readings of

the texts. Returning to the focus of this chapter, it is my contention that the composition

classroom represents a space in which there should be a similar triadic understanding of

hospitality. Just as Miller argues that the readings of a text meet across a third element

(the text), and Levinas argues there is a third element that recollects the self, I argue that

the composition classroom exists as a similar third element. Because the university exists

to educate students it cannot survive without them, and because students need university certification to obtain their desired jobs, they need the university. The composition classroom, where students learn to communicate in the academic language of the university, is the third element, the space across which the student and university meet.

In the next section of this chapter, I argue the traditional hospitable metaphor with its narrow focus on host and guest has taken on what Ann Berthoff calls a "killer" quality. Berthoff applies the killer label to dichotomous relationships that appear to reflect reality so well they begin to actively shape reality. The primary example of a killer dichotomy is the relationship between theory and practice. The division between the two appears to reflect our reality so well, that it shapes our reality. The separate journals in the field of Writing Studies that are known as places for articles about practice (CCC, The Writing Lab News Letter) or places for articles about theory (JAC, The Writing Center Journal) demonstrates the strength of this killer dichotomy. While not a true dichotomy, the traditional hospitable metaphor has taken on this killer quality when applied to the university. The two positions of host and guest central to the traditional hospitable metaphor begin to shape our perceptions of the relationships to which the metaphor is applied. The result is that the analysis stops, and practice is promoted, at the level of who is welcoming whom.

Locations like composition classroom illustrate the killer aspect of the hospitable metaphor because, while outwardly there are two participants in the room, there is often a third party influencing the relationship between the apparent host and guest. The university presents an institutional challenge to the host/guest relationship because it

maintains a constant influence on the relationship between the instructor and student.

Grading and evaluation represents just one way the university maintains an influential

presence in the classroom. To determine that a student passed her courses and earned her

degree she must be evaluated in each course. Instructors have, in a sense, been hired to

provide that evaluation. The result is that, though intangible and unseen, the university is

always influencing the relationship between the instructor and student. Difficulty arises

because the traditional metaphor focuses only on the host and guest, which in the

composition classroom cannot account for the additional influence of the institution upon

that relationship.

Forestalling Analysis and Misplacing Action: Identifying the Killer Metaphor

The hospitable metaphor falls into the "killer" category Ann Berthoff describes

for dichotomies such as theory and practice. Berthoff calls such dichotomies killer

because they appear to correspond to the real work, which leads us to believe they

accurately describe the situation. The relationship, or lack thereof, between theory and

practice provides Berthoff with an example of the "killer" phenomenon. The relationship

between theory and practice represents a dichotomy because they are typically considered

mutually exclusive. Berthoff describes the danger of such dichotomies,

> What we need to remember is that dichotomies can forestall critical analysis if
> they are taken to correspond in a point-to-point way with the real world. If their
> logical function is misconceived, they become Killer Dichotomies, hazardous to
> both our theory and practice as writing teachers. ("Killer" 13)

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The point to point correspondence of the theory / practice dichotomy with the real world

functions in Berthoff's "killer" fashion because theory and practice are generally

considered mutually exclusive; therefore, arguments are made to support maintaining that

exclusivity. The arguments in support of maintaining the separation between theory and

practice further strengthens the perception that they are mutually exclusive, which

perpetuates the dichotomy. How scholars approach the relationship between composition

and hospitality reflects the killer nature of the theory / practice dichotomy. Haswell,

Haswell and Blalock provide one example of this phenomenon when they claim that in

their attempt to define a hospitable pedagogy for the composition they can "leave the

theory" to someone else ("Hospitality" 708). Conversely, Matthew Heard suggests that

the practice of hospitality be labeled "generosity" in order to preserve the theory of

hospitality by not linking it to a practice ("Hospitality and Generosity" 319-20).

These distinctions reinforce the dichotomy because "leaving the theory to others"

or putting it on the shelf for "preservation" interferes with our ability to analyze either

theory or practice in more complete or full ways. Dichotomies, like metaphors, shape our

thinking, and therefore will remain a vital part of our descriptions of the world, which

means the answer is not to eliminate dichotomies. The answer is to attempt to break the

"killer" part of the dichotomy that traps our thinking between the two poles. Berthoff

argues the killer aspect of a dichotomy is broken by defining creating a method that

"bring[s] together what we think we are doing and how are doing it," and that "method

raises our consciousness of just what our ideas are and how they are working for us—or

against us" (*Making of Meaning* 4). In this case, the attempts to keep the theory and

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practice of hospitality from influencing one another interfere with compositionists attempt to engage with "hospitality," because it obscures factors that potentially work against the application of this theory to the classroom.

The ability to be able to clearly determine the host and guest in a relationship serves as the foundation for the traditional hospitable metaphor because it is a means of determining responsibility. While not the center of discussion here, an example from what I refer to as physical hospitality best illustrates this point. Contemporarily, the food and hotel industries thrive and it is no longer necessary to host individuals at home; consequently, in most conversations the act of welcoming refers to the ambiance and service in a hotel or restaurant. This welcome can involve the material sharing of lodging and nourishment; thus, I refer to it as physical hospitality. Physical hospitality would also include Martha Stewart, Food Network, HGTV and the other sources that provide the contemporary rules to observe when individuals still welcome friends and family into their homes. These rules circulate because agreeing to act as a host means agreeing to act in a particular manner. For example, if I agree to house an exchange student, or invite a new acquaintance to my house for a meal, I have tacitly agreed to act as a host. When hosting a new friend for dinner, I might purchase more, perhaps special, food, and take more time preparing and presenting it. Agreeing to host someone from another country, as in the case of the exchange student, might also mean providing the person with particular experiences such as attending local sporting events, theatre, visiting national parks, etc. These are all actions for which I became tacitly responsible when I agreed to physically act as the host for another person. With physical hospitality the dyadic

metaphor works because the individual agreeing to take on the position of host has the authority and ability to fulfill the responsibility.

Consequently, though not a dichotomy, the dyadic hospitable metaphor has taken on a similar killer quality. Applying the dyadic metaphor to composition the composition classroom potentially interferes with what is thought about hospitality and composition by appearing to describe the existing relationship because it describes the most visible individuals in the room. The instructor assumes the role of host and the students that of guests. Analysis is forestalled, as Berthoff described, because all the elements of the dyadic metaphor have been fulfilled – there is a host and guest. Yet, the metaphor does not account for all the elements of the composition classroom. The institution remains an influential participant in this relationship for which the traditional hospitable metaphor is unable to account. The influence of the university should be dealt with because it actually compromises the instructor's ability to act as the host of the classroom.

Ensuring that the instructor has the ability to act as a host is necessary because performing the actions of a host is how an individual embodies the label. As Maurice Hamington says, "Hospitality is a performative act of identity," opening the door, ushering guests into our homes, being available and open to our colleagues, welcoming students into our classrooms, these acts position us and give us the identity of the host ("Toward" 24). Being able to act establishes the validity of the descriptive metaphor because those actions perform the identity of the label, making the individual a host. Elaborating upon his point, Hamington says, "There must be an "I" who gives, welcomes, and comforts, and that "I" is only known through action" ("Toward" 24).

While I might want to label myself "host," unless I am able to act appropriately there is

no way for me to instantiate that identity, to become the host. Returning to the classroom,

while the instructor would appear to be the obvious host for the students in the classroom,

the actions ascribed to hosting are not always within the instructor's control. The

instructor is unable to perform the actions that would make her recognizable as the host.

It is true the instructor often welcomes students into the classroom however that action

alone is not enough to perform the identity of host. Haswell, Haswell, and Blalock define

the five following actions to the instructor in the composition classroom.

> [Haswell, Haswell, and Blalock] assume that post-secondary composition teachers normally engage in at least five instructional practices: finding ways to meld students with course objectives and methodology, finding ways to work together with students, devising assignments and learning tasks, responding to student work, and testing or grading that work. ("Hospitality" 716)

Through the manipulation these five elements Haswell, Haswell and Blalock claim

instructors act as a host and create a hospitable classroom. However, these suggestions

overstate the instructor's control over many of these elements, and her ability to

instantiate the role of host to the student.

As they detail how these five practices can be hospitable Haswell, Haswell and

Blalock argue that course objectives become a set of "conditions" that only "happen to

apply where students and teacher meet" ("Hospitality" 716). When enacting a hospitable

pedagogy, the instructor should "give the student space and assistance dealing with those

conditions in ways that will not thwart or damage the student's growth in writing and

learning" ("Hospitality" 716). Giving the student assistance dealing with the conditions

of the course objectives requires a flexibility that instructors may or may not have.

Reacting to meet a particular class's needs could mean slowing down one particular unit,

which could result in three rather than four graded essays one semester. Departments

often require composition instructors to ensure students produce a certain number of

graded essays or pages, during the semester. Choosing to act as a host by giving the

student space or time to deal with the challenges of the course of the objects could

interfere with the instructor's ability to meet her job requirements.

If the composition instructor find herself working in an institution where she does

have some control that allows her to determine how students meet the course objectives,

students often remain resistant because they recognize the institutional consequences

linked to such a maneuver. Just as instructors often meet resistance when they attempt to

disrupt the power dynamics of a course, attempting to manipulate or negotiate the course

objectives meets resistance because the students recognize that the instructor always

maintains the power to grade their work. Consequently the move the instructor views as

creating a more democratic or welcoming classroom appears to the student as a form of

manipulation. The power of the grade is potent because students are told that grades

shape everything from their ability to make the honor roll, get/keep scholarships, to their

ability to get a job. The student's previous experience in school provides a pragmatic

confirmation of the power of the grade. Students' grades determined the courses they

took, their ability to graduate, their ability to get into a university. Arriving at the

university, students will not forget the importance of earning and keeping good grades. A

failing grade may prevent them from entering a major, or may force them to take longer

to get their degree, requiring more time, and money, that they may not have. With such high stakes, and consequences it is no wonder students are unable to believe the instructor who is trying to disrupt her institutional power by creating a hospitable environment. Additionally, instructors are also evaluated by the student's ability to meet the course objectives, which means manipulating them could have severe consequences for instructors as well.

Instructor's face both formal and informal evaluation based upon the grades they assign students. Formally, student's grades serve as one barometer of the quality of instruction. By itself grade distribution is not an accurate indicator of what happens in the classroom; however, coupled with classroom observations grade distribution may provide a writing program administrator with insight into the quality of instruction. In that way, instructors are institutionally assessed based upon how their students are graded. In addition, instructors are informally assessed by students based up on the grades they give. Students use grade distribution to make decisions about which courses to take. Students can check an instructor's grade distribution from the previous semester before determining which course to add to their schedule. In composition, the heavy reliance on adjunct labor means that instructor's depend in part on student enrollment to secure a position for the next semester. Attempting to manipulate the course objectives could affect an instructor's grade distribution, which formally and informally affects her ability to secure employment. Even with the influence or change the course objectives the potential consequences may prevent an instructor from doing so.

Haswell, Haswell and Blalock do not make a distinction between grading and assessment, however, to me grading refers to the process of evaluation and demonstrates the institutional influence in the classroom. Therefore, I use grading to describe the instructor's official evaluation of student work, and assessment to refer to the non-evaluative act of judging someone's ability to perform a task. Haswell, Haswell and Blalock acknowledge that grading is an impediment to implementing a hospitable pedagogy in the composition classroom.

> Of all the intrinsic functions of a writing course, assessment seems most inimical to customs of hospitality, which by its nature offers a radical escape from judgment, an outside-the-boundaries escape from ruling cultural values that keep strangers apart. Hospitable practice eschews educational systems preconditioning the status or rank of students for the teacher before the course begins – systems of tracking, placement, or academic major. In another way, however, hospitality is an intrinsic test of its own practice, or rather of human virtues such as good will, forbearance, and friendliness that underlie it. The success of writing teachers would be shown by the kind of writing – open, altruistic, truthful, useful – that their students become willing to practice. ("Hospitality" 717)

In order to reconcile the "inimical" nature of evaluation and hospitality, Haswell, Haswell and Blalock situate their hospitable practice in a future world. A "would be" world in which instructors were somehow evaluated on the kind of writing their students do, rather than whether or not their students met certain course objectives. Of course, this move only hides the fact that even in this future world someone would have to figure out how to evaluate student work to determine if it were "open, altruistic, truthful, useful" (717). Even within the hypothetical world Haswell, Haswell and Blalock describe it is impossible to escape the judgment associated with the composition classroom.

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Additionally, evaluation based upon the type of writing students are willing to produce is problematic, because if as a hospitable practice the students are "allow[ed], invit[ed] and encourag[ed]" to offer up their own "backgrounds, motives, and areas of expertise" then they must also be "allow[ed], invit[ed], and encourage[ed]" to refrain from this sharing as well. "Open and truthful" are properties in writing which are often inextricably linked with divulgence or confession, because what seems truthful to us is that which the author shares which makes her sympathetic, or demonstrates something she has overcome. If the instructor evaluates on writing that is "open, altruistic, truthful, and useful" then there will always be a pressure on the students to produce writing that privileges the sharing of "backgrounds, motives, and areas of expertise" ("Hospitality" 717). Students may feel compelled to share information they would rather have kept private. In this case, then the hospitable welcome that might invite them to share actually becomes a method of coercion, which is in and of itself inhospitable. The hospitable practice which Haswell, Haswell and Blalock attempt to define may "eschew educational systems," but the fact remains that the composition classroom exists as a part of those systems ("Hosptiality" 717). Students must be evaluated in order to determine if they have met the requirements for a degree. Instructors must be evaluated by administrators to ensure they are meeting the requirements of their employment within the system.

The Haswell, Haswell and Blalock passage regarding evaluation is striking because it illustrates the key way in which a hospitable practice in the composition classroom is disrupted. Haswell, Haswell and Blalock declare that hospitality "offers a radical escape…from ruling cultural values that keep strangers apart" ("Hospitality"

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717). Yet, as Joseph Harris comments the composition classroom actually functions as a way to welcome students to "learn our ways," to learn what are essentially "ruling cultural values" (Harris 118, Haswell, Haswell and Blalock 717). The fact that students come to the university specifically to learn the ways of the community, to take on "ruling cultural values" should prevent the application of the dyadic hospitable metaphor to this relationship (Harris 717). By the time students reach the composition classroom, their membership in the university community is already established. They received a letter of acceptance, attended orientation, and paid their tuition, which all signify their membership in this new community. The instructor is not so much the student's host in a new community as he is a master with whom the student serves an apprenticeship. The master and apprentice image of the instructor and student could provide an interesting way to consider the composition classroom, but like the host and guest it lacks the ability to account for the influence of the institution.

Fortunately, in addition identifying killer metaphors, Berthoff offers a way to disrupt them. Once again drawing on the Pragmatic influences on her thinking, Berthoff proposes that triadicity, which "sees the distinction between the sign and what it signifies not as a gaping abyss but as a relationship mediated by interpretation" provides a new perspective from which to analyze the dyadic relationship ("Problem-Dissolving" 9). Understanding the relationship between the sign and the signified as an interpretation opens up the apparent polarity between terms like theory/practice and fact/opinion to new interpretation. In this chapter I argue that adopting a triadic metaphor of hospitality encourages a new interpretation of the composition classroom.

The Position of the Composition Instructor

In order to understand how the composition instructor's actions are constrained by the university influence on her relationship, it is necessary to describe her material working conditions. In what has been referred to as the "adjunctification" of composition, administrators rely heavily on teaching assistants, and part-time labor to teach first year writing. The trend towards reliance on temporary labor stretches beyond composition to the rest of the university. The issues surrounding adjunct and part-time labor are being addressed and challenged by groups like New Faculty Majority, and have found their way into discussions on academic forums like The Chronicle of Higher Education, and Inside Higher Ed. On January 4th 2013, Audrey Wilson June and Jonah Newman published an article in The Chronicle describing the rise of the Adjunct Project begun by Michael Boldt. The project began as a spreadsheet created to give adjunct faculty around the nation a resource when looking for job. The spreadsheet tracked how much different schools paid per course, and whether or not adjuncts had access to benefits like health insurance and faculty governance. Working with The Chronicle Boldt has expanded the spreadsheet into a website ("Adjunct Project Reveals").

Founded in 2007, New Faculty Majority (NFM) "engages in education and advocacy to provide economic justice and academic equity for all college faculty" ("NFM's Mission"). Economic justice and academic equity are outlined in the NFM's 7 goals. The goals call for equity in compensation, job security, academic freedom, faculty governance, professional advancement, benefits, and unemployment insurance ("NFM's 7 Goals"). The lack of job security, health and retirement benefits, and unemployment

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insurance typically experienced by adjunct faculty often forces them to work at multiple institutions in order to earn a living wage, and leaves them scrambling to find work several months out of the year. These goals are designed to ensure that non-tenure track and adjunct faculty experience the same financial and job security available to tenured faculty.

The working conditions of contingent faculty are certainly a concern throughout the university; however, as Eileen Schell and Patricia Stock comment, "Composition studies is a particularly fitting vantage point from which to study the academy's turn toward contingent employment as it has long been an instructional area staffed by non-tenure-track faculty and graduate teaching assistants" ("Working Contingent Faculty" 7-8). Schell and Stock's claim about the special vantage point in composition studies is born out in the 2011 College English special topic issue focused on contingent faculty. In the introduction the co-editors co-edited by Mike Palmquist and Sue Doe state "nearly 70 percent of all composition courses, and roughly 40 percent of all lower-divisions literature courses are now taught by faculty in contingent positions" (2007 ADE Ad Hoc Committee on Staffing in Palmquist and Doe). The working conditions of contingent faculty directly affect the teaching of composition because they comprise the majority of the instructors in those classes.

As a part of the ongoing effort to draw attention to the situation faced by contingent faculty, Tony Scott describes their working conditions as follows:

- Sixty percent of full-time, non-tenure-track faculty make less than $28,000 dollars per year.

•   Twenty-one percent of part-time faculty earn less than $2,000 per course, and 60 percent earn less than $3,000 per course.

•   Less than half (47 percent) of part-time faculty paid by the course get six weeks' notice of their teaching assignments.

•   Less than half of part-time faculty paid by the course (37 percent), as compared to 100 percent of full-time, tenure-track faculty, have access to a health plan through their work. ("Managing Labor and Literacy" 154)

The working conditions described in these bullets indicate how instructors may struggle to balance the need to make a living wage with the desire to implement a specific pedagogy. As is often described in the literature surrounding contingent faculty, many instructors teach at multiple institutions, balancing the possibly conflicting demands of different writing programs. Without adequate notice of teaching assignments, instructors may find themselves relying on departmental syllabi and course assignments that may reflect a different pedagogy from their own.

In the College English issue on contingent faculty Doug Sweet describes the consequences of the working conditions described by Scott.

> As someone who toiled for a number of years as a freeway flyer, cobbling a living wage by hiring myself out to a handful of colleges at any given time, I have a good idea of the epistemological and pedagogical contortions needed to stay in good graces with institutions writing programs, and my own tenuous sense of myself as a teacher of composition. (Bilia et al. "Forum on Identity"379).

Sweet's description highlights the pressures of low wages that may require instructors to "cobble" together a living by working at multiple institutions, and the "pedagogical contortions" required by working in multiple writing programs. The necessity of such

contortions indicates one reason why instructors may not feel as though they have the ability to control the pedagogy practiced in their classroom.

In the same issue, Angela Bilia echoes that lack of control when she describes her position, having been hired as an instructor, a position she notes required a PhD, the position was subsequently reclassified as a lecturer, which effectively lowered her rank and put her in a less stable position ("Forum on Identity" 381)

> In this position, I've encountered conflicts that are indicative of the subordinate role that composition plays in departments of English, such as the *inability to run my classes the way I want* and my department's reliance on a system of teaching assessment that turns out to be a management and control mechanism for contingent faculty. [emphasis mine] ("Forum on Identity" 381)

The pedagogical contortions, lack of pedagogical control, and sense of management and control exhibited in Sweet and Bilia's descriptions of their experiences as contingent faculty illustrate how the context of instructor working conditions should be considered when advocating for a particular form of pedagogy. Each element represents a possible impediment to the instructor's ability to determine the pedagogy best suited for the classroom. Because Haswell, Haswell and Blalock advocate specific actions the instructor can make to implement a hospitable pedagogy, I felt it important to include this brief section to provide some context for why those choices might not be that easy. Sweet and Bilia describe situations familiar to many of the contingent instructors teaching composition, but not all. There are institutions that have taken to heart the 1987 Wyoming Resolution and let its recommendations influence its hiring and governance pratices . While some local changes have been made, these working conditions do still

exist, and they represent an important context to consider when advocating for a particular form of pedagogy.

Creating the Space for Action: Expanding the Metaphor

In his philosophical work defining a phenomenological ethics, Levinas uses a hospitable metaphor to discuss the relationship between the self and other. Levinas claims we make meaning of ourselves through our responsibility and relationship with the other. Levinas' position is, as Megan Craig describes, a "Copernican" revolution for philosophical thought. According to Craig, just as Copernicus changed our perception of the universe by placing the sun, rather than the earth, at its center "Levinas dethrones the "I," the "ego," and "consciousness" from their privileged position at the center of subjectivity," and replaces it with the other (*Levinas and James* 2). This revolution is important because it illustrates Levinas's claim that the self requires an Other to make meaning of himself. The self defines his identity by responding to those around him, by seeing in them what he is not. The importance Levinas places on our relationships with other is certainly an aspect of what has drawn such a wide variety of scholars to his work. In this section, I identify the roles Levinas uses when defining an individual's hospitable relationship with others. Taking those roles out of the phenomenological realm, I map them onto the interpersonal relationships occurring in the composition classroom as a means of determining where the responsibility for action lies.

The metaphor of the dwelling establishes a threshold, across which the self welcomes the other. Levinas' choice to domesticate his configuration of the self and other

is important because it illustrates the inherent risks involved with hospitality. As the

ancient stories of travelers trapped in fairy worlds by accepting food or drink from their

hosts warn us, once the guest enters the dwelling of the host, there is the risk that he will

never be allowed to leave. As we learn from ancient stories and urban legends alike, for

the host there is the risk that the guest will harm himself or his family. In addition to

highlighting the risks of hospitality, bringing the self and other into contact through the

metaphor of the dwelling, Levinas sets up an important aspect to his thinking,

recollection. Levinas says, "Because the I exists recollected it takes refuge empirically in

the home" (*Totality and Infinity* 154). The dwelling of the self is not a home until the self

is "recollected" within it. The recollection of the self to himself makes the dwelling a

home from which a welcome can be extended. For Levinas then, the hospitable metaphor

is more complicated than just the traditional roles of the host and guest. There must also

always be a participant in the relationship who first recollects the self/host to himself,

which allows him to then turn his face outward to welcome a guest.

The question here in terms of the composition classroom then is who, or what, is

the other that can recollect the self to himself. Levinas says "this refers us to its essential

interiority, and to the inhabitant that inhabits it before every inhabitant, the welcoming

one par excellence, welcome in itself – the feminine being" (*Totality and Infinity* 157).

As the "inhabitant before every inhabitant" the feminine being recollects the host to

himself, making his dwelling a home, and allowing him to extend that welcome outward

to the stranger at his threshold (*Totality and Infinity* 157). This figure that welcomes the

host into his dwelling is described as "revealed simultaneously with this presence in its

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withdrawal and in its absence" (*Totality and Infinity* 155). It is a presence influencing the relationship between the self and other, but remains unseen. When applying this third position in the hospitable metaphor to a physical relationship it is necessary to look for a presence that exerts influence without physically being present. In the composition classroom, the presence of the university is felt through evaluation, yet to the observer the primary relationship exists between the instructor and student.

The feminine figure that welcomes the self is essential to Levinas because without this element the self would never feel at home enough to extend that welcome outward to a guest. The metaphor Levinas creates for hospitality is then more complicated than a simple relationship between the host and guest. Many commentators address the issues that arise from Levinas's reductive use of the feminine, but few address the hostess as a participant in the hospitable relationship. As Tracy McNulty describes the feminine figure as one "whose hidden presence is crucial to the destiny of the masterful self" (*Hostess*, xxv). McNulty calls this feminine figure the hostess. Although the hostess is central to Levinas's work, McNulty also acknowledges that this aspect of hospitality has been "largely ignored by philosophical commentators" (*Hostess* xxv). Rather than setting it aside, this additional position makes it possible to better account for the complex relationship in the composition classroom. If, in order to act as a host, the instructor must first feel recollected in the space of the classroom then part of the task of establishing a hospitable practice in the classroom should be to identify this third figure, the one who first welcomes the instructor and provides her the opportunity to be recollected to herself.

Before applying this position to the classroom, however, it is necessary to intervene in Levinas' gendered construction of this position as "feminine," as "Woman" (*Totality and Infinity* 155). In order to complicate the relationship between the host/guest at the core of the hospitable metaphor, I argue that this "feminine" presence needs a label in the hospitable metaphor (*Totality and Infinity* 155). Assigning this figure a label in the hospitable metaphor, following McNulty's lead to label the figure the hostess is tempting. As McNulty points out, "Levinas tends to link "feminine hospitality" to qualities supposedly innate in women, like maternal love, empathy, or care" (*Hostess*, xxv). Choosing a term that visually reinforces gendered assumption about this third position is problematic, however, given the work women like Diane Perpich, Catherine Chalier, Tina Chanter, Luce Irigaray, and others have done to try to undo this unfortunate formulation. As Perpich says, "feminists who see in Levinas's ethics an important valorization of difference and a rejection of essentialist and reductive conceptions of human nature find themselves in the difficult position of having to defend, or at least account for, this notion of the feminine and for the seemingly sexist, patriarchal language in which it is expressed" ("From the Caress" 29). The awkward feminine construct accounts for theorists desire to "set aside and ignore" the dwelling and third participant in the hospitable metaphor (McNulty *The Hostess* xxv). As in the case of the composition classroom, however, the avoidance of the third position leads to the misapplication of the dyadic hospitable metaphor.

Like Perpich, I believe that by "situating the account of the feminine more directly within the fundamental problematic of Levinas's thought readings of Levinas

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should no longer be able to treat the feminine and the erotic as a side issues of only peripheral interest or importance for a full understanding of his thought" ("From the Caress" 48). Identifying a triadic metaphor for hospitality is one positive outcome of keeping the feminine essential to readings of Levinas. Given the negative way the field of Writing Studies has been feminized, however, it is not completely responsible to argue for a clearly feminine third position such as hostess when describing the composition classroom. In a 1991 article, Sue Ellen Holbrook identified feminization as a process in which a field "become[s] associated with feminine attributes and populated by the female gender" ("Women's Work" 201). Feminized work is considered women's work, which "is service oriented; it pays less than men's work; it is devalued" ("Women's Work" 202). Accepting hostess as a label for this third position would unproductively further feminize the field of Writing Studies. I promote a label that keeps the attributes Levinas assigns to the feminine as one who provides the ultimate welcome, and the presence which is also an absence without reinforcing the gendered stereotypes as the term hostess might.

As the "inhabitant before every inhabitant" the hostess prepares the space of the dwelling in order for the host to consider it a home (*Totality and Infinity* 157). Therefore, when applying this triadic hospitable metaphor to Writing Studies I propose calling this position the "Preparer." Adopting a hospitable metaphor that includes the preparer provides us with a pragmatic way to account for situations in which we can theoretically identify a host and guest without being able to account for why hospitality may not work as a practice. The composition classroom is a prime example of this type of

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configuration. In the next section I will apply the triadic, preparer-host-guest, metaphor to the composition classroom as a means of analysis to identify where the responsibility for hospitable action lies within this relationship.

Applying the Metaphor

My earlier analysis shows that by attempting to establish a hospitable pedagogy Haswell, Haswell and Blalock illustrate how the dyadic hospitable metaphor is unsuited for the composition classroom. The dyadic metaphor fails to account for the influence of the institution on the relationship between the instructor and student. If, as Levinas proposes, the preparer must first welcome the host before the host welcomes the guest, then the preparer bears the first responsibility for hospitable action. At the broadest level the university, the institution, is the preparer. It is the discreet absence in the room with the instructor and students; however, since the institution itself cannot act it must have a local representative acting on its behalf. For the composition classroom that local representative is the writing program administrator. Though the crux of their article is about how instructors can enact a hospitable pedagogy, Haswell, Haswell and Blalock admit the enactment of hospitality actually belongs first to the administrator when they say, "It might seem an epic WPA feat to promote, enable, and sustain a hospitable environment across more than fifty sections" ("Hospitality" 721). This statement also supports my claim that it is the writing program administrator who acts as the preparer for the classroom.

The writing program administrator must first establish hospitality as a possibility for the classroom. If the writing program administrator has not first welcomed the instructor into the program community, then the instructor will be unable to extend hospitality to the students she encounters. Preparing the space of the classroom to ensure that the instructor can "recollect" herself in the classroom, the writing program administrator must create course objectives and policies flexible enough that an instructor feels able to adapt them as needed. This first welcome from the instructor serves as Levinas's "recollection." Seeing herself in the program community the instructor feels supported and able to disrupt classroom traditions such as determining how to meet the course objectives without fear of reprisal. The ability to disrupt the paradigm when possible enables the instructor to best welcome the student into the classroom as Haswell, Haswell and Blalock suggest. The WPA most nearly represents the university in the relationship between the instructor and student. She hires and manages instructors, and is the first authority to whom students turn. While physically she is a "discrete absence" in the classroom, her institutional power assures her constant influence.

In this chapter, by closely examining Haswell, Haswell and Blalock's attempt to create a hospitable pedagogy for the composition classroom, I establish that the traditional dyadic metaphor of hospitality is functioning in what Ann Berthoff describes as a killer way. Because the positions of host and guest appear to so closely reflect reality they begin to shape how we see that reality, and hide other influential participants in relationships we would like to define as hospitable. Returning to the work of Emmanuel Levinas, I show that he speaks of hospitality not as a dyadic relationship, but a triadic

one. Giving the third position in his metaphor the label preparer, I then apply this triadic

metaphor to the composition classroom, which reveals that it is the WPA who is most

responsible for creating a hospitable environment in the composition classroom. In the

next chapter I will explore this idea further, using the triadic hospitable metaphor as a

means of analysis to reveal how the writing program administrator might act hospitably,

and what might prevent her from doing so.

CHAPTER III

DETERMINING AGENCY: THE TRIADIC VIEW OF THE WRITING PROGRAM
ADMINISTRATOR

> Hired to provide leadership, on the one hand, but frequently positioned without
> resources or authority, on the other, writing program administrators (WPAs) all
> too often find themselves caught in a debilitating paradox.
> ~ Donna Strickland

Creating the Conditions: The Writing Program Administrator as Preparer

When applied to the composition classroom, the triadic metaphor of hospitality

challenges the observer to identify the preparer of the space. The conditions created by

the preparer affect how well the instructor is able to perform the role of host for the

students. As discussed in the previous chapter, in the broadest sense the preparer of the

composition classroom is the institution itself because the relationship between the

instructor and student is influenced by the institutional power the instructor wields when

grading. The institution, however, does not act directly it requires a local representative to

act on its behalf. In the case of the composition classroom that local representative is the

writing program administrator. The administrator, who is typically responsible for the

hiring, training, and supervising composition instructors, creates occupies the position of

preparer for the composition classroom.

Within its first year of publication the WPA: Writing Program Administration

journal published an editorial by Kenneth Bruffee. The editorial was a reprinting of an

address he gave to the MLA Teaching of Writing Division in which he attempted to

define writing program administration for writing teachers, and those outside the profession. Bruffee's piece defined writing program administration as teaching: teaching "junior faculty and teaching assistants how to teach writing," teaching senior faculty "the prevailing ideas about teaching writing," teaching faculty in other departments how to "deal with poorly written papers," teaching them how to construct effective writing assignments, and even teaching faculty from across the disciplines "the educational value of assigning papers at all" ("Editorial" 10-11). He concludes his editorial by stating that "Writing program administrators in fact teach students how to write in almost exactly the same sense—although not, of course, in the same ways – that we classroom teachers teach students how to write, because both of us are actively undertaking *to create conditions in which learning can occur*"[emphasis original] ("Editorial" 11-12). Although the field of writing program administration has developed since then, Bruffee's thirty- four year old editorial statement underscores that the administrator's impact on the composition classroom has been understood, if not fully explored, from the beginning of the field.

Bruffee's editorial provides an appropriate frame for this chapter because, in addition to underscoring the administrator's influence on the classroom, it obliquely addresses a tension within the field. In his desire to create a bridge between administrator's and classroom teachers, Bruffee does not address "the managerial tasks of making up schedules, assigning classes, hiring and firing, that sort of thing" ("Editorial"11). In fact, Bruffee sets the two sides of writing program administration – the educational work and the managerial work – at odds by stating that "the most

important part of their job is not managerial but directly educational" ("Editorial 11).

Analyzing the writing program administrator's work through the triadic hospitable

metaphor reveals how the conditions of the administrator's managerial work affect his or

her ability to perform the educational work of "creat[ing] the conditions in which

learning can occur" ("Editorial" 11). Depending on the context such as if the writing

program administrator's decisions will impact the composition classroom, or the

instructor's working conditions, the writing program administrator occupies different,

often conflicting, positions in the triadic hospitable metaphor. In regard to the

composition classroom, the writing program administrator acts as preparer, setting the

conditions in which the instructor performs his or her duty. However, the writing

program administrator acts as a host for the university in her direct relationship with the

instructor. The tension between the two positions held by the writing program

administrator is illustrated by the paradox described in the Donna Strickland epigraph to

this chapter. The WPA is "hired to provide leadership" or, in other words, to act as the

preparer in the relationship between the instructor and student, yet as the university's host

of the writing instructor she is "frequently positioned without resources or authority" to

implement the changes that would make hospitality possible (Strickland "The Invisible

Work" 73).

As the preparer the writing program administrator is particularly important in the

composition classroom because the transient nature of the instructor pool means that if a

student has a question after the end of the semester she must often turn to the WPA. As

Chapter II showed, composition instructors are typically non-tenure track, adjunct labor,

and so seldom constitute a stable presence on campus. Having, in some cases, been hired

only weeks before the semester began, and, in many cases, working at multiple

institutions, composition instructors do not have the time to learn about, or even much

experience with the campus community into which they welcome students. Eileen Schell

quotes Helen O'Grady's description of her experiences teaching over 60 students a

semester at multiple campuses. O'Grady asserts "multiple appointments multiplies time

spent negotiating different institutional philosophies and different student demographics,

not to mention the time driving from one place to another" (qtd in Schell "Part-

Time/Adjunct Issues" 185). Even though as the preparer the writing program

administrator may remain an unseen presence in the classroom, if the instructor leaves the

university at the end of the semester, the administrator becomes represents the instructor

in any additional interactions with a student.

One even more direct and far reaching way the writing program administrator, as

preparer, influences the learning conditions of the classroom is by setting the course

objectives, policies, and in some cases choosing the textbooks. Even though these choices

may happen in dialogue with other tenured colleagues, the writing program administrator

remains responsible for the enforcement of these policies and procedures, and serves as

the face of the department for the instructors. All these factors contribute to establishing

the writing program administrator as the preparer of the classroom. Providing part-time,

adjunct faculty the opportunity to participate in departmental governance appears to be

one solution to making instructors feel as though they have the ability to act as hosts to

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their students; however, part-time and adjunct faculties with heavy teaching loads at multiple institutions may greet attempts to include them in departmental activities warily.

Carrie Leverenz shares a story of an administrator committed to giving part-time and adjunct faculty voting rights within the department. The adjunct faculty were "hesitant to speak" at departmental meetings, and tenure-track faculty, "who had opposed their inclusion ignored their presence" ("What's Ethics Got"12-3). Although present for discussions of faculty governance, the part-time faculty remained unheard. Initially, just as difficult for part-time and adjunct faculty to trust their influence in departmental conversations as it was for the traditional faculty to allow them to participate. While in Leverenz's anecdote everyone eventually learned to value the presence of others in departmental discussions, "the transition wasn't easy for anyone" ("What's Ethics Got" 12). This story illustrates that there are no easy answers for writing program administrators seeking to create the conditions necessary for hospitable classrooms. As shown throughout this chapter, the writing program administrator's ability to act as the preparer of the composition classroom is often influenced by everyone from part-time instructors, to tenured faculty, to department chairs, and university policy.

Writing program administrators can prepare an environment in which instructors can practice a hospitable pedagogy by providing them with the freedom to make choices in developing their courses. In my own experience the environment in which I learned the most and felt best able to choose a hospitable stance in the classroom happened as a graduate teaching assistant. The department provided us with an academically hospitable welcome, treating us, to paraphrase John B. Bennett, as fellow teachers ("Academy" 25).

At the beginning of August new teaching assistants attended a week-long training with the Director of Composition and the Graduate Assistant Director of Composition where we learned about the program, and constructed our syllabi together. During training we learned about the student population, the departmental philosophy, and some common assignments to help meet the departmental goals. What I remember most clearly is that there were very few rules to follow. We had to practice delayed grading, which meant giving the students multiple opportunities to revise before turning in a substantial portfolio at the end of the semester. End of the semester portfolios needed to account for at least 50% of the grade, contain at least 25 pages of revised writing, and there had to be an assignment that incorporated research.

During that semester, we were provided with a common reader to use in class, but could choose our own in subsequent semesters. As a new teacher, so many choices frustrated me, and felt like an immense responsibility; however, the freedom to make those choices demonstrated the departmental writing program administrator's trust in us as instructors, and gave us the freedom to create the classroom environment that worked best for us. Since then having worked in situations where the text, assignments, and evaluative method were chosen for me, I appreciate the freedom I had as a graduate teaching assistant because I recognize that in Levinasian terms it allowed me to feel recollected within the department. Allowing me the space to learn who I was and what I valued as an instructor, the program administrators made those choices feel empowered to make decisions that reflected the needs of my students. Reviewing my experience in light of the triadic hospitable metaphor, the writing program administrators in my

department created a space in which, I could take responsibility for hosting the students in my course.

Working at other institutions and reading for this project, I realize how unique my experience was. As the writing program administrator in my program taught me about early American pragmatism in our course, she also demonstrated those principles by preparing a space in which, as a new instructor, I had the autonomy to experiment. My classroom was a place to test the consequences of the pedagogies and teaching philosophies I was developing. Marc Bousquet's statement that writing teachers are "frequently denied such basic classroom autonomies as choosing their texts, assignments, and pedagogies …" underscores the unique nature of my experience ("Introduction: Does" 4). Departments that impose syllabi, assignments, and texts deny instructors the opportunity to act as a host in the classroom. Unless the pedagogy of the department and the writing program administrator actively supports hospitality in the classroom by supporting instructor's ability to choose to "devis[e] assignments and learning tasks, [respond] to student work, and [find] ways to work together with students" enacting a hospitable pedagogy as Haswell, Haswell and Blalock suggest could cost an instructor her job (Haswell, Haswell and Blalock 716).

In their essay, "When Critical Pedagogy Becomes Bad Teaching: Blunders in Adjunct Review" William H. Thelin and Leann Bertoncini describe the consequence of practicing a critical pedagogy in an unsupportive department. They highlight the fact that "The conditions under which adjunct faculty work in English departments … can undermine attempts at implementing critical pedagogy" (132). The narrative that follows

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describes Bertoncini's increasingly poor reviews as her student centered, critical pedagogy is misread as incompetence, which leads to her termination ("When Critical" 141). Thelin helps to frame Bertoncini's story in the context of his own theory of blundering, which he developed with John Tassoni. Tassoni and Thelin developed their concept of the blunderer, defined as "—the critical pedagogue who either failed to accomplish his or her goal, or looked like he or she had failed, due to dominant perceptions of the form teaching should take," in response to the dominant narratives of successful pedagogies that appeared to offer "sure-fire solutions" to complex problems ("When Critical" 133). Thelin admits, however, that "the consequences for blundering were not discussed much" and that the "authors in our [Thelin & Tassoni] book were relatively privileged" ("When Critical" 134). Bertoncini's story forces Thelin to understand that enacting a critical pedagogy, or blundering, carries a greater risk for adjunct, part-time faculty. Instructors who choose to enact a critical, or for the purposes of my argument hospitable, pedagogy without the support of the department risk having their work misread, which can carry severe consequences.

My own experience and Bertocini's reveal how essential and risky the "blundering" associated with a critical pedagogy can be for learning. As a new instructor the writing program administrators with whom I worked prepared a program in which I felt comfortable allowing me to take the risks that created the conditions that allow the students and I to learn. In Levinasian terms, it was a program in which I felt "recollected," and in Bennett's phrasing it was a program in which I felt as though I "matter[ed] as [a] fellow inquirer" ("Academy" 25). The space the writing program

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administrator prepared for me, as well as the pragmatic reflection she encouraged,

enabled me to learn as much from the assignments and activities that went awry as I did

from those which went well. Bertocini's story reveals the risk for instructors who attempt

to enact critical, or hospitable, pedagogies without the support of the writing program

administrator.

Levinasian Responsibility and Pragmatic Fallibilism

Levinas conceived the triadic metaphor of hospitality to describe the relationship

between the self and other. Accepting Levinas's conception of hospitality, then the host is

only able to welcome the guest when he first feels welcomed into his own home by the

preparer. In this conception of hospitality it is the preparer who is most responsible for

action. By tying the self's ability to respond to the stranger to a previously felt welcome

provided by the preparer, Levinas placed the other at the center of the philosophical

thought. It is the self's response to the other that calls him into being rather than any form

of self-awareness. Levinas claims that the other disrupts the thinking self by calling to the

individual, turning him outward. Complicating the Cartesian conception of the self,

Levinas claims "I" am, not because I think, but because I respond.

In his 1934 study of early childhood development, *Thought and Language*, Lev

Vygotsky established that we "become aware of ourselves because we are aware of

others" (Kozulin xxiv). Vygotsky also maintained that "Thought is not merely expressed

in words; it comes into existence through them" (*Thought and Language* 218). Alex

Kozulin illustrates this concept by describing how a child develops indicatory gestures:

> At first it is simply an unsuccessful grasping movement directed at an object. … When mother comes to the aid of the child, the situation acquires a different character. Gesture "in-itself" becomes gesture "for-others." Others (mother in our case) interpret the child's grasping movement as an indicatory gesture, thus turning it into a socially meaningful communicative act. Only afterward does the child become aware of the communicative power of his movement. He then starts addressing his gesture to adults, rather than to an object, which was the focus of his interest in the first place. (xxvii)

The unorganized grasping gesture begins to organize the child's thoughts and becomes communicative only after the interaction with the mother, which is demonstrated by the child beginning to address the gesture specifically to adults. As we learn language for the objects and concepts around us it provides the language to order internal thoughts, which are then externalized in spoken language. Vygotsky's psychological theory coheres with Levinas's philosophical theory that we develop socially through our relationships with others. For Levinas, our relationship with others does not just spur our development it situates us in relationship to them. The self is not just aware of others it is responsible to (and for) them. Ethics, for Levinas, begins with how we respond to the call from the Other. In Levinas's hospitable metaphor the self's responsibility toward the other extends beyond what ought to be done, what could have been done, or what could be reciprocated, it is infinite. Diane Perpich points out that to explain infinite responsibility Levinas often quotes Dostoyevski from *The Brothers Karamazov*: "Each of us is guilty before everyone for everyone, and I more than the others" (Dostoyevski in Levinas *Otherwise* 146). "I" am more guilty than all the others because I carry the weight of their responsibility as well as my own. The infinite construction of this responsibility is often a crushing weight for Levinas's reader.

This construction of responsibility represents a significant challenge because it often makes even Levinasian scholars question the individual's ability to adequately respond to the other. Diane Perpich asks "Might it not be argued that if I am responsible for everything, I am in fact responsibility for nothing?" (Perpich *Ethics* 83-84). On the one hand, I understand this sentiment completely because a sense of responsibility for everyone can make even the largest act of hospitality, generosity, or kindnesses appear futile. Because we share a pragmatic point of view, like Hilary Putnam, I feel Levinas is "strategically relevant in so far as impossible demands are essential to moral *striving*" [emphasis original] (Putnam in Craig 99). The pragmatic imperative of looking forward to consequences and possibilities prepares pragmatists to accept the infinite striving described in Levinas's work. Responsibility for Levinas is like truth for James. James says, "Truth *happens* to an idea. It *becomes* true, is *made* true by events"[emphasis orginial] ("Pragmatism's Conception of Truth"). For Levinas, responsibility *happens* to an individual. The individual *becomes*, and is *made*, responsible in response to the Other.

I find hope in infinite responsibility because as Craig says it "gives us something to aim for, even if it is nothing we can ever achieve" (*Levinas and James* 99). Infinite and impossible responsibility is necessary because it discourages individuals from turning away from one another. Were the individual able to claim a responsibility already met, he or she could turn away from a guest in need. A shared pragmatic frame of references allows me, like Hillary Putnam, to find the "strategic relevance" in Levinas's argument (Putnam in Craig 99). The pragmatic principle of fallibilism, which holds that "there is no belief or thesis — no matter how fundamental— that is not open to further interpretation

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and criticism," keeps pragmatists looking forward with that same sense of immediacy (Bernstein 387). Rather than attempt to determine how to be infinitely responsible, or hospitable, to every other, I contextually determine how best to be responsible to the other within my given context.

Just as there is no simple answer to the sexist language used to set the terms of hospitality in *Totality and Infinity*, there is no simple answer to Levinas's claim that we are infinitely responsible for everyone. Just as Perpich argues that the way to deal with Levinas' sexist language is not to avoid the issue, but to struggle with the issue and try to make meaning through the text; the answer here is not to walk away from an infinite responsibility, but to accept its impossibility and keep trying – to look for how it is possible to take responsibility locally (*Ethics* 90). For lack of a better metaphor, when I fall into the trap of futility, I consider the challenge of infinite responsibility a little like recycling. A problem which is impossible to solve individually, but when the effort of each is aggregated into a whole it makes a difference. Choosing individually to recycle reflects a Jamesian belief that the difference I make in my immediate surroundings will make a difference elsewhere.

Within given situations, reasons determine whether or not an individual is (or was) responsible to act in a particular way. Yet, Levinas' argument that infinite responsibility exists prior to the self's decision to act means my reasons still serve as an explanation, but it is my prior responsibility which makes an explanation necessary (Perpich *Ethics* 90). Levinas's claim that we are all infinitely responsible for each other frustrates critics because it represents a different view of the relationship between reasons

and responsibility. Levinas's critics begin by thinking of reasons as a justification, an "exoneration or condemnation" for individual actions (Perpich *Ethics* 90). In Levinas's conception of prior responsibility action is assumed, and reasons exist to explain the action taken, not to justify its necessity.

Accepting prior responsibility, and the action it necessitates, then the question becomes which action will best promote a hospitable response to the other? While this idea of responsibility for others appears to support a dominant narrative that makes instructors responsible for welcoming their students, the instructor's ability to take on this responsibility is often determined before she even enters the classroom. Instead, the preparer, the writing program administrator shoulders the responsibility for making hospitality possible in the composition classroom. The writing program administrator's hospitable action towards the instructor enables the eventual extension of hospitality to the students. The consequence of her local hospitable action is the infinite forward movement of hospitality, rippling outward as in Joanna Want's metaphor, through the instructor's welcome of the students.

Competing Roles: The Writing Program Administrator as Host

Just as individuals play multiple roles as wife, mother, daughter, co-worker, it is possible in different contexts to occupy different positions in the hospitable metaphor. In relationship to the composition classroom the writing program administrator acts as "preparer," bearing responsibility for making hospitality possible in that space. In her direct relationship to the instructor, the WPA acts as host, attempting to welcome the

instructor into the community of the department or university. The complex intertwining

of these roles can make it difficult to determine the writing program administrator's

responsibility for action. The triadic hospitable metaphor provides a useful critical lens

through which to view the work of the administrator because it can help reveal which role

the administrator occupies and the responsibilities associated with that role. Is she, as

preparer, responsible for preparing a space in which a hospitable encounter between host

and guest is possible? Or, is she, as host, responsible for welcoming instructors into the

department in which she dwells? When interacting with the Department Chair, or Dean is

she the guest responsible for learning and respecting the ways of the institution?

Determining which role the writing program administrator can help her determine the

appropriate course of action.

Understanding her position in the triadic hospitable metaphor is for the writing

program administrator a process of what Friere calls conscientization. In her article,

"Paulo Friere's Liberation Pedagogy" Ann Berthoff helps familiarize American

audiences with conscientazation, by describing it as "the process by which one becomes

the subject of what one learns, a subject with a purpose which can be represented,

assessed, modified, directed, and changed" (365). Recognizing in any given situation

whether the writing program administrator should define herself as a host, preparer, or

guest helps her to identify her subject position, and thereby her purpose. The triadic

hospitable metaphor then becomes a way for the administrator to determine how best to

advocate for change. If the WPA uses the triadic hospitable metaphor to analyze her

current situation, she can ask herself, 'As host, what is the impact of the current

environment on my ability to welcome the instructor?' The difference made by incorporating the triadic metaphor is that when the WPA identifies how the current environment prevents or hinders her ability to host instructors then she has identified a place for departmental or institutional advocacy. Perhaps, accepting Haswell, Haswell and Blalock's challenge by attempting the "epic WPA feat to promote, enable, and sustain a hospitable environment across more than fifty sections" represents one way to identify changes programs can make to improve the working conditions of contingent instructors ("Hospitality" 721). Developing such a community of instructors might involve advocating for an extended contract system for part-time instructors. If the purpose of the writing program administrator's position is to create a hospitable environment in the composition classroom then the triadic hospitable metaphor helps her to determine the changes necessary to fulfill that purpose.

In the 2002 edited collection *The Writing Program Administrator's Resource* Stuart Brown argues that WPAs need a moral heuristic to guide their decision making processes. In his article "Applying Ethics: A decision-Making Heuristic for Writing Program Administrators" Brown maps a decision making process based on two categories "matters of fact" and "matters of consequence. " Posed as questions the matters of fact and consequence are:

> Matters of Fact
> 1. Where does the agency reside?
> 2. Who are the stakeholders?
> 3. What is the central issue or problem?
> 4. What is the relationship among the various stakeholders?
> 5. What values are involved?

6. What is my duty as WPA to each of the stakeholders?

Matters of Consequence
1. How is the decision affected by the exigency of the situation?
2. How do my institution's interests affect the decision?
3. How do my own interests determine the decision?
4. What decision will provide the greatest benefit (or least harm) for the greatest number?
5. What decision demonstrates genuine concern for those who need the most help?
6. What harm will result from my action?
7. Based on my own personal values, can I live with my decision? (159-161)

Grounded in a traditional understanding of ethics, Brown's heuristic creates reasons as a determinant for action. From a pragmatic or hospitable perspective the heuristic takes a slightly different shape. What Brown labels "Matters of Consequence," and places below "Matters of Fact" on his scale of decision making, become the first questions as pragmatic considerations of context and consequence for the decision. From a pragmatic hospitable perspective action does not require reasons; it is, in effect inevitable, what remains to be determined is the course of action. The first question in determining ethical action then becomes "How is the decision affected by the exigency of the situation?" ("Applying Ethics" 160). A pragmatic hospitable perspective places an emphasis on determining a course of action that will have the most ethical consequences given the situation.

Using the triadic hospitable metaphor to understand the work of the writing program administrator is one way to "the relationship among the various stakeholders" ("Applying Ethics" 160). Determining the relationship in the hospitable metaphor helps to place the responsibility for action with the appropriate person. Using the writing

program administrator's different roles in the hospitable metaphor as an example, it is possible to determine if the administrator has agency to resolve the problem: if the problem resides in the relationship between the instructor and student "agency resides," (to use Brown's language) with the administrator acting as the preparer; if, however, the problem arises from the instructor's relationship with the writing program administrator, her agency is limited because her role as host is influenced by the conditions created for her by the department chair or dean. While the WPA does have the most influence over relationships in which he or she acts as "preparer," as host his or her agency lies in advocating with in the university to shape the way it prepares for instructors. Like Brown, who says of his heuristic, "my essential aim here is to underscore and integrate the awareness of ethics in the WPA role," my essential aim here is to create an awareness of the hospitality might influence the university beyond the pedagogical claims that have already made ("Applying Ethics" 161).

One contemporary trend when writing about writing program administration is to use the lens of labor relations, but this lens dichotomizes the relationship between the writing program administrator and the instructor just as much as the dyadic hospitable metaphor does the relationship between the instructor and student. As adjunct and contingent faculty take on the role of exploited labor and the writing program administrator the role of management, discussions stagnate because this lens fails to account for the university's influence on their relationship. In this instance the direct relationship under analysis is that of the writing program administrator and instructor. No longer in the position of preparer the writing program administrator's ability to welcome

the instructor (to in Levinasian terms make the instructor feel "recollected" in the program) is determined by university and departmental environment created for her. Considering writing program administration through the lens of labor relations provides a useful perspective, but can obscure considerations of the writing program administrator's working conditions. A hospitable analysis reveals the limited impact the writing program administrator may have on the working conditions of instructors.

Marc Bousquet likens the writing program administrator to the lower management in a corporation. According to Bousquet, lower management, while ideologically identifying up the corporate ladder with other managers, spends their day with workers on the line. Bousquet's uses the analogy of a Taco Bell manager, who identifies with the corporate workers at the parent TriCon Corporation, but whose own days are spent with employees in the restaurant, to explain how writing program administrators identify up with tenured faculty and administrators, but spend their days with untenured part-time faculty ("Composition" 14). The comparison to a fast food employee might not flatter writing program administrators, but it highlights the contemporary corporate structure dominating university governance. Although many departments are developing writing program administration courses and internships for graduate students, future administrators typically train for a tenure track, research intensive position just like any other graduate student. The result is that the writing program administrator does identify up as Bousquet describes, seeking out tenure and other benefits, while in her day to day work she is surrounded by instructors who do not receive those same benefits.

Bousquet defines the writing program administrator as a "'special kind of wage-laborer' the noncommissioned officer, or foreman, the members of the working class whose particular labor is to directly administer the labor of other members of their class at the front line of the extraction of surplus value" ("Composition" 15). The writing program administrator remains committed to the ideological structure of upper management, the pursuit of tenure and research while managing other instructors. In fact, accepting these management positions represents the primary avenue through which rhetoric and composition scholars are able to pursue tenure and research. Taking a position that requires overseeing the labor of other instructors becomes a route to tenure and promotion, which supports the writing program administrator's ideological alignment with the values of upper management. While the metaphor of labor relations represents one way to identify and discuss the disparate roles the program administrator must offer, it can, however, make the administrator appear to have more power over making change than she actually possesses. The triadic hospitable metaphor provides the writing program administrator with a way to determine how best to act in a given situation that acknowledges the constraints on her power. Knowing which position she occupies in the triadic hospitable metaphor, the writing program administrator can then assess if she is capable of direct action and influence (when she is the preparer), or if she must use her position to advocate for better conditions of hosting (when she is the host).

Bousquet, Strickland, and others explicitly call attention to the managerial nature of writing program administration, not to create a dichotomy between writing program administrators and instructors, but to highlight an aspect of composition work that

typically remains hidden in public discourse – the administration. Bruce Horner's *Terms of Work for Composition: A Materialist Critique* is an excellent example of this phenomenon. In the introduction Horner shares the five terms he will analyze in relationship to the work of the field of Composition, or Writing Studies, "students, politics, academic, traditional, and writing" (xv). While he admits the terms are not "exhaustive," he states that he chose these words because, "these are often the terms by which we understand and engage in the work of composition" (xv).

> Within the "field" of Composition, *work* has three distinct, usages. First, in a usage closely aligned with a general trend in the culture to restrict the term's meaning to "paid employment," it is invoked in debate over the *conditions* of teacher's work: class size, teaching load, salaries, office facilities, clerical support, library resources, use of adjunct, and part timers, withholding of tenure and tenure lines for composition faculty, and the "feminization" of composition teaching evidence by such conditions (Williams, Keywords 281-282). Second, in much scholarly debate in Composition, *work* is used almost exclusively to refer to written texts. The question "What are you working on," for example, typically refers to the texts one is producing rather than to any other activities in which one might also be engaged. (E. Watkins 11, 12, 85; see also Varnum 9, 114,212). A third meaning refers to the actual concrete activities of teaching. Significantly, however, this meaning is distinctly subordinate to the second and commonly subsumed by the first: teach who daily spend hours interacting with students in classrooms and writing responses to student writing speak of *their* "own work" as something with which these activities compete: their work is the texts they produce when not engaged in such activities, which are understood as labor benefitting others, exchanged for pay—that is, as "paid employment." [emphasis original] (Terms of Work 1)

Missing from this list is any discussion of the administrative or managerial work associated with composition. Yet, one of the significant ways in which

> we understand and engage in the work of composition" is administratively. This is true, at the very least, for those seeking a tenure-track position, which will most

likely require them to perform administrative work. (Miller in Bousquet "Composition" 19).

In this opening passage of this book defining the work of composition, however, Horner does not identify administrative duties as a part of that work. Although it can be argued that some of the "conditions of teacher's work" could be read so as to apply to administration because administrators also deal with "class size, teaching load, salaries" and many of the other conditions listed, the list is specifically cast as conditions of teacher's work, and not that of administrators. Consequently, the administrative work of composition is unaccounted for in this materialist critique of composition.

The writing program administrator occupies the conflicting roles of host and "preparer" when attempting to address the working conditions for adjunct and contingent faculty. As the "preparer," the administrator understands that he or she needs to create an environment in which a hospitable relationship between the instructor and student is possible. Yet, as a host, she does not have the agency of the "preparer" to prepare hospitable space; instead, in these situations, she is the host and hampered by the conditions department and university policy create for her; therefore, the administrator's ability to address issues of low pay and access to health care is limited. One item from the list that may be within the writing program administrator's ability to address is teaching assignments. For an instructor, even when working within a department where she is assigned a text, types of assignments, or even a syllabus, giving her adequate notice of teaching assignments gives her the opportunity to plan her course accordingly. Providing the instructor with some ability to plan her course helps develop her sense of agency in

the classroom. Developing an instructor's sense of agency in the classroom is one way to create a hospitable environment for her because it demonstrates a confidence in her ability to do the job for which she was hired. Without diminishing the need to address the working conditions faced by adjunct and contingent faculty, it is also necessary to acknowledge that as "lower management" writing program administrators own working conditions are a determined by the department and university as well.

According to Bousquet, writing program administrators occupy a position often at odds with itself because they are "isolated ideologically from the workers with whom they live face-to-face" ("Composition" 15). Having been trained to pursue research and tenure, the writing program administrator identifies up the managerial ladder isolating her from the instructors with whom she most often interacts. The administrative work which may help gain tenure is not highly valued among a writing program administrators tenured peers, which leads to further isolation; additionally, as Doug Hesse points out the "expert status accorded WPAs in the pages of a journal may be set aside in the office of a dean" ("Politics and the WPA" 42). Possessing an expertise that is only recognized from the bottom of the hierarchy, Hesse's comment highlights the precarious nature of the administrator's position when attempting to rely upon that expertise in other institutional relationships. Considered from the traditional dyadic metaphor of hospitality, the writing program administrator appears to host the instructor for the university. The appearance of hosting implies an agency the writing program administrator does not necessarily possess with upper administration. Since it is the "preparer" that is most responsible for establishing the hospitality of the space, the next level of institutional representation, the

Department Chair, or Dean, assumes the agency for establishing for how well the writing program administrator hosts writing instructors. While I agree with Bousquet, Strickland, and others that understanding the managerial role of the writing program administrator is important, their critiques suggest only the dichotomy of management and labor. The triadic hospitable metaphor reveals the complexity of a writing program administrator's working conditions.

If a writing program administrator has been encouraged to think critically about the hospitable triad of which she is a part, she can use the metaphor as a heuristic for decision making. She can determine whether or not she bears the responsibility for action, as with the composition classroom; or, if she is constrained by the conditions created for her, as in her relationship to the instructor. The writing program administrator who defines his or her role hospitably knows that any decision made about the composition classroom must provide the instructor with the opportunity to choose a hospitable pedagogy. The hospitable administrator also knows that in the role of departmental host to adjunct and part-time employees he or she must advocate with the preparer (department chair or dean) to create the conditions in which responsible hosting is possible.

Approaching writing program administration from both a pragmatic and hospitable perspective strengthens the administrator's position by relying on a pragmatic foundation of "progressive institutional activism" promoted by John Dewey, while applying the triadic hospitable metaphor identifies when the writing program administrator is responsible for action (Miller, Skeffington 127). Pragmatism and

hospitality work well together; pragmatism provides strong progressive history, and

hospitality sheds new light on the "interpretive assumptions and institutional constraints"

surrounding writing program administration (Miller, Skeffington 127). Together

hospitality and pragmatism help writing program administrators face the "challenge of

managing to get by or managing to make a difference" (Miller, Skeffington 134). In

short, understanding her job both pragmatically and hospitably allows the WPA to

"manage to make a difference" (Miller, Skeffington 134). The administrator who reads

his or her position through a triadic hospitable lens understands where to advocate for the

conditions necessary in order to act as a host to the instructors she manages. Gaining

better conditions for instructors makes the writing program administrator's job as

preparer for the instructor/student relationship that much more productive.

CHAPTER IV

THE POSSIBILITY OF HOSPITALITY: VISITING THE WRITING CENTER

Applied outside the realm of phenomenology, Levinas' triadic conception of hospitality provides a useful lens through which to analyze the relationships and work done in an institutional setting such as the university. In previous chapters, I argued that applying the triadic hospitable metaphor as a lens through which to analyze the composition classroom reveals the writing program administrator needs to prepare the space of the classroom before an instructor enacts a hospitable pedagogy. The administrator prepares the space by making the writing instructor welcome in the department or program. Repositioning the triadic hospitable lens to consider the work of the writing program administrator through the position of preparer reveals the underlying tensions the administrator must negotiate if her goal is to create an environment in which instructors can choose to enact a hospitable pedagogy. While the writing program administrator may find the triadic hospitable metaphor a useful way to view her work, often the metaphor reveals the ways in which the administrator's actions are constrained or limited by her own working conditions.

In this chapter, I once again refocus the triadic hospitable metaphor, this time to consider another element of Writing Studies, the writing center. The writing center, as I will discuss in length later in the chapter occupies a unique position in the university. As a student service, it is a part of the institution, yet because grading does not happen in the

center institutional power does not circulate through the center in the same manner as the classroom. Without the power of the grade looming between the consultant and writer it is possible for them to engage in a hospitable relationship. The consultant acting as a host can welcome the writer to the center by sharing her knowledge of institutional conventions. Within this context, I argue that the writing center administrator can promote this hospitable exchange by accepting the role of preparer in the triadic metaphor. In the triadic metaphor the preparer creates a space in which the host feels comfortable enough to extend a welcome to the guest. In the writing center the administrator creates a space in which the consultant feels comfortable enough to welcome the writer. The writing center administrator who understands her role within the triadic hospitable metaphor realizes she creates the possibility of hospitality. Considering the writing center in light of a triadic hospitality could form the basis of a book length project; however, for the purposes of this chapter I will focus specifically on how the writing center administrator, acting as the preparer, can work to create a hospitable environment in the writing center.

Recently in their book *The Everyday Writing Center: A Community of Practice*, Geller et al. argued for the necessity of viewing the writing center from a sociological perspective, as a community of practice. Geller et al. accept Wenger's definition of communities of practice as "places where we develop, negotiate, and share" our "theories and ways of understanding the world" (Wenger in Geller et al. ch.1). Geller et al. argue that as a community of practice, writing centers should be "designed for learning" and that "this design must be based on something other than the familiar stratification

between directors and tutors, tutors and writers, directors and professors, peer tutors and professional instructors" (*Everyday Writing Center* ch.1). The familiar stratification described by Geller et al. reflects a system in which one party is assumed to have greater knowledge or institutional standing than the other: directors have greater knowledge than tutors; tutors have greater knowledge than writers; professors and professional instructors have higher institutional standing than directors and peer tutors.

Hospitality provides an appropriate way to view writing center work because it requires thinking through a different stratification. For example Dale Jacobs, who approaches hospitality from a Benedictine perspective, reminds us that "there can be no hospitality between a somebody and a nobody," which would require undoing the stratification completely (Nouwen in Jacobs 569). Each participant in the hospitable relationship Jacobs describes must be seen as an equal. Unfortunately, the institutional context in which Jacobs promotes hospitality does not allow for that equality. In his Judaic approach to hospitality Levinas also places an emphasis on equality by describing the relationship between the self and other as a face-to-face meeting, which calls to mind a meeting of equals. While it is true Levinas also challenges us when he states "the Other is placed higher than me," as with much of Levinas' philosophy, placing the other higher than the self is a goal to work toward, yet perhaps not one that can be achieved (*Totality and Infinity* 291). The benefit of each of these hospitable perspectives is that they represent a new perspective from which to view relationships. It might not be possible to always put the other ahead of the self, the writing center could represent a place within the institution in which individuals have the potential to meet as equals.

The pursuit of a center without stratification in Geller et al.'s vision of a community of practice compliments my vision of a hospitable writing center because it promotes an equality that allows individuals to learn from one another's differences. The height Levinas grants the other represents a respect for the difference, which he argues is the basis necessary for the face-to-face encounter. The learning from one another necessary to both Levinas and Geller et al. enables individuals to build a "shared repertoire of resources: experiences, stories, tools [and] ways of addressing recurring problems," which defines them as a community of practice (Wenger qtd. in Hall 93). Some communities of practice such as those that function using an apprenticeship model, may maintain a certain amount of hierarchy; however, the emphasis on each individual contributing to the knowledge and resources of the community represents an equality that values the contributions of each individual. The sense of equality in a community of practice reflects the existing value writing centers place on the idea that both the consultant and writer can teach each other, and a principle of hospitality. Viewing the writing center as a community of practice is then a step towards creating a hospitable writing center.

Develop a community of practice within the center is one way an administrator can work to make hospitality possible in the center. The community within the center then welcomes the new consultant, making her feel recollected, and she is able then to share that welcome with the writer. In this chapter I explore how the institutional location of the writing center makes it a possible site for hospitality; how it is possible to view the writer as a guest of the writing center, and how creating a community of practice in the

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writing center prepares the consultant to welcome the writer. Finally, I argue that each of these elements requires the writing center administrator to adopt the perspective of the preparer in the triadic hospitable metaphor.

The Liminal Space of the Writing Center

Writing centers are able to create and foster a community of practice as a result of their unique space within the institutional hierarchy of the university. Peter Carino describes them "as instructional sites, but not classrooms, student service units yet instructional (in contrast, say, to the health center or financial aid office), centers have been difficult to classify in the taxonomy of university entities" ("Power and Authority" 97). Difficulty to classify, writing centers often struggle to create a strong campus identity. Writing instruction happens in the center outside the classroom strictures of course objectives, learning outcomes, and grades. The consultants and writers teach each other. Consultants leave the session having perhaps learned something new from the subject matter of the paper, and from having worked through a session with a new writer; writers leave the session with a better sense of their own writing style and an outsider's perspective on how well they communicated their ideas. Yet, without course objectives, learning outcomes, and grades the university is at a loss to categorize the instructional value of the writing center. Similarly the institutional location of the writing center and its mission can lead to its illegibility within the university. Writing centers can be housed within English departments, Writing program, libraries, or as in the case of the center I coordinate student services. The location of the writing center can lead to confusion.

Does the center housed in the English Department or Writing Program serve only English students? If the center is located outside those departments who trains consultants and ensures the quality of instruction provided?

The writing center remains not quite legible within the institution because it occupies both the instructional and service aspects of student life, can occupy different spaces within the university structure, and proposes to serve all students rather than a specific discipline. Once consequence of this illegibility within the structure of the university is that writing centers are "easy to marginalize," and can be viewed as "unnecessary frills sucking up funds, space, and personnel" (Carino 97, Harris 40). Bonnie Sunstein, however, sees the writing center's illegibility within traditional university taxonomies as a positive attribute. She defines the writing center as a liminal space. Drawing on anthropologists like Victor Turner, Peter McLaren, and others, Sunstein defines liminal spaces as part of a state of "in-betweenness" that foster "communion, spontaneity, and insight" (Turner, Lavie, Narayan, and Rosaldo in Sunstein 14). Because the writing center exists at the edges of the university, Sunstein argues that it helps students to navigate the transition between old identities and new. Although Muriel Harris recognizes the perils of existing at the margins, she sees potential there as well. Using student comments Harris demonstrates, "The power of the tutor's position outside the evaluative [graded] setting" ("Talking in the Middle" 29). The writing center's marginal, or liminal, position creates a location for an encounter between the consultant and writer that provides the potential for an equitable encounter. As one of Harris's respondents says, "They [tutor's] treat you as equals. It is not like teachers

helping students. This makes the student feel more at ease" ("Talking in the Middle" 34). Carino, Sunstein, and Harris are each right in a different way. The liminality of the writing center is positive because it enables the work of the center. Feeling more "at ease," students are better able to interact with their own writing, and the consultants.

The liminal position of the writing center promotes the application of other outsider metaphors as well. Using Julia Kristeva's definition of exile to describe writing centers, Nancy Welch claims centers create a place for students to be strangers to their own texts. Welch describes this type of exile as "a space in which we can reflect on and intervene in the languages, conventions, and belief systems that constitute our texts, our sense of self, our notions of what is 'common sense'" ("From Silence to Noise" 4). The writing center, in its position at the margins of the university, provides just such a space. A part of the university that is familiar enough with university norms and systems to provide assistance to students, the writing center is also separate from the university because it is, as Carino identifies, "difficult to classify" ("Power and Authority" 97). Students entering the university are like Derrida's foreigner, evaluated on their ability to communicate in the language of this new community to which they seek admittance (*Of Hospitality* 12). The writing center represents a community which students can visit to practice this new language. The marginal/liminal location of the writing center gives the student the opportunity to learn without the risk of evaluation.

As Welch's work indicates, applying philosophical works as a lens through which to view writing center work is not uncommon. In addition to routinely adopting and adapting the work of composition theorists, writing center workers often go directly to

philosophy for inspiration as well. For example, Elizabeth Bouquet wrote a history of writing center work heavily influenced by Foucault's histories ("Our Little Secret"). Nancy Grimm's *Good Intentions: Writing Center Work for Postmodern Times* specifically argues for the usefulness of postmodern philosophy and theory as a way to understand the work and liberatory potential of writing centers. Working at the same institution with Grimm, Marilyn Cooper, argues that writing center consultants are well positioned to take on the role of Gramsci's "organic intellectual," and states that, "writing centers are in a good position to serve as a site of critique of the institutionalized structure of writing instruction in colleges" ("Really Useful Knowledge" 98). Some of these philosophical influences have had more lasting impact on the field than others. My point here is simply that there is a history of considering the work done in writing centers from a philosophical perspective. My attempt to apply hospitality theory to writing center work could be seen as another link in this chain of philosophical perspectives. There is, however, a significant difference to my approach.

Traditionally when Welch, Cooper, or any writing center theorist uses her local writing center to illustrate a theoretical approach to writing center work, it can make the theory appear site specific, and perhaps inapplicable in another setting. For example in Welch's article she describes the process of helping a student prepare to participate in a panel discussion on the issue of sexual harassment ("From Silence" 5). The process described takes place with the same consultant (Welch) in multiple sessions over a three month period ("From Silence" 5-13). This type of consistent meeting with an experienced consultant over such a long period of time might not be possible at every center.

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Consultant's schedules might change, the number of available appointments may be limited, or any number of variables might change from location to location. Thinking of the writing center as a location of critical exile could be useful, but Welch weaves the details of her own center (the quiet, the frequent visits, the consistent consultant) into that definition and thereby limits its application to other centers. Welch's center appears to neatly describe "a space in which we can reflect on and intervene in the languages, conventions, and belief systems that constitute our texts" because those elements exist within the context of her center ("From Silence" 4). While it is impossible for an author to anticipate the context of every writing center, the result has been that author's often fail to acknowledge how the context of their own center might account for the success of their theoretical framework. Viewing my work as pragmatic hospitality not only forces me to account for how my own context might influence my work, but to acknowledge how the application of this theory might work differently in new contexts.

Site specific illustrations like this, without attention to context leave much of writing center scholarship feeling like Ann Berthoff's "recipe swap," a long exchange of authors saying "here's what worked for us" (*Making of Meaning* 33). This kind of exchange allows readers to focus on the example, perhaps attempting to implement the same practice in their own center, but leaves them unable to account for why those practices sometimes fail. Throughout this chapter, I will provide practical examples of what a hospitable writing center might look like with this caveat—there is no one way to create a hospitable writing center. Hospitality theory provides a pragmatic way of considering writing center work because the hospitable nature of a writing center is

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determined within its local context. The theoretical frame of hospitality will lead to vastly

different practices in different locations, which accounts for the very pragmatic concern

of local context. To paraphrase William James, every difference makes a difference to

how hospitality is practiced ("What Pragmatism Means" 27).

Stranger at the Table: Viewing the Writer as Guest of the Center Community

In contrast to the challenges of applying the hospitable metaphor to the

composition classroom, the writing center is an apt location for applying the hospitable

metaphor because in addition to existing at the edges of the university structure it

represents a community that writers visit without expecting to join. Individuals, who have

done well in the struggle to learn academic language and are willing to help others with

the process are carefully selected and trained to become members of the center

community. Since there is no credit toward the writers' degree or grade attached to their

visit to the center, writers typically choose whether or not to visit the center. While some

do become regular visitors to the center, many visit only once or twice during their time

at the university, making their brief relationship with the writing center fit many

expectations of the temporary nature of the hospitable relationship. As a liminal part of

the university, and a community which students visit to learn more about the larger

university community they joined, the writing center is a site of hospitality without trying

because it occupies a third position. Because it occupies this position it becomes a third

element across which, to paraphrase J. Hillis Miller, the university and student can relate

("Critic" 444).

While those working in the writing center community understand and feel its liminal space in the university, writers can be intimidated because they see the center as an official representative of the university. Staffing the center with peer consultants is an attempt to highlight its place outside the traditional, teacher-driven structure of grading. Knowing the consultant does not influence or determine her final grade, the writer can be "more at ease" and potentially engage more freely with the consultant ("Talking in the Middle" 34). That free engagement is often hindered by the perception that the writing center (as Stephen North famously described) is a place for bad writers ("The Idea" 433). The result of that perception is that students often begin a session feeling a lack of ownership and authority over their writing. Sliding the paper across the table to the consultant, writers slouch back in the chair to wait for the consultant to fix their writing. In this section I assert that the writing center's liminal position in the university allows the writing center consultant and writer to refute this misperception. In a hospitable writing center the goal is for the consultant and writer to negotiate shared authority during a session.

Hospitality is possible in nearly any relationship; however, as shown in the composition classroom, the more power one participant in the relationships has over the other the more difficult it is to offer or accept hospitality fully. The more the equality in the relationship between the consultant and writer is emphasized the more possible it becomes for them to meet, as Levinas describes, with a "direct and full face welcome" (*Totality and Infinity* 80). Much like infinite responsibility, the "full face" welcome is an ideal difficult to achieve; it occurs only when the other is allowed to remain wholly

foreign to the self. Outside the phenomenological realm, this means allowing the other to remain completely strange to the self by resisting the urge to classify him into a familiar category. The resistance to classification described by Levinas is nearly impossible to achieve because one way to make meaning of new situations or people is to describe it through familiar words and phrases.

Such description is impossible for Levinas because he says the other "overflows the idea a thought would carry away from it" (*Totality and Infinity* 51). In other words the moment a familiar description is applied to a new person, the difference between that familiar description and the new person is also highlighted. For example, when meeting someone new I might try to make them familiar by search for a label to ascribe to them like woman, student, instructor, barista, the list could go on, but in that moment I must also recognize all the ways they may not fit that particular label. Within the context of the writing center, the consultant might be tempted to think the person across the table is a "student," and therefore like me, yet that person is always so much more than just a "student" that she overflows the label before it is even applied to her. Accepting the overflowing of the label, the difference of the person across the table represents the welcome for which Levinas advocates. Like other elements of Levinas's work , the attempt to allow the other to remain different from ourselves, the constant effort, is a part of the goal because it is the others difference that teaches.

Putting the other's difference at the center of the relationship between the consultant and writer relationship represents the biggest challenge Levinas' work poses for writing centers because his claim that teaching comes from the "absolutely foreign"

conflicts with foundational texts, like Kenneth Bruffee's "Peer Tutoring and the Conversation of Mankind," that base the success of writing center work by casting consultants and writers as the same, as peers (*Totality and Infinity* 73, "Peer Tutoring"). By classifying the relationship between two students (the tutor and tutee) as peers, Bruffee defines the relationship based on sameness rather than difference. Hospitality theory provides an alternative to this structure. For Levinas, one benefit of allowing the other to remain strange to the self is that the others difference teaches the self. In the hospitable writing center then the consultant learns from and teaches each writer because they are different.

Bruffee argues that creating writing centers staffed by students provided a new social and collaborative setting in which students could learn the skills they needed ("Peer Tutoring" 206-7). The traditional structure of the classroom, a teacher and students, had not worked for those students who needed additional assistance with their writing. Consequently, those students, who needed the most assistance, would avoid the writing labs staffed by instructors. Peer tutoring, Bruffee says, offers an alternative to "the social structure of the traditional classroom" ("Peer Tutoring" 207). According to Bruffee, students would attend centers staffed by their peers because they provided an alternative to the classroom hierarchy. Writing centers provided a new social setting in which to learn because it was a place in which tutor and tutee met as peers because as students they are both "status equals" ("Peer Tutoring" 207). The perceived equality between the tutor and tutee provided an alternative to the hierarchy inherent in the instructor-student relationship.

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As status equals, the conversation between tutor and writer helps both to develop what Richard Rorty calls a "normal discourse" ("Peer Tutoring" 213). Normal discourse, as Bruffee describes Rorty's work, is "conversation within a community of knowledgeable peers whose work is guided by the same paradigms and the same code of values and assumptions ("Peer Tutoring" 211). While I am a proponent of peer tutoring and agree with much of Bruffee's argument, there is an inherent contradiction in the phrase "peer tutor." The phrase obscures the difference between the student selected to provide assistance and the student seeking it out. John Trimbur articulated this objection to the phrase in a 2008 article by noting that while, "both tutors and tutees find themselves at the bottom of the academic hierarchy" using that position to declare them "status equals" obscures the reality of the relationship ("Peer Tutoring: A Contradiction" 290). Students chosen to be tutors have been rewarded by the institution, and "have often internalized its values and standards and, in many respects, remain dependent on its authority" (Trimbur 290). As Trimbur sees it, and I agree, because these students prospered under the traditional system, to bolster their authority in a session tutors may rely on traditional educational forms like Paulo Friere's banking method of education, wherein an expert deposits knowledge with a novice (*Pedagogy* 72). Unfortunately, preconceived perceptions of tutors and tutoring impose this perception, which can hinder well trained tutors attempts to use collaborative techniques to help the tutee.

Singling out the student who has the knowledge to be a tutor re-establishes the sense of instructional authority. Tutors and tutees may subconsciously envision themselves not as collaborators, but as surrogate instructor and student. The perception

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occurs because becoming tutors takes one student and "single[s] them out and accentuate[s] the differences between them and their tutees—thereby, in effect, undercutting the peer relationship" (Trimbur 290). Describing tutors and tutees as a community of knowledgeable peers participating in normal discourse then obscures the reality, that only the tutor has internalized the values and standards of the university. The tutee has sought out help precisely because he or she is has not mastered the normal discourse of the academic community.

In some tutorial centers across campus the re-establishment of hierarchy may prove beneficial to the tutor-tutee relationship. At academic assistance centers that provide support for students in subject areas like math, chemistry, physics; such tutors often benefit from the hierarchical system implied in the tutor/tutee relationship. At discipline specific assistance centers students seek out specific aspects of subject knowledge, such as help solving a particular type of physics problem. In order to most effectively provide assistance tutors must first assess, or determine, the tutee's knowledge of the subject. Does the tutee understand the underlying concepts of the problem? Does the tutee's problem stem from a lack of basic math skills? As the tutee works through the problem, the tutor periodically assesses whether or not the tutee is ready to move on. The tutor's ability to assess student knowledge depends on her knowledge of physics, which links her authority directly to content knowledge of the subject. Linking tutor authority to content knowledge re-establishes a hierarchical relationship between the tutor and tutee by creating the perception that the tutor is a surrogate instructor. In some cases linking the tutor to an instructor-style of authority positively impacts the tutor – student

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relationship because it generates student confidence in the tutor's subject knowledge. One potentially negative result, however, is that the terms tutor and tutee signify a hierarchical relationship. The relationship situates the tutor as always determining the type or amount of knowledge to give to the tutee. Although many would consider tutoring a collaborative effort, in this way it mirrors the banking concept of education. Thinking about peer tutoring through hospitality theory is useful because it places the focus on how individuals learn from their differences rather than sameness.

A hospitable writing center mitigates these issues of authority by seeking to share authority between individual. The equity of the tutor and the tutee does not stem from their shared status as students, but from their shared authority within the session. Establishing shared authority begins early. For the writing center administrator it starts with the choice of what to call the students who work in the center and those who visit the center. As a writing center administrator attempting to prepare the most hospitable space possible for the students staffing the center, I share Lex Runciman's doubt about the usefulness of the terms tutor and tutee to describe the students in the writing center ("Defining Ourselves" 27). The hierarchical relationship implied by the terms tutor and tutee conflicts with the more equitable distribution of authority I seek to establish in the writing center. To ensure the terminology used in the center reflects the sharing of authority necessary for a hospitable approach to writing center work, rather than tutor, tutee, and tutoring as a writing center administrator I choose an alternate vocabulary to describe the relationship in the center: consultant, writer, and consulting.

The knowledge that a writer brings to a writing consultation is just as important as the knowledge held by the consultant, which also contributes to creating a balance of authority in the writing center session. Writers bring a variety of work to the writing center, which means that consultants may not be familiar with the subject matter. For example, a consultant who is a history major ends up working with a writer on a biology lab report, or psychology paper. This type of situation illustrates the distribution of authority in a session. The consultant's knowledge of the conventions of academic writing has little value without the writer's knowledge of biology gained from class lectures, discussions, and laboratory work. Bruffee highlighted this exchange of knowledge and authority, "The tutee brings to the conversation knowledge of the subject to be written about and knowledge of the assignment. The tutor bring to the conversation knowledge of the conventions of discourse and knowledge of standard written English" ("Peer Tutoring" 213) Approaching this issue from a hospitable perspective highlights that the consultant and writer's conversation is successful not because of how they are the same, but because they are different. The different knowledge each brings to the consultation matters more than their shared status as student.

Sharing authority with in a session is not as easy as changing the labels assigned to consultants and writers, or recognizing the value of the knowledge the writer already possesses. Often, having used tutorial services in the past, writer's come to the writing center expecting a traditional tutoring session, so from the opening exchanges of a session consultants must work to share authority with the writer. The struggle to share

authority in a session starts from the first meeting of consultant and writer when a consultant typically asks some form of the question:

"How can I help you today?"

To which the writer typically responds:

"I don't know. Look at my grammar?"

By responding "I don't know" the writer gives the consultant authority by expecting her to do the work identifying any problems. Also as if appealing to an area they assume the consultant knows well, the fall back response "Look at my grammar?" is often asked in a questioning fashion, deferring to the consultants authority and prompting the consultant to take control of the session. One challenge for the writing center administrator seeking to create a hospitable environment is training consultants to help the writer accept authority within the session.

Acting as the preparer, the writing center administrator trains consultants to establish the writer's authority in the session. One small way this sharing of authority is accomplished is through the purposeful rephrasing of the opening question during a session. A consultant's first instinct may be to ask, "How can I help you today?" That question, however, places authority squarely in the consultant's hands with the implication that assistance is an action she will perform. To develop the writer's sense of authority the consultant can be trained instead to ask, "What would you like to work on today?" or "Where would you like to start today?" The subtle shift in the question indicates that "you," the writer, will be active in the session. With this question the consultant indicates that the writer maintains authority in the session. Training

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consultants to begin from the first question by giving the writer an active role to play in determining the agenda for the day leads to further opportunities for the writer to maintain authority and remain active in the session.

Often writers have not learned how to talk about their writing; consequently, the response to a question like, "What would you like to work on today?" is either "I don't know" or "Grammar." Consultants must then be trained to ask follow up questions to help the writer articulate their needs. Questions such as, "What grammatical problems do you typically have?" allow the consultant to keep the writer involved in the session by enlisting his or her help setting the agenda. The importance of setting an agenda is an important aspect of any writing conference. Writing about the instructor/student relationship, Thomas Newkirk reminds writing instructors that "Unless a commonly-agreed-upon agenda is established, a conference can run on aimlessly and leave both participants with the justifiable feeling that they have wasted time" ("The First Five Minutes" 303). Newkirk's admonition holds true for the writing center as well. Writer's often overestimate the amount of work that can be done in a session, booking a short appointment for a long paper. In such situations getting the writer involved in setting the agenda helps to ensure the conference maintains focus. For example, if the consultant did not enlist the writer's help setting the agenda, then she might just start at the beginning of the paper and run out of time before getting to the conclusion, which may have been where the writer most needed help.

Within writing center scholarship Shanti Bruce also advocates the importance of setting an agenda for the conference. While Bruce writes specifically about working with

non-native speakers of English her advice applies to all writing center sessions. She says "Making a plan is not just helpful for the student, but it can make the tutor's job easier as well. It creates a shared responsibility for how the session will unfold, and it reduces uncertainty about what to do next" ("Getting Started" 31). For example, if the writer comes in says her goal is to, "Get an A on this paper," and expects the consultant to fix the paper for her, then whether or not the paper gets an A could be seen as the consultant's responsibility. When the writer does not get the grade she believes she deserved, it is possible for her to place blame on the consultant for not "fixing" the paper. If, however, the consultant works with the writer to set the agenda for the session, she has the opportunity to renegotiate those expectations. The consultant can explain that, while she can help, it will be the writer's efforts and the instructor's evaluation that will determine the grade on the paper. Asking the writer "what do you think will make this draft an A paper?" establishes the writer's responsibility for the paper and her authority over the content of the paper. Hopefully creating a setting in which both the writer and consultant feel the session was successful. Training the consultant to set an agenda is just another way that as an administrator I can create an environment in which hospitality is an option for the consultant and writer.

For writers new to the country, a discipline, or the university, the writing center represents a place where they can work to adapt to new language conventions. The writing center is a non-evaluative space in which the writer can experiment with the new language. Writing center administrators can make this experimentation possible by creating an environment in which the writer's contributions to the session are a valued,

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essential part of the session. As I discussed in this session such an environment is created by establishing a non-hierarchical relationship between the consultant and writer through shared authority in a session. Consultants can be trained to share authority and maintain writer responsibility for the paper using established techniques such as: questioning, setting goals, and leading the direction for the session.

The First Welcome: Building a Community for Consultants

The third presence in the Levinasian metaphor of hospitality exists to turn the "dwelling" of the self into his "home" (*Totality and Infinity* 156). When that metaphor is applied to the writing center the administrator occupies the third position and as a result must welcome the consultant into the center. Welcomed into the center, the consultant is then able to turn outward, offering that welcome to the writer as discussed in the previous section. One way administrators have attempted to welcome consultants and identify as different from classroom space is adopting a more domestic décor by including couches, coffee pots, plants, and other home accessories. In theory the "comfortable" home décor places consultants and writers more at ease. Considering the writing center through the triadic hospitable metaphor, however, requires a critical analysis of how consultants are welcomed into the space by administrators. Performing this critical analysis requires writing center administrators to take up Jackie Grutsch McKinney's challenge to reconsider the dominant "homey" metaphor used to define center spaces.

McKinney argues that in an effort to differentiate the writing center from "classrooms and other impersonal institutional spaces" the writing center community

"tacitly accepted [the] notion" that "writing centers should be like home" ("Leaving Home" 7). Prevailing narratives tend to conflate "homey" with "cozy," and fail to account for the fact that "coziness" is determined by individual taste, and not always conducive to meeting the actual needs of the space. As McKinney points out,

> While describing a center as having a couch and soflty painted walls may invoke the metaphor of home, for some readers of that description, a wider, more critical reading of a space may reveal a much different mood—what if the couch is terribly stiff, the walls a dirty beige, and the center itself full of cranky tutors? ("Leaving Home" 10)

McKinney challenges the writing center community to consider how their spaces might read to the writers who visit them. By calling attention to how the "homey" metaphor may read differently for individuals, McKinney reveals one of the ways in which writing center scholarship fails to account for the changing context surrounding each center.

Applying the triadic hospitable metaphor to the writing center helps administrator's take up McKinney's challenge because it can account for changing context by shifting the focus from a "homey" space to a "hospitable" one. As I argued previously what is hospitable will differ in each new context. Within one context hospitable and homey might look quite similar, perhaps the hospitable environment includes a couch that is comfy and a coffee pot that is clean and well stocked; yet, at different institution, in a different context, perhaps what is hospitable does not include a couch or coffee pot. A hospitable approach to writing center work significantly shifts the focus of McKinney's challenge as well. As a preparer attempting to welcome a host into the center, I would argue that the administrator must first consider how their space reads

to the consultants working in them. Striving for a hospitable environment for consultants challenges the writing center administrator to create a center that is visibly different from the classroom (separate from institutional power structures such as grading), yet still a recognizable place for academic work. Ensuring that the furniture and layout visibly define the center as a working space sends a signal to the writer and consultant about the nature of their relationship.

During my first year as a writing center administrator I focused on learning my position and how the center currently functioned within its physical location and institutionally. The writing center I administer is housed within academic and student services as a part of a larger undergraduate academic assistance center. The subject driven tutorial service (Math, Science, and Chemistry) is well established, and produces well known tutor training products. Whereas, the writing portion of the center is just twelve years old, and I am the first full time administrator dedicated to the service. The small service consists of a primary location, which operates out of the tutorial center during business hours, and in the evening there are three satellite locations in residence halls. While the primary location functioned on an appointment only basis, the evening residence hall locations operated as first come-first served drop-in centers.

The primary location, which has the most attendance, is located at the back of the larger academic assistance center in an 18' x 26' room, which is quite a bit longer than it is wide. A large portion of the room is taken up by as an equipment room, which limits the placement of furniture because the door must be kept clear. This leaves room for two round tables, file cabinets, a small waiting area with two chairs, one tall, large book case,

and one smaller book case. In the fall of 2010, when I began my position as administrator, every wall in the space was painted white and the two round tables were set against the longest wall. Next to the tables against one short wall were three filing cabinets and a small seating area. Opposite the two tables are the door and a tall, large book case. The stark white walls and the arrangement of the furniture visibly marked this room as a space in which to work; yet, it was not a very comfortable space in which to do so.

The white walls gave the room an aggressive feel that made consultants and writers want leave as soon as possible. For the writer engaged in a 30 minute session, the environment was uncomfortable, but tolerable. Consultants working a 3 hour shift came in right on time and left as quickly as possible, not a terrible sign but an indication that the center was not a place they wanted to be. One of the first requests I made was to purchase paint and acquire additional furniture from university surplus. During the break between fall and spring semesters I painted the longest wall a warm light brown khaki and used the additional furniture to separate the tables creating distinct consulting stations on each wall. Since the tan khaki wall is the first wall seen when entering the room, it creates a warm effect, setting people at ease. Along the wall, there is a consulting station and a large, almond colored, four-drawer horizontal filing cabinet to hold session records. Opposite the filing cabinet is the second consulting area, which is shielded from the door by a book case. Upon entering the room consultants and writers see a space that is not a classroom, but certainly a space in which work happens.

There is no couch or coffee pot, yet the consultants and writers make themselves at home. Consultants and writers take their time in sessions, rather than getting in and out as fast as they can. In fact, politely getting the writer to leave is a common discussion at training and among the consultants. The consultants themselves have started coming to the center early to relax or do their own work before starting a shift. A space like our center shows that it is possible to create a hospitable environment visually distinct from classroom spaces, and comfortable to work in, without accepting the cozy, homey metaphors traditionally applied to writing centers.

As important as the physical space is when attempting to create a hospitable writing center, it is only one element to making the consultant feel welcomed. The other part is at once more important, and more ephemeral, the consultant must feel, to adopt the Levinasian term "recollected" in the center. To be recollected in the center the consultant must be able to see herself in the center. For me as an administrator, that means making sure the consultants feel that they contribute to the daily operation and governance of the center. Returning to an element mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, one way an administrator can give the consultants this sense of belonging is to create within the center a community of practice. In their book *The Everyday Writing Center* Geller et al. use the work of anthropologist Etienne Wenger to define a community of practice as "places where we develop, negotiate, and share" our "theories and ways of understanding the world" (Wenger in Geller et al. ch.1). According to Geller et al, envisioning the writing center as a community of practice means designing the center for learning in a way that is "based on something other than he familiar stratification between directors

tutors, tutors and writers, directors and professors, peer tutors and professional

instructors" (*Everyday Writing Center* ch.1). Hospitality offers an alternative to this

stratified relationship that I believe compliments the development of a community of

practice.

Although as Wenger states "communities of practice are a natural part of

organizational life" and as such will eventually develop within an organization, I sought a

way to actively cultivate a community of practice within our writing center (*Cultivating*

ch.1). Mark Hall's article, "Using Dialogic Reflection to Develop a Writing Center

Community of Practice" provided me a place to start shaping our writing center

community of practice. Hall's summary of the three characteristics Lave and Wenger

claim define a community of practice helped me identify specifically how I felt the center

is a community of practice, and also where, as such, it could use more development.

> First, a community of practice includes a "domain of interest," a sphere of
> concern and capability. Second, a community of practice includes members who
> engage in common activities, interact, and learn from each other over time. Third,
> a community of practice includes, as Wenger put it, "a shared repertoire of
> resources: experiences, stories, tools [and] ways of addressing recurring
> problems." ("Using Dialogic Reflection" 93)

Reading Hall's summary, I could see that the writing center's "sphere of concern and

capability" is responding to student writing, and that the staff of the writing center engage

in common activities such as consulting and training that help them learn from each other

over time. If anything, the center lacked a "shared repertoire of resources" to enhance the

development of its community of practice. The consultants developed worksheets and

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tools for the writers using the center, but lacked a way to pass knowledge on to the new consultants who joined the staff. Initially, I thought about establishing a mentoring program in the writing center to help build that shared repertoire. In our small center, however, there is rarely a consistent ration of experienced and new consultants on the staff.

In the end, following the example in Hall's article and created a staff blog as a way to provide new consultants access to the knowledge gained by experienced consultants. All consultants are encouraged to contribute pieces about their experiences in the center and provide feedback from one another. New consultants are specifically encouraged to post questions for feedback from experienced consultants. The posts and responses created a shared repertoire of knowledge that remains accessible as consultants graduate and leave the center. When considering the blog format, I felt privacy was the element most necessary to make this a space in which consultants could feel they were developing their own community, privacy from the public and from me. To provide privacy I chose the free blogging platform, *Wordpress*, which allows us to lock the community to active consultants only. Keeping in mind that no space on the internet is completely locked down, consultants are also encouraged never to provide identifying information about a writer, or to post anything that might be inappropriate. An additional measure to keep the space consultant oriented is that while I do monitor the space and enjoy reading posts, I do not often contribute myself. Other than the initial welcome to our blog, only occasionally do I post links to articles I think might be of interest or brief recaps of conferences I attend.

Recently, a consultant and I developed the position of Blog Curator. The consultant holding the title of Blog Curator is responsible for moderating comments and creating a link library on the page to provide other consultants with additional resources. Currently, posting to the blog is a part of assignments in consultant training and development. My hope, however, is that a culture of contributing to and maintaining the blog will develop, and requiring posts will become unnecessary. A shared repertoire of consulting activities is developed when the new consultants, currently mentored through the blog system, become experienced consultants and continue sharing their wisdom, which creates a community around the activity of writing consultation. Providing the consultants a way to create their own shared repertoire of knowledge about writing consultation not only builds a community of practice, but also helps me welcome the consultants into the center by demonstrating the value I place on their contributions to our community. The archive of their individual posts helps consultants track their own development, and see how they shape the community through their posts and responses; it provides the consultants a way to feel the Levinasian "recollection" of seeing themselves as a vital part of the center.

In addition to creating the blog to provide consultants a way to influence the development of the center community, whenever possible I seek out the consultants help and opinion on matters of center development. As an example, in the fall of 2012 another campus program approached me seeking to develop a collaborative project with the writing center. As the writing center administrator, I certainly could have accepted the project or not on my own. Instead, I informed the outside group, that I could not make

such a decision without first receiving feedback from the consultants. Sharing the idea

with the consultants I let them know that we would only take on the project with their

approval, which demonstrated to them the value of their contribution to the center. This

became another opportunity for me to demonstrate that the consultants are central to the

center's governance. Welcoming the consultants to the center this way builds their sense

of community and authority in the center, which then makes them comfortable enough to

share authority with the writers visiting the center.

Additionally, one of the early decisions I made about the writing center had the

unexpected benefit of strengthening the sense of community in the tutorial center. When I

began as the writing center administrator, the center operated as an appointment only

service. One consequence of the appointment only practice was that while the writing

service is located within the tutorial center, it operated fairly autonomously. Each day the

consultants received a list of appointments then managed any reception procedures on

their own by walking to the front of the tutorial center to meet the writer. As a result the

writing service staff and tutorial center staff rarely interacted, and the writing consultants

did not feel a part of the tutorial center. In what I saw as an unrelated move, I decided to

move away from the appointment only policy to create time for students to drop-in

without an appointment to get help with their writing.

At first the writing service operated as independently as ever, by creating a small

waiting area for students in its room. However, drop-in services proved popular that

semester and there simply was not enough space in the back room for the students

waiting to see a consultant. The only other option was to have students wait at the front of

the tutorial center; however, given the physical location of the writing center, it was impossible for consultants to see students waiting at the front. The consultants could no longer manage reception duties on their own. To continue offering this popular form of service the writing consultants would have to rely on the assistance of the tutorial center reception staff. Working together the tutorial center reception staff and I developed a system in which writers would sign in at the front, and wait in the much larger area. After a writer signed in the front desk receptionist would instant message the consultants in the writing center to let them know someone was waiting. The consultant would come to the front of the tutorial center, cross the writer's name off the sign in sheet and take the writer back to the center to begin the session. The obvious benefit of this system is that there is much more waiting space in the front reception area. The more subtle benefit came from making the writing consultants a more visible part of the tutorial center. The increased contact with the tutorial center staff increased the consultant's sense of community, by enabling them to define their small community within the larger tutorial center. Having already felt themselves welcomed into the writing center, the consultants' greater interaction with the tutorial center staff provided an external confirmation of their identity as a community of their own.

Developing a community of practice demonstrates to consultants that they make our writing center the successful service it is, giving them a "home" in the center. When the writer visits the center the consultant is then able to welcome the writer into the space as well. It is true, however, that even in an established community of practice, a welcoming physical space, and hospitable policies, the consultant and writer may not

connect "face-to-face" in the Levinasian sense. There will always be sessions in which

consultants and writers sitting across from one another will fail to connect. Just as there

will be electronic sessions conducted through instant messaging in which the consultant

and writer meet "full face," as Levinas says (*Totality and Infinity* 80). The writing center

administrator who creates a community of practice within the center only prepares the

space in which hospitality becomes a possibility; she cannot force either the consultant or

writer to open up to the other. A hospitable approach to writing center work is valuable

then because it provides a guide for decision making. As a writing center administrator

operating from a hospitable perspective when I am faced with a decision I must consider

"Will what I am about to do support the consultant's ability to welcome the writer into

the space and engage with her ethically, or will it deter that engagement?" Hopefully, my

answers result in a "direct" and "full face" welcome, which prompts the consultant to

welcome the writer into the center, encouraging her to open up and share her ideas

(*Totality and Infinity* 80).

Beyond Location: Applying the Triadic Hospitable Metaphor to Writing Centers

Finally, considering the writing center as a hospitable place requires re-thinking

the role of the administrator. As preparer, the writing center administrator's goal of

welcoming the consultants into the center will perhaps change the focus of her hiring

practices, training, and the daily function of the center. This reconsideration places the

writing center closer to Andrea Lundsford's goal of creating a "Burekean Parlor" in the

writing center. As described by Lundsford the Burkean Parlor is a location in which

knowledge is "always contextually bound," "always socially constructed" and where "control, power, and authority [are] not in the tutor or staff, not in the individual student, but in the negotiating group" ("Collaboration" 8). The community of practice necessary to welcome the consultant into the center creates socially constructed knowledge that the consultant negotiates sharing with the writer. By naming her ideal writing center a Burkean Parlor, Lundsford draws on Burke's famous metaphor describing literary criticism as an unending conversation in which individuals only participate for a short time. In Burke's metaphor a person must listen to the parlor conversation for a while before joining in with the knowledge that the conversation will continue after she has left. The writing center, as imagined by Lundsford, is then a space to which the writer can come in order to listen to the academic conversation, to learn it before making her contribution to the conversation through her class paper.

Creating a "Burkean Parlor" with the attributes Lundsford describes would challenge "our ways of organizing our centers, of training our staff and tutors, of working with teachers" ("Collaboration" 8). Envisioning the writing center as a hospitable place reorganizes the center to value the writer's difference. Such reorganization requires adjustments to the training of staff, and perhaps with the ways in which the center works with instructors. Hospitality provides a lens through which all of these actions are determined by the context of our local situations. Since one key element of a hospitable writing center is that control, power, and authority are distributed between the consultant and writer, I argue accepting the hospitable metaphor for writing centers provides

administrators with the means of meeting Lundford's challenge to create a Burkean

Parlor in the writing center.

The opening dialogue between consultant and writer, which I earlier described as

hospitable, can also reflect a writer learning the academic conversation from the

consultant. As suggested earlier, when the consultant asks, "What would you like to work

on today?" she is negotiating the location of power in the session by attempting to share it

with writer. When the writer's response is too broad or vague, such as "I want to work on

the flow of my paper" the consultant's attempt to help the writer set the agenda for the

session also models academic conversation for the writer. The consultant might rephrase

the writer's response, "Flow can be a pretty broad concept. When you said you wanted to

work on your paper's 'flow,' did you mean the overall organization, or the transitions

from one paragraph to the next?" Listening to the academic conversation the writer

picked up on the broad concept of 'flow.' Talking with the consultant helps the writer to

understand the academic conversation better by revealing that "flow" contains multiple

elements. In this way the writing center becomes a space for the writer to practice

participating in the academic conversation.

By demonstrating the way hospitality theory already compliments current

scholarship in Writing Center Studies through: the identification of the writing center as a

liminal space within the university; the move to equalize the relationship between the

consultant and writer by sharing session authority; and, the promotion of writing centers

as communities of practice, throughout this chapter I strove to demonstrate how valuable

the triadic hospitable metaphor is to writing centers. While I made this point throughout,

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at the conclusion I would like to stress what I consider to be the most useful element of the triadic hospitable metaphor, which is the way that the metaphor allows for its application within different contexts. The examples I provided throughout this chapter represent what is hospitable at a small writing center located within a tutorial center at a large research university. The context of other writing centers will influence what is considered hospitable in those locations. For example, at a small center with minimal staff and limited hours, hospitable policies may include an appointment only mode of service coupled with a rule limiting the number of appointments a writer may make in any given week. While such rules may be considered barriers to service, they also function to protect the consultants time. If there are only appointments, at the beginning of her shift the consultant can know her schedule for the day and plan accordingly. Limiting the number of appointments a writer may make in a week ensures that the greatest number of students may use the service.

At an established center appointment rules and policies may not be hospitable. Such a center may have a large enough staff to make a primarily drop-in service most hospitable, by ensuring someone was always on ready to help the writers stopping by. The approach could be hospitable to writers because it would allow fit a center visit into their schedule. The large staff may even ensure the writer receives feedback from a variety of perspectives. A triadic understanding of hospitality is a useful way to think about writing center work because in addition to meeting the challenges of contemporary writing center studies, it allows for the changes in context when it is implemented in different locations. Given that no two writing centers function in exactly the same way,

the triadic hospitable metaphor provides a theoretical framework that can account for their differences.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION: HOSPITALITY—A PROGRAM FOR MORE WORK

As with many if not all dissertations, at the beginning I envisioned a different

project; yet, at this point, I can barely fathom what that project was. I most clearly

remember my dissatisfaction with how the intersection between hospitality and Writing

Studies was being promoted. As Charles Peirce would say, the articles I read irritated my

doubt because while I firmly believed in the radical and transformative potential Jacobs,

Haswell, Haswell and Blalock, Heard, and others identified in the relationship between

hospitality and composition, the articles did not show me a way to fulfill that potential.

Perhaps, at the beginning of this project, I considered hospitality a "solving name," a

word that signaled "the end of [a] metaphysical quest," and promised solutions; yet, the

articles I read left me with more questions (James "What Pragmatism Means" 28).

According to James terms like

> 'God,' 'Matter,' Reason,' 'the Absolute,' 'Energy' are so many solving names.
> You can rest when you have them. You are at the end of your metaphysical quest.
> But, if you follow the pragmatic method, you cannot look on any such word as
> closing your quest. You must bring out of each word its practical cash-value, set it
> at work within the stream of your experience. It appears less as a solution, then,
> than as a program for more work, and more particularly as an indication of the
> ways in which existing realities may be *changed*. [emphasis original] ("What
> Pragmatism Means' 28)

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Despite James's admonitions otherwise, all the terms influencing my thought at the start of this project, including pragmatism, appeared as solving names to me. Pragmatism, Hospitality, Composition were all terms to be capitalized, defined, and applied to other concepts, yet, treating these terms as an end, as a means to solve a problem, left me frustrated with nowhere to go. There is no "AHA" moment to describe; however, the future oriented tenets of pragmatism and hospitality eventually began to guide my thinking. The intersection of pragmatism, hospitality, and composition became a place from which to begin my thinking rather than end it.

Placing hospitality and pragmatism at the beginning of my thinking helped me to reconcile the inherent tension between hospitality and the university. The institutional setting of the university is not, by its very nature, a hospitable place. The power and hierarchy inherently circulating in nearly every relationship (student/instructor, staff and faculty, differently ranked faculty, faculty and administration) consistently works against an individual's ability to accept the risk of remaining open, available, and welcoming. Consequently, while I could certainly determine what level of risk was acceptable for myself, I could not presume to set that level of risk for someone else, which left me unable to advocate for a course of hospitable action in the university. Yet, walking away from hospitality was not an option for me.

As a first generation graduate student I felt what it was like to be a guest of the university, and as a composition instructor I felt the constraints upon my ability to act as a host for students, now as a writing center administrator I occupied a new position in the triadic hospitable metaphor. As an administrator I could act as the preparer creating a

space in which the consultant felt welcomed and could potentially choose to extend that welcome to the writer. The writing center consultant acted as a host for the writer, and I prepared the space in which they would meet. While I did not feel it right to impose a hospitable philosophy on the consultants, I could create a space in which it was possible for them to choose hospitality. This new perspective allowed me to think of hospitality differently, to see it in terms of possibility, and it was this view that enabled me to think about the composition classroom, and writing program administrator differently.

If the critical scholarship on hospitality and composition did not satisfy my curiosity, or appease my doubt, then I needed to understand why. Returning to Haswell, Haswell and Blalock, I read and re-read their article doing my best to approach it hospitably, to look for the parts I could accept just as eagerly as those I could not. Haswell, Haswell and Blalock's thorough explanations of Judeo-Christian, Homeric, and Nomadic hospitality helped me to categorize how I thought about and defined the term. Yet, even as I admired their work, I kept returning to this passage, attempting to decipher why it provoked me.

> In this piece we chiefly treat hospitality not as a theory but as a social or cultural praxis—complex, tacit, risky, and treacherous, therefore in need of analysis, conscientization, and caution. As any praxis, hospitality can be theorized, of course, but in this article we leave that route to others (Giorgio Agamben, Jacques Derrida, Julia Kristeva, and Emmanuel Levinas are good places to start). ("Hospitality" 708)

Having struggled through the readings (Agamben, Derrida, Kristeva, and Levinas) and wrestled with the difficult task of writing about hospitality, which requires determining

when to delve into the philosophy and theory, and how much the reader needs to know at any given point, I understood Haswell, Haswell and Blalock's desire to focus on defining a hospitable pedagogy. The problem was that in their attempt to set aside the theory of hospitality, Haswell, Haswell and Blalock revealed how impossible that was. Haswell, Haswell and Blalock defined hospitality as a "praxis … in need of analysis, conscientization, and caution," which is certainly true. However Friere, whose influence is revealed in the author's choice of the term conscientization, teaches that

> Within a word we find two dimensions reflection and action, in such radical interaction that if one is sacrificed—even in part—the other immediately suffers. There is no true word that is not at the same time praxis. (*Pedagogy* 87)

The application of hospitality to composition must also reflect these two dimensions, and can never be one without the other. "Chapter II: The Hospitable Metaphor and the Composition Classroom" reveals how I believe Haswell, Haswell and Blalock's pedagogy suffered from their attempt to set aside hospitality theory for others. Engaging with hospitality theory reveals a more complex hospitable metaphor with which to describe the classroom. Leaving aside hospitality theory to define a hospitable action or pedagogy perpetuates the assumption that hospitality is conscripted to the traditional dyadic metaphor of host and guest.

Within such a binary, the instructor appears most responsible for creating a hospitable classroom. Reflecting upon hospitality theory reveals the richer means of analysis, the triadic metaphor for hospitality. The triadic metaphor of hospitality accounts for the unseen, but influential presence of the institution in the composition classroom.

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The most local representative of institutional power is the writing program administrator, who hires and supervises instructors, and is influential in setting the course objectives and policies. While it is certainly possible for an instructor to attempt to be as hospitable as possible in the classroom, her ability to do so is impacted by the environment created for her by the writing program administrator. The writing program administrator is responsible for preparing the space, or creating an environment in which the instructor sees hospitality as a possibility.

Recognizing the influence the writing program administrator has on the ability of the instructor to enact a hospitable pedagogy reveals how hospitality can be used by the writing program administrator to evaluate the conditions she creates for instructors. The administrator creates the possibility of hospitality. As I discus in Chapter III "Determining Agency: The Triadic View of the Writing Program Administrator," one way the administrator can determine whether to adopt a program policy is to determine if that policy will help the instructor create a hospitable environment in the course. Most importantly for the writing program administrator, the triadic hospitable metaphor can provide a way to define and describe the often conflicting roles she must occupy. Determining which position an individual occupies within the triad helps determine how she is capable of acting. For example, the writing program administrator occupies the position of preparer in relationship to the composition classroom because she is most responsible for creating the conditions that make hospitality a possible stance for the instructor. However, in a direct relationship to the instructor the writing program

administrator occupies the position of host, and her ability to act hospitably is constrained by the conditions the university creates for her.

As a means of analysis, and determining responsibility, the triadic hospitable metaphor creates the broadest program of work for Writing Studies because it promotes the consideration of consequences. To paraphrase the pragmatists, it forces instructors, administrators, or anyone applying the analysis to consider how an action will impact the ability to create a hospitable environment. For example, when Doug Hesse describes negotiating the qualifications for writing instructors with his dean he is already engaged in this kind of decision making. While Hesse frames this example as a successful approach to negotiating institution politics as a WPA, it is also an example of hospitable decision making. Hesse describes his context: "I was directing a large writing program staffed primarily by some eight-five graduate teaching assistants, about half master's and half doctoral candidates" ("Politics and the WPA" 46). Hesse mentions that there was a teacher training and support program in place and that "[he] considered teaching in the program strong" ("Politics and the WPA" 46). Yet, the Dean of arts and sciences expressed concern about the relationship between teaching quality and experience even suggesting hiring a staff of instructor's with master's degrees to replace the graduate teaching assistants.

The instructors would receive higher pay and benefit and be eligible for renewable contracts, but not tenure ("Politics and the WPA" 46). While "[Hesse] thought a second-tier faculty a bad idea," he allows his responsibility for the graduate teaching

assistants to serve as a guide for making the decision ("Politics and the WPA" 46).

Countering the Dean's proposal, Hesse takes the opportunity to addresses his own

> concerns that each fall, following a week-long teaching orientation and with the
> benefit of an ongoing three-hour course and a teaching proseminar, we assigned
> twenty-five to thirty new master's students to sections of English 101. The crunch
> of beginning graduate studies and teaching for the first time was enormous.
> ("Politics and the WPA" 46)

Addressing the Dean's concern about teaching quality, and his own concern about

overloading graduate students, Hesse proposed a solution that would provide anyone

teaching in the program a semester of "highly supervised experience" by assigning new

master's students to co-teach with experienced instructors ("Politics and the WPA" 46).

The Dean approved the plan and Hesse offers the example as an illustration of political

success. I argue the anecdote is also a success because it is an example of Hesse fulfilling

his role within the triadic hospitable metaphor. The approval of the Dean created the

conditions that allowed Hesse, in his capacity as a host for instructors, to welcome new

master's students into the teaching community by providing them with mentorship.

For this project, my goal when discussing the composition classroom was to

challenge the existing view that the responsibility for creating a hospitable pedagogy lay

with the instructor. Consequently, I highlighted the ways in which the classroom

environment is influenced by the writing program administrator. An unintended result of

my focus on outside influences in the composition classroom is the perception that the

instructor lacks agency in her direct relationship with the student. However, anticipating

the continuing program of work for hospitality in the composition classroom, it is

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possible to consider another direct relationship in the composition classroom—the relationship between the student and assignment. Considering the students interaction with an assignment as if it were a relationship, forces the instructor to determine how well the student has been prepared to successfully complete the assignment. Preparing the student to complete the assignment influences the design of individual classes, but it also requires the instructor to consider carefully the type of assignment. At a time when many instructors experiment with multi-modal assignments, the student's ability to meet the needs of the assignment must be considered. Will all the students have access to the appropriate programs? Will the instructor use class time to teach the students how to use the appropriate programs or software? I argue the instructor's hospitable agency lies in these considerations, in interrogating her assumptions about students when developing assignments and lesson plans.

Just as this dissertation began as a reflection of my experience, it ends as a reflection of how my experience changed. The composition classroom, which was such a central part of my work as a teaching assistant, now serves as a site of contrast between the existing literature about composition and hospitality and my own views about that relationship. The classroom, where I anticipated spending much of my time in this dissertation and as a professional now reflects a place to begin this discussion. As my experience working in different writing programs grew, it led me to consider how hospitality might impact the administrative work of Writing Studies as well as the composition classroom. Accepting my first position as a writing center administrator provided became (to paraphrase James) the opportunity to set hospitality to work in the

stream of my experience. Unexpectedly, in the writing center I found my own place within Writing Studies. While writing center scholarship has a rich history and is a growing field, my graduate education only marginally prepared me for this complex and invigorating aspect of Writing Studies. Most importantly my new position in the writing center gave me the opportunity to put my views of hospitable administrative practice to the text of experience.

Putting hospitality to work outside the composition classroom is a way to theorize about all aspects of Writing Studies because it provides us with a means of accounting for local contexts, assessing the consequences of our actions, and acknowledging and respecting difference. I argue that within Writing Studies the writing center provides the location to which the hospitable metaphor is best applied. The location of the writing center which is a part of the university, but outside the typical power structures of grading and evaluation, creates a setting in which the consultant and writer meet as equals. The essential knowledge each brings to the session equalizes them further by distributing authority between them. Muriel Harris illustrates this equality by describing what sets consultants apart from instructors, "Tutors don't need to take attendance, make assignments, set deadlines, deliver negative comments, give tests, or issue grades" ("Talking" 28). Since the consultants do not have the power to influence the writer's grade, the two can begin their relationship in the center in a position of equality, which provides them with the potential to be open and available to each other. In such a relationship the consultant and writer learn from the differences each brings to the session.

Just as with the composition classroom where the direct relationship between the instructor and student is influenced by the writing program administrator, the direct relationship between the consultant and writer is influenced by the writing center administrator. Viewing the writing center through the triadic hospitable metaphor the writing center administrator occupies the position of the preparer. The choices the administrator makes about center policy and training directly affects the ability of the consultant to welcome the writer into the center and by extension the academic community. As I argued in Chapter IV "The Possibility of Hospitality: Visiting the Writing Center," the writing center administrator best prepares the space of the writing center for the relationship between the consultant and writer by ensuring that the consultant feels a part of the center community. The physical space of the center, policies, and methods of training are all elements that help the writing center administrator to create an environment in which hospitality is possible.

The most important aspect of attempting to create a hospitable writing center is the fact that what is hospitable is determined by the local conditions. As Harry Denny illustrates in the introduction to his book *Facing the Center: Toward an Identity Politics of One-to-One Mentoring*, much of writing center research

> operates on the assumption, on some level, that writing centers can just bank and replicate without regard to local context or culture or without deep thinking in collaboration with a staff and other stakeholders. (ch. 1)

A pragmatic hospitality, I argue, disrupts this assumption because what is hospitable at one location may not be at another. The changing conditions require a change in the

application of hospitality. Rather than trying to define best practices that account for every context, considering the writing center through the lens of hospitality helps writing center administrators to make decisions based upon what will have the most hospitable consequences for their situation. The shift in focus allows context to determine the best practices in each location.

Proposing that hospitality best accounts for the local context of writing centers, my intention is not to perpetuate what Doreen Massey calls the "exoneration of the local," which promotes "understanding 'local place' in entirely positive terms" ("Geographies of Responsibility" 14). Local situations may not be perfect. In those cases, however, the application of a pragmatic hospitality identifies where the administrator should advocate for change. In some instances that may mean advocating where appropriate to increase consultant pay, make physical or web-space available for center use, or the ability to re-design consultant training. Accounting for local context is meant to illustrate the usefulness of the theory, not to promote acquiescence for an unsuitable environment.

Hospitality theory requires a constant concern for difference that echoes contemporary work in writing center studies. Recently published works like *Writing Centers and the New Racism: A Call for Sustainable Dialogue and Change* and *Facing the Center: Towards an Identity Politics of One-to-One Mentoring* reflect the way writing center scholarship is attempting to allow difference and diversity in the university to influence the field. Nancy Grimm questions the standard maxims of writing center work, in her article "Retheorizing Writing Center Work to Transform a System of Advantage

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Based on Race." She says the consequences of such maxims as "a good tutor makes the student do all the work; the ultimate goal of a tutorial is an independent writer; our aim is to make better writers, not better writing" are that they support an ideology of individualism which perpetuates discriminatory structures ("Retheorizing" 81). Grimm's work troubles the underlying mission of writing centers by questioning whether writing centers exist to help students assimilate to university culture by completely conforming to standard academic English, accommodate to university culture by deciding when to incorporate standard academic English into their home language patterns, or promoting resistance to the cultural forms of discrimination inherent in standard academic English.

Grimm argues that focusing only on the writer – making her do all the work, making her independent, and making her better supports an educational ideology that prizes independent learning, a system which privileges students who (through class, gender, or racial privilege) learn without assistance. At heart the questions raised by Grimm and others about how to combat institutional racism within the writing center are questions about how institutions and individuals relate to the difference represented in others. Is that difference contained or erased through assimilation? Is that difference tolerated through accommodation? Is that difference acknowledged and respected? Hospitality theory represents a respect for and desire to learn from difference and an emphasis on equality that might help writing centers administrators to answer the difficult questions posed by Grimm.

Understanding how the relationship between the consultant and writer differs from that of the instructor and student is essential because it highlights how the writing

center mitigates some of the risks inherent with hospitality. As Leann Bertocini's story illustrates, choosing to adopt a philosophical position that is not supported by the department in which an instructor works can have serious consequences. Consequently, instructors are not often free to adopt a hospitable pedagogy. Similarly, the contentious faculty meeting Dale Jacobs describes is another situation in which the consequences are potentially too great for individuals to choose to enact a hospitable pedagogy. In the writing center the consultant and writer both occupy the lowest place on the "academic ladder," which means they risk little sharing their knowledge with each other (Harris "Talking" 28). The result is that the writing center represents a space in the university in which hospitality becomes a possibility for writer and consultant. As equals each are able to choose to act hospitably, to "give serious consideration to their ideas" as Dale Jacobs would say ("Audacity" 569).

Making the relationship between Writing Studies and hospitality the focus of this dissertation represents more than simply my own experience; it is vital to the contemporary context of the field. While the flat world is an over-used metaphor for increasing globalization, individuals, corporations, universities, and nations all spend more and more of their time in contact with people who are different from themselves. At the university that difference is embraced as diversity. The diverse campus is marketed as a place in which multiple perspectives meet to the benefit of all; where, as the course most often required of all incoming students, composition or first year writing is where those multiple perspectives often collide. Just as Chrisitan Moraru argues that learning to

cope with difference is essential in contemporary culture, I would argue it is essential to the contemporary university. Moraru says,

> What, how and where we are obligates. Next to "them" more than we have ever been, "we" are responsible to and for them, more specifically to and for what makes them other to us rather than others like us" (*Cosmodernism* 53).

Moraru's sense of obligation and responsibility for difference echoes Levinas and carries the same sense of infinity. If diversity is the goal of the contemporary university, then those embedded in the university structure consultants, instructors, administrators all need to develop a way to accept and learn from the difference of the individuals becoming a part of the campus.

As proof of "[Composition's] long history of acting inhospitably toward radical and complex ideas," Matthew Heard describes an exchange between Janice Lauer and Ann Berthoff about "the types of "questions" that should be invited to the conversation about writing" [emphasis orgininal] ("Hospitality and Generosity 321-22). In Heard's characterization of the exchange, Lauer seeks questions in order to solve problems, and Berthoff sees "transformative potential in a field of open questions and in the very act of "problematizing" that keeps new questions alive" ("Hospitality and Generosity" 322). Heard and I approach the "ideal" of hospitality in stances similar to Lauer and Berthoff. Heard argues that a solution to the problem of hospitality is the "preservation" of the ideal by labeling the practice generosity ("Hospitality and Generosity" 321). Whereas, like Berthoff, I argue that the "problems" identified by the intersection of hospitality and Writing Studies provoke useful questions. As a means of analysis, the ideal of hospitality

is "useful" and "transformative" because it continually generates new questions for the field.

Hospitality is not a solution for the university or Writing Studies, but as James said, it is a program for more work. Writing Studies can use hospitality to re-think every aspect of the field. The types of assignments instructors create, how instructors respond to student work, and how students are invited to respond to instructors represent just a few of the ways hospitality could impact the composition classroom. The working conditions the writing program administrator develops for instructors, the methods of course delivery approved by the administration, the terms of instructor evaluation and promotion represent how hospitality could impact the administration of writing programs. The physical configuration of the center, the policies of the center, the language describing the session, and the training of the consultants are all ways I have highlighted that hospitality could impact the writing center. Of course the most important way hospitality represents a continuing program of work for writing center is that each change in local context creates a change in what is considered hospitable. Hospitality shares with pragmatism a forward looking focus on the consequences of responses and relationships.

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