WRITING CENTER HANDBOOKS AND TRAVEL GUIDEBOOKS:

REDESIGNING INSTRUCTIONAL TEXTS FOR

MULTICULTURAL, MULTILINGUAL, AND MULTINATIONAL CONTEXTS

By

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The dissertation, *Writing Center Handbooks and Travel Guidebooks: Redesigning Instructional Texts for Multicultural, Multilingual, and Multinational Contexts*, is hereby approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY in the field of Rhetoric and Technical Communication.

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Abstract

In an increasingly interconnected world characterized by the accelerating interplay of cultural, linguistic, and national difference, the ability to negotiate that difference in an equitable and ethical manner is a crucial skill for both individuals and larger social groups. This dissertation, *Writing Center Handbooks and Travel Guidebooks: Redesigning Instructional Texts for Multicultural, Multilingual, and Multinational Contexts*, considers how instructional texts that ostensibly support the negotiation of difference (i.e., accepting and learning from difference) actually promote the management of difference (i.e., rejecting, assimilating, and erasing difference).

As a corrective to this focus on managing difference, chapter two constructs a theoretical framework that facilitates the redesign of handbooks, guidebooks, and similar instructional texts. This framework centers on reflexive design practices and is informed by literacy theory (Gee; New London Group; Street), social learning theory (Wenger), globalization theory (Nederveen Pieterse), and composition theory (Canagarajah; Horner and Trimbur; Lu; Matsuda; Pratt). By implementing reflexive design practices in the redesign of instructional texts, this dissertation argues that instructional texts can promote the negotiation of difference and a multicultural/multilingual sensibility that accounts for twenty-first century linguistic and cultural realities.

Informed by the theoretical framework of chapter two, chapters three and four conduct a rhetorical analysis of two forms of instructional text that are representative of the larger genre: writing center coach handbooks and travel guidebooks to Hong Kong. This rhetorical analysis reveals how both forms of text employ rhetorical strategies that uphold dominant monolingual and monocultural assumptions. Alternative rhetorical strategies are then proposed that can be used to redesign these two forms of instructional texts in a manner that aligns with multicultural and multilingual assumptions. These chapters draw on the work of scholars in Writing Center Studies (Boquet and Lerner; Carino; DiPardo; Grimm; North; Severino) and Technical Communication (Barton and Barton; Dilger; Johnson; Kimball; Slack), respectively. Chapter five explores how the redesign of coach handbooks and travel guidebooks proposed in this dissertation can be conceptualized as a political act.

Ultimately, this dissertation argues that instructional texts are powerful heuristic tools that can enact social change if they are redesigned to foster the negotiation of difference and to promote multicultural/multilingual world views.

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Chapter 1

Writing Center Handbooks and Travel Guidebooks:

Instruction Manuals for Encountering Cultural, Linguistic, and National Difference

Four MTR subway lines converge at the massive underground Central Station complex in Hong Kong, one of the world's great global cities. The sleek blue trains of the Airport Express Line rocket from Central out to the futuristic terminal at Chek Lap Kok, where 747s and A-340s from all over the world touch down in steady succession. Commuters ride the Tung Chung Line out to mountainous Lantau Island, with its high-rise apartment blocks and giant Buddha statue. On the Tsuen Wan Line the trains worm under Victoria Harbour and run beneath the neon-drenched streets of Kowloon. The

Island Line traces the northern shore of Hong Kong Island, an urban coast studded with the towers of international banks, luxury hotels, and multinational corporations. I know these four lines well, know their rhythms and quirks, know where to find an open seat during rush hour and where to switch lines, know which stations have bakeries selling fresh *daan taat* 蛋撻 (egg tarts) and which stations have a bookshop or Pacific Coffee nearby.

Whenever I want to explore some new ground in Hong Kong, I often begin my journey at Central Station, nexus of four key MTR lines. Likewise, this dissertation stands at the center of four interlinked fields—Literacy Studies, Composition Studies, Writing Center Studies, and Technical Communication. Just as I use the MTR lines to explore Hong Kong, I use these four fields as lines of inquiry that allow me to explore the central questions of this dissertation: How do instruction manuals encourage their users to engage with cultural, linguistic, and national difference in ways that serve dominant monocultural and monolingual assumptions? How can these practical, how-to guides be redesigned to encourage a more productive engagement with difference that challenges dominant ideologies, fosters multicultural and multilingual assumptions, and provides for more inclusive notions of user identity? And how has the globalized nature of our age, which requires us to face an expanding array of difference in entirely new ways, made this redesign nothing less than imperative?

I take the globalized context for asking these questions as a given. After all, in an age when one can electronically communicate with friends and colleagues on the other side of the world in just a few seconds of tapping on a keyboard, not to mention travel to

those same friends and colleagues in less than 24 jet-lagged hours, few would dispute the globalized character of the twenty-first century. There might not be much consensus on anything else that has to do with globalization, however, a term that remains as contentious as it is contested (McDonough and Wong; Nederveen Pieterse; Roman). The ongoing debate about the many facets of globalization is hardly surprising, for there is a great deal at stake, from global warming to global hunger. The attacks of September 11, 2001, the SARS epidemic of 2002-2003, and the worldwide financial crisis that began in 2008 provide ample evidence of our interconnectedness. Nobody can escape the impact of globalization, and for better or for worse everyone shares in its political, economic, and environmental consequences. Everyone shares in its social consequences as well, including the ways that globalization compels us to face an expanding variety of cultural, linguistic, and national difference. How we engage with this difference will determine our individual and collective futures. Will our engagement be characterized by actions that serve to assimilate, exclude, ignore, or erase difference? Or will our engagement be characterized by a reflexive spirit of negotiation with difference?

As noted by the New London Group, an international collaboration of prominent literacy scholars, globalization has brought a steadily rising number of literacies and identities into contact at an ever-increasing rate. This has generated considerable tension and conflict, with those holding dominant literacies and identities seeking to maintain their privileged positions in the face of challenges from those who hold alternative literacies and identities. The hybridization that inevitably results from these challenges tends to blur boundaries, break down binaries, and undermine notions of fixed and pure

literacies and identities. Globalization is therefore best understood as a process of hybridity rather than a homogenizing process or state of continual conflict between immutable cultural blocs (Nederveen Pieterse). Composition scholar A. Suresh Canagarajah has asserted, for example, that it is no longer possible to look to one version of English as the definitive standard any more than it is possible to assign one standard identity to those who speak it. Rather, we must look to multiple, evolving, and hybrid World Englishes spoken by and to people holding diverse, fluid, and hybrid identities—a notion facing profound resistance from ideological forces invested in Standard English and the mainstream Euro-American identities positioned as its ultimate owners ("The Place"). Similarly, Composition scholar Paul Kei Matsuda challenges the "myth of linguistic homogeneity" that remains prevalent in the United States. This myth underpins the commonly held assumption that all students in the composition classroom are native speakers of mainstream English; moreover, the myth justifies the marginalization of those students who are not native speakers. With these examples in mind, if those of us in Literacy Studies are to help make the global interplay of literacies and identities productive rather than destructive, progressive rather than regressive, and equitable rather than unjust, we must continue to interrogate how literacies and identities interact in a global context.

In response to this imperative, I critically interrogate the hegemonic work performed by instructional texts. I focus my interrogation on writing center coach handbooks and travel guides to Hong Kong, which serve as two representative examples

of a very broad genre.[1] On first glance, coach handbooks and travel guidebooks might seem like an odd pairing. Beyond joint membership in that broad and somewhat amorphous genre known as "instructional texts," what exactly do coach handbooks and travel guidebooks have in common? After all, if you went to a bookshop that sold both popular and academic texts, you would likely find that writing center coach handbooks and travel guidebooks were stocked on opposite sides of the store.

Whatever their dissimilarities, however, coach handbooks and travel guidebooks nonetheless share a common purpose in that they both instruct users in how to engage with cultural, linguistic, and national difference.[2] Moreover, these texts frequently push forms of engagement that work, as literacy scholar Nancy Grimm puts it, to "manage" encounters with difference (*Good* xii). They instruct users, in other words, to assimilate, exclude, ignore, marginalize, or erase difference. This instruction is almost always an unconscious action on the part of the handbook or guidebook designer, but no less effective for being so.[3] Coach handbook and travel guidebook designers employ similar rhetorical strategies in the service of this instruction, which is another significant link between these two subgenres of instructional texts. Coach handbooks and travel guidebooks rarely refer to the race of their users, for example, but this omission

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[1] See chapter three for an explanation of why I use the term "coach" over more commonly used terms such as "tutor," "writing consultant," and "peer consultant."

[2] The field of Technical Communication generally prefers the term "user" over the term "reader" when discussing how an individual interacts with instructional texts. (See, for example, Robert R. Johnson's *User-Centered Technology: A Rhetorical Theory for Computers and Other Mundane Artifacts*.) I follow this practice throughout this dissertation. My use of the term "user" recognizes that an individual does not merely read a handbook or guidebook. Rather, an individual reads and then carries out specific actions based on that reading. An individual *uses* a handbook or guidebook, in other words, to accomplish certain tasks.

[3] See chapter two for an explanation of why I use the term "designer" over traditional terms like "author" or "writer."

nonetheless reinforces the dominant cultural assumption that White is the colorless norm. The race of the user need not be specified, in other words, because the designer assumes that White is the default identity of *all* users. Users are thus instructed to manage encounters with racial difference by ignoring and erasing any difference that challenges the default White identity template. On the other hand, coach handbooks and travel guidebooks *do* refer to physically and cognitively disabled users. By consistently placing these references in special subsections and textboxes separate from the primary text, however, coach handbooks and travel guidebooks reinforce the dominant cultural notion that the disabled are different, while the physically and cognitively abled, who need no special textboxes and indeed no mention at all, remain the default norm. In this case, users are instructed to manage difference through exclusion and marginalization rather than outright erasure. This kind of implicit and largely unconscious instruction constitutes the central link between coach handbooks and travel guidebooks.

The globalized context for coach handbooks and travel guidebooks provides yet another link between the two genres. That travel guidebooks are geared to engaging with difference in global settings remains obvious. Less immediately obvious, perhaps, is that university writing center work is also geared to engaging with difference in a globalized context. In *ESL Writers: A Guide for Writing Center Tutors*, Shanti Bruce argues that writing centers are microcosms of U.S. culture ("Getting" 31). While Bruce is certainly correct, I would argue that writing centers are microcosms of globalization as well. After all, in a typical writing center students from around the world work together in pursuit of degrees that will prepare them for employment in a global economy that privileges what

literacy scholar James Paul Gee terms "hyper-competitive global capitalism," or more simply, "fast capitalism" ("New" 46). Moreover, coaches are *already* working in the global economy before they graduate, since as employees of what Daniel Mahala calls the "managed university," writing center staff are subject to the demands of the global economy and must grapple with the complex forces of globalization. These forces pressure writing center coaches to homogenize student dialects and languages into the Standard English demanded by the "global spread of U.S. English-only projections" (Lu, "Living" 605). At the same time, the forces of globalization compel coaches to face a steadily increasing, and therefore more complex, array of cultural, linguistic, and national difference. How they choose to face these conflicting pressures depends in no small part on their in-house coach education programs, which often rely on handbooks that instruct apprentice coaches to engage with difference in ways that correspond to dominant monolingual and monocultural assumptions.

Writing center coach handbooks and travel guidebooks both function as instruction manuals for encountering difference in a globalized age, and the instructions they contain typically correspond to dominant lines of power. These instructions favor those holding privileged identities and literacies while simultaneously marginalizing those marked as Other. Interrogating coach handbooks and travel guidebooks simultaneously allows me to account for the two basic ways that a user can encounter the Other—a person who is different from the user in one or more socially significant categories of identity and therefore marked as abnormal or something *other* than the user. In the case of travel guides, the normative user/traveler ventures abroad to meet the Other

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on the dusty boulevards of Phnom Penh or the sun-lashed streets of Penang. With writing center coach handbooks the situation is reversed, and the Other comes to the user/coach, who is assumed to hold an identity positioned as normative. A *Putonghua*-speaking international student from China walks through the door of a university writing center, in other words, and sits down to work with a White, English-speaking coach from the United States. How this encounter plays out depends in no small part on how the coach has been prepared to work with cultural and linguistic difference. If the coach has been educated to manage difference in the manner implicitly suggested by coach handbooks, she will likely coach in a way that reinforces, however unconsciously, the dominant literacies and identities of the U.S. academy. This approach will force the international student to attempt to conform in ways that may sacrifice his own identity. Alternatively, the student may choose to resist. Either way, however, the student will not be well served. If the coach has been educated to engage with difference through negotiation, however, she will likely coach in a more self-reflexive manner that takes into account the complex interplay of language, culture, and power that occurs in any coaching session. She will acknowledge, interpret, and seek to understand difference from multiple viewpoints. Such reflexive negotiation with difference might cause that writing coach to interrogate her own tacit assumptions in ways that open up space for validating alternative literacies, such as *Putonghua* or Chinese-accented World English. Such validation, I would argue, is socially transformative in its acceptance of multiple and coexisting literacies.

Writing center coach handbooks and travel guidebooks are also linked by the substantial impact of the activities they promote—literacy acquisition and international travel. Few actions have greater impact on our lives than literacy acquisition, since our social position is directly linked to which literacies we acquire and how competently we acquire them. Literacy pedagogy, like literacy itself, can therefore never be neutral; it can only be always and already ideological (Street). Writing center coach handbooks shape approaches to literacy in ways that favor the values of the U.S. academy, for example. Viewed in this way, the power of coach handbooks to impact the literacies and hence the social lives of university students should not be underestimated. This is all the more true given that writing centers are becoming increasingly prominent on university campuses nationwide and have now "moved from the periphery to the center of academic instruction" (Murphy xiii). For better or for worse, the opportunities for writing centers to shape student literacies are increasing, and by extension, so too are the opportunities for coach handbooks.

Like literacy acquisition, international travel also has a significant impact on our social lives, or at least the social lives of those fortunate enough to venture abroad. Just as literacy pedagogies tend to favor those in privileged social positions, so too does the entire system of international travel, with its passports, visas, hard and soft currencies, airlines, and borders demarcated with chain-link fences and coils of concertina wire. Travelers holding U.S. and European Union passports will always do better at international frontiers, for example, than travelers holding passports from Nepal, Niger, or Nicaragua. As an integral part of this system, travel guidebooks shape the user's

approach to travel in ways that are favorable to those who are already privileged, and the power and pervasiveness of this shaping is considerable.

If anything, the power of guidebooks to shape the user's travel experience is increasing. Many international travelers now carry guidebooks and/or consult travel websites configured to perform the same function as traditional print guidebooks. During my last stay in Hanoi, for example, I noticed that lost European and North American tourists consulting their guidebook maps have become an integral part of the streetscape. While these travelers look to their guidebook maps for explicit navigational guidance, they also receive implicit ideological guidance at the same time. Maps are not ideologically neutral, after all. They are, in fact, "a quintessentially ideological genre" tasked with supporting various agendas (Barton and Barton). The maps, photographs, and text in travel guidebooks all support larger ideological undertakings designed to favor certain combinations of literacy and identity, such as the English-speaking White male steeped in notions of individuality and the free market. Likewise, coach handbooks are components of larger ideological projects that favor certain literacies and identities, such as the English-speaking White student invested in academic English and middle-class values. Both genres are linked by their complicity in ideological projects that have a profound impact on our social lives.

As a scholar I situate myself in Literacy Studies, a field well suited to the interrogation of literacy, identity, and ideology. Literacy Studies provides a robust and flexible framework for asking how dominant paradigms of literacy and identity can be reconfigured to meet twenty-first century cultural and linguistic realities. In order to

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create a more inclusive and equitable social order, for example, scholars in Literacy Studies have constructed theoretical approaches for reconceptualizing monolingual and monocultural conceptions of literacy and identity. These approaches can be productively applied to writing center coach handbooks and travel guidebooks, two forms of instructional text that typically privilege dominant literacies and normative identities while simultaneously holding the potential ability to challenge those literacies and identities. How can these approaches provide a theoretical framework for new coach handbook and travel guidebook designs that broaden the monocultural and monolingual assumptions typically embedded in these genres? How can these approaches provide a framework for new designs geared to more inclusive multicultural and multilingual assumptions? What rhetorical strategies would this redesigning entail? And how can this project contribute to what the New London Group calls the "designing of social futures," particularly those futures that foster the productive "negotiation of differences" and resultant social transformation? In asking these questions I seek to extend ongoing conversations occurring within Literacy Studies, a field not typically concerned with instructional texts. Another link between coach handbooks and travel guidebooks, in fact, is that instructional texts of this sort have received little scholarly attention in Literacy Studies or the related fields that I draw upon throughout this dissertation.

As I discuss in chapter four, Technical Communication has always been concerned with instructional texts produced in the corporate and government workplace, such as operator's manuals and computer user instructions. (See, for example, Johnson; Paradis.) However, as part of a lively debate about what exactly constitutes technical

communication, the field has recently expanded its examination of institutional

instructional texts to incorporate diverse genres that include pregnancy handbooks,

cookbooks, and even sewing pattern instructions. (See, for example, Allen; Durack,

"Patterns"; Seigel.) This interrogation of "how-to" instructional texts has not yet been

extended to coach handbooks and travel guidebooks, but recent calls within the field to

move towards the study of extra-institutional technical documentation suggest that now is

the time to undertake such an interrogation (Kimball).

     Writing Center Studies has no reason to concern itself with travel guidebooks, of

course, but it is rather surprising that the field has neglected coach handbooks as a site of

interrogation. Harvey Kail argues that handbooks hold considerable "research value" for

the field because they function as repositories of coach-education practices and the

pedagogical theories that inform them ("Separation" 74). As I detail in chapter three,

however, Writing Center Studies has largely overlooked Kail's call for in-depth research

into coach handbooks. While scholars have published book reviews of coach handbooks

as well as the rare journal article or book chapter interrogating these handbooks, these

pieces do not collectively amount to an extended conversation within the field. To give

just one telling example of how neglected coach handbooks are as a site of interrogation,

the popular *Longman Guide to Writing Center Theory and Practice* published in 2008

claims to offer an exhaustive overview of writing center theory and practice (Murphy

xiv). However, this anthology of central works does not contain a single journal article

devoted to coach handbooks. Coach handbooks, in fact, don't even rate an index entry,

and few of the 45 scholarly works in the anthology refer to them. My point here is not to

find fault with either *The Longman Guide* or Writing Center Studies. Rather, my point is that while scholars in the field have devoted considerable attention to coach education and professional development, they have not yet interrogated the coach handbooks that so often take a central role in coach education programs.

The final link between coach handbooks and travel guidebooks is a personal one related to my career as an academic and professional writer. I am deeply engaged in theories of literacy and in various contexts and capacities have worked as a writing instructor for more than twenty years. I am now a doctoral candidate in Rhetoric and Technical Communication, which has given me the opportunity to work as a writing coach, serve as a writing center coordinator, and facilitate coach education at the Michigan Technological University Writing Center. In addition, and like many writing instructors, I am also a publishing author. I am an academic writer, of course, but I am also a professional writer specializing in subjects pertaining to travel in Asia. As part of this specialization, I design travel guidebooks for ThingsAsian Press, a publishing house based in San Francisco and Hong Kong. In 2007, the press published my first guidebook, *Strolling in Macau: A Visitor's Guide to Macau, Taipa, and Coloane*, which focuses on the history and culture of Macau, China. Two years later the press published my second city guide, *Exploring Hong Kong: A Visitor's Guide to Hong Kong Island, Kowloon, and the New Territories*. I am presently working on a third guidebook for ThingsAsian, titled *Strolling in Hanoi: A Visitor's Guide to Vietnam's Capital City*. I draw attention to my passion for writing center work and travel guidebook design to situate myself in relation to the content of this dissertation. The reader should know that I am an involved

participant, not an outside observer watching from some distant and supposedly more objective viewing point. When I talk about writing center coaches and travel guidebook designers, I am talking about me.

As I mentioned at the start of this chapter, this dissertation has two basic aims. The first objective is to determine how instructional texts encourage users to manage cultural, linguistic, and national difference in ways that serve dominant monocultural and monolingual assumptions. The second closely related objective is to determine how instructional texts can be redesigned to encourage productive negotiations with difference, foster multicultural and multilingual assumptions, and provide for more inclusive notions of user identity.

In chapter two, I build the theoretical framework necessary for supporting my effort to reach these two objectives. I situated this framework primarily in Literacy Studies, though I draw on scholars in Composition Studies and related fields as well. My theoretical framework centers on what I term reflexive design practices, which can be used to redesign coach handbooks and travel guidebooks so that they promote the productive negotiation of difference and the transformative social change that such negotiation can engender. I believe that specifying how coach handbooks and travel guidebooks can be redesigned for inclusivity and pluralism can open up space for more equitable notions of literacy and identity. When embedded in handbooks and guidebooks, these notions can help prepare users to engage with difference in a globalized world where difference is not only the norm, but an inescapable norm. This redesigning of handbooks and guidebooks can prepare users to *negotiate* difference in the spirit of

equitable social change, rather than fall back on strategies that work to *manage* difference in ways that conform to privileged ideologies, literacies, and identities.

I devote chapter three to writing center coach handbooks and chapter four to Hong Kong travel guidebooks. I situate these chapters in Writing Center Studies and Technical Communication, respectively. These two chapters consider the rhetorical strategies employed by coach handbook and travel guidebook designers, particularly those strategies that work to privilege dominant monocultural and monolingual assumptions. Such strategies, I argue, promote the management of difference and consequently prevent social transformation while simultaneously preserving the status quo. Furthermore, handbooks and guidebooks constructed around these strategies ultimately fail their users, since they do not adequately prepare them for the globalized contexts where writing center coaches and international travelers encounter an increasingly diverse array of cultural and linguistic difference. Given this reality, I consider how handbooks and guidebooks can be redesigned to promote multicultural and multilingual assumptions. Central to this redesign is the use of reflexive design practices, which rely on alternative rhetorical strategies that foster negotiation with difference.

In chapter five, I argue that designers must conceptualize the redesigning of coach handbooks and travel guidebooks as a political act. I suggest that traditional rhetorical strategies indexed to the management of difference are no longer appropriate or effective in a world marked by the accelerating interplay of cultural, linguistic, and national difference. As a corrective to these outdated rhetorical approaches, I suggest a range of alternative rhetorical strategies that can encourage coach handbook and travel guidebook

users to negotiate with difference in ways that align with multicultural and multilingual assumptions. I conclude that redesigning coach handbooks and travel guidebooks to promote productive negotiation with difference is a political act that imagines new social futures. In a globalized age characterized by vast differentials in wealth, environmental disaster, and ongoing oppression and conflict, I believe that the designers of coach handbooks and travel guidebooks—indeed, the designers of *all* instructional texts—are ethically bound to design their texts in a manner that fosters equitable social futures marked by inclusiveness and plurality.

Chapter 2

Bamboo Scaffolding:

Building a Theoretical Framework for the Reflexive Redesign

of Writing Center Handbooks and Travel Guidebooks

Hong Kong can often seem like the most modern city in the world. However, 香港人 (*heung gong yan* or "Hong Kong people") will stick to traditional ways of doing things when it makes good sense to do so. The skeletons of half-built skyscrapers sheathed in bamboo scaffolding remain a common sight in Hong Kong. Modern metal scaffolding is never used, and crews of men skilled in the erection of bamboo scaffolding clamber high above the city streets, often without safety lines or hardhats. Some work in sandals, cigarettes dangling nonchalantly from their lips. The crews use black plastic

cord to lash the bamboo poles together, and the resultant frame is sturdy, flexible, and able to bear tremendous weight. This bamboo latticework can even withstand the power of what the Cantonese respectfully term 大风 (*tai fung* or "big wind," but commonly translated as "typhoon"). I like to think that the theoretical scaffolding I use to support the construction of what I term reflexive design practices is just as flexible, robust, and resistant to the fury of typhoon-strength wind.

Globalization and Cultural Difference

Though they are likely too busy to give the matter much thought, the men assembling bamboo scaffolding high above the streets of Hong Kong are working in one of the world's most globalized cities.[4] The context for assembling my own theoretical scaffolding remains profoundly global as well. Globalization, however, is marked by power differentials that ensure an unequal distribution of the benefits generated by this transnational process. Consequently, globalization means different things to different people. The process means one thing to the upper management ensconced in the futuristic high-rise headquarters of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation, one of the world's preeminent multinational financial institutions. The process means quite another thing for the Filipina and other transnational migrant workers employed by the city's financial elite as poorly paid maids, cooks, and *amahs*.[5] Likewise,

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[4] They are also risking their lives. According to *The South China Morning Post*, between 1998 and 2007 more than 75 workers died in falls from bamboo scaffolding in Hong Kong (Yau).

[5] An *amah* is a Hong Kong English term for a domestic worker who lives in the home, does household chores, and looks after her employer's children. Most *amahs* in Hong Kong are Filipino, though an

globalization means quite different things to the many academics who specialize in globalization theory. Scholars in a wide variety of fields have undertaken critical interrogations of globalization that have focused on different aspects of the phenomenon and reached a diverse array of conclusions, depending on the theoretical approach of the particular scholar. The only true point of agreement among them is that globalization remains a contested term with "divergent meanings" and multiple definitions (McDonough and Wong xii; Nederveen Pieterse; Roman).

Given the complexity of globalization and the lack of consensus on what the term means or how it should be interrogated, I want to specify my own theoretical approach to globalization, which draws on the paradigm of globalization as hybridization advocated by sociologist Jan Nederveen Pieterse and the notion of the contact zone theorized by Mary Louise Pratt ("Arts").[6] My approach views globalization through the lens of cultural hybridity, rather than, for example, the lens of cultural differentialism or cultural homogenization. Treating globalization as a hybridizing process positions contemporary globalization as merely the latest stage in a long and often highly contested process of global hybridization that began before the start of recorded human history. Global hybridization has always been shaped by systems of power that favor certain social groups. The dominance of the British in colonial Hong Kong, for example, ensured that the hybridity characteristic of that city favored British language and culture rather than

increasing number come from Indonesia and other Asian nations. The term is a linguistic hybrid, as it is derived from the Portuguese word for "maid."

[6] Pratt is difficult to situate in any one academic field, as her areas of expertise include modern languages, Latin American literature and Latin American studies, comparative literature, linguistics, postcolonial theory, feminist and gender studies, anthropology, and cultural studies.

the language and culture of the local Cantonese. However, approaching globalization as

a hybridizing process can help explicate how systems of power can be undermined in

global environments characterized by uneven power differentials. While global

hybridization often favors dominant languages, cultures, and nations, the process also

subverts those dominant linguistic, cultural, and national groupings by refusing to uphold

binaries, by transgressing even the most heavily guarded borders, by complicating

notions of ethnic or linguistic purity, and by positioning what the New London Group

terms the "negotiation of differences" as normative. Such an approach views

globalization as an arena for the productive interplay and consequent hybridizing of

literacies and identities, which makes it highly compatible with the reflexive design

practices that I will describe later in this chapter.

The First Paradigm of Cultural Difference: Polska dla Polaków!

Sociologist Jan Nederveen Pieterse identifies three "paradigms of cultural

difference" that underpin scholarly approaches to globalization theory (4). Each

paradigm adheres to a particular "politics of difference" that is more widely held among

various ethnic and national groups worldwide (42). The first paradigm, for example,

holds that cultures are fixed and clearly defined entities resistant to globalization and

other forms of change. Cultures are consequently prone to conflicts with one another,

since they are divided by their distinct and lasting cultural differences (42). This age-old

viewpoint remains the dominant paradigm today and the prism through which most

cultural, linguistic, and national groups view the world. As globalization continues to

interconnect the world, these groups feel increasingly pressured to erect physical and ideological barriers to preserve their own "pure" identities (26). The first paradigm is sometimes described as a "billiard-ball" approach to cultural difference where cultures are distinct and impermeable entities that may violently collide (46).

A worldview geared to the first paradigm assumes that ethnic, racial, linguistic, and cultural hybridity is illegitimate. Conversely, purity is positioned as both normative and necessary. As might be expected, the first paradigm aligns with doctrines of nationalism and racial purity (Nederveen Pieterse 47). This paradigm justifies well-guarded physical and ideological boundaries, as illustrated by the prevalence of national names staking out the frontiers of different ethnic, linguistic, and cultural groups, from Scotland (land of the Scots) to Malaysia (land of the Malays). These boundaries frequently attempt to erase internal diversity with a fictional national purity designed to favor a dominant group. Despites its name, for example, Malaysia is a tri-cultural nation split between citizens of Malay, Chinese, and Indian descent. The *Bumiputra* (Malays) hold a dominant social position, however, and have claimed the right to name the nation as their own.

In the best-case scenario, ascribing to the first paradigm leads to a form of "cultural differentialism," where cultures are seen as immutable and separate rather than evolving and intertwined (Nederveen Pieterse 56). The billiard balls, in other words, are scattered across the global table in stationary positions. Such benign cultural differentialism may even align with multiculturalism, since it can work to legitimize diversity (47). In the worst-case scenario, however, following the first paradigm leads to

ethnic cleansing, mass graves, and what political scientist Benjamin R. Barber refers to as "Lebanonization." In an influential article that is frequently cited by globalization theorists, Barber argues that the world is split between the forces of "jihad," which pursue the first paradigm, and the free-market forces of "McWorld," which pursue global homogenization. Despite its problematic name, however, Lebanonization is not just at work in Lebanon, but also in the Balkans, various African nations, the states of the former Soviet Union, and anywhere else where cultural and linguistic groups fractiously assert their own identities at the expense of larger nation states. In Barber's grim estimation, Lebanonization inevitably leads to "the retribalization of large swaths of humankind by war and bloodshed" (n.p.). Here the billiard balls are clearly smacking against each other at high velocity in a game with clear winners and clear losers.

The first paradigm is epitomized by the angry words I used to see spray-painted on concrete embankments and derelict buildings when I lived in Poland: *Polska dla Polaków!* (Poland for the Poles!) I resided in Poland in the early 1990s, when the country was experiencing a period of wrenching transition following the collapse of the Berlin Wall. Many Poles felt powerless to control their own futures and fell back on the security offered by the first paradigm instead. As angry scrawls like *Polska dla Polaków!* graphically illustrate, the first paradigm can be ascribed to a politics of difference based on rage and fear—fear of losing power to the Other, fear of losing one's identity, fear of anyone holding a different identity. This fear and the angry backlash it can ignite explains why the first paradigm is highly durable, frequently irrational, and potentially murderous. The first paradigm packs the ideological punch of a full-strength *tai fung*.

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As I explain below, however, I have built a theoretical framework of flexible bamboo that can withstand this storm and offer an alternative read on globalization.

The Second Paradigm of Cultural Difference: "McDonaldization"

The second paradigm of cultural difference holds that globalization inevitably leads to what Nederveen Pieterse terms "global cultural homogenization" (1). Though this paradigm aligns so tightly with popularly held views of globalization that it has become common wisdom, Nederveen Pieterse contends that the supposed link between globalization and homogenization is underpinned by the unexamined assumption that globalization leads to global Westernization and Western-style fast capitalism. Nobody claims homogenization will lead to a world that speaks *Putonghua* (Mandarin Chinese) and lives according to Confucian ideals, for example. The second paradigm is therefore best understood as supporting a hegemonic project of global homogenization where cultures that diverge from Euro-American norms are "erasable and being erased" (42). The central narrative of this paradigm assumes an inevitable "cultural convergence" to a homogenizing master template of Euro-American culture and its capitalist economic framework. Globalization, in other words, amounts to de-facto Westernization.

The positioning of globalization as an exclusively Euro-American phenomenon does not withstand careful scrutiny, however. In *Global Hong Kong*, for example, Gary McDonough and Cindy Wong interrogate globalization through the lens of "Chinese globalism" (212). They argue that the global spread of diasporic communities of Chinese immigrants "must be read in counterpoint to any Western projections of globalization"

(xiv). These communities have had a lasting influence throughout Asia as well as in the United States and Canada, Latin America, Australia, and Great Britain. Consequently, the Chinese should be viewed as drivers of globalization rather than mere passengers. Nederveen Pieterse reaches similar conclusions and points out the influence of non-European cultures on Europe throughout history as well as the ways Chinese, Japanese, and other Asian cultures have continually influenced each other (69).

The supposed homogenizing impact of globalization is often termed "McDonaldization," which has been extensively treated in globalization theory. (See, for example, Barber's "Jihad vs. McWorld" or the scholarly pieces collected in Ritzer's *McDonaldization: The Reader*.) McDonaldization is usually assumed to dovetail with the politics of difference encompassed by the second paradigm of cultural difference (49). However, Nederveen Pieterse suggests that McDonaldization should be viewed "as a form of intercultural hybridization" instead (51). Rather than cultural homogenization, McDonald's and similar fast-food franchises "usher in difference and variety, giving rise to and reflecting new, mixed social forms" (51). The McDonald's restaurants located in 118 countries around the world vary in significant ways so as to better align with their social context, a phenomenon that Nederveen Pieterse terms "global localization" (50). In Hong Kong, for example, McDonald's restaurants have adapted to fit the local market. Most obviously, Cantonese is the *lingua franca* of the restaurants, though counter staff speak varying degrees of Hong Kong English as well. The menu features items unique to Hong Kong, such as teriyaki burgers and side orders of corn. The prices are in Hong Kong dollars and reflect local economic conditions. Even the architecture is different—

many McDonald's are located in basements without windows or have narrow storefronts that reflect the high land values of urban areas. By North American standards, seats and tables are small and jammed very close together. Restaurants never have parking lots or drive-thru windows, since relatively few Hongkongers own cars. Customers are not expected to bus their own tables, and as I have learned from experience, they will be served "white coffee" pre-mixed with milk rather than black coffee unless they specify otherwise. The McDonald's on Cheung Chau even switches to an all-vegetarian menu during the island's annual Bun Festival. While one could certainly debate the degree of difference and amount of variety that Nederveen Pieterse attributes to global fast-food chains, his notion of global localization is nonetheless useful for explicating how the McDonald's franchise in Hong Kong is a new hybrid spawned and sustained by globalization, rather than an exemplar of global cultural homogenization fueled by U.S.-style fast capitalism. On first glance, McDonald's appears to buttress the second paradigm of cultural difference. On closer inspection, however, the global spread of this ubiquitous fast-food chain actually supports the third paradigm.

The Third Paradigm of Cultural Difference: Hybridization

Globalization is a paradox marked by homogenization as well as increasing diversity and extensive hybridity. Literacy and Composition scholars are well aware of the homogenizing impact of globalization, such as the rise of English as a *lingua mundi* and how other languages are, as Min-Zhan Lu puts it, "peripheralized by the power of English under fast capitalism" ("An Essay" 24). Scholars also contend, however, that

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globalization does not necessarily flatten and homogenize, but can also lead to a

counteracting revival of local culture and diversity as well as the proliferation of

linguistic hybridity and World Englishes. Furthermore, globalization leads to new

economic, political, and cultural forces that transcend nation states, such as OPEC and

the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation, CNN and the BBC, and Greenpeace

and Amnesty International (Canagarajah, "The Place"; Kalantzis and Cope 146;

Fairclough 165-68; Horner 572; Lo Bianco 93-94; Lu, "An Essay," "Living"). These

arguments align with Nederveen Pieterse's third paradigm of cultural difference, which

holds that globalization is "a process of cultural mixing or hybridization across locations

and identities" (42). This paradigm focuses on hybridity and how it problematizes

boundaries and undermines all assertions of fixed, pure, or binary categories of identity.

There are no pure cultures, in other words, only hybrid ones in a state of constant and

contested flux. As Nederveen Pieterse makes clear, this notion subverts dominant

paradigms of cultural difference:

> Hybridization is an antidote to the cultural differentialism of racial and
>
> nationalist doctrines because it takes as its point of departure precisely
>
> those experiences that have been banished, marginalized, tabooed in
>
> cultural differentialism. It subverts nationalism because it privileges
>
> border-crossing. It subverts identity politics such as ethnic or other claims
>
> to purity and authenticity because it starts out from the fuzziness of
>
> boundaries. If modernity stands for an ethos of order and neat separation

by tight boundaries, hybridization reflects a postmodern sensibility of

cut'n'mix, transgression, subversion. (53)

I base my approach to globalization on the third paradigm of cultural difference.

Viewed through this lens, globalization becomes an arena for engaging with difference,

and this engagement can only lead to evolving forms of hybridity. The notion of

globalization as a hybridizing process aligns with the New London Group's theoretical

framework, which positions literacies as multiple, fluid, and hybrid. The third paradigm

also supports the New London Group's notion of designing new social futures, since

globalization spurs an accelerating interplay of cultural, linguistic, national, and other

forms of difference. As I detail later in this chapter, this interplay results in the continual

redesigning of available designs, leading to new designs and new social futures marked

by mixing and hybridity.

Approaching globalization as a hybridizing process calls into question the use of

first-paradigm terms like "West" and "Western." Anthropologist Robin Patric Clair, for

example, rejects terms like "East" and "West," arguing that the use of such words only

"functions to split the world in half—eastern from western" (20). Clair argues that since

"Western" is equated with White European identity, the use of this term renders Native

Americans and other non-White inhabitants of North America invisible. Furthermore,

Nederveen Pieterse's notion of global hybridity makes it clear than in reality there can

never be a pure East and a pure West. There can only be amalgamations of the two.

Therefore, whenever I use the terms "East" and "West" in this dissertation, I do so with

the full understanding that they are hybrid geographical regions that have no pure

identities. The West is not purely White Euro-American, in other words, and the East is not purely Asian.

Few writers have captured this mixing and hybridity better than Pico Iyer, whose essays and travel narratives often focus on the dynamic interplay of cultural difference. In *Video Night in Kathmandu and Other Reports from the Not-So-Far East*, Iyer observes that

> the most remarkable anomalies in the global village today are surely those created by willy-nilly collisions and collusions between East and West: the local bands in socialist Burma that play note-perfect versions of the Doors' "LA Woman," in Burmese; the American tenpin bowling alley that is the latest nighttime hot spot in Beijing; the Baskin-Robbins imitation in Hiroshima that sells "vegetable" ice cream in such flavors as mugwort, soy milk, sweet potato and "marron"; or the bespectacled transvestite in Singapore who, when asked to name the best restaurant in a town justly celebrated for its unique combination of Chinese, Indian and Malaysian delicacies, answers, without a moment's hesitation, "Denny's." (10)

As Iyer points out in this insightful and humorous description, the interconnectedness inherent to globalization leads to all manner of unpredictable hybrid social forms, from innovative ice-cream flavors to Asian-language renditions of classic American rock songs. In these cases difference is never managed or erased—it is negotiated and renegotiated in productive and surprising ways.

However, Iyer's focus on the more quirky elements of pop-culture hybridity obscures the fact that throughout Asia hybridity is normative in *all* areas of social life, not just the food court and shopping mall. Furthermore, his focus largely glosses over the workings of power that govern how hybridity plays out across Asia. Consider Hong Kong, for example, where linguistic hybridity is both normative *and* contested. I am always reminded of this paradox whenever my wife Jill and I are invited to share meals with the Cantonese family of an old friend. Though my friend's parents live in Hong Kong, all but one of their children have emigrated to the United States. Their grandchildren have all been born and raised in the USA, and when they visit Hong Kong over the holidays, dinner conversations always combine Cantonese, Mandarin, Hong Kong English, and various dialects of American English, sometimes within a single sentence. This linguistic pluralism is a manifestation of the struggle to determine Hong Kong's identity in the wake of the former British colony's return to China. This high-stakes game is a three-way contest between the oppositional forces of globalization (English), the Chinese nation state (*Putonghua* or Mandarin), and local/regional identity (Cantonese). Rather than result in the dominance of any one language, this struggle leads to linguistic hybridity instead as Hongkongers employ a blend of the three languages in context-specific ways. This blending never provokes much interest during dinner conversations with my friend's extended family; after all, cultural and linguistic hybridity is so normal in Hong Kong that nobody thinks to comment on it. As Nederveen Pieterse astutely observes, "hybridity as a point of view is meaningless *without* the prior assumption of difference, purity, [and] fixed boundaries" (94).

Linguistic hybridity of the sort common to Hong Kong is the same kind of hybridity that many in the United States are unfamiliar with and taught to fear and erect boundaries against. As many scholars in Literacy and Composition have noted, such linguistic hybridity in mainstream American culture is seen as a mark of the Other, dealt with as if it were a threat, and viewed as a deficit to be erased and rewired into Standard English (Bawarshi; Canagarajah, "The Place"; Horner; Lu, "An Essay," "Living"; Matsuda; Pratt, "Building"; Trimbur, "Linguistic"). The dominant viewpoint, in other words, aligns with the first and second paradigms identified by Nederveen Pieterse. These paradigms seek to erect borders and preserve linguistic purity while simultaneously working to export that linguistic identity beyond its own borders in order to homogenize the surrounding linguistic terrain. Linguistic contact zones are the inevitable result of this exportation, which invariably leads to hybridization rather than homogenization.

The Global Contact Zone

In what has become a canonical essay in the fields I rely upon in this dissertation, Mary Louise Pratt defines "contact zones" as "the social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of power" ("Arts" 35). A frequent result, Pratt argues, is "transculturation," a hybridizing process in which a marginalized people appropriates linguistic and cultural elements of the dominant culture in order to pursue their own ends. Many scholars in Composition Studies and related fields have since applied the contact zone to various sites, particularly the writing center and composition classroom. I extend this conversation by linking the

concept of the contact zone with Nederveen Pieterse's third paradigm of cultural difference. I assume the entire world is now a contact zone, and that furthermore, all of this contact is interconnected. Rather than thinking of discrete contact zones, in other words, we should think instead of multiple contact zones that are all interconnected within one gigantic "global zone" where transculturation occurs both rapidly and routinely in ways that align with Nederveen Pieterse's third paradigm of global hybridization. This paradigm underpins my approach to globalization, the context for this dissertation, and is highly compatible with the reflexive design practices I construct in this chapter.

Constructing the Framework: Reflexivity, Design, and Practice

In the first section of this chapter I detail my theoretical approach to the globalized context of this dissertation. In the remaining portion of the chapter, I build a theoretical framework to support the implementation of reflexive design practices in a globalized context. I start lashing black cord around lengths of bamboo, in other words, just like those scaffold builders perched high above Hong Kong. I acquire my bamboo and cord primarily from Literacy Studies, though I occasionally gather some from Composition and other disciplines as well. While Literacy Studies provides the theoretical scaffolding, Writing Center Studies and Technical Communication provide the specialized tools for constructing the towers I erect in chapter three (redesigning coach handbooks) and chapter four (redesigning travel guidebooks). The normative ideological forces invested in traditional design practices that work to manage and

marginalize difference will no doubt attempt to shred my theoretical framework with typhoon-like blasts that bring construction work to a halt. I trust my framework to bear its heavy weight, however, for I have seen how bamboo scaffolding can withstand the fury of the *tai fung*.

Definition of Reflexivity

A theoretical rationale for reflexive design practices requires a careful definition of its constituent parts—reflexivity, designing, and practice. These definitions are hardly straightforward or uncontested within my four fields of inquiry. Calls for reflexivity are common in Literacy Studies and Composition Studies, for example, but definitions of the term vary and it is often used interchangeably with "reflection". Since reflexivity is a key component of reflexive design practices, I want to specify my own definition of the term.

In my view, *reflexivity* differs from mere *reflection*. I define "reflexivity" as the willingness and ability to critique the reliability of one's own self-knowledge. I define "reflection", meanwhile, as the act of looking back at one's thoughts, actions, and behaviors. The key point is that reflection does not necessarily involve an attempt to critically evaluate the ideologies that underpin one's own assumptions. A *reflective* teacher, for example, might evaluate the success of a given assignment based on whatever criteria she deems appropriate. A *reflexive* teacher, however, might critically evaluate the ideological assumptions that led her, as a situated social being, to select and impose those criteria in the first place. *Reflection* can lead to improved classroom practice, but only within the boundaries of certain acknowledged and unacknowledged

ideologies, literacies, and identities. *Reflexivity*, on the other hand, can lead to transformative classroom practices that challenge the borders erected by ideologies and identity constructions.

My definition of reflexivity is supported by scholars in Literacy Studies who have sought to foster reflexivity among instructors, students, and writers. The New London Group argues that reflexivity and meta-awareness are necessary components of its Pedagogy of Multiliteracies, which presents a model for literacy education in an era when meaning-making is increasingly multimodal, and linguistic and cultural diversity is on the rise (5). James Paul Gee, meanwhile, draws a useful distinction between the ability to think "critically" and the ability to think "critiquely" ("New" 62). Gee's distinction between these two terms is very similar to my own distinction between the ability to think reflectively versus the ability to think reflexively. According to Gee, thinking critically involves "higher order thinking," which is necessary for one to succeed in the modern knowledge economy. However, such higher order thinking leaves one unequipped to critique "systems of power and injustice," since such a critique would be "dangerous" to the fast capitalist order (53). Thinking critiquely, on the other hand, allows for the interrogation of one's own "tacit" ideologies in order to see the harm that such ideologies can inflict upon others (*Social*).

As an antidote to academic discourse that fails to account for the ideological dimensions of globalization, Leslie G. Roman advocates a form of reflexivity similar to Gee's that she terms "relational genealogy" (87). Educators and students practicing this form of genealogy habitually ask "how particular histories and genealogies register (or

fail to register) within global networks of power, whose interests count, and on whose ethical scale when comparative models are used" (87). Answering such questions requires a high degree of reflexivity, or what Roman calls "critical global intelligence" (87). Such an intelligence functions as a general-purpose tool for critiquing how social groups are situated in relation to each other and within systems of power in a globalized world. Like Roman, Gee, and the New London Group, I am arguing for a type of reflexivity that can facilitate the unpacking of social systems of power in a globalized context.

Definition of Design

Throughout this project I refer to coach handbook and travel guidebook *designers* rather than *writers* or *authors*. As I can attest to based on my own work with travel guidebooks, the term "designer" better suits the multimodal nature of the tasks that must be performed when designing instructional texts. Such tasks include writing the text, taking photographs, producing maps, and creating page design. The term "designer" also meshes well with the idea that the conventions of any genre, including coach handbooks and travel guidebooks, are never fixed; rather, they are in a continual state of evolution. In other words, handbook and guidebook designers always begin with the conventions of the genre, but they can then either reproduce them and buttress dominant ideologies and identities, or modify the conventions to challenge those ideologies and identities, leading to social transformation.

This view of textual production is supported by the New London Group's model of semiotic designing, which relies on the concept of Available Designs, Designing, and the Redesigned to explicate how meaning is socially produced. According to this model, we are the recipients of socially constructed meaning or "conventions" (Available Designs), but we are at the same time "active designers" of meaning (Designing) who produce new meaning (the Redesigned) that may or may not significantly diverge from available forms of meaning. The model emphasizes that meaning is continually evolving rather than stable or static in nature, and that there is always tension between Available Designs and the process of Redesigning (20). Central to this model is the concept that when we design new meaning we become empowered "designers of social futures" (7). This notion clearly opens up space for social transformation, though social transformation is by no means guaranteed.

The New London Group's design scheme provides a way to understand the social production of meaning. This understanding can lead to the identification of new avenues for pursuing social transformation, such as designing new pedagogical approaches to literacy that can produce more equitable social futures. This understanding can also allow us to see how social change can be prevented by existing lines of power. Consider the case of Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala. Mary Louise Pratt describes Guaman Poma as a seventeenth-century Andean of Quechua descent who lived in Spanish-ruled Peru, some 40 years after the destruction of the Inca Empire ("Arts"). In 1613, he composed a 1,200-page document in a mixture of Spanish and Quechua. Remarkably, as Pratt points out, Quechua had no acknowledged written form in the 1600s. Guaman Poma titled his

manuscript *El primer nueva corónica y buen gobierno* (*The First New Chronicle and Good Government*) and addressed it to King Phillip III of Spain. Guaman Poma had taken Available Designs, subjected them to a transculturated Designing process, and produced an entirely new Redesign that departed radically from established conventions and challenged dominant ideologies and identities. His hybrid text offered a new take on language, as it blended Spanish with written Quechua, and it offered a fresh take on established Spanish genres, such as the "new chronicle" that the Spanish used to describe their own subjugation and rule of colonial possessions. Guaman Poma's sophisticated text offered a blueprint for a more equitable social future, but existing structures of power ensured that nobody unrolled his blueprint, much less took the time to actually read it. Guaman Poma's text simply disappeared. A researcher rediscovered Guaman Poma's work in a Danish museum in the early 1900s, Pratt tells us, but the manuscript did not receive a sustained and sympathetic reading until the 1970s. In the end, producing a new design had not led to social transformation for reasons that had to do with the situated nature of the production, the producer, and the audience. In short, Guaman Poma wrote from a position of relative powerlessness, which meant that his subversive project could be easily ignored.

The tragic story of Guaman Poma suggests, however, that the designers of contemporary coach handbooks and travel guidebooks might be able to produce redesigned texts that can successfully press for equitable social transformation. Coach handbook and travel guidebook designers work from positions of far greater empowerment than Guaman Poma, as they are typically drawn from the ranks of the

privileged. Unlike Guaman Poma, these designers utilize privileged discourses of the world's most privileged language, and they design texts that conform to existing genres. Guaman Poma's text had no established audience, but coach handbooks and travel guidebooks hardly lack for readers. The Lonely Planet series of travel guides sells over six million copies a year, for example (Mantell). Consequently, coach handbook and travel guidebook designers are situated where they can produce redesigns that cannot be so easily ignored. These redesigns typically conform to existing conventions and, as a result, tend to reinforce and buttress dominant ideologies and identities. However, coach handbooks and travel guidebooks can also be redesigned to challenge dominant ideologies and identities through various techniques, such as provoking reflexivity in their users through texts designed specifically for this purpose. Such a redesign would mark a significant departure from established conventions. Redesigned coach handbooks and travel guidebooks possess the latent power to produce social transformation not just because they will be read, but also because they can pressure users to read in a reflexive manner that draws dominant assumptions into question. I am confident that these redesigned texts will not languish unread in museum storerooms for 350 years. I am confident, in fact, that they will be read by the coaches and staff of writing centers all across the United States, and I am confident that they will be read by millions of travelers worldwide.

Definition of Practice

My definition of practice rests on a social theory of learning developed by Etienne Wenger and Jean Lave, and further developed by Wenger in his influential *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity*. According to this theory, the term "practice" is best conceptualized as a process of learning that is both social and situated. Learning is therefore a social practice, not an independent or autonomous activity located in the individual (*Communities* 3; *Situated* 43). This concept of learning as socially situated practice is significant because it pushes against dominant conceptions of education, which assume that learning is largely a process of information transfer from a neutral external source to an individual learner (*Situated* 47). However, a social theory of learning as practice holds that learning does not occur through the direct transmission of knowledge or simple acquisition of skills (116).

In making this argument, a social theory of learning departs from widely held views of educational practice by changing the focus from the individual learner assimilating and internalizing information from another individual or text to learning as a form of participation in social groupings (*Situated* 43, 47). These social groups, which Wenger and Lave term "communities of practice," are the central focus of a social theory of learning. A community of practice consists of a situated group of people united by shared practice and identity, which evolves over time and in concert with other overlapping communities of practice (*Communities* 45; *Situated* 98). Wenger and Lave's theory of learning as social practice assumes that learning consists of the process of moving from limited participation to full participation in a community of practice. This

notion contrasts with traditional theories of learning that focus on the autonomous individual learner.

According to Wenger and Lave, learning as social practice revolves around the concept of "legitimate peripherality" in communities of practice. Learning is initially peripheral, with "newcomers" to a community of practice positioned on the outer rim of the community. However, learning through participation gradually increases in engagement and complexity until newcomers become "old timers" who achieve full participation and membership, with its associated mastery of knowledge and skills. Wenger and Lave identify this process as "legitimate peripheral participation," which involves participation and practice as a way of learning in a community of practice. Learning must therefore be conceptualized as legitimate peripheral participation in communities of practice (*Situated* 31). Such an approach moves beyond the traditional focus on classroom learning and other educational contexts because legitimate peripheral participation is not reliant on pedagogy, including classroom instruction and tutoring (113). This allows the concept of legitimate peripheral participation to be applied to contexts that are not normally examined in theories of learning. As a result, for example, legitimate peripheral participation can serve as an analytic framework for approaching the question of how first-time travelers to Hong Kong (newcomers) learn to understand that city, and how experienced travelers in the form of travel guidebook designers (old timers) facilitate this learning, which takes place in a community of practice consisting of English-speaking travelers to Hong Kong.

Legitimate peripheral participation is a "way of understanding learning" that can explicate the process of how newcomers become—or fail to become—full participants in a community of practice (*Situated* 40, 63). The notion of "legitimate peripherality" underpins legitimate peripheral participation, and as Wenger and Lave make clear, "legitimate peripherality can either promote or prevent legitimate participation" (103). Legitimate peripherality can therefore be empowering or disempowering, depending on one's position in a community of practice (36, 42). Legitimate peripherality is empowering if one can move to full participation through learning based in practice that allows for an understanding of, and identification with, a given community of practice. In order for this legitimate peripheral participation to occur, however, one must have full access to practice as a resource for learning. Mere instruction will not lead to forms of learning that engender full participation in a community of practice (85).

Legitimate peripherality can be disempowering if it is a position from which one is prevented from engaging more fully in a community of practice (*Situated* 36, 42). This denial of access prevents legitimate peripheral participation, which thwarts learning and ensures newcomers will never become full members of a community of practice. According to Wenger and Lave, it can be difficult to become a full participant "when masters prevent learning by acting in effect as pedagogical authoritarians, viewing apprentices as novices who 'should be instructed' rather than as legitimate peripheral participants in a community [of practice] engaged in its own reproduction" (76). Opportunities for legitimate peripheral participation can also be stymied when communities of practice rely on social practices that have become naturalized and

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transparent to its full members. In this case, the transparent and normalized practices of the community of practice serve hegemonic functions that disempower newcomers and keep them permanently on the margins of a community of practice. They may have legitimate peripherality, but it is a marginal form of it without access to the legitimate peripheral participation that would allow them to become full participants through shared practice.

Legitimate peripherality that leads to legitimate peripheral participation allows newcomers to gain what Wenger terms "negotiability," or the ability to make meaning in a community of practice (*Communities* 197). Wenger and Lave underscore this point when they explain that "participation is always based on situated negotiation and renegotiation of meaning in the world" (*Situated* 51). Some newcomers within a community of practice may enjoy an empowered legitimate peripherality, which gives them access to the practices that will allow them to participate in the community's ongoing negotiation of meaning. Other members, however, are denied this access for reasons that have to do with constructions of identity indexed to the ideological assumptions dominant within that community of practice. These members have legitimate peripherality, but without negotiability or access to practice. Wenger further refines this point in *Communities of Practice* when he diagrams how the members of a community of practice who are not full participants develop "identities of non-participation" based on positions of either peripherality or marginality. Peripherality is a form of non-participation that is a necessary precursor to full participation, whether the participant chooses to pursue full participation or not (*Communities* 165). Marginality is

enforced non-participation that prevents full participation even if the participant desires it (166).

Negotiability occurs within "economies of meaning," where socially constructed meanings compete and some meanings become dominant. Economies of meaning can involve multiple and overlapping communities of practice, but they can also occur within individual communities of practice. Contests for "ownership of meaning" always occur within any economy of meaning, which ensures that meaning will always be fluid rather than fixed (*Communities* 199). The degree of ownership one has determines the degree to which one can negotiate—develop, modify, change, control, alter, adapt—the meanings situated within a community of practice (200). As Wenger explains, within a community of practice meaning is both *produced* and *adopted*. However, the meanings produced by participants only contribute to the development of the community if they are adopted. Members who produce meaning that is always adopted have ownership of meaning and develop identities of full participation, while members who produce meaning that is never adopted have no ownership of meaning and develop identities of marginal non-participation (203). Wenger explains this process as follows:

> When, in a community of practice, the distinction between the production and adoption of meaning reflects enduring patterns of engagement among members—that is, when some always produce and some always adopt—the local economy of meaning yields very uneven ownership of meaning. This situation, when it persists, results in a mutually reinforcing condition of both marginality and inability to learn. (203)

Wenger's conception of how meaning is developed in social groups can help explicate, for example, the marginality of multilingual coaches in writing center communities of practice. Though multilingual coaches remain relatively rare in writing centers, they do exist. I have worked alongside them, after all. But more to the point, there is no reason why multilingual coaches should not exist. Many writing centers implicitly assume that English monolingualism is the default identity for writing coaches, however, and inadvertently fail to acknowledge that coaches can be multilingual as well. This failure is fostered and reinforced by coach handbooks, which typically position coach identities as English monolingual. Consequently, those multilingual coaches who do find work in writing centers may develop identities of marginal non-participation because meaning within their communities of practice is always produced by others for them to adopt. Monolingual coaches and staff get to decide what counts as a valued linguistic identity, with native speaker of Standard American English the most prized identity of all. The meaning that is made, in other words, sustains English monolingualism.

In a writing center geared to a monolingual framework, multilingual coaches have little negotiability, little ownership of meaning, and little access to the practices that would open up space for learning in participation with other members of their community of practice. Such learning would allow multilingual coaches to cultivate negotiability and make meaning that is adopted by their community of practice. As a result, for example, their multilingualism could be repositioned as visible rather than invisible, as an asset rather than a deficit, and as the default rather than an aberration. Such learning

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could also provide a forum for validating the identities and experiences of multilingual coaches, and in the process, provoke reflexivity among monolingual coaches. When writing centers make space for coaches from non-mainstream linguistic and cultural backgrounds to both speak *and* be listened to, the result is almost always a powerful kind of learning that can alter the practices of that writing center. During one of our weekly coach education meetings at the Michigan Tech Writing Center, for example, a Chinese-American coach revealed that many clients questioned her competence in English even though she was a native speaker. This painful story compelled the Euro-American coaches to consider how they took it for granted that their own competence in English would never be challenged. They quickly saw that this freedom from challenge actually stemmed from their racial background rather than their fluency in English. A remarkably productive discussion ensued and real learning occurred. Multilingual and non-mainstream coaches negotiated meaning that was adopted, and the entire community of practice changed as a result.

Wenger and Lave make clear that legitimate peripheral participation, communities of practice, and the negotiation of meaning apply to all contexts where learning takes place, not just educational contexts (*Situated* 40). Their analysis of legitimate peripheral participation in communities of practice covers Mexican midwives, African tailors, U.S. Navy quartermasters, professional butchers, and non-drinking alcoholics. In *Communities of Practice*, Wenger extends this analysis to the medical claims processing center of a large insurance company. Wenger and Lave suggest that "thinking about schooling in terms of legitimate peripheral participation is only one of several directions

that seem promising for pursuing the analysis of contemporary and other historical forms of social practice in terms of legitimate peripheral participation in communities of practice" (*Situated* 41). This suggests that applying a social theory of learning to diverse communities of practice would be a productive undertaking. These communities of practice need not be defined by clearly demarcated borders, as Wenger and Lave make clear:

> In our view, participation at multiple levels is entailed in membership in a *community of practice*. Nor does the term community imply necessarily co-presence, a well-defined, identifiable group, or socially visible boundaries. It does imply participation in an activity system about which participants share understandings concerning what they are doing and what that means in their lives and for their communities. (*Situated* 98)

In this dissertation, I attempt to answer Wenger and Lave's call to analyze situated learning through the lens of legitimate peripheral participation in communities of practice. I do so by focusing on the meaning-making that occurs in communities of practice associated with travel to Hong Kong and the work performed in writing centers. (For other examples of scholars who have answered Wenger and Lave's call, see Barton and Tusting's *Beyond Communities of Practice: Language, Power, and Social Context* and Geller *et al.*'s *The Everyday Writing Center: A Community of Practice*.)

Reflexive Design Practices: Two Examples of Reflexive Redesigning

Having defined the individual components of reflexive design practices, I now turn my attention to defining the term itself. As a starting point, I return to how writing center coach handbooks and travel guidebooks are designed to promote certain forms of engagement with linguistic, cultural, and national difference while simultaneously forestalling other more productive forms of engagement. Often handbooks and guidebooks implicitly promote the *managing* of difference in ways that privilege dominant ideologies, literacies, and identities. However, I believe that coach handbooks and travel guidebooks can be redesigned to explicitly promote *negotiating* with difference instead, with a resultant subversion of dominant lines of power and transformative social change. An effective redesign geared to the negotiation of difference could make use of the reflexive design practices I propose in this dissertation. Rather than proceed directly to my definition of reflexive design practices, however, I want to first provide two specific examples taken from coach handbooks and Hong Kong travel guidebooks that illustrate the kinds of redesigns I am advocating. In addition, these examples will help explain what I mean when I use abstract terms like "managing difference," "negotiating difference," and "transformative social change."

For the first example, I turn to the mapping practices of Hong Kong guidebooks. The maps in these guides typically refer to a small city on the south side of Hong Kong Island by its English-language name of "Aberdeen." However, the 95 percent of Hong Kong residents who speak Cantonese refer to this city as "Heung Gong Tsai" (香港仔),

which is most commonly translated as "Little Fragrant Harbor."[7] By using an English-language template for the cartography of Hong Kong, travel guidebooks instruct the user in how to engage with linguistic difference. Rather than negotiate difference, the maps manage difference by refusing to engage with it. They reinforce the dominance of English, erase the local language, and implicitly support the notion that powerful English-speaking nations can name the world as they see fit. Furthermore, the ideology of British colonialism and White superiority is left unchallenged, since Aberdeen takes its name from Lord Aberdeen, the British Foreign Secretary from 1841 to 1846. As this example clearly illustrates, certain ideologies that privilege certain literacies and identities saturate Hong Kong guidebook maps. However, these ideologies could be exposed and challenged through reflexive design practices. Hegemonic cartography, for example, could be countered by alternative mapping practices that valorize difference (Barton and Barton). Monolingual English maps of Hong Kong Island could be replaced by multilingual English-Cantonese maps that emphasize the linguistic hybridity of Hong Kong. Aberdeen could be labeled香港仔*Heung Gong Tsai (Little Fragrant Harbour); Aberdeen*. This would allow the English-speaking visitor to view Hong Kong through a Cantonese-language template, a socially transformative move that would not only challenge the dominance of English, but provide a more nuanced sense of Hong Kong geography as well. Such a move would also assert Cantonese linguistic and cultural identity and thereby challenge the dominance of *Putonghua* (Mandarin Chinese) speakers,

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[7] Alternative spellings include Heung Gong Jai and Heung Geung Jai. Alternative translations include "Little Incense Port" and the hybrid, semi-translated "Little Hong Kong."

who are the majority in China. Crucially, a multilingual map would compel users to engage with difference rather than merely erase it.

In another example of how the ideology of English-language dominance plays out, writing center coach handbooks typically include a section or chapter devoted exclusively to English as a Second Language (ESL) students. There is even a coach handbook— Bruce Rafoth and Shanti Bruce's *ESL Writers: A Guide for Writing Center Tutors*—that focuses solely on coaching ESL students. In these ways native English-speaking students are separated from ESL students, who are assumed to require special coaching tactics related to their status as non-native speakers. As a result, ESL students are positioned as an abnormal deviation from the monolingual English framework of the U.S. academy. Writing center coaches comprise part of this monolingual framework, as handbooks assume they can only be native English speakers. The task of these native English-speaking coaches therefore becomes the task of rectifying any deviation from the linguistic norm. Apprentice coaches who use coach handbooks are thus instructed to manage their encounters with linguistic difference in ways that reinforce dominant monolingual and monocultural assumptions about language and identity.

A careful redesign of coach handbooks that employs reflexive design practices, however, could dissolve the binary of native speaker/non-native speaker and present a more nuanced portrait of coaches and students. The practice of segregating ESL students in special chapters could be replaced by the practice of integrating ESL students into *all* chapters, since ESL students generally benefit from the same approaches to coaching recommended for working with native English-speaking students. Languages other than

English could be integrated into the text as a counterweight to English monolingualism. Assumptions about the benefits of acquiring English could be explicitly unpacked and interrogated. The notion that acquiring the English language automatically leads to social and material rewards, for example, could be problematized by positioning this notion as a "false" or "seldom-delivered" promise that fails to deliver real gains (Horner and Trimbur 618; Lu, "Living" 608; Pennycook). The common assumption that acquiring English literacy guarantees social success could also be challenged by positioning this assumption as a powerful "literacy myth" that ignores the historical reality that literacy does not guarantee social success (Gee, *Social*; Graff). ESL students could be repositioned as multilingual students, thereby replacing the notion that they are linguistically deficient with a recognition of their linguistic sophistication (Canagarajah, "The Place"; Horner; Lu, "An Essay," "Living"; Matsuda; Pratt, "Building"; Trimbur, "Linguistic"). Traditional notions about the native English-speaking coach could be replaced by more flexible assumptions that recognize that multilingual coaches not only exist, but are particularly well positioned to negotiate linguistic difference. From the standpoint of Wenger and Lave's social theory of learning, these redesigns can offer multilingual coaches access to the practices that will allow them, as legitimate peripheral participants, to develop identities of participation that position them to negotiate meaning within their community of practice. This would give them a say in how their linguistic identity is constructed. Opening up space for more equitable negotiations of linguistic identity in coach handbooks specifically and writing centers more generally can challenge

ideologies that privilege English as the master standard. This challenge can be socially transformative in its push for a more multilingual approach to writing center work.

Receptive Contexts for Reflexive Design Practices

Reflexive design practices can be employed in the redesign of diverse instructional texts. As the examples above show, however, reflexive design practices are particularly well suited for redesigning instructional texts geared to writing center work and international travel. Multiple and conflicting identities routinely interact in these spaces, which enjoy a relative degree of freedom from institutional and ideological forces. This freedom, however limited, produces a fertile environment for the productive negotiation of difference and social change.

In recent years writing centers have become increasingly prominent on North American university campuses (Murphy xiii). However, many writing centers still exist on the periphery of academic institutions, where they are consigned to basements and other undesirable office space that symbolize their low status within the campus hierarchy. Unsurprisingly, assertions that writing centers are marginalized remain common in Writing Center Studies. (See, for example, Stephen North's canonical "The Idea of a Writing Center.") These claims of marginalization rest on the notion that institutional forces within the academy are so threatened by writing centers that they must actively work to marginalize them. I would argue, however, that claims of marginalization falsely inflate the importance of writing centers, which tend to be simply ignored and overlooked rather than actively persecuted. Furthermore, claims of

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marginalization allow writing center staff and scholars to blame external sources for their own position within the academy (Boquet and Lerner).

Whether ignored or marginalized, however, writing centers find themselves in a rather paradoxical position. Precisely because they are so undervalued and ignored, writing centers face less pressure to adhere to dominant academic practices and assumptions (Cooper 344). As entities situated on the periphery, writing centers also have the freedom to implement pedagogical innovations that might not be possible in more prominent and visible institutional locations (Carino; Howard and Carrick). Writing Centers can fly under the radar of the academy, in other words, and avoid its disciplinary flak. Consequently, writing centers can offer spaces where the diverse discourses, dialects, and languages spoken by non-mainstream students are positioned as productive resources rather than deficiencies to be eliminated. Writing centers are free, in other words, to foster the negotiation of difference in academic environments that generally work to manage it instead. Rather than adhere to the monolingual and monocultural framework of the academy, writing centers can advocate a multilingual and multicultural approach instead. While it remains true that most writing centers have not made a serious and sustained attempt to engage with difference in this fashion, it is also true that they have the potential to do so. Furthermore, there is considerable latent power in this potential for spurring social change. Redesigned writing center coach handbooks can help unlock this change.

Just as writing center work can open up space for engaging with difference in socially transformative ways, international travel can allow travelers to engage with

difference in new social spaces unconstrained by familiar conceptions of language and

categories of identity. Journeying abroad, however, does not necessarily cause a traveler

to engage with difference in a reflexive manner that challenges their own assumptions.

Many travelers carry their own ideological baggage in an uncritical manner, which

promotes engagements with difference based on stereotypes and cultural bias. The

chances that travelers will reflexively engage with difference greatly increase when they

are provided with explicit guidance for this reflexive engagement.

　　As a 20-year-old undergraduate, for example, I enrolled in a study abroad

program that took me on a semester-long ocean voyage around the world, with port calls

in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East.[8] While at sea I took courses taught by academics

who challenged my assumptions and explicitly attempted to foster a reflexive climate

among the 400 students aboard ship. "You have to take off your cultural lenses," I

remember one professor telling us as the ship rolled in heavy seas somewhere in the

Atlantic Ocean. I had been coached to react reflexively when I encountered linguistic

and cultural diversity along the ancient stone lanes of Jerusalem, in the cloud-wreathed

highlands of Sri Lanka, and beneath the neon-splintered arcades of urban Japan. These

foreign contexts challenged the known rules for engaging with difference and pressured

me to interact with local languages and cultures in ways that conformed to local norms

rather than my own assumptions. When I failed to show sufficient reflexivity, other

students let me know. I can still remember the embarrassment I felt when a classmate

told me I was "culturally insensitive" for classifying the people of Mumbai (Bombay) as

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[8] The Institute for Shipboard Education's Semester at Sea program, currently affiliated with the University of Virginia.

dirty in an offhand comment I made over lunch in the ship's cafeteria. Maybe, he suggested, their hygiene had to do with the fact that many were so poor they had to sleep on the sidewalk each night? My classmate was right, of course, and I knew it. My professors and fellow students provided an explicitly reflexive framework that caused me to become more reflexive and more likely to negotiate with difference than when I had faced difference back in my home state of Massachusetts, which was ideologically monolingual and monocultural despite its own linguistic and cultural diversity.

As my story illustrates, travel in unfamiliar and disorienting foreign contexts can be personally transformative, and by extension, socially transformative. However, this potential for personal and social transformation is far more likely to be realized if travelers are explicitly pushed to be reflexive. My professors, classmates, and coursework provoked this reflexivity in me. Redesigned travel guidebooks that are designed to provoke reflexivity in their users can also spur travelers to self-reflexively question their own assumptions. This makes space for the personal and social transformation that inevitably follows any genuine self-interrogation of our normalized and transparent assumptions about the world. Provoking critical self-interrogations of the ideological assumptions held by users, in fact, remains the ultimate goal of the redesign of coach handbooks and travel guidebooks that I propose in this dissertation. This new approach to handbook and guidebook design relies on the use of reflexive design practices, which are underpinned by specific notions of literacy, discourse, identity, and ideology.

Literacy, Discourse, and Reflexive Design Practices

What should travel guidebook maps call that city on the south side of Hong Kong Island? Aberdeen? Heung Gong Tsai? Or perhaps even 香港仔? What linguistic background should coach handbooks assume that coaches possess? Can they only be native speakers of English? Or can they be multilingual coaches who speak Hindi, Farsi, Spanish and/or a variety of World English? How these questions are answered, of course, depend on the ideological assumptions of the designers who create travel guidebooks and coach handbooks.

For an understanding of how ideology impacts the design of coach handbooks and travel guidebooks, I look to Literacy Studies. Scholars in the field have developed theoretical approaches that can help explicate how the design practices of handbook and guidebook designers support certain ideologies, usually in a tacit and *unconscious* manner. Quite frequently designers are not even aware of the ideologies they embed in their instructional texts. These ideologies often favor certain kinds of users, regardless of whether the designer consciously intended them to. At the same time, these ideologies also marginalize certain kinds of users. Multilingual and/or international writing center coaches will not find much evidence of their own existence in coach handbooks, for example, since the ideologies embedded in handbooks support English monolingualism and other ideological positions that do not align with the concept of a multilingual coach from a country other than the United States. Therefore, my argument is that coach handbook and travel guidebook designers must reveal and interrogate the implicit ideological assumptions inherent to their own designing. Designers must be *conscious* of

the ideologies they emplace in their texts, and if they find that these assumptions exclude or otherwise harm certain groups of users, then designers are duty-bound to alter their designs in order to prevent this exclusion and harm. Designers are obligated, in other words, to employ reflexive design practices.

My argument for why designers must implement reflexive design practices is underpinned by an ideological model of literacy first proposed by literacy scholar Brian V. Street. Street rejects the traditional "autonomous" model of literacy that views literacy as a neutral set of skills devoid of ideological content. Street faults the autonomous model for obscuring the ideological nature of literacy behind a façade of supposed neutrality and for positioning literacy as an *individual* practice rather than a *social* practice. Though literacy scholars have embraced Street's rejection of the autonomous model, this model nonetheless continues to dominate the rhetoric of public debate over literacy in the United States and obscures the fact that the privileged literacies taught in schools and universities are anything but neutral. They are geared, in fact, to certain kinds of people holding certain kinds of identities and values. Anyone who does not hold these identities and values will find themselves at a disadvantage when it comes to acquiring these privileged literacies. They may still attain those literacies, often after a prolonged and personally damaging struggle. Or they may never attain them and fail to achieve social success, which is just an academic way of saying that they are likely to be poor and powerless. Literacies thus function as gate-keeping mechanisms designed to let certain people in to the privileged parts of society and to lock certain people out. For all of these reasons, Street argues for an "ideological" model of literacy

that recognizes the socially constructed nature of literacy and its complicity with structures of power.

I rely on Wenger and Lave to further explicate Street's ideological model and the ways that literacies are constructed in social groups. Wenger and Lave's social theory of learning holds that all meaning-making is social and situated. All meaning-making is therefore ideological as well, including the meaning-making associated with literacy. A community of practice invested in a particular literacy does not merely *use* that literacy, in the autonomous sense. Rather, the community *constructs* that literacy in an ongoing process of negotiation among its full participants, which is ideological by its very nature. Legitimate peripheral participants who are given access to the practices of this community will be able to gradually become full participants able to negotiate and take ownership of meaning, including the meanings associated with its literacies. Members with marginal legitimate peripherality, however, will never acquire negotiability and ownership of meaning; they will remain disempowered. Literacy is thus both social and ideological in its construction and use. It is not a pre-made and neutral tool that individuals pick up and autonomously teach themselves to use.

Gee argues for an ideological model of literacy, just as Street does, and Gee also argues for an approach to literacy that accounts for its social nature in ways that echo Wenger and Lave. Gee is well known within the field for his arguments against the traditional autonomous model of literacy, which positions literacy as merely the individual ability to read and write. Such a model remains problematic because it "situates literacy in the individual person, rather than in society" (*Social* 22). Drawing on

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the work of Street, Gee faults the autonomous model of literacy for its failure to take into account the sociocultural contexts of all literacies. Literacy practices, in other words, cannot be disentangled from all the other practices and underpinning beliefs of a given social group. Gee argues that the autonomous model "cloaks literacy's connections to power, to social identity, and to ideologies, often in the service of privileging certain types of literacies and certain types of people" (46). Like Street, Gee argues instead for an ideological model of literacy that takes social contexts into account and positions literacies as stemming from and situated in these social contexts.

What I find most useful about Gee, however, is that he situates literacy in socially constructed and ideologically driven discourses, which complicates traditional definitions of literacy as a neutral skill. By situating literacies in "Discourses," Gee positions literacy as much more than the mere ability to use language to communicate.[9] Language and language ability, in fact, remains just part of the equation:

> what is important is language *plus* being the "right" *who* doing the "right"
> *what*. What is important is not language, and surely not grammar, but
> *saying (writing)-doing-being-valuing-believing combinations*. These
> combinations I will refer to as Discourses…. (*Social* 127)

Gee is suggesting that the fluent use of specific discourses allows individuals to signal membership in specific social groups while resisting membership in others, and in doing so, accrue certain social advantages. He makes the crucial point that discourses are like "identity kits" that identify members of a given discourse community and allow them

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[9] Like most scholars in Literacy Studies, I have opted not to capitalize "discourse" and "discourses."

to think and behave in ways that are often implicit, transparent, and unexamined (*Social*

127). Discourse determines our identity, in other words, and which identities we hold

determines our social status. Legal discourse practiced by lawyers, for example, is a

high-status discourse, and this status is materially represented by the financial rewards

associated with practicing this discourse. The accrual of social advantages, financial or

otherwise, allows certain discourses to become "dominant discourses" capable of

marginalizing non-dominant discourses and associated ideologies and identities. In the

halls of power, legal discourse trumps most other forms of discourse in the United States

today. Because discourses determine social positions, they are "inherently ideological"

(132). In addition, because discourses are socially constructed, they are also in a state of

constant change. Crucially, however, an individual has to be a recognized member of a

discourse community before they can gain any ability to negotiate meaning within that

discourse.

Just as Wenger's social theory of learning offers a deeper understanding of

Street's ideological model of literacy, it can also refine the interconnected workings of

discourse, identity, and power outlined by Gee. As Wenger explains, our identities are

shaped by the practices we do or do not engage in. As a result, we acquire identities of

participation and non-participation in relation to specific communities of practice

(*Communities* 164). The development of these identities can be understood through the

concepts of peripherality and marginality. Peripherality is a form of non-participation

that is a necessary first step towards full participation in a community of practice,

whether we choose to pursue full participation or not (165). Marginality, however, is

enforced non-participation that blocks full participation even if we want it (166). In some cases, we may find it quite straightforward to acquire a peripheral identity of non-participation that leads to full participation. I decided to learn to fish while in graduate school, for example, and over the years I have steadily moved from peripheral non-participation towards full participation in a community of practice that consists of inland-lake anglers in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. The evidence of my progress towards full participation is not merely the increasing size of the fish I catch, but also my ability to "talk fishing" with more experienced members of the community. In other cases, however, we may find that the only trajectory open to us in a community of practice is to acquire a marginal identity of non-participation that will never lead to full participation no matter how much we might want it to. I am drawn to Taoist temples in Hong Kong, for example, and I sometimes seek blessings there by placing joss sticks before the altars to Kwun Yam, Tin Hau, and Man Cheong. I would like to incorporate these rituals more fully into my life. However, I understand that I will always do so from a position of marginal non-participation due to my racial, cultural, and linguistic background. The locals will never accept me as a full member of this particular community of practice, in other words, and I say this without rancor or criticism. As this example illustrates, an identity of marginal non-participation is just as genuine an identity as peripheral non-participation or full participation, but it is a disempowered identity nonetheless (164). I have no say in the practices associated with temple ritual in Hong Kong, in other words, even though I may sometimes perform them.

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The process of becoming full participants in communities of practice helps explicate how certain people gain access to the discourses Gee is concerned with, while others are locked out. To become full participants in a community of practice, for example, "newcomers" must learn to enact the discourse—or wear the "identity kit"—of that community in ways that the "old-timers" accept as genuine. As Gee points out, "overt instruction" in the classroom or similar context does not generally facilitate this enactment. Rather, this facilitation is best achieved through access to social practice ("Literacy" 527). University writing centers, for example, can offer access to the social practices necessary for students to begin acquiring the specialized discourses required for academic success (Bruffee, "Peer").

Gee's focus on social practice aligns with Wenger and Lave's notion of legitimate peripheral participation—a concept that can explain why certain newcomers to a community of practice become full members fluent in its discourse, while others do not. Those newcomers who already share the identities and ideologies of the old-timers are more likely to be positioned as legitimate peripheral participants who are granted access to the social practices of the community. This enables the learning that allows newcomers to eventually become full members with identities of participation. These newcomers consequently acquire the ability to make meaning in their community of practice, which means they get a say in the ongoing evolution of its discourse. In the terminology of the New London Group, these newcomers get to participate in the redesign of the community's discourse, and consequently, the design of the community's social future. Because these newly anointed full participants share the identities and

associated ideologies of the old-timers, they are unlikely to perceive any need for significant redesigns of the discourse. These new full participants, in fact, are far more likely to reproduce established conventions of the discourse and preserve the status quo. The new social future for the community will consequently look must like the recent social past, in other words. In the meantime, the new full participants share in the social and material benefits associated with the discourse, which can be significant in the case of what Gee calls "middle-class mainstream status-giving Discourses" ("Literacy" 531).

However, members of a community of practice who do *not* share the identities and ideologies of the old-timers are often denied access to practice, which forces them to adopt a marginal identity of peripheral non-participation. Marginal non-participants are consequently barred from practice and the learning it enables because the old-timers understand that if these non-participants were to acquire access to practice, they would eventually acquire the ability to make meaning within that community. They would acquire negotiability and ownership of meaning. Marginal non-participants would then have a say in the redesign of its discourse, and they would likely want to make significant changes in its composition. They might challenge, for example, the ideological assumptions inherent to the discourse. For this reason, old-timers will resist granting access to practice to members holding a marginal identity of non-participation and will instead require that these members enact the discourse without any say in the ongoing evolution of that discourse. Members holding an identity of marginal non-participation might therefore be required to enact a discourse that implicitly or explicitly invalidates their own identity and life experiences. In addition, they are unlikely to acquire a full

share of the social and material benefits associated with that discourse and community of practice. Members holding an identity of marginal nonparticipation thus remain disempowered peripheral non-participants unable to shape how their community of practice knows the world.

Gee describes discourses, in fact, as "ways of being in the world" shared by specific groups of people that can be likened to communities of practice (*Social* viii). These ways of being or ways of knowing are based on a set of evolving "theories" shared by the group about what to think and how to behave. These theories are what Gee calls ideologies. What complicates matters, however, is that such theories exist on a continuum of "overt" to "tacit," and the more tacit theories generally go unexamined and free to do their ideological harm. Those holding such tacit beliefs view their theories as naturalized common sense, when in fact these theories are based on unexamined assumptions shared by a socially situated discourse group. The first and second paradigms of cultural difference outlined by Nederveen Pieterse are good examples of tacit ideological beliefs that have been normalized as truth.

Gee's approach to literacy, discourse, and ideology helps explicate how reflexive design practices emphasizing self-reflexivity and negotiation with difference can lead to social transformation. Since reflexive design practices cannot be employed in a discourse without changing that discourse, particularly in terms of its underlying values and assumptions, the use of such practices inevitably leads to social change. The discourse of travel changes, for example, when guidebook designers employ reflexive design practices that compel their users to self-reflexively engage with the linguistic hybridity of Hong

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Kong through multilingual maps. Likewise, the discourse of writing center work changes when handbook designers portray coach identities as linguistically diverse. Reflexive design practices can render tacit ideologies visible and subject them to scrutiny. This process can change discourses and enact social transformation that has real material consequences. For this reason, reflexive design practices pack considerable power.

I use the ideological model of literacy to explain why those fluent in dominant mainstream discourses—which are indexed to privileged identities and ideologies—are unlikely to call on self-reflexivity as a strategy for engaging with difference. This lack of reflexivity means that holders of mainstream discourses are likely to rely on management rather than negotiation as the default mode for engaging with difference. Most coach handbook and travel guidebook designers, for example, are fluent in dominant discourses and implicitly invested in maintaining that dominance. This maintenance calls for the managing of difference, since negotiation with difference would call that dominance into question. A travel guidebook designer might be invested in the dominance of discourses linked to the preeminence of English, for example, and opt for English-language maps of areas where English is not the first or only language. All too frequently, designers have no incentive to "think critiquely" (Gee, "New" 62). Consequently, they have no incentive to employ strategies like reflexive design practices, either. As I will argue later in this chapter, however, designers *do* have a powerful ethical incentive to employ reflexive design practices, and I believe this ethical imperative is compelling enough to convince designers they should implement reflexive design practices.

I also rely on the ideological model for an understanding of why those fluent in non-dominant discourses are far more likely to employ reflexivity and negotiation as the primary strategy for engaging with difference. Since their primary discourse does not mesh with privileged discourses, they have no choice but to learn how to self-reflexively negotiate the difference between the two. The alternative is social marginalization, with all the detrimental material circumstances such positioning implies. Individuals in non-mainstream social positions are not only more likely to acquire reflexive negotiating skills, but to view these skills as normal to the point of transparency. Multilingual and/or international writing center coaches, for example, are often skilled at negotiating different languages, literacies, discourses, and dialects for the simple reason that such negotiations remain an integral part of their social lives. This ability to negotiate linguistic difference is certainly an advantage in writing center work, and while monolingual coaches may have to consciously develop their negotiation skills as part of their coach education, multilingual coaches often have an intuitive understanding of them.

A growing number of scholars in Literacy Studies, Composition, and Writing Center Studies have advocated pedagogical approaches that emphasize the negotiation of linguistic and cultural difference based on the assumption that difference is normative, desirable, and beneficial in educational and other civic contexts. (See, for example, Bawarshi; Canagarajah, "The Place"; Horner; Lu, "An Essay," "Living"; Matsuda; Pratt, "Building"; Trimbur, "Linguistic.") The New London Group concludes that

> the most important skill students need to learn is to *negotiate* regional,
>
> ethnic, or class-based dialects; variations in register that occur according

to social context; hybrid cross-cultural discourses; the code switching

often to be found within a text among different languages, dialects, or

registers; different visual and iconic meanings; and variations in the

gestural relationships among people, language, and material objects.

Indeed, this is the only hope for averting the catastrophic conflicts about

identities and spaces that now seem ever ready to flare up. (14; emphasis

added)

Literacy scholars recognize, however, that linguistic difference is a site of struggle requiring adaptive strategies by speakers of non-dominant discourses, dialects, and languages. Many students from non-dominant backgrounds, for example, practice adaptive strategies that allow them to productively negotiate linguistic and cultural difference. This can clearly be seen in "'Whispers of Coming and Going: Lessons from Fannie,'" a 1992 *Writing Center Journal* piece by Anne DiPardo that has become one of the more well-known articles in the field of Writing Center Studies. DiPardo recounts the story of Fannie, a young Native American woman who spoke both Navaho and English and grew up immersed in Navaho culture. When Fannie began her first year at a predominantly white and middle-class campus, she found herself forced to navigate the unfamiliar terrain of higher education, with its mainstream values, specialized discourses, and adherence to Academic English. Fannie struggled to pass her courses as a result, but this provoked little interest or sympathy from her instructors or the larger institution. Despite the lack of supportive scaffolding, however, Fannie managed to survive her first year on campus and became a university student without surrendering her Navaho

identity. As DiPardo explains, Fannie "was learning to inhabit both arenas, and in so doing, enact a negotiation of admirable complexity" (365). She resisted pressure to assimilate and became a linguistic and cultural shape-changer who could adopt the identity kit of a university student whenever circumstances demanded.

Multilingual students like Fannie who become adept at negotiating linguistic difference are at an advantage in a globalized world, since they can more easily shift between different dialects, discourses, and languages when compared to mainstream, monolingual students (Canagarajah, "The Place"; DiPardo; Lu, "An Essay," "Living"; Matsuda; Trimbur, "Linguistic"). Pratt even suggests that monolingualism should be viewed as a "handicap," since multilingual children achieve higher scores in cognitive testing ("Building" n.p.). However, the advantages of multilingualism may not be sufficient to overcome the formidable social barriers placed in the path of non-mainstream students. DiPardo does not reveal how Fannie ultimately fared in higher education, for example, and while I like to think that she prospered, this outcome cannot be taken for granted. Becoming fluent in academic discourse does not automatically ensure that non-mainstream students will be welcomed into academia, after all, and to assume otherwise is to buy into the model of autonomous literacy so thoroughly discredited by Street, Gee, and other literacy scholars. Understanding this reality, DiPardo suggests that non-mainstream students are far more likely to be welcomed into academia if writing center coaches and staff—and by extension, educators in general— are willing and able to become "models of reflective practice—perennially inquisitive and self-critical" (366). DiPardo's call can be forwarded to locations beyond the writing

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center. DiPardo's call, in fact, can be seen as an impetus for the designers of coach handbooks to employ reflexive design practices that spur the productive negotiation of difference.

Reflexive Design Practice as Social Transformation

I look to the work of scholars in Literacy Studies and Composition for support when I position liberatory social transformation as a primary objective of reflexive design practices. I define liberatory social transformation as change that leads to more egalitarian social futures for those who are not in privileged positions as well as for those who are. A process of liberatory social transformation not only does no harm, but both acknowledges past harm and attempts to prevent future harm. This emphasis on avoiding harm to others is what makes practicing reflexive design such a socially transformative act. Literacy and Composition scholars broadly share my definition of social transformation and frequently call for social responsibility and social change in public school systems, composition classrooms, writing centers, and other academic settings, as opposed to the mere reinforcement of existing social norms. Indeed, these scholars argue that implementing pedagogical approaches that foster social transformation is an ethical and pedagogical imperative for educators. Social responsibility, they claim quite convincingly, mandates the pursuit of social transformation. I believe this call for social change can be extended beyond educational contexts, however, and be used to justify the implementation of innovative new pedagogies geared to social transformation in a broad assortment of environments, including the realm of handbook and guidebook design.

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Reflexive design practices incorporated into coach handbooks and travel guidebooks can therefore be conceptualized as a new form of critical pedagogy for international travel and writing center work.

My theoretical rationale for including social transformation as a goal of reflexive design practices is buttressed by the praxes of the "Big Three" in critical pedagogy—Paulo Freire, Ira Shor, and Henry Giroux (George 93). All three scholars argue that instructors have a moral duty to empower students to guide their own education, acquire critical literacy, and work for social and democratic transformation (Freire, *Literacy*, *Pedagogy*; Giroux; Shor). In a passage that summarizes many of the shared pedagogical assumptions of the Big Three, Giroux claims that public schools need "curricular justice," which he defines as

> forms of teaching that are inclusive, caring, respectful, economically
> equitable, and whose aim, in part, is to undermine those repressive modes
> of education that produce social hierarchies and legitimate inequality
> while simultaneously providing students with the knowledge and skills
> needed to become well-rounded critical actors and social agents. (xxvi)

Though Gee does not explicitly categorize himself as a critical pedagogue, he nonetheless shares broadly similar goals with Freire, Shor, and Giroux. Like the Big Three, Gee emphasizes that the failure to pursue equitable social transformation through literacy pedagogy has genuine material consequences. He contends that "literacy has been used, in age after age, to solidify the social hierarchy, empower elites, and ensure that people lower on the hierarchy accept the values, norms, and beliefs of the elites, even

when it is not in their self-interest or group interest to do so" (*Social* 36). Gee thus makes

it clear that the impact of literacy is not abstract or theoretical, and that "real people really

get hurt by the workings of language, power, ideology, and Discourse" (ix). This leads

Gee to argue that everyone has an ethical obligation to acquire a "meta-knowledge" of

discourse that will equip them with the ability to interrogate their own tacit ideological

assumptions, particularly those that might harm other people. Furthermore, this meta-

knowledge should be the "core ability" that schools focus on. Gee concludes by arguing

that practicing this kind of social linguistics "is a moral matter and can change the world"

(191).

The New London Group, which includes Gee among its ten original members,

presents a model for literacy pedagogy that works towards transformative and equitable

social outcomes. As a starting point, the group asks, "How do we ensure that differences

of culture, language, and gender are not barriers to educational success?" (10). In an

attempt to answer this question, the New London Group proposes a literacy pedagogy

that is purpose-designed for social transformation. In brief, this Pedagogy of

Multiliteracies is based on the concept of Available Designs, Designing, and the

Redesigned that I outline at the start of this chapter. This pedagogical model consists of

four components, which are not sequential or hierarchical. In Situated Practice, students

immerse themselves in diverse communities of practice and engage in meaningful design

practices. In Overt Instruction, instructors or other expert designers provide a "scaffold"

for students, who fashion a "metalanguage" of design that provides "conscious awareness

and control over what is being learned" (33). In Critical Framing, students reflexively

critique and "denaturalize" what they have learned and the social context in which their learning occurs (7, 34). This component reveals the socially transformative potential of the New London Group's pedagogy, as the denormalizing and challenging of socially produced meaning inherent to Critical Framing enhances the potential for equitable social change. In Transformed Practice, students reflexively design and implement new practices based on situated learning in communities of practice, a metalanguage of design, and their ability to reflexively critique what they have learned. Again, the potential for equitable social change is clear, since Transformed Practices allows students to become designers of new social futures that can lead to liberatory social transformation (7, 33). Gee frames the implementation of this pedagogy as an ethical obligation for all educators. Moreover, he positions the pedagogical principles outlined by the New London Group as a "Bill of Rights" for students, particularly those from non-mainstream backgrounds ("New" 67).

Leslie G. Roman advocates "critical global intelligence," as I have already noted, and suggests that implementing pedagogies designed to foster this intelligence remains an ethical imperative for educators that can spur social transformation. Roman argues that critical global intelligence stems from "moral intelligence and civic responsibility" as well as a willingness to productively engage with diverse communities outside one's own (86). Furthermore, she asserts that critical global intelligence is characterized by the ability to reflexively engage with the world based on underlying values of compassion, respect, and civic responsibility. Roman is arguing, in other words, for the productive negotiation of difference in a global context.

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Just as scholars in Literacy Studies and Composition have argued that educators are ethically bound to work towards liberatory social transformation, I argue that the designers of instructional texts such as coach handbooks and travel guidebooks are also ethically obligated to orient their work towards equitable social transformation. My contention is that designers must instruct users in how to denormalize assumptions and self-reflexively negotiate difference, as opposed to instructing them in how to uncritically manage, ignore, or erase difference. In embedding this instruction in coach handbooks and travel guidebooks, designers engage in socially transformative acts. Multilingual maps of Hong Kong, for example, challenge the linguistic assumptions of native English-speaking users. Likewise, coach handbooks that present diverse coach identities challenge user assumptions that assume a native English speaker is the only appropriate linguistic identity for a writing center coach. In both cases, transparent monocultural and monolingual assumptions are rendered visible and open to interrogation.

I recognize that by making the pursuit of social transformation an integral part of reflexive design practices I have invited many of the same criticisms that have been leveled at critical pedagogy and socially transformative praxes such as the New London Group's Pedagogy of Multiliteracies. I have invited, in other words, the wrath of the *tai fung*. Critics charge, for example, that critical pedagogy pushes a political agenda on students in an environment characterized by asymmetric teacher-student power differentials. They also charge that critical pedagogy is theoretically attractive but difficult to implement in practice. In addition, they charge that critical pedagogy remains unrealistic, utopian, and unlikely to lead to measurable social change (George). Though

these charges raise important issues that cannot and indeed should not be ignored, I believe these criticisms can be parried by the counterarguments offered by proponents of critical pedagogy and socially transformative approaches to literacy pedagogy. I rely on these counterarguments to justify my own foregrounding of social transformation in reflexive design practices.

The first argument against critical pedagogy and socially transformative literacy pedagogy is that these approaches amount to little more than an attempt to brainwash students into accepting a left-wing ideological agenda. Before I proceed any further, I think I should first point out the obvious fact that forcing students to adhere to a given set of political ideologies is a risk while using *any* pedagogical approach. It is hardly a problem inherent to critical pedagogy. Furthermore, any pedagogy that does not pursue some form of social transformation, however limited, is by default upholding the ideologies of the status quo. In classrooms where such pedagogies are operative, both instructors and students alike uncritically accept the theories and assumptions of dominant ideological forces as naturalized truth and common sense.

In any case, to charge critical pedagogy with pursuing specific political agendas is to overlook the basic goal of critical pedagogy, which is to prepare students to "think critiquely" (Gee, "New" 62). Critical pedagogy can, and indeed has been, used to pursue specific political goals. Gee, for example, problematizes Freire's call for "correct" political thinking among the members of a literacy campaign in the African nation of Sao Tome e Principe. Gee notes that while Freire wants to give the people emancipatory literacy, he simultaneously works to ensure that the people reach the correct political

interpretations (*Social* 36). As Freire well knew and as this example illustrates, literacy can never be ideologically neutral. Critical pedagogy attempts to equip students with critical literacy so that they can better understand the social context in which they live. For most students, this understanding has a liberatory impact precisely because their social context oppresses them in ways they might not have been able to articulate without critical literacy skills. The goal of critical pedagogy is not to endow students with a certain set of political beliefs, however, though I think it is fair to say that critical literacy is more likely to produce progressive-minded students than conservative ones.

Likewise, the pursuit of specific political agendas is not the goal of reflexive design practices. Rather, the goal is to ensure that designers instruct users in how to self-reflexively negotiate with difference, as opposed to merely managing or erasing it. This means that implementing reflexive design practices is most definitely *not* a neutral undertaking. However, this implementation is not a monolithic undertaking either, since exactly how guidebooks instruct users to negotiate difference will vary significantly from designer to designer. More importantly, exactly how users implement what they learn from this instruction will also vary. Designers are not trying to push users to negotiate in ways that lead to specific outcomes; rather, they are merely attempting to equip users with the skills needed to negotiate difference. If users are going to negotiate with linguistic difference, for example, they have to face that difference rather than refuse to engage with it. Reflexive design practices can ensure this engagement by, for example, including multilingual rather than monolingual maps. The specific outcome of the

negotiation is left up to the user. The very fact that the negotiation occurred, however, is socially transformative.

With some justification, detractors of critical pedagogy and socially transformative approaches to literacy pedagogy have also charged that while these approaches are theoretically attractive, they are difficult to implement in practice (George). Praxes of critical pedagogy, in other words, have been too heavily weighted towards the theoretical. I have sought to avoid this imbalance by building a praxis that is equal parts theory and practice. Consequently, while this chapter is devoted primarily to *theory*, the chapters that follow are devoted primarily to *practice*. I identify common rhetorical strategies in coach handbooks and travel guidebooks that promote the management of difference and the maintenance of monocultural and monolingual assumptions. I suggest these design practices should be scrapped, and then recommend alternative rhetorical strategies for the redesign of coach handbooks and travel guidebooks, including strategies that I implement in the design of my own guides to Hong Kong, Macau, and Hanoi. These rhetorical strategies provide examples of easily implemented reflexive design practices that can encourage the negotiation of difference, promote multicultural and multilingual assumptions, and spur social transformation.

As for the third argument that critical pedagogy is unrealistic, utopian, and unlikely to lead to measurable social change, I have little time for it. While it may be true that critical pedagogy and socially transformative approaches to literacy pedagogy can only manage to change the world in modest and incremental ways, this is certainly no reason to stop employing these correctives. While Ira Shor warns that we must consider

the situated limitations of critical pedagogy in any classroom, he also notes that even partially successful critical learning is valuable social action (197). He is surely correct that a single classroom can't change society, but he is equally correct that critical pedagogy can support broader societal change and is therefore anything but marginal. In a similar vein, the New London Group suggests that "we cannot remake the world through schooling, but we can instantiate a vision through pedagogy that creates in microcosm a transformed set of relationships and possibilities for social futures" (19). Composition scholar William Thelin, meanwhile, argues that instructors should not abandon the goals of critical pedagogy just because students fail to acquire critical literacy. Rather, Thelin suggests that instructors should learn from their inevitable "blunders" in the classroom and implement revised pedagogies that are more likely to accomplish the goals of critical pedagogy.

Realistic goals are the key to critical pedagogy, it seems to me, just as they are for reflexive design practices. The transformative outcomes produced by reflexive design practices are rarely large in scale; they are usually modest and incremental, but no less valuable for being so. If multilingual maps in Hong Kong guidebooks lead users to understand that 香港仔 is how the locals name Aberdeen, I would judge this a small but significant engagement with linguistic difference that can productively challenge implicit and unstated assumptions about the dominance of English. When I propose equitable social transformation as a goal of reflexive design practices, I take inspiration from Composition scholar Min-Zhan Lu, who argues that scholar-teachers in the writing classroom "have no real alternative but to keep on trying" to fight injustice. Furthermore,

Lu is surely correct when she says that "our word-work can help to design a better world" ("An Essay" 46). I believe that her argument applies as equally to reflexive design practices as it does to writing pedagogy.

Re-imagining the World

Coach handbook and travel guidebook designers are often situated in social contexts that are unreceptive to forms of cultural and linguistic difference, particularly those forms of difference that run counter to dominant ideologies and identities. This unreceptive context shapes the assumptions of handbook and guidebook designers, who consequently rely on rhetorical strategies that work to manage, assimilate, exclude, and erase forms of difference that might challenge those assumptions. As a result, for example, rhetorical strategies in coach handbooks and travel guidebooks reinforce English monolingualism rather than multilingualism. Since the underlying assumptions of handbook and guidebook designers drive their design practices, they may fail to see or fail to employ alternative design practices that can promote more productive negotiations with difference capable of sparking social change.

However, designers can resist unreceptive social contexts through a process of imagination, and indeed are ethically obligated to do so, for reasons I outline throughout this chapter. Designers can choose to re-imagine their social context as receptive to the productive negotiation of difference and equitable social change. They can choose to position multilingualism as the default in their coach handbooks and travel guidebooks, for example. Coach handbooks can state that Chinese students speak普通话, and travel

guides can inform travelers that Hong Kong is known to the locals as 香港. However, such re-imagining presents no small task. Designing handbooks and guidebooks involves literacy practices, after all, and literacy practices are always shaped by their social context (Ivanic 65).[10] Such a view corresponds to the ideological model of literacy, which holds that literacies and discourses are socially constructed and situated in specific social contexts (Gee, *Social*; Street). Receptive social contexts will nurture literacy practices geared to the productive negotiation of difference, while inhospitable social contexts will block their implementation.

The socially situated and ideological nature of literacy helps explain why strategies for negotiating difference are often resisted in academic settings and other arenas governed by dominant discourses. Fannie had no choice but to implement strategies for negotiating difference when she encountered an unfamiliar and dominant discourse—academic English—that was in conflict with what Gee would call her "primary Discourse" (*Social* 137). Fannie engaged with academic discourses and gained valuable experience in negotiating difference as a result, but these negotiations were not reciprocal. Fannie did all the work in a one-way struggle to acquire academic discourses indexed to mainstream concepts of identity and ideology. Her writing coach and the instructors teaching her courses could—and apparently did—opt out of engaging with her primary discourse. They learned little or nothing about negotiating with difference and fell back on familiar educational strategies of assimilation and exclusion that work to

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[10] I rely here on a basic definition of literacy practices provided by Roz Ivanic: "Literacy practices are the culturally shaped ways in which literacy serves social ends" (65).

manage difference instead (DiPardo; Kalantzis and Cope 123). In the end, Fannie adapted to the status quo, which remained unchanged.

Fannie's writing coach and instructors might have been able to productively negotiate difference if they had been situated in a more receptive social context governed by a discourse of engagement. Such a discourse would clearly run counter to the monolingual and monocultural discourses prevalent in the United States today. However, the concept of Civic Pluralism advocated by the New London Group provides a model for a new social framework geared to multilingualism and multiculturalism. A state operating according to the principles of Civic Pluralism is not invested in particular literacies or identities, and in the social space produced by this civic philosophy, a productive venue appears for negotiating difference. Civic Pluralism does not and indeed cannot erase existing power differentials on its own; however, it can reposition the state as an entity that arbitrates difference rather than manages it. Dominant ideologies, literacies, and identities can be more productively critiqued in such an environment, leading to equitable social transformation.

An educational system utilizing the model of literacy pedagogy advocated by the New London Group can also foster a social framework that foregrounds the negotiation of difference. According to Kalantzis and Cope, the New London Group's proposed Pedagogy of Multiliteracies takes a pluralistic approach to literacy pedagogy that rejects the traditional assimilation and exclusion model of literacy, which holds students to a supposed norm, such as Standard American English. The assimilation and exclusion model of education demands that students submit to the dominant culture and acquire

normative literacies, while simultaneously discarding their own non-dominant identities and literacies. Faced with the choice of either assimilation or exclusion, Fannie negotiated a tenuous interstitial space for herself between the two extremes. However, students unable or unwilling to assimilate or acculturate are excluded from the dominant culture and shunted to the ghettos, reservations, barrios, and rust-belt municipalities that are positioned on its margins. Along with the assimilation and exclusion model, Kalantzis and Cope also reject the non-reflexive pedagogies of multiculturalism that merely hide mechanisms of assimilation and exclusion instead of challenging them. They argue instead for a Pedagogy of Multiliteracies founded on the notion of pluralism. Such a pluralist pedagogy does not serve dominant literacies and does not force students to assimilate or face exclusion. Rather than command students to adhere to certain standards and norms, or pay homage to superficial "spaghetti and polka multiculturalism," a Pedagogy of Multiliteracies equips students to negotiate difference instead (136). The underlying assumption of this pedagogy is that students must acquire the ability to negotiate difference, since the increasing interconnectivity of globalization will ensure that students encounter difference and diversity at an unprecedented rate. Indeed, students unable to perform such negotiations will be at a distinct disadvantage. Implementing a Pedagogy of Multiliteracies would make the productive negotiation of difference both normal and possible, which in turn would allow for the transformative redesigning of social futures.

    While the Civic Pluralism and Pedagogy of Multiliteracies advocated by the New London Group provides a sound theoretical basis for a nationwide social framework

geared to the productive negotiation of difference, this framework is likely to remain on a theoretical level for the foreseeable future. I do not expect to see this framework implemented as national policy in the United States, for example. While this reality may be disheartening, it does not foreclose the implementation of this framework at the individual level or within communities of practice. After all, the true value of the New London Group's proposed social framework is that it can be used by individual designers acting within their communities of practice. Using this scaffold as support, the designers of coach handbooks and travel guidebooks can and must re-imagine their social contexts as forums for the productive negotiation of difference instead of arenas for the management and erasure of difference.

I look to Wenger's concept of imagination for help in understanding how designers can re-imagine their worlds as forums for the productive negotiation of difference. Wenger describes imagination as a "mode of belonging" that fosters identity construction and learning (*Communities* 173). Other modes of belonging include "engagement" and "alignment." Engagement involves social practice in communities of practice that leads to learning and the negotiation of meaning (173). Alignment is a process by which we shape our identities to correspond with entities larger than communities of practice, such as nation states (174). Imagination, meanwhile, involves the process of "creating images of the world and seeing connections through time and space by extrapolating from our own experience" (173). Like engagement and alignment, imagination must be understood as a *social* rather than an *individual* process (178).

As an example of how imagination can be called upon to serve specific purposes, Wenger notes that imagination and alignment with national ideologies are often interlinked (183). Wenger explains this phenomenon as follows:

> Leaders often make appeals to imagination in an effort to justify alignment by claiming the existence of a "natural" community. The rise of nationalism in the nineteenth century is an example in point, when nationalist leaders made appeals to (often spurious) ties of common origins and linguistic unity in order to support their struggles for national alignment. (183).

Imagination is thus often used to bring about an alignment with national identities that reinforces a politics of cultural difference that follows the first paradigm of cultural difference—*Polska dla Polaków!*—identified by Nederveen Pieterse. However, there is no reason why imagination and national ideology have to lead to the first paradigm and its venomous doctrines of national purity. Imagination can be used to envision other more egalitarian approaches to nationalism and difference, such as Nederveen Pieterse's third paradigm of cultural difference—*hybridization*—or the New London Group's Civic Pluralism.

Wenger's notion of imagination explains how coach handbook and travel guidebook designers utilizing reflexive design practices can conceptualize the texts they design as something more than mere how-to manuals. A story Wenger tells about two stonecutters carving stone blocks illustrates how designers can imagine their work as belonging to some larger project beyond their immediate practice. When asked what they

are doing, the stonecutters give very different responses. The first replies, "I am cutting this stone in a perfectly square shape." The other responds, "I am building a cathedral" (176). Both answers are valid. However, they suggest different ways of knowing the world, since the latter stonecutter shows imagination, while the former does not.

The stonecutter story can be extended to two travel guidebook designers working on guidebooks to Hong Kong. When the first designers is asked what he is doing, he replies that he is writing a set of instructions for visiting Hong Kong—how to travel around the city, where to get a meal that conforms to the user's cultural expectations. When the second designer is asked the same question, however, she says that she is designing a situated text that positions the traveler to comprehend Hong Kong through the productive negotiation of difference. She then adds that to do anything less would be to support the status quo, with all its associated injustices and inequities. Consequently, she might design a guidebook that features multilingual rather than monolingual maps for navigating Hong Kong. Or alongside the typical listings of high-end restaurants catering to an international crowd, she might include bilingual English-Cantonese menus that facilitate eating *char siu* (叉烧) with the locals in an everyday *siu mei* or low-end *dai pai dong*, where English is typically not spoken or included on the menus.[11] In this way users would be given practical how-to information, such as how to get around and where to eat, but this information would be imparted in a way that challenges their own cultural

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[11] *Char siu* is a common barbecued pork dish, often served in *siu mei* restaurants specializing in barbecued and roasted meats. A *dai pai dong* is a market stall, street stand, or hole-in-the-wall restaurant selling inexpensive noodles and other basic meals. *Siu mei* restaurants are everywhere in Hong Kong and easily recognized by the barbecued meats hanging in their windows, while *dai pai dongs* have become increasingly rare.

framework while simultaneously introducing them to an alternative framework where Aberdeen is香港仔and a typical meal consists of 叉烧.

Like the two stonecutters, the two travel guidebook designers have very different senses of their work, and while both are engaged in practice, the latter designer combines that practice with reflexivity and imagination. This is exactly what I am arguing handbook and guidebook designers must do—they must imagine their work as leading to some larger social purpose, and they must imagine that this work takes place in a receptive social context while simultaneously working to actually create that context. In undertaking this designing of social futures, designers can spur social change that can lead, over time, to a social framework similar to the Civic Pluralism proposed by the New London Group. Globalization provides the exigency for developing such a framework, since the productive negotiation of difference is vital in a globalized world characterized by the accelerating, hybridizing, and often conflicting interplay of cultural, linguistic, and national difference.

Wenger's concept of imagination supplies the last pieces of bamboo for my theoretical framework, which supports the remaining pages of this dissertation. In chapters three and four, I rely on the fields of Writing Center Studies and Technical Communication to interrogate the design practices of writing center coach handbook and Hong Kong travel guidebook designers. I conclude that these practices often support monolingual, monocultural, and other status-quo assumptions. I then detail specific reflexive design practices and make recommendations for how designers can use these practices to compose instructional texts that provide practical how-to information while

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simultaneously challenging dominant assumptions, encouraging negotiation with

difference, and spurring equitable social change. In making these recommendations I risk

the typhoon-like wrath of dominant lines of power. I trust, however, that while my

bamboo framework will bend in the wind, and perhaps even lose a few pieces to the

tempest, it will not break.

Chapter 3

What Is the Idea of a Writing Center Coach Handbook?

Some 25 years ago Stephen M. North published an article in *College English* titled "The Idea of a Writing Center." North argues that the prevailing view of writing centers as little more than grammar "fix-it shops" has marginalized writing centers and the faculty, staff, and coaches who work in them. In an attempt to combat this marginalization, North describes what he believes to be the true purpose, identity, and value of writing centers. His view of writing center work stresses the development of the student writer for the student's own benefit rather than the production of student texts for the instructor's evaluation, which leads North to declare that "our job is to produce better

writers, not better writing" (69). This 10-word aphorism has become the most quoted line in Writing Center Studies, while the article itself has become the most read and most frequently cited piece in the field.

In a 1998 survey of 60 participants attending a CCCC conference session devoted to writing centers, for example, 82 percent said they had read North's article (Koster 159). Significantly, the participants included many well-known names in Writing Center Studies, and some 80 percent of the attendees worked as writing center directors. Furthermore, in their recent study of how North's article has shaped writing center theory and practice, Elizabeth H. Boquet and Neil Lerner note that one in three of all the articles ever published in *The Writing Center Journal* cites North's piece. They further note that 80 percent of all issues contain at least one citation of North's essay (174-75). The six coach handbooks I interrogate in this chapter certainly mirror this trend. Four of the six coach handbooks quote the "produce better writers" line mentioned above, for example, and all six cite North's article (Capossela 2; Gillespie and Lerner 36; Staben and Nordhaus 71; Wingate, "What" 9). This unanimous homage to North is hardly surprising, since his article has become a canonical work and is required reading for anyone working in writing centers today.

However, Boquet and Lerner argue quite convincingly that Writing Center Studies has uncritically accepted the assumptions in North's piece to the detriment of the field. They suggest that the field needs to move beyond mere assumptions; indeed, the field needs to reflexively challenge those assumptions through rigorous interrogation and research. As Boquet and Lerner note, some scholars in the field, including North himself,

have already problematized many of the article's assumptions and used the piece as a starting point for productively extending conversations within the field. (See, for example, Bawarshi and Pelkowski; Breuch; Ede; Grimm, "Contesting"; Lunsford; North, "Revisiting".) Similarly, I use North's piece as a springboard into my interrogation of coach handbooks by asking, "What is the idea of a writing center coach handbook?" My concern, however, is not whether writing centers should produce better writers or better writing, or some efficacious combination of the two. Rather, my concern centers on how coach handbooks construct coach identities and issue instructions for engaging with linguistic and cultural difference, often in ways that conform to dominant monolingual and monocultural assumptions.

Significance to Writing Center Studies

In what may well be the only scholarly article devoted exclusively to coach handbooks, Harvey Kail contends that handbooks have considerable "research value" because they offer comprehensive overviews of coach education practices and the educational theories that underpin them ("Separation" 74). The field has largely ignored Kail's call for further research into coach handbooks, however. While scholars have published the occasional journal article or book chapter interrogating coach handbooks, these pieces do not collectively amount to an extended conversation within the field. (See, for example, *The Everyday Writing Center: A Community of Practice* by Geller *et al.*) In some cases, journal articles are not critical interrogations so much as sources of practical advice for writing center staff. One of the earliest examples of such an article is

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the 1982 anthology chapter "Tutor Training on a Shoestring" by Susan Glassman. (For

another early example, see "The Handbook as a Supplement to a Tutor Training

Program" by Jeanette Harris.)

The Writing Center Journal, the dominant periodical in the field, has consistently

published book reviews of writing center coach handbooks. Some of them have been

quite critical of specific handbooks as well as the genre as a whole. (For reviews of

coach handbooks in The Writing Center Journal and other publications, see Braxley;

Chapman; Hackworth and Johanek; Harris, Jeanette, "Reaffirming"; Kail, Rev. of The

Practical; McDonald; Silk; Thonus, Rev. of ESL; Wingate, Rev. of The Harcourt.)

However, the journal has yet to publish a scholarly article specifically devoted to coach

handbooks, though the occasional article has considered coach handbooks as part of a

larger interrogation of an entirely different topic. (See, for example, McKinney; Thonus,

"Triangulation".)

In the forward to the recently published and widely used Longman Guide to

Writing Center Theory and Practice, Christina Murphy positions this anthology as an

exhaustive compendium of scholarly pieces pertaining to writing center work that can be

used to supplement coach handbooks. "Quite simply put," Murphy states, "there is no

aspect of writing centers that The Longman Guide to Writing Center Theory and Practice

fails to explore or to invite the reader to explore and investigate" (xiv). Despite this

claim, however, no author within this 576-page anthology undertakes a substantial

interrogation of coach handbooks in terms of either theory or practice. Indeed, coach

handbooks are not even listed in the index and few of the 45 scholarly pieces in the

anthology refer to them. (For examples of articles that touch upon coach handbooks in this anthology, see Kilborn; Shamoon and Burns.) The situation in the popular *St. Martin's Sourcebook for Writing Tutors* is much the same. My point here is not to find fault with *The Writing Center Journal* or *The Longman Guide* and *St. Martin's Sourcebook*. Rather, my goal is to illustrate the larger point that while scholars in Writing Center Studies have devoted considerable attention to coach education and professional development, they have not yet interrogated the coach handbooks they have written and utilized for this coach education. This dissertation chapter attempts to fill what is clearly a significant gap in the field's knowledge of how coach handbooks and similar materials inform coaching theory and practice.

Coaches and Clients: Defining My Terms

Before proceeding any further, however, I must first venture down a meta-textual tangent and define some of the terms I use in this chapter. To a greater or lesser degree, these terms are at variance with the preferred terms used in the literature of Writing Center Studies as well as coach handbooks. Consequently, I feel obligated to explain my rationale for adopting the terms I have chosen to use.

As anyone familiar with writing center literature knows, a variety of terms are used to describe the students who work in writing centers—tutor, assistant, consultant, and so on. The ongoing debate about what to call these students remains part of a larger discussion about the role of writing center student staff in teaching writing (Cooper 336). The dominant term is "tutor," which is preferred by five of the six handbooks I discuss in

this chapter. In my mind, however, the term carries too much negative baggage packed

with notions of remediation. The terms "tutor" and "tutee" connote a hierarchical

teacher-student relationship rather than a conversation between peers. Lex Runciman

details how the terms "tutor" and "tutoring" have traditionally been connected in the

United States with remedial instruction, and that historically the educational

establishment has embraced tutoring not for its supposed pedagogical efficacy, but

because it was a relatively cheap way to school those students in need of remedial

instruction. By using terms like "tutor" and "tutoring," Runciman asserts, writing centers

position themselves as remedial institutions. This positioning typically aligns with the

views of campus administrators, who tend to see writing centers as a relatively cost-

effective way of upping retention rates for so-called remedial students. Since these

remedial students are assumed to represent a relatively small portion of the student body,

administrators can justify slim budgets for writing centers. Perhaps most harmfully of all,

using "tutor" and "tutoring" causes great confusion among writing center staff, since the

connotations of the term actually run contrary to the theory and practice of contemporary

writing centers. All of this leads Runciman to conclude that writing center theorists and

practitioners alike

> ought to recognize that the words *tutor*, *tutoring*, and *tutee* do not
>
> accurately portray the full range of writing center activities. These words
>
> limit both our clientele and our budgets; they make our activities appear
>
> both marginal and exclusively remedial. Furthermore, our continued use
>
> of these terms perpetuates confusions which hurt us and make our jobs

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more difficult. Confusion, as any writer knows, is an invitation to revise:

therefore, let us do so. Let us define ourselves as accurately as we can.

Let us choose our own new terms. (33; emphasis in original)

In the 20 years that have passed since the publication of Runciman's article in *The Writing Center Journal*, relatively little has changed. "Tutor" remains the preferred term in writing center theory and practice, and writing centers are still commonly perceived as remedial institutions. However, an increasing number of dissenting voices in Writing Center Studies have adopted terms like "writing consultant" or "peer consultant." Though the title of the handbook suggests otherwise, the term "consultant" remains the preferred label in Toni-Lee Capossela's *The Harcourt Brace Guide to Peer Tutoring*, the only contemporary coach handbook to use a term other than "tutor."[12] The term "peer consultant" or "peer tutor," however, provokes a debate about whether writing center coaches can truly be considered the peers of the clients they work with (Trimbur, "Peer"). Terese Thonus, for example, asserts that considering monolingual English coaches and multilingual clients to be peers is an "erroneous" assumption (Rev. of *ESL* 124). Certainly terms like "peer tutor" run into trouble when coaches are older and/or more proficient writers (Clark and Healy 250). As a 44-year-old professional writer earning a Ph.D., for example, I am rarely perceived as a peer by the clients I work with in the Michigan Tech Writing Center. This has never struck me as a problem, and recent

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[12] While *The Harcourt Brace Guide to Peer Tutoring* privileges the term "consultant," it also recognizes that the term "coach" can serve as a useful role metaphor for the work consultants perform (Capossela 1). Likewise, though *The Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors* prefers the term "tutor," it also suggests that "coach" is a useful role metaphor (Ryan and Zimmerelli 28).

scholarship supports my own suspicion that coaches do not necessarily have to be perceived as peers to be effective (Thompson *et al.*; Thonus, "Triangulation").

For all of these reasons, I have opted to use the term "coach," which is the term we use in the Michigan Tech Writing Center. *The Michigan Tech Writing Center Handbook*, an in-house publication, explains that

> we decided on *writing coach* because a coach's job is to develop talent.
> This athletic metaphor suited the work we do. A good athletic coach
> needs to keep several goals in mind all at once: she has to observe the
> game, to study behaviors, to understand the plays and the ways the plays
> change in different situations, to know the players, to explain the concepts
> of the game clearly, to scout the competition, to motivate, to break from
> routine. (8; emphasis in original)

As the above definition illustrates, the term "coach" aligns more precisely with the theory and practice of contemporary writing center work than the term "tutor." In addition, the term "coach" discards the remedial connotations latent in the use of the word "tutor" and challenges the widely held assumption that writing centers are remedial institutions. While this defining of terms may seem like mere semantics, the repositioning of writing centers as learning resources for *all* students has significant material consequences— larger budgets, greater prestige and pay for writing center faculty and staff, and wider patronage from across the entire student body.

When referring to someone who uses a writing center, I use the term "client." This term emphasizes that coaches exist to serve anyone who seeks out a writing center,

and it avoids the remedial connotations associated with the term "tutee." Just as importantly, however, "client" is more precise than simply using the term "student." After all, faculty, staff, spouses, and members of surrounding communities sometimes utilize writing centers. In addition, since coaches are students themselves, calling clients "students" can appear to place coaches in a non-student role. Finally, not all students use writing centers. With this in mind, when I use the term "student" in this chapter, I am referring to students generically. I include writing center coaches and both the students they serve and the students that never enter a writing center under this broad umbrella. I assume as well that the term "student" embraces an inclusive roster of student identities.

Finally, I use the term "multilingual" to refer to students who speak more than one language. I prefer this term over more familiar labels such as "ESL," "ESOL," "ELL," "NNS," or "NNES" because it emphasizes linguistic ability rather than linguistic deficit and inability.[13] Rather than labeling a student as someone who *cannot* speak fluent Standard American English (SAE)—the implied master dialect and language in the United States—I prefer instead to acknowledge a student as someone who *can* speak more than one language. I recognize that referring to students as "multilingual" can sometimes be rather imprecise. A multilingual student might be a native speaker of Cantonese and English *or* a native speaker of Cantonese learning to speak English. The two are rather different, and sometimes the use of the term "multilingual" may require additional explanation to clarify the precise linguistic situation of a student. A dose of

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[13] These acronyms stand for English as a Second Language (ESL), English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), English Language Learner (ELL), Nonnative Speaker (NNS), and Nonnative English Speaker (NNES).

common sense helps, too. I would not label myself as multilingual, for example, despite

what I know of French and Polish. At any rate, the term "ESL student" is just as

imprecise, since students sometimes learn English as a third or fourth language.

Moreover, the term tells us nothing about the relative abilities of students in English. As

Christina Ortmeier-Hooper explains, terms like "ESL student" are also problematic

because they function as "institutional markers" that tag students in need of remediation,

and because such broad terms ignore the diverse cultural and linguistic identities of

multilingual students. She asserts that "we cannot assume that 'ESL' is this monolithic,

universal code word that explains everything we need to know about a student" (414).

Ortmeier-Hooper also points out that students labeled as ESL often reject the term,

particularly the so-called "Generation 1.5" students, who are multilingual residents of the

United States who completed at least some of their secondary education there. Such

students complicate the task of determining exactly who qualifies as an ESL student and

who qualifies as a native speaker of English (Severino, "Avoiding" 335). Clearly terms

like ESL are problematic. Having said that, however, I should note that I do sometimes

use the term "ESL student" when such usage is necessary to explain how multilingual

students are described in the handbooks I discuss in this chapter.

Selection of Writing Center Coach Handbook Titles

Just as I find it necessary to define the terms I use in this chapter, I also believe it

necessary to explain how and why I selected specific coach handbook titles for

interrogation. As a starting point in the selection process, I opted to exclude what I term

"Generation 1.0" handbooks, which date back to the 1970s and 1980s. Kail identifies

these "early and particularly influential tutor training manuals" as Kenneth A. Bruffee's

A Short Course in Writing: Practical Rhetoric for Composition Courses, Writing

Workshops, and Tutor Training Programs (1972), Irene L. Clark's *Writing in the Center:*

Teaching in a Writing Center Setting (1985), and Muriel Harris' *Teaching One-to-One:*

The Writing Conference (1986) ("Separation" 77).[14] To this list I would add *Talking*

about Writing: A Guide for Tutor and Teacher Conferences by Beverly Lyon Clark

(1980), *The Tutor Book* by Marian Arkin and Barbara Shollar (1982), and *The Practical*

Tutor by Emily Meyer and Louise Smith (1987). I have chosen to remove these

handbooks from consideration because they are no longer fully representative of current

theory and practice in writing center work. Moreover, relatively few contemporary

writing centers now use these handbooks as primary texts for coach education.

This chapter focuses instead on more recently published coach handbooks that

might best be categorized as "Generation 2.0." My selection criteria for these titles

remains rather uncomplicated, given that there are only six writing center coach

handbooks currently on the market. The small number of handbooks in print should

hardly come as a surprise. After all, the financial and professional rewards that stem

from writing coach handbooks remain paltry at best, and consequently, as Kail explains,

these "specialized texts" are "written out of sheer professional enthusiasm" (Rev. of *The*

Practical 61). As might be expected, all six handbooks are written or edited by

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[14] Later editions of the Bruffee book were published as *A Short Course in Writing: Composition, Collaborative Writing, and Constructive Reality*. The revised subtitle obscured the book's original connection to writing center coach education.

academics specializing in writing center theory and practice, including a number of scholars who are well known in the field, such as Ben Rafoth, Paula Gillespie, and Neal Lerner. Two of the handbooks have a single designer, two have co-designers, and two are edited collections with multiple designers. Regardless of the number of designers, however, all of these handbooks are designed to function as "how-to" instructional texts geared to an audience of undergraduate writing center coaches rather than academics fully versed in writing center theory and practice. These coaches are typically positioned in handbooks as novice or apprentice members in the field of Writing Center Studies rather than as mere part-time employees, and they are invited to participate in ongoing discussions and research in the field. For the same reason, the handbooks take it as a given that writing center coaches should become familiar with not just writing center practice, but writing center theory as well (McDonald 70-71).

In the end, I simply selected all six of the coach handbooks in print today. With the arguable exception of *What the Writing Tutor Needs to Know*, these handbooks are all widely used for undergraduate coach education and professional development in the United States. An informal survey of writing center directors at nine Michigan campuses, for example, revealed that six writing centers used a commercially published coach handbook as part of their coach education program.[15] The six handbooks I interrogate in this chapter were published between 1998 and 2008, and include the following titles:

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[15] Of the nine writing centers, four used *The Longman Guide to Peer Tutoring*. A fifth writing center used the *Longman Guide* as well as *The Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors* and *A Tutor's Guide: Helping Writers One on One*. A sixth writing center used *The Practical Tutor*, a Generation 1.0 handbook. Three writing centers did not use commercially published coach handbooks.

The Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors, 4th edition, by Leigh Ryan and Lisa

Zimmerelli (2006)

ESL Writers: A Guide for Writing Center Tutors, 1st edition, edited by Shanti

Bruce and Ben Rafoth (2004)

The Harcourt Brace Guide to Peer Tutoring, 1st edition, by Toni-Lee Capossela

(1998)[16]

The Longman Guide to Peer Tutoring, 2nd edition, by Paula Gillespie and Neal

Lerner (2008)[17]

A Tutor's Guide: Helping Writers One on One, 2nd edition, edited by Ben Rafoth

(2005)

What the Writing Tutor Needs to Know, 1st edition, by Margot Iris Soven (2006)

When selecting coach handbooks for discussion in this chapter, I ruled out titles

from closely related genres. For example, I excluded coach handbooks that are not

specifically geared to writing centers, such as *A Training Guide for College Tutors and

Peer Educators*, which focuses on academic support units in general (Lipsky). I have not

included anthologies of scholarly pieces pertaining to writing center work, such as the

widely used *St. Martin's Sourcebook for Writing Tutors* (Murphy and Sherwood), or

handbooks geared to writing center supervisors and directors, such as the frequently cited

Tutoring Writing: A Practical Guide for Conferences (McAndrew and Reigstad). I have

also excluded coach handbooks produced in-house by and for individual writing centers.

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[16] Unlike the other five handbooks, *The Harcourt Brace Guide to Peer Tutoring* is a hybrid text that is half
handbook and half anthology of scholarly works in Writing Center Studies.
[17] *The Longman Guide to Peer Tutoring* was formerly titled *The Allyn and Bacon Guide to Peer Tutoring*,
2nd edition (2004). The two versions of the handbook have identical text and pagination.

These idiosyncratic documents jam-packed with writing center lore fall outside the boundaries of this dissertation, but deserve future scholarly attention from the field of Writing Center Studies.

Methodology

I situate this chapter in Writing Center Studies, and my reliance on rhetorical analysis as a primary methodology follows established research practices within the field. Rhetorical analysis is used so frequently, in fact, that it often remains an implicit and unstated methodology in the literature of the discipline. In an article that examines the promotional materials and in-house correspondence of 20 different writing centers, Peter Carino breaks with this tradition and explicitly justifies his use of rhetorical analysis as a primary methodology. He suggests that rhetorical analysis is "a legitimate and fruitful method" for interrogating writing center discourse and "for making writing center knowledge" (93). Carino traces the methodological lineage of rhetorical analysis back to literary criticism, which has always relied heavily on rhetorical analysis. He then explains that his version of rhetorical analysis takes the close-reading methods of literary studies and applies them to texts that fall outside the boundaries of literature (93). His goal is to uncover, identify, and interrogate the assumptions that institutional writing center discourse "encodes" within these texts (94). Carino also relies on "precedents" in earlier writing center scholarship to justify his use of rhetorical analysis and refers to various scholars in Writing Center Studies who use this methodology to focus on the rhetoric of writing centers (93). He cites, for example, *The Writing Center Journal*

article by Lex Runciman that I draw upon to support my use of the term "coach" in this chapter. Runciman's article employs rhetorical analysis to problematize the use of the terms "tutor" and "tutoring" in writing center theory and practice. What Carino neglects to mention, however, is that Runciman never offers an overview of his methodology, which leaves his use of rhetorical analysis an unstated given. I point out this omission not as a criticism of Carino or Runciman; rather, I simply want to stress that while rhetorical analysis is commonly used in Writing Center Studies, it is rarely rendered explicit as a methodology.[18]

My use of rhetorical analysis is informed by the theoretical framework of this dissertation, which draws on recent work in Literacy Studies that situates literacies in socially constructed and ideologically driven discourses (Gee, *Social*; Street). As I detail in chapter two, James Paul Gee describes discourses as "ways of being in the world" shared by specific kinds of people, such as lawyers or academics. These discourses regulate how lawyers, professors, or the members of any given discourse community think and behave (viii). Gee explains that discourses are like "identity kits" that supply "the appropriate costume and instructions on how to act, talk, and often write, so as to take on a particular social role that others will recognize" (127). Discourses can consequently never be neutral, since they always privilege a particular identity kit. Discourses and the literacies they encapsulate, in other words, always operate according to their own internal ideological framework. Because discourses are tied to the

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[18] As Carino notes, another example of a significant work in Writing Center Studies that employs rhetorical analysis is Anne DiPardo's canonical "Whispers of Coming and Going: Lessons from Fanny." I draw on this essay repeatedly in chapters two and three.

distribution of social power, Gee points out, they are "always and everywhere" ideological in nature (132). Those discourses that lead to the acquisition of significant social and material rewards—prestige, power, status, money, and so on—are dominant discourses, and those people who can wear the identity kit of these dominant discourses are members of dominant groups (132). In the contemporary United States, for example, legal discourse is a dominant discourse, and lawyers are a dominant group.

In this chapter I use rhetorical analysis as a methodological tool for interrogating coach handbooks and the rhetorical strategies employed by their designers. Rather than focus on discourses in the broad sense, which is Gee's approach, my brand of rhetorical analysis zeroes in on individual texts. In other words, I ask how a coach handbook addresses a given audience for a given purpose in a given context. Employing a brand of rhetorical analysis that is informed by Gee's notion of discourse, however, allows me to conduct a layered and nuanced interrogation of individual coach handbooks that accounts for the discourses where such handbooks are situated, such as the discourse of writing center work or the discourses of higher education in the United States. Such an approach allows me to unmask and diagram the workings of ideology and power that a more traditional rhetorical analysis might not be able to fully reveal and explicate.

My use of rhetorical analysis therefore has an objective similar to the form of critical discourse analysis proposed by Gee, which centers on how ideology, identity, and power are manifested in specific discourses and literacies (*Social*). The goal of Gee's discourse analysis is to uncover and interrogate the "tacit" ideological assumptions embedded in discourses, such as the discourse of writing center work. In contrast, the

objective of the rhetorical analysis I perform in this chapter is to reveal and challenge the implicit ideologies that inform the design moves made by the designers of coach handbooks. Like Gee, however, I believe that practicing a critical form of textual analysis remains an ethical obligation, since it can reveal the unstated ideological theories we rely upon and the ways that these theories benefit and harm certain kinds of people. It is a socially transformative act to render the tacit ideologies embedded in the rhetoric of a given text or discourse visible, since visible ideologies can be interrogated and challenged in ways that invisible ones cannot.

I am particularly concerned with identifying and challenging the tacit or invisible ideological theories that underpin the monolingual and monocultural framework of coach handbooks. Rhetorical analysis provides me with a tool for uncovering and interrogating the rhetorical moves and other design choices of coach handbook designers that work to support this ideological framework. In the remainder of this chapter, I focus on how these rhetorical moves construct coach identities, often in narrowly prescribed categories aligned with monocultural and monolingual assumptions. I ask how these constructions of coach identity work to manage difference, and I ask how they benefit certain kinds of privileged coaches at the expense of others. I also consider how coach handbook designers are regulated by the discourses in which they conduct their designing, and how this policing influences their rhetorical design practices and renders certain coach identities as implicit givens (monolingual English coaches from the United States) and others as conceptual impossibilities (multilingual coaches from other nations).

Once I have identified the design practices that serve dominant ideologies, I propose alternative design practices for the next wave of coach handbooks, which I classify as "Generation 3.0." These new design practices focus on both the micro and macro level of design work, and involve the implementation of rhetorical moves that can uncover and challenge the typically implicit monolingual and monocultural assumptions operative in coach handbooks as well as writing center theory and practice. These alternative rhetorical moves are an example of the reflexive design practices I advocate in chapter two. By explicitly challenging the monolingual and monocultural framework, these alternative moves can broaden coach identities in ways that account for the multilingual, multicultural, and globalized nature of writing center work. Somewhat paradoxically, I believe that this redesigning of Generation 3.0 coach handbooks can benefit all kinds of students precisely because it benefits no particular category of student.

Rhetorical Strategies and the Normal User

Rather than focus on the *audience* for coach handbooks, as might be expected in a study relying on rhetorical analysis, I focus instead on the handbook *user*. The two terms are somewhat similar, but they are not synonymous. I situate my definition of the term "user" in the field of Technical Communication rather than Writing Center Studies. Technical Communication scholars generally prefer the term "user" over the term "reader" or "audience" when discussing how an individual interacts with a technological artifact, including instructional texts. My use of the term "user" takes its cue from Technical Communication by recognizing that an individual does not merely read an

instructional text like a coach handbook. Rather, an individual reads and then carries out

specific actions based on that reading. An individual *uses* a handbook or guidebook, in

other words, to accomplish certain tasks for certain purposes.

From the standpoint of Etienne Wenger and Jean Lave's social theory of learning,

handbooks and guidebooks are tools that facilitate the user's "legitimate peripheral

participation" in a given community of practice, such as a university writing center. The

"old timers" in a community of practice pass on communal knowledge and skills to

"newcomers" through instructional texts. As newcomers internalize this knowledge and

practice these skills in situated social practice, they are able to move from peripheral to

full participation in their community of practice (*Situated*). As I explain in chapter two,

however, this progression from limited to full participation may not occur if a newcomer

does not share the ideological assumptions and associated identities of the old timers.

For this reason, instructional texts do not treat all users equally. Handbooks and

guidebooks privilege users with identities that align with the discourses of the

communities of practice in which these instructional texts are situated. In contrast, users

with identities that are not in alignment are often marginalized in handbooks and

guidebooks.

Technical Communication scholar James Paradis suggests that every instructional

text is geared to an "agent," which he describes as "a fictional operator who represents an

average or suitably qualified individual" for the tasks described in a given text (367).

The construction of an average agent or user for an instructional text, however, is

inevitably underpinned by the ideological assumptions of the community of practice

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where that text is situated. Consequently, handbook and guidebook designers typically

assume that they are designing instructional texts for an agent or user that reflects

normative notions of identity. These "normal users" represent the default audience for

instructional texts like the coach handbooks I examine in this chapter. Because the

identity markers of the normal user are naturalized to the point of being commonsensical,

these markers tend to remain implicit and unacknowledged, not to mention unchallenged.

Such identity markers are underpinned by the "tacit theories" of the sort Gee describes,

and it is the tacit nature of these theories that makes them so powerful. In a U.S. context,

the default identity markers of the normal user align with monocultural and monolingual

assumptions, so a failure to reveal and challenge the identity markers of the normal user

amounts to a de-facto acceptance of the ideological assumptions that underpin them. The

identity markers of the normal user in U.S. instructional texts typically include the

following:

White

Male

Mainstream/middle-class

Heterosexual

Able-bodied

Monolingual English

The normal user remains the default audience for most handbooks and

guidebooks on the market today, from bird-identification guides to Boy Scout manuals.

The designers of these instructional texts privilege and protect the default identities of the

normal user through a wide variety of rhetorical moves and other design decisions. In

this dissertation, however, I pay particular attention to a pair of related design practices

that serve as representative examples of these rhetorical moves. I call the first move

strategies of separation and containment and the second practice *strategies of omission*

and erasure. These two rhetorical strategies work to manage cultural, linguistic, and

national difference in ways that assimilate, exclude, ignore, contain, marginalize, and

erase that difference.

Handbook and guidebook designers commonly employ strategies of separation

and containment, though they are unlikely to think of them as such. They are far more

likely to conceptualize them as rhetorical moves designed to serve the needs of specific

categories of users. These rhetorical moves typically take the form of special textboxes,

subsections, and chapters designed to accommodate users with identities that set them

apart from the norm. Though no doubt well intentioned, such rhetorical moves

nonetheless function as strategies of separation and containment that quarantine non-

dominant user identities in special holding areas. Quarantined user identities are only

acknowledged and addressed in these special areas and generally ignored throughout the

rest of the text, where the normal user remains the presumed audience. As I detail in

chapter four, for example, Hong Kong travel guidebooks often include a short subsection

devoted to "Travelers with Disabilities" or "Disabled Travellers," particularly those who

are visually impaired or use a wheelchair (Fallon 75; Macdonald 241). These subsections

typically provide a quick summary of the challenges disabled travelers will face in Hong

Kong and list some relevant local resources. The tone is generally negative, with several

guidebooks describing the disabled traveler's experience in Hong Kong as a "nightmare" (Reiber 29; Macdonald 242). In most cases, these brief subsections are the only acknowledgement disabled travelers receive, which implicitly suggests that the rest of the guidebook is geared to able-bodied travelers. Disabled travelers are separated and contained in these maximum-security subsections, which align with "ableist" assumptions that position able bodies as normal and disabled bodies as abnormal (Palmeri 49). Rhetorical strategies of separation and containment manage difference in ways that conform to the dominant ideological grid, in other words, which is geared to the able-bodied normal user.

Handbook and guidebook designers also rely heavily upon strategies of omission and erasure, though once again they are unlikely to think of them as such. In fact, they are unlikely to think of them at all, since such strategies are based on tacit ideological assumptions that by their very nature go unexamined. Strategies of omission and erasure rely on dominant assumptions about the normal user's identity, and the dominant nature of these assumptions renders them commonsensical. Consequently, designers do not see a need to explicitly refer to them. Hong Kong travel guidebook designers, for example, typically assume that White is the colorless norm. Consequently, the racial identity of the user/traveler is almost never acknowledged, since such an acknowledgement is viewed as superfluous in a social context where White remains the default racial setting. That users might hold an alternative racial identity is never considered. Many North Americans who travel to Hong Kong are of Chinese descent, for example, and yet none of the Hong Kong guidebooks recognize that these travelers might not stand out in Hong Kong, but blend in,

with all the complications that this situation might cause. Instead, the guidebooks assume that all users will stand out as White travelers in a Chinese city. In the section devoted to crime and personal safety, *The Rough Guide to Hong Kong and Macau* warns that if a traveler goes out late in the evening, "there's nothing you can do to avoid standing out" (Brown and Leffman 46). As this example illustrates, alternative racial identities are omitted and erased from Hong Kong guidebooks in the service of a White-centric racial ideology. This reliance on a White default racial setting remains particularly ironic, given that the Hong Kong guides, like so many travel guidebooks, describe locales where the default racial setting is Asian, African, or some other racial identity. Regardless of the ironies involved, however, guidebook designers erase and disempower alternative racial identities by positioning the normal user as White by default.

Coach handbook designers construct a special variant of the normal user that I term the "normal coach." This uniquely situated version of the normal user generally aligns with the broad categories of the normal user that I list above—White, male, mainstream/middleclass, heterosexual, able-bodied, and monolingual English. However, because coach handbooks are geared to a unique audience for a unique purpose, the normal coach has identity markers specially tailored to match tacit assumptions about coach identity that are prevalent in the discourse of writing center work. I categorize the identity markers of the normal coach as follows:

The coach as female

The coach as academic insider

The coach as skilled writer

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The coach as monomodal composer

The coach as monocultural

The coach as monolingual

In the remainder of this chapter, I consider the rhetorical moves employed by handbook designers that promote and protect the normal coach—an identity construction that aligns with dominant monocultural and monolingual assumptions. I also consider rhetorical moves that mask and expunge non-dominant coach identities. I then suggest alternative rhetorical tactics and other reflexive design practices that can move coach handbooks away from the identity markers of the normal coach towards broader concepts of coach identity. In conducting this extended rhetorical analysis, I point to numerous examples culled from coach handbooks that show how these instructional texts support the identity construction of the normal coach. However, I do not want to imply that coach handbooks *always* work to marginalize non-dominant coach identities. The six handbooks I discuss in this chapter sometimes do the opposite, in fact. My rhetorical analysis should therefore be read as a representative analysis of the contents of the six handbooks, rather than a comprehensive analysis of the 1,102 pages they contain.

In conducting this rhetorical analysis, my overall goal is to ascertain how coach handbooks can be redesigned to foster broader and more inclusive notions of coach identity that move beyond the dominant monocultural and monolingual framework. Such a redesign, I believe, can promote transformative social change. I do not seek to judge or indict the designers of the handbooks I discuss in this chapter. Such an approach would be self-incriminating, for one thing, since some of the shortcomings I identify in coach

handbooks can be found in my own travel guidebooks. Self-incrimination is not my

concern, however. Rather, my concern is that I treat handbook designers with respect

and engage with their work rather than merely criticize it. For this reason, I at all times

keep in mind the advice of Joseph Harris, who suggests that as scholars we must strive

for "civility" while interrogating each other's work in a "generous mode" (67). Such a

generous read seeks to extend and develop academic conversations rather than merely

rebut or find fault with the positions taken by colleagues in their scholarly work. My

rhetorical analysis of coach handbooks is thus guided by a spirit of fairness, respect,

civility, and generosity.

The Coach as Female

Coach handbooks typically imply that the default gender for the normal coach is

female. This female default differentiates coach handbooks from most instructional texts,

which tend to construct the normal user as male. Coach handbook designers assume that

writing center coaches are both male and female, of course, as is made clear by the names

of the coaches contained in those handbooks. Coach handbooks do not always state

whether coach names are real or pseudonyms, but the names do indicate gender, and even

the most cursory glance at these names reveals a variety of male and female coach names.

Female names remain far more common, however, as Table 1 illustrates.[19]

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[19] Coach names of ambiguous gender were excluded from the percentages calculated in Table 1.

Table 1.

Total Number of Male and Female Coach Names in Each Coach Handbook

Coach Handbook Title	Female	Male
The Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors	4 (50%)	4 (50%)
ESL Writers: A Guide for Writing Center Tutors	15 (75%)	5 (25%)
The Harcourt Brace Guide to Peer Tutoring	0	0
The Longman Guide to Peer Tutoring	20 (74.1%)	7 (25.9%)
A Tutor's Guide: Helping Writers One to One	7 (70%)	3 (30%)
What the Writing Tutor Needs to Know	14 (58.3%)	10 (41.7%)

As a category of coach identity, the male coach is not considered a conceptual impossibility. After all, male coaches are often represented in coach handbooks, as shown in Table 1. However, male coaches are nonetheless positioned in coach handbooks as something *other* than the norm. I suspect this positioning mirrors the reality in most North American writing centers, where coaches are far more likely to be female. At the Michigan Tech Writing Center, for example, male coaches comprised just

one-third of the coaching staff during the Fall 2009 semester. This is a particularly

revealing statistic, given that Michigan Tech is an engineering school where two-thirds of

the students are male. As I see it, however, the key issue is not whether the

preponderance of female coaches in coach handbooks is representative of writing center

coaching staff in general. Rather, the key issue is that this gender imbalance in writing

center work is not acknowledged in coach handbooks, much less challenged or

problematized. Coach handbook designers make no attempt to account for how and why

female coaches are predominant in coach handbooks, and they make no attempt to ask

whether this predominance is an accurate or desirable representation of writing center

coaches in general. Crucially, the handbooks make no attempt to ask how gender

stereotypes and systemic gender inequities might produce this gender imbalance and

contribute to the peripheral location of writing centers and Writing Center Studies in the

U.S. academy.

For all of these reasons, coach handbook designers must take a more reflexive

approach to gender and coach identity. I can identify two rhetorical moves that can help

to accomplish this task. At the micro level of reflexive design practice, coach handbook

designers can identify coaches by gender-neutral job titles rather than by their gender-

specific given names. As shown in Table 1, this is the rhetorical tactic that Toni-Lee

Capossela uses in *The Harcourt Brace Guide to Peer Tutoring*. Unlike the other five

handbooks, *The Harcourt Brace Guide* never uses coach names and relies instead on the

gender-neutral term "peer consultant." In doing so, *The Harcourt Brace Guide* subverts

the identity of the normal coach, who is typically assumed to be female until specifically

shown to be otherwise. *The Harcourt Brace Guide* also subverts the female-gendered

normal coach identity through its use of personal pronouns, as Capossela makes clear in

this meta-textual explanation: "In this book, I alternate between male and female

pronouns, usually shifting for each paragraph" (67). What is most noteworthy about

Capossela's explanation is not the specific rhetorical move that she uses for promoting

gender balance in the use of personal pronouns. Rather, what is noteworthy is the

explicit way that Capossela reveals her design strategy as well as her ideological agenda.

This leads me to the second and ultimately more effective way that coach

handbook designers can foster a more reflexive approach to gender and coach identity.

After all, merely relying on gender-neutral terms like "peer consultant" and a 50-50 split

of male-female pronouns is not sufficient. On the contrary, such tactics may obscure the

issue of gender and coach identity. In fact, identifying coaches by name, even if this

reveals a marked gender imbalance, might be the preferably rhetorical tactic, so long as

this gender imbalance is explicitly problematized. Handbook designers must therefore

rewire their handbooks at the macro level to explicitly problematize issues of gender in

writing center work. Handbooks must ask novice coaches to consider why writing center

coaching staffs are frequently characterized by a pronounced gender imbalance.

Handbooks must also ask coaches to consider how this imbalance can be corrected, if

indeed it should be, and for what reasons. Handbooks must spur coaches to challenge the

stereotypes and dominant assumptions that produce and buttress these gender imbalances.

Ultimately, these efforts to subvert and problematize dominant assumptions about gender

and coach identity can and should tie into larger efforts to hire and retain diverse

coaching staffs. In this way, coach handbook designers can be agents of social change.

The Coach as Academic Insider

Coach handbooks typically position coaches as mainstream students who have

excelled in their undergraduate academic career and become academic insiders, albeit of

a junior sort. To put it in Gee's terms, they can wear the "identity kit" of the apprentice

academic in a manner that full members of the academy will recognize and accept (*Social*

127). Such coaches can also be conceptualized as legitimate peripheral participants in

Wenger and Lave's social theory of learning (*Situated*). This *academic insidership* is

assumed to be a coaching prerequisite and a primary resource for coaches to draw upon

when working with clients. In contrast, coaches are not assumed to have personal

experience with *academic outsidership*, and this knowledge is never positioned as a

productive coaching resource.

As recent work by Composition scholars has suggested, however, experience with

academic outsidership can be just as valuable as knowledge of academic insidership.

Many students from non-mainstream cultural and linguistic backgrounds begin their

academic careers as academic outsiders. While this outsidership is typically portrayed as

a disadvantage for students to overcome, A. Suresh Canagarajah argues that "there is an

advantage in students maintaining their outsider status." Students positioned as academic

outsiders face a "discursive tension" between their own life world and the academy. The

"critical detachment" fostered by this tension can spur innovative approaches to

composing within academic discourses that can push against the status quo ("Multilingual" 41). This critical detachment identified by Canagarajah can also lead to innovative approaches to coaching that challenge the assumptions embedded in academic discourses. For this reason, writing center coaches from non-mainstream cultural and linguistic backgrounds may often be more effective than coaches from mainstream backgrounds, particularly when they work with non-mainstream clients. In such cases, the coach can draw on her own experience as a former academic outsider and share the strategies she used to become proficient in academic discourses. For non-mainstream students with outsider status, acquiring such proficiency is a daunting task.

As literacy scholars have noted, mainstream students typically come from backgrounds that have prepared them for this process of acquiring academic norms, conventions, and values. Students from alternative backgrounds may not be as well prepared, however, and their attempts to join the academic community and speak its language may place their primary discourse and aspects of their identity in conflict with academic discourse (Gee, "New," *Social*; Heath; Ivanic 68). To succeed they must take up unfamiliar literacy practices brokered by academic disciplines and other "literacy sponsors" that demand adherence to the ideologies of their specialized discourses (Brandt). Coaches from non-mainstream backgrounds may be particularly well placed to work with clients learning to negotiate academic discourses, since non-mainstream coaches can draw on their own experience of learning to negotiate the norms of the academy while positioned as outsiders.

Regardless of their background, coaches who have internalized mainstream norms and academic discourses may lack the reflexivity necessary to coach non-mainstream clients. As academic insiders acculturated into the discourses of the academy, such coaches may not be able to understand the experiences of clients positioned as academic outsiders. This lack of reflexivity can have a detrimental impact on writing center work, as detailed in Anne DiPardo's "Whispers of Coming and Going: Lessons from Fannie." Fannie's coach Morgan is unable to create a productive working relationship with Fannie because she does not understand Fannie's experience as a first-year non-mainstream and multilingual student of color. There is some irony in Morgan's lack of understanding, given that she is a student of color herself. However, Morgan has apparently internalized the norms of the academy so completely that she does not share, much less understand, Fannie's status as an academic outsider. Consequently, the two never really develop a truly productive working relationship, despite Morgan's "idealism and good intentions" (365). Rather than fault Morgan, which would be both simplistic and unfair, DiPardo instead faults the cursory and superficial nature of Morgan's coach education program. Dipardo concludes that a novice coach like Morgan

> needed abundant support, instruction, and modeling if she were to learn to reflect critically upon her work, to question her assumptions about students like Fannie, to allow herself, even at this fledgling stage in her career, to become a reflective and therefore more vulnerable practitioner. (365)

As the primary texts of many coach education programs, handbooks clearly have

a role in fostering the critical reflexivity that DiPardo calls for. Coach handbooks will

require a substantial redesign before they can fully embrace this role, however. This

micro- and macro-level redesign must foreground academic insidership *and* academic

outsidership as productive coaching resources. Such an approach values the life

experiences of coaches and clients from non-mainstream backgrounds while

simultaneously challenging the monocultural and monolingual power grid. Such an

approach is also an example of the reflexive design practices that I call for in chapter two.

The need for such a redesign is pressing, given that coach handbooks typically

position coaches as savvy academic insiders, usually of the English major variety. This

academic insider status is presented as both a coaching strength and a prerequisite. In

ESL Writers: A Guide for Writing Center Tutors, for example, Kurt Bouman describes

coaches as "insiders to the academic community" who can serve as informants for clients

unfamiliar with the norms and conventions of the academy (113). This positioning

mirrors larger assumptions in Writing Center Studies, which takes as a given that all

coaches are by definition academic insiders. The field's emphasis on the academic

insidership of coaches is partly a defensive move in reaction to critics of peer coaching.

After all, traditional arguments against peer coaching hold that coaches, like all students,

are academic outsiders entirely reliant on the knowledge of academic insiders—i.e.,

professors who are experts in their fields.[20] If coaches are empty vessels waiting to be

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[20] This line of reasoning draws on a teacher-centered top-down approach to education that Paulo Freire
describes as the "banking" model of education. This model assumes that learning can only occur when
certified academic experts "deposit" knowledge into the passive "receptacles" sitting before them in lecture
hall desk-chairs (*Pedagogy* 58).

filled with knowledge, as some critics of peer coaching believe, then they are therefore the "blind leading the blind" when it comes to coaching clients in academic discourse and disciplinary expertise (Bruffee, "Peer" 212; Trimbur, "Peer" 289). Coaches can best serve their clients by focusing on grammar and similar writing issues, the logic goes, and this remedial function should therefore be the primary operation that writing centers perform.

Such arguments have been extensively countered by scholars in Writing Center Studies, who suggest that coaches are academic insiders ideally placed to work with clients attempting to acquire and negotiate academic discourses. Kenneth A. Bruffee argues in his now-classic "Peer Tutoring and the 'Conversation of Mankind'" that a social model of learning opens up space for coaches and clients to collaboratively engage in academic discourse as peers apprenticing in the field, and through this engagement, become more proficient in that field. The notion that coaches and clients are and should be peers has since been extensively critiqued, however. John Trimbur, for example, suggests that terms like "tutor" and "peer" may present a difficult but potentially productive "contradiction in terms" for coaches forced to take on both roles simultaneously ("Peer" 290). More recent scholarship in Writing Center Studies concludes that clients typically do not view coaches as peers, but that this coach-dominant hierarchical positioning can nonetheless lead to productive outcomes and satisfied clients (Thompson *et al.*; Thonus, "Triangulation"). Though there is no clear consensus within the field on whether coaches are or should be considered the peers of

the clients they coach, there is a general consensus that coaches are and indeed should be academic insiders.

Handbook designers generally reflect this consensus and assume that all coaches are academic insiders. Moreover, designers assume that coaches will come from a variety of academic majors and therefore possess different forms of academic insidership based on the discourses prevalent in their disciplines. The default assumption, however, is that coaches are English majors. *The Longman Guide to Peer Tutoring* suggests that coaches are most likely to come from English departments, for example, as is made clear in the following passage:

> Perhaps the most important thing we can say about the writing process and your work as a tutor is this: Avoid creating clones of yourself, and avoid teaching *your* processes as if they are the tried and true methods of approaching any writing task. Sure, they've worked for you as an English major (or sociology or business or biology or undeclared major), but that doesn't mean they'll necessarily work for another. (Gillespie and Lerner 20; emphasis in original)

To be fair, I should note that *The Longman Guide* later goes on to explicitly acknowledge the value of recruiting coaches from diverse majors (27, 161). However, English remains the default coach major throughout the text.

An implied binary of academic insider coach versus academic outsider client remains prevalent in coach handbooks, regardless of the majors involved. This simplistic binary glosses over the fact that coaches possess differing degrees and diverse forms of

academic insidership. This binary also refuses to recognize that coaches may possess—
or may have formerly possessed—varying degrees of academic outsider status. In what
amounts to a strategy of omission and erasure, there is no recognition that in some cases
this sense of academic outsidership may be a more dominant form of personal identity for
a coach than any form of academic insidership. This may be the case when a coach from
a non-mainstream background acquires academic insidership that conflicts with other
aspects of his identity, for example. Most critically of all, designers fail to position
academic outsidership as a productive coaching resource. The rectification of this failure
should be a priority for designers working on Generation 3.0 coach handbooks.

The Coach as Skilled Writer

Donald A. McAndrew and Thomas J. Reigstad observe that in the literature of
writing center theory and practice coaches are often assumed to not only be academic
insiders, but strong academic writers as well, or at least stronger writers than those being
coached (89). The advanced writing skills of coaches are explicitly linked to their
position as academic insiders proficient in the norms of academic discourse, particularly
those situated in English Studies, and implicitly linked to their status as native speakers
of English. However, McAndrew and Reigstad problematize the notion that coaches
possess more advanced writing skills than the clients they coach. They note that in "real-
world situations" coaches may work with clients who have similar writing abilities (90).
The potential even exists for coaches to work with clients who possess significantly more
advanced writing skills, particularly in writing centers where undergraduate coaches

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work with graduate students and/or returning students. In any case, the degree of expertise coaches and clients bring to a given writing task depends to a great extent on the nature of that task, as Wendy Bishop argues in *A Tutor's Guide: Helping Writers One on One*. Bishop notes humorously that "I can make anyone a basic writer. Here's your assignment: In five minutes, write a Shakespearean sonnet" (81). So while coaches may indeed be good writers, it strikes me as unrealistic to assume that they will always have the skill and experience to competently execute all possible writing tasks. Moreover, it strikes me as equally unrealistic to assume that they will always be better or more experienced writers than the clients they coach.

The key issue, Bishop believes, is whether coaches are actually writing. She argues that "it's essential that tutors be practicing writers—that means sometimes basic writers and sometimes wildly successful writers—but most often living somewhere in between" (80). While I agree with Bishop in theory, in actuality I do not think it is safe to assume that all coaches write with the kind of regularity normally ascribed to practicing writers. Evelyn Posey, for example, notes that some coaches she works with claim that they are not faced with any writing assignments in their courses (331). Indeed, I have heard similar claims made by the undergraduate coaches I work with at the Michigan Tech Writing Center, particularly those majoring in engineering and other technical fields. On the other hand, I *never* heard this claim when I worked at the writing center Bishop directed at the University of Alaska Fairbanks in the late 1980s. I worked as one of her writing coaches, and like most of the other coaches, I was earning an MFA in creative writing. My fellow coaches and I wrote every day—even that astonishing

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morning when the temperature nosedived to 59 degrees below zero—and our productivity may well be where Bishop's insight into the necessity of coaches being practicing writers originated. However, I suspect that coaches are not usually such eager and prolific writers.

While the output of student writers can be empirically quantified, determining exactly what makes one student writer better than another remains a highly subjective process. The very definition of a "good student writer" is problematic precisely because "good writing" is generally equated with Standard American English, specialized academic discourse, and mainstream/middleclass U.S. culture. Coaches are considered good writers when they have internalized these norms, and their job is to transform clients and their texts so that they align with the norms of the academy—norms that coincide with dominant monocultural and monolingual assumptions. Consequently, scholars have charged that writing centers function as policing mechanisms that ensure that no students pass through the academic gates without first acquiring certain credentials, such as fluency in Standard American English and an apprentice-level proficiency in academic discourses (Bawarshi and Pelkowski; Grimm, *Good*).

Traditional definitions of good writing are bolstered by what Carol Severino calls an "assimilationist" approach to coaching that views linguistic difference as "error" to be eliminated in order to acquire Standard American English and "blend into the mainstream or melting pot" ("The Sociopolitical" 338). The assimilationist model can leave competent writers unrecognized and thus discounted as viable writing center coaches simply because their writing skills do not match the established norms of good writing.

An overemphasis on correct grammar and the norms of academic English may weed out skilled writers from the coaching pool—for example, the international student who is a powerful and confident writer in his native language. This sophistication likely carries over into his writing in English, but his written "accent" may be a barrier to getting hired as a writing coach. The emphasis on grammar skills typical of the assimilationist model may likewise exclude native English-speaking students who possess advanced critical abilities, but weaker writing skills.

Coach handbooks tend to uncritically position coaches as experienced and capable writers. Moreover, the general assumption is that coaches are more capable writers than the clients they work with. William J. Macauley Jr. notes in *A Tutor's Guide: Helping Writers One to One* that "tutors are often more skilled at conversing about writing than the clients they serve" (3). *The Longman Guide to Peer Tutoring* describes the writing center coach as a "successful writer," "skilled editor," and "successful reader" (Gillespie and Lerner 8, 11, 19, 25, 105). Similarly, in Margot Iris Soven's *What the Writing Tutor Needs to Know* coaches are assumed to be "good writers" (xiv, 2, 27). Soven views writing skill and coaching ability as integrally linked, as she makes clear in a direct address to apprentice writing coaches:

> remember that having been chosen to be a writing tutor means that *you* are
> a good writer. You already know a great deal about writing, and more
> than likely a great deal about peer tutoring as well. Like many of the
> students in my [coach education] class, you probably have been helping
> your friends with their papers for years. The major difference, as some of

my students say, is that now they are getting paid! (xiv; emphasis in

original)

While *The Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors* also positions coaches as skilled writers, it

qualifies this assumption by noting that while coaches may not be expert writers, they

nonetheless gain a degree of expertise from their coaching experience. Rather than

writing skill leading to coaching skill, as suggested by Soven, coaching experience leads

to greater expertise in writing. The handbook explains to novice coaches that

> You may not be a writing teacher or a writing expert; nonetheless,
>
> students usually come to you assuming that you know more about writing
>
> than they do. The truth is, you probably do. Just by being a tutor, you
>
> become more knowledgeable about writing. (Ryan and Zimmerelli 29)

In contrast to Soven and the other handbook designers mentioned above, Toni-

Lee Capossela argues that it is a "stereotype" to assume that the best coaches are always

skilled writers (1). In reality, coaches must be more than just good writers and possess

abilities above and beyond mere writing skills if they are to be effective at their jobs.

Capossela argues this point forcefully in *The Harcourt Brace Guide to Peer Tutoring*, the

only handbook to dissent from the dominant view that the best coaches are the best

writers and vice-versa. In a confessional statement that opens the first chapter of *The*

Harcourt Brace Guide, Capossela reveals that

> When I became a writing center director and began recruiting peer
>
> consultants, I thought I knew what I was looking for—good writers with
>
> outgoing personalities. I soon discovered I was wrong on both counts. (1)

Capossela goes on to suggest that coaches can be "merely competent writers" and still be "excellent" coaches who are able to read critically, ask productive questions, and sympathize with clients faced with challenging writing tasks (1). She also argues that the best writers are not necessarily the best coaches, explaining that "not all strong writers are good at helping others with their writing—some are impatient, and others are unable to explain a process that is second nature to them" (1). In Capossela's mind, personality plays a key role in the success of writing coaches. However, she cautions that the most effective personalities for coaching may not align with stereotypes of the extroverted coach:

> Some extroverts are dandy in the writing center, but others are overwhelming. An insecure or self-contained writer can benefit in many ways from a less outgoing consultant, whose conversational style leaves enough room for the writer to lapse into silence, think, and come up with his own ideas. So if you're trying to decide whether you've got what it takes to be a writing consultant, don't measure yourself against a stereotype. (1)

Capossela problematizes the assumption that advanced writing skills are the primary attribute of successful coaches, suggesting instead that a variety of factors can come into play, from personality to life experience. One crucial point that all six handbooks overlook, however, is that in an age characterized by proliferating forms of new media, coaches must be much more than just skilled writers. Coaches must also be skilled composers of texts that blend the written, oral, and visual modes, often in a digital

medium (Howard and Carrick; McKinney; Sheridan; Trimbur, "Multiliteracies"). The

tendency of handbooks to position coaches *only* as good writers ignores the reality that

coaching work is increasingly characterized by multimodality and digital mediums, from

PowerPoint slides to web pages. I elaborate on this point in the next subsection, where I

discuss how handbooks position coaches as monomodal composers working exclusively

with traditional print-based, text-only documents.

Rather than relying on the "good writer equals good coach" stereotype,

handbooks must be redesigned to foreground a more nuanced sense of coach identity that

takes into account the varied and variable characteristics of an effective coach. Certainly

skill as a writer remains one such characteristic, but the definitions and standards of what

counts as good writing need to be reexamined. Scholars who study second-language

writing suggest that the "accented English" of competent multilingual writers should be

considered good writing (Matsuda and Cox 43; *Writing*). Scholars in Literacy Studies

and Composition Studies further complicate the issue of "good writing" by suggesting

that grammatically incorrect English written by non-native speakers should not

necessarily be read as error. Rather, it should be read as a situated and strategic use of

English for a specific rhetorical purpose (Canagarajah, "The Place," "Toward,"

"Multilingual"; Lu, "An Essay," "Professing"). Good writing therefore becomes an issue

of situated rhetorical effectiveness, rather than adherence to standard grammar and the

norms of academic discourse.

For all of these reasons, handbooks must be redesigned to adopt broad and

flexible definitions of "good writing" that reject assimilationist approaches to coaching

and that push against the remedial and regulatory role traditionally assigned to writing centers. Redefining what counts as good writing would open up space for writing centers to hire, for example, multilingual coaches who write well, but with an accent. Such a redefinition would also make space for alternative rhetorical approaches that can challenge academic discourse and conventions in innovative and transformative ways. This amounts to a substantial rewiring of coach handbooks at both the micro and macro level, but such a rewiring can reorient handbooks towards the productive negotiation of linguistic difference. Given the pressures of globalization, this ability to negotiate linguistic difference is fast becoming a necessary skill for all students. For writing center coaches, however, acquiring such skill remains nothing short of imperative.

The Coach as Monomodal Composer

On a typical day at the Michigan Tech Writing Center I might work with the members of a study team as they assemble a PowerPoint presentation for their World Cultures course, discuss oral presentation strategies with an international student, and offer feedback to a graduating senior on the visual design of her résumé. All three of these coaching sessions center on multimodal compositions involving some combination of the written, oral, and visual modes. Most coaches in any writing center worldwide would report similar coaching experiences, and yet coach handbooks consistently make rhetorical moves that position both coach and client as monomodal composers working *only* in the written mode. This positioning is signaled, for example, by the consistent use of the term "writer" to describe writing center coaches and clients. Rhetorical moves like

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these lead Jackie Grutsch McKinney to conclude that in coach handbooks "there is little acknowledgement that visual elements or document design are important for tutors to read and discuss with students" (41).

Coach handbooks are certainly not alone in their failure to acknowledge the increasingly multimodal nature of writing center work, however. Writing Center Studies as a whole, in fact, has not yet fully embraced the implications of multimodality in terms of either theory or practice. Trimbur points out, for example, that the field's debate about what to call the physical location where coaching occurs has always assumed that the term "writing" is a given component of any possible name—writing lab, writing clinic, writing center, writing studio, writing workshop ("Multiliteracies" 29). In another telling example, *The Longman Guide to Writing Center Theory and Practice* includes no articles pertaining to visual, oral, or multimodal composing. The terms "oral" and "oral design," "visual" and "visual design," and "multimodal" and "multiliteracies" do not even appear in the index. In contrast, the term "writing" has twelve sub-listings in the index, from "writing assignments" to "writing skills" (Barnett and Blumner). As McKinney rightly observes, the field is clearly "divided" on whether writing centers should embrace new media and multimodality (29). [21]

Despite the traditional neglect of multimodality in Writing Center Studies, a growing roster of scholars in the field now advocate a multimodal approach to coaching.

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[21] When I use the term "new media," I am referring to texts that are digital and rely heavily or even primarily on non-textual elements for rhetorical effect. This definition is shared by many scholars specializing in new media. However, it is worth noting that some scholars define new media as any text that is designed with an awareness of its own materiality—a definition that embraces everything from stained-glass windows in medieval churches to contemporary comic books. In this sense, new media is not really new at all (McKinney 30-32).

Indeed, these scholars "see literacy as a multimodal activity" and take multimodality as a given in writing center work (Trimbur, "Multiliteracies" 29). In an anthology of scholarly pieces geared to writing center administrators, for example, David M. Sheridan argues that "the emergent technologies of the twenty-first century increasingly ask us to be *composers* of multimodal texts" (340; emphasis in original). In the same anthology, Rebecca Moore Howard and Tracy Hamler Carrick assert that writing centers must take the lead in the academy's conversation about textual multimodality or "textual multiplicity," which they define as "the transformations and proliferations of text in the age of new media" (257). Sheridan warns that writing centers that continue to adhere to a monomodal orientation risk "increasing obsolescence" and renewed marginalization (346). In a similar vein, McKinney cautions that if writing centers "surrender" new media texts to computer science or other academic departments, new media composition will be seen as mastering technological processes rather than performing situated rhetorical acts (35). For all of these reasons, writing center specialists are pushing for a rebranding of writing centers as "multiliteracy centers" that can adapt to the composing practices of clients working with multimodal digital texts (McKinney; Sheridan; Trimbur, "Multiliteracies").

Scholars in Writing Center Studies who advocate a multimodal approach to writing center work are supported by colleagues in Literacy Studies and Composition who view literacy as both multiple and multimodal (Cope and Kalantzis; Kress; New London Group; WIDE Research Center Collective). The New London Group argues, for example, that "meaning is made in ways that are increasingly multimodal," and

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consequently it advocates multimodal literacy pedagogies compatible with the multiliteracies of the digital age (5). As Trimbur points out, the New London Group's concept of multiliteracies—i.e., a broad definition of literacy that moves beyond privileged text-based discourses—provides a theoretical approach for coaching clients who are composing just about any form of text ("Multiliteracies" 30). The New London Group's concept of social "design" that I describe in chapter two can provide additional theoretical scaffolding for conceptualizing multimodality in writing center theory and practice. Such a conceptualization positions students as situated multimodal "designers" rather than as monomodal "writers." As multimodal composers or designers, students create or redesign texts based on established conventions (i.e., available designs) that to some degree both conform to and deviate from established norms. Students are therefore best conceptualized as "designers," a term that accounts for the social nature of composing while still opening up space for individual agency.

Despite these calls to reconceptualize writing center theory and practice as digital and multimodal, coach handbooks construct writing center work as print-based and monomodal. This is particularly evident in the privileging of the term "writer" in all six handbooks. In *The Longman Guide to Peer Tutoring*, for example, Gillespie and Lerner explain their rationale for using the term "writer" throughout the handbook:

> You might have noticed that we use the term *writer* to refer to those folks whom we work with in our writing centers. We've chosen this term with specific purpose. While *student*, *tutee*, *client*, or *respondent* all are accurate descriptions to a degree, we truly believe that it's important for

you to see the people you work with as writers, just as you are. (8;

emphasis in original)

Though the other five handbooks do not necessarily state their rationale for describing

coaches and clients as "writers," they nonetheless use the term consistently to describe

writing center staff and clientele. None of the handbooks use a term that suggests

coaches and clients might be engaged in multimodal composing processes. The

handbooks consistently construct the normal coach as a monomodal composer while

simultaneously employing strategies of omission and erasure against constructions of

coach identity that embrace multimodality. In some cases, however, these strategies fail

to completely omit or erase the multimodal coach.

After all, two of the six coach handbooks hint that clients are multimodal

composers when they touch upon coaching issues that pertain to the visual and oral

modes. In *A Tutor's Guide: Helping Writers One to One*, the chapter by Carol Briam

includes a two-page subsection devoted to "Headings and Visual Cues" in business and

technical writing. Here Briam tells coaches, for example, that "while wording is

important [in a workplace document], so is visual distinctiveness" (66). The rest of the

subsection reviews basic visual design practices, such as font types and sizes, bullet

points, and white space. While this is certainly worthwhile material for any coach to

consider, the placing of Briam's advice on visual design in a chapter on business and

technical writing implies that such practices should only be considered when composing

technical documentation.

The Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors includes a four-page subsection on how to coach clients composing texts with visual and oral components. These texts include résumés, which incorporate both the written and visual modes, and PowerPoint presentations, which incorporate all three modes. The subsection is placed in a chapter titled "Helping Writers across the Curriculum," which situates multimodality *outside* English Studies. Despite this odd placement within the handbook, however, the short subsection offers useful advice for coaches faced with multimodal coaching sessions. The subsection includes, for example, a series of questions that coaches can ask when working with clients composing PowerPoint presentations:

> Has the writer carefully considered the audience, purpose, and occasion for the presentation?
>
> Has the writer carefully considered his or her position in relation to the audience and how he or she wishes to be perceived by them (ethos)?
>
> Does the presentation truly complement the talk?
>
> Is the slide progression logical? Is the text simple and phrased in a consistent manner (parallelism)?
>
> If appropriate, does the presentation reinforce key concepts or phrases?
>
> Do the text, images, tables, and graphs facilitate and complement the presentation?
>
> Does white space appropriately set off text, images, tables, and graphs?
>
> Are the background, colors, fonts, and themes appropriate and consistent? (Ryan and Zimmerelli 86-87)

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Rather than restricting the focus to writing alone, these practical questions ask coach and

client to consider written, oral, and visual design as part of a multimodal composition.

Despite this acknowledgement of multimodal composing, however, *The Bedford Guide*

refers to clients as "writers" throughout the entirety of the handbook.

Writing center coaching has always been multimodal to some extent, as *The*

Bedford Guide implicitly acknowledges. However, the advent of digital media has now

made multimodality a *central* reality of contemporary writing center work, regardless of

whether coach handbooks choose to explicitly embrace this reality. As Trimbur reminds

us, the accelerating proliferation of digital media has "serious implications" for writing

center work ("Multiliteracies" 29). Coaches now expect to work with clients designing

web pages, composing PowerPoints, revising oral presentations, inserting visual elements

into traditional texts, and drafting rhetorical analyses of multimodal texts, to name just a

few of the multimodal tasks common in writing centers today. Consequently, coaches

who are skilled in visual and/or oral modes of composition are far more versatile and

hence more effective than coaches with skills confined strictly to the written mode. This

reality has led Sheridan and other writing center scholars to advocate the hiring of

"multiliteracy consultants" or "digital writing consultants" who either have, or can gain

through in-house professional development, a very specific roster of "knowledge and

skills" that Sheridan defines as follows:

> [Digital writing consultants] need to develop a sophisticated understanding
>
> of consultant pedagogy, including both traditional models for providing
>
> peer support as well as an understanding of how these models need to be

adapted when consulting moves into a digital environment. They need to

develop an understanding of multimodal rhetoric. And they need to

understand the technical processes that are involved in composing digital

media. (343)

Like Sheridan, McKinney believes that writing centers must accept multimodality

and new media, but that this acceptance "necessitates rethinking our dominant writing

center ideas and revising our common practices" (36). One practice that must change,

she suggests, is the long-established best practice of reading client texts aloud.

McKinney believes that coaches must look "*at* student texts instead of *through* them" in

order to account for the materiality of these texts (39; emphasis in original). This means,

for example, that a coach working with a client on a résumé should focus on the textual

and visual elements of that document. McKinney also suggests that instead of reading

new media texts aloud, coaches should "talk aloud" instead as they negotiate and

navigate those texts (39). When reading a text aloud, coaches might ignore non-textual

elements, since they cannot be verbalized. When "talking aloud," McKinney suggests,

coaches can show clients "how a reader makes meaning by reading the various modes in

the text: images, text, layout, color, movement" (40). Such an approach allows coaches

to work with multimodal texts in a manner that accounts for all of their individual

components, be they oral, visual, or textual.

For all of these reasons, coach handbooks must undergo a macro-level redesign

that accounts for the multimodal nature of writing center work. Redesigned coach

handbooks must emphasize the oral and visual modes along with the written mode, and

they must position coaches and clients alike as multimodal composers. In order to fully serve their clients, coaches must be able to "engage students in conversations about rhetorical choices they make concerning not just words, but images and other media elements as well" (Sheridan 345). Given the digital character of contemporary writing practices, an effective and versatile coach can no longer be just a good writer. The ideal coach—the *normal* coach—must be a skilled multimodal composer.

The Coach as Monocultural

The designers of all six coach handbooks make similar assumptions about the cultural background of the typical handbook user. To support these assumptions, the handbooks employ rhetorical moves that position coaches as cultural insiders who are native members of mainstream U.S. culture. This insidership is presented as a coaching strength that allows coaches to function as cultural and linguistic "informants" when working with international clients (Powers 373). Positioning coaches as native members of mainstream U.S. culture is generally an implicit and subtle rhetorical move, as is the corresponding positioning of coaches as citizens of the United States. The operative assumption is not only that coaches are cultural insiders holding U.S. passports, but that this is the only normal identity for coaches to hold. Consequently, handbooks rarely make room for coaches from non-mainstream or non-U.S. cultural backgrounds. As I discuss in the next subsection, on the rare occasions when such coaches appear in coach handbooks, their cultural and linguistic identities are presented not as productive resources for writing center work, but as problems that impede successful coaching.

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Coach handbooks also make similar assumptions about the context for writing

center work, which is presumed to take place within the U.S. academy.[22] This

assumption ignores the fact that writing centers are proliferating across the globe in a

wide variety of academic contexts, including Europe, East Asia, and the Gulf States. In a

recent article in *The Writing Center Journal*, for example, Lynne Ronesi describes the

coach education program she developed as director of the American University of

Sharjah (AUS) Writing Center. Ronesi explains that selecting coach handbooks and

similar educational materials for the program proved to be a challenge, since writing

center "training literature has yet to address contexts outside North America" (76). With

its "US-centric" focus, coach education materials are geared to a U.S. context and

consequently to users who are assumed to be monocultural and monolingual U.S. coaches.

At AUS, however, the students are multicultural, multilingual, and multinational. In

addition, relatively few students on this strikingly cosmopolitan campus come from Euro-

American backgrounds. Though the coaches at the AUS Writing Center reflect the

diversity of the larger student body, they do not reflect the cultural and linguistic

identities of the coaches who are the target users of coach handbooks and similar

materials. This led Ronesi to design a coach education program syllabus with an eclectic

assortment of readings and assignments.[23] The syllabus encouraged coaches to draw on

their own experience and "establish a body of local understanding that would serve our

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[22] Of the six handbooks, only *ESL Writers: A Guide for Writing Center Tutors* considers academic contexts outside the United States. This handbook contains a chapter by Gerd Brauer titled "The Role of Writing in Higher Education Abroad," which is largely focused on a German academic context.

[23] The syllabi for Ronesi's coach education course includes just one reading assignment from a coach handbook—Kurt Bouman's chapter "Raising Questions About Plagiarism" in *ESL Writers: A Guide for Writing Center Tutors*. However, *ESL Writers* itself is not on the reading list.

purposes" as writing coaches from multicultural, multilingual, and multinational backgrounds who work with equally diverse clients in a context outside the United States.

The omission and erasure of non-U.S. academic contexts from coach handbooks is paralleled by the homogenization of U.S. academic contexts. Writing center work is assumed, in other words, to involve similar coaches, clients, and campuses. However, coach identities and academic contexts in the United States are far from homogenous. Not all writing center work takes place on four-year campuses populated by mainstream monolingual students of traditional age. Not all coaches are U.S. citizens, native speakers of English, and part of the U.S. middleclass. Indeed, the notion that all coaches are members of the cultural mainstream relies on an essentialized vision of U.S. citizens that aligns with the identity markers of the normal coach. This notion sets up a false binary between the normal coach and the international client that positions the coach as a cultural and linguistic expert. The client, meanwhile, is positioned as culturally and linguistically deficient.

Though the binary between the normal coach and the international client is usually implicit in handbooks, the rare explicit moments prove that the binary is a dominant assumption underpinning the construction of coach identity. The use of the possessive adjective "our" provides explicit illustrations of this binary in action. In *A Tutor's Guide: Helping Writers One to One*, for example, Carol Severino explains that "the most rewarding way to cross cultures is to converse over time with international students about *our* perceptions of cultural differences and build toward a mutual understanding" ("Crossing" 45; emphasis added). Another explicit example of this

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binary can be found in *The Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors*, which also relies heavily on the use of the possessive adjective "our" in its discussion of plagiarism and international clients:

> Plagiarism is not always the deliberate violation of rules that it seems. In *our* culture, we value originality in writing and regard a piece of writing as belonging to the person who produced it, so we cite the sources of borrowed ideas and words as we write, and we have rules with regard to plagiarism. But not all cultures share *our* values. (Ryan and Zimmerelli 62; emphasis added)

Several lines later, coaches are told that "though you will need to explain *our* culture's rules and customs about citing sources and doing one's own work, be aware that ESL writers may not be knowingly violating those rules" (62; emphasis added). This concern for the different cultural and academic traditions that clients bring to the writing center is seriously undermined by an us-versus-them binary that essentializes coach and client identities. This binary not only assumes that all coaches are U.S. citizens, but that U.S. cultural values are monolithic as well. This homogenization of U.S. cultural values corresponds with the dominant monocultural and monolingual framework and the identities it supports. In other words, an essentialized view of U.S. culture aligns with the identity markers of the normal coach. *The Bedford Guide* does acknowledge that cultures are not monolithic and advises coaches to be aware of this fact: "Though you want to be aware of differences, you should not assume, for example, that every writer you meet from a particular culture embodies what you know about that culture" (63). This caution

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is aimed at cultures on the opposite side of the binary rather than at U.S. culture, however, and no insight into the cultural diversity of the United States is offered.

While coach handbooks acknowledge that international students will be unfamiliar with U.S. culture to a greater or lesser extent, no handbook considers the possibility that *coaches* may be unfamiliar with U.S. culture. This failure to recognize the possibility of a coach who is unfamiliar with U.S. culture aligns with notions of the normal coach, who is assumed to be from a mainstream U.S. cultural background. Handbooks do recognize that international clients will be unfamiliar with U.S. culture and that this lack of familiarity can pose formidable challenges in an academic environment geared to U.S. cultural and historical knowledge. In *A Tutor's Guide*, for example, Severino points out that international students bring assignments to writing centers that are "inextricably embedded in the contexts of U.S. culture and history" and that these assignments take for granted the students' "familiarity with the U.S. educational system based on a presumed twelve plus years of attending U.S. schools" ("Crossing" 41). Severino goes on to argue that this assumption underpins most composition readers, which center on U.S. authors writing about U.S. issues in a U.S. academic context. Severino does not extend this insightful point far enough, however, and fails to account for the reality that coach handbooks make similar assumptions that position coaching as something that can be done *only* by U.S. citizens. Severino provides examples of coaches who might not have knowledge of certain aspects of American history and culture, but the examples pertain to age—i.e., U.S. coaches born after specific historical events (44). There is no discussion of the possibility that coaches might be

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unfamiliar with U.S. culture and history because they are citizens of another country, or members of an immigrant family, or members of a U.S. cultural group that does not correspond to mainstream cultural values. Any cross-cultural interaction is assumed to be a binary one of U.S. coach and international client:

> it is important for international students to have opportunities to respond to the features of American culture that surround them, both positive and negative, as well as to respond to American perceptions of their own cultures in order to establish reciprocity and a cross-cultural balance. This way, the cultural informing that happens in the writing center is not all American intake with little international output. (49)

The binary of U.S. coach and international client assures that there is no space for coaches to hold any identity except that of U.S. citizen and mainstream cultural native. Severino is surely correct to argue that "tutors need to learn from international students about their lives and cultures in order to tutor them better, and international students need to learn from tutors in order to perform better on their assignments" (50). However, until coaches are recognized as embracing truly diverse identities, including international and multilingual identities, such statements will only uphold constructions of the normal coach.

This recognition of diverse coach identities is all the more urgent given the growing impact of globalization on writing center work. This impact can be seen in the increasing percentage of coaches and clients who come from international and multilingual backgrounds, in the proliferation of hybrid texts and literacies operative in

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coaching sessions, and in the fact that coaches and clients alike are all bound for employment in the global economy. Given the globalized nature of writing center work, hiring a diverse staff of coaches remains imperative. Several of the authors in *A Tutor's Guide: Coaching One to One*, in fact, briefly acknowledge the value of a diverse coaching staff. (See, for example, Greiner 119; Zemliansky 88). However, as is true in the other five coach handbooks, there are no in-depth discussions in *A Tutor's Guide* of how and why diversity strengthens a writing center, particularly in terms of a writing center's ability to respond to the pressures of globalization. McAndrew and Reigstad devote a short section to the value of hiring a diverse coaching staff, though this passage is contained in a handbook devoted to writing center administrators rather than student coaches. They suggest that writing centers should "recruit tutors to mirror the cultural, gender, class, and linguistic diversity of the writers who visit the center" (98). McAndrew and Reigstad fail to push this point hard enough, however. The justification for a diverse coaching staff should not be that such a staff can better serve its clients by mirroring the demographics of the student body. Rather, the justification should be that a diverse coaching staff ensures that coaches and clients alike learn to negotiate cultural, linguistic, and national difference, a crucial skill in a globalized world and a vehicle for equitable social change. Viewed from this angle, it remains largely irrelevant whether or not a coaching staff mirrors the student body it serves. The diversity of the coaching staff remains the relevant point, in other words, not the diversity of the student body.

Though coach handbooks give some play to diverse *client* identities—albeit in ways that reinforce monocultural and monolingual assumptions—they give little or no

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play to diverse *coach* identities. An effective redesign of coach handbooks must therefore recognize and validate diversity among coaches, and this redesign must do so in a manner that challenges the dominant monocultural and monolingual power grid. At the micro level of reflexive design practice, designers must strive to eliminate those rhetorical moves that position the mainstream monolingual U.S. coach as the only possible construction of coach identity. The personal adjective "our" must be used with the utmost care, for example. At the far more crucial macro level of reflexive design practice, handbook designers must incorporate academic contexts outside the United States. They must also discard the binary of the U.S. coach and international client and recognize that coaches do, can, and should come from diverse domestic and international backgrounds. Designers must create handbooks that explicitly problematize the identity construction of the monocultural and monolingual U.S. coach. Furthermore, handbooks must be redesigned to foreground the value of a diverse coaching staff and to forcefully advocate the hiring of coaches from diverse backgrounds. In making these redesigns, coach handbooks can align with the writing center model advocated by Nancy Grimm, which is built around a "core value" of "productive and flexible engagement with linguistic, social, racial, and cultural diversity" ("New" 15). Such a model fully accounts for the cultural and linguistic realities of the globalized contexts where writing center work now takes place.

The Coach as Monolingual

A broad consensus of leading scholars in Literacy Studies, Composition, and Writing Center Studies argue that pedagogical theory and practice grounded in English

monolingualism must give way to multilingual orientations that reflect the linguistic realities of twenty-first century educational contexts (Bawarshi; Cangarajah, "The Place"; Grimm, "New"; Horner and Trimbur; Lu, "An Essay," "Living"; Matsuda; Pratt, "Building"). As part of this ongoing discussion, many of these scholars suggest that multilingual students possess an intuitive ability to negotiate linguistic difference that monolingual students often lack (Canagarajah, "The Place"; Horner; Lu, "An Essay," "Living"; Matsuda; Pratt, "Building"; Trimbur, "Linguistic"). For these reasons, writing center specialists assert that multilingual coaches enrich the writing centers where they work, since they bring with them a cultural and linguistic sophistication well suited to negotiating the myriad forms of difference that are a constant, if often unacknowledged, feature of writing center work (Grimm, "New").

Writing center handbooks, however, have yet to catch up with current theory and continue to operate along monolingual lines. One obvious manifestation of this dissonance is that coach handbooks typically position coaches as monolingual English speakers. This positioning is sometimes rendered explicit through calculated rhetorical moves. Shanti Bruce and Ben Rafoth, for example, make it clear that native English-speaking coaches remain the target users for *ESL Writers: A Guide for Writing Center Tutors*. They explain in the introduction to the handbook that "this book assumes a U.S. context for learning and tutors who are native speakers of English" (xiii). While Bruce and Rafoth chase this statement with a careful acknowledgement that U.S. English is just one of many varieties of World English, they fail to problematize the assumption that being a native speaker of English is the only valid linguistic identity for coaches. Bruce

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and Rafoth go on to explain that "tutors in the United States for whom English is a native language are an important part of helping others meet this challenge [of learning to speak English], and they are the readers for whom this book is written" (xiii).

The chapters in *ESL Writers* focus tightly on monolingual U.S. coaches, just as Bruce and Rafoth promise. The only discussion of multilingual coaches in the handbook centers on an international client who does not believe multilingual and/or international coaches are sufficiently skilled in English. This international client defines a qualified coach as a native speaker of English and admits a general unwillingness to work with multilingual/international coaches:

> Sometimes I am not sure they [multilingual/international coaches] are
> really qualified. I've never had an international student as my tutor. I saw
> an international student tutor, but I didn't get help from her because I
> wonder how well she writes? I doubt she writes well. (Bruce 153)

As is true throughout *ESL Writers*, the focus in this chapter is on multilingual/international *clients* rather than multilingual/international *coaches*. As a result, the implied notion that multilingual/international coaches lack sufficient writing expertise is not sufficiently problematized, and the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of such coaches are positioned as liabilities rather than assets.

This is how coach handbooks assess multilingual clients as well, who are typically positioned as special problems for monolingual coaches. *The Longman Guide to Peer Tutoring*, for example, opens the chapter titled "Working with ESL Writers" with the following paragraph:

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We have often found that a large source of anxiety for new tutors surrounds the work they will do with ESL writers. "Will my knowledge of grammatical terms and rules be adequate?" they wonder. "Will my session get bogged down in line-by-line identification and correction of error?" they fear. "Will I emerge from a session spent and bleary eyed, hoping to find someone to talk about big ideas and not the minutia of English mechanics?" they ask. "Will I be pushed into the role of editor instead of being a tutor?" they fear. Certainly, these concerns are understandable; after all, *many of you have had little contact up to this point with ESL writers.* (Gillespie and Lerner 117; emphasis added)

As this excerpt illustrates, the opening of the chapter foregrounds the coaching of multilingual clients as a stressful exercise in error correction for native English-speaking coaches. Rather than a positive and productive experience that can benefit coach and client alike, coaching multilingual clients is presented as a largely negative experience that will leave coaches exhausted and in search of more intellectually stimulating clients endowed with "big ideas." To be fair, later material in the chapter presents coaching multilingual clients as a "rewarding" experience, but the opening paragraph nonetheless sets a negative tone that the remainder of the chapter never fully escapes (118).

In most cases, however, coach handbooks employ far more subtle rhetorical moves for constructing the default coach identity as English monolingual. Many of these moves involve strategies of omission and erasure, and representative examples culled from the handbooks illustrate these moves in action. In *What the Writing Tutor Needs to*

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Know, coaches are asked to reflect on their own experiences as second-language learners, but this potentially productive exercise is undermined by the assumption that this second-language learning involves a language other than English, since coaches are assumed to be native speakers (Soven 106). *The Longman Guide to Peer Tutoring*, meanwhile, presents reflective writing by coaches that clearly establishes they are all native speakers of English (Gillespie and Lerner 1-5). In both of these examples, the identities of multilingual coaches are omitted, erased, and rendered a conceptual impossibility.

This pattern continues in *The Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors*. In order to give coaches some sense of the grammatical difficulties faced by multilingual writers composing in English, for example, *The Bedford Guide* includes a textbox that displays how the English-language sentence "Last night I ate rice instead of bread" literally translates from Korean as "Yesterday evening in rice instead of bread ate" (Ryan and Zimmerelli 61). I find this textbox remarkable because the original Korean sentence is rendered in *Hangul* (한글), the Korean phonetic alphabet. This passage marks one of the rare inclusions of non-English text in the handbooks, and the only passage in the six handbooks to be written in something other than the Roman alphabet. While I am all in favor of any approach that brings a multilingual flavor to coach handbooks, the textbox only works to reinforce the notion that coaches are English monolingual. After all, multilingual coaches would likely already have an intuitive grasp of the challenges associated with working in two or more different languages. Multilingual coaches, like many multilingual writers, understand how to shift between languages in a way that monolingual coaches generally do not (Canagarajah, "Multilingual," "The Place,"

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"Toward"). An example of Korean grammar, in other words, would probably not tell multilingual coaches anything they do not already know from firsthand experience.

The use of certain coach and client names also functions as a rhetorical move that omits and erases multilingual coach identities. *ESL Writers: A Guide for Writing Center Tutors* includes a number of vignettes where the coach has a name stereotypical of mainstream monolingual U.S. students, while the client has a name stereotypical of Asian international students—Tina and Ling, Michelle and Reiko, Judy and Tang, Jane and Yoshi (Bruce and Rafoth 19, 26, 84, 158). The names used in these anecdotal accounts of coach-client interactions reinforce the unstated assumption that coaches are English monolingual, from mainstream U.S. cultural backgrounds, and predominantly female. Furthermore, the use of such stereotypical names obscures the complex nature of coaching in a globalized age characterized by accelerating hybridity—an age where Asian clients take on English names and the multicultural backgrounds of coaches ensure that no assumption about "typical" coach names is ever likely to be valid. A writing center could easily have a coach named Yi (i.e., a Chinese-American who could be either English monolingual or Chinese/English bilingual) and a client named Frank (i.e., a multilingual Chinese international student). Such a scenario, however, is not presented as a possibility in *ESL Writers*.

Along with strategies of omission and erasure, the rhetorical moves used to enforce the binary distinction between monolingual English coaches and multilingual clients frequently rely on strategies of separation and containment. These strategies operate by quarantining multilingual clients in clearly demarcated chapters and

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subsections with titles like "Working with ESL Students," "The Writer for Whom English is a Second Language," and even "Tutoring Special Students" (Capossela 92; Ryan and Zimmerelli 60; Soven 102). Five of the six coach handbooks separate monolingual English coaches and clients from multilingual clients in this way. Moreover, three of the five handbooks situate subsections devoted to multilingual clients in the same chapter with subsections pertaining to clients who have learning disabilities, a placement that implicitly and illogically links non-native English speakers with learning disabilities (Capossela; Ryan and Zimmerelli; Soven). The sixth handbook, *ESL Writers: A Guide for Writing Center Tutors*, is a book-length strategy of separation and containment that draws its meaning from the implicit dichotomy between English monolingual coach and multilingual client. Coaches seeking guidance on working with monolingual U.S. clients should consult the other five handbooks, in other words, while coaches working with multilingual clients should consult specialized texts like *ESL Writers*. Such logic reinforces the binary between monolingual English coach and multilingual client while simultaneously erasing the possibility of a multilingual coach.

As the above examples clearly illustrate, there is a serious disjunction between the current theory of the field and the theory and practice encapsulated within coach handbooks. In order to correct this disconnect, coach handbooks must be redesigned to more fully account for the multilingual context of writing center work. Rather than strategies of omission and erasure that render multilingual coaches invisible, alternative rhetorical moves must be employed that foreground multilingual coaches. Rather than positioning multilingual coaches as conceptual impossibilities, they should be positioned

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as always and already on the job, and not just in foreign contexts like the American University of Sharjah. And rather than presenting multilingual coaches as problems, coach handbooks must be redesigned with an understanding that multilingual coaches possess sophisticated skills for negotiating linguistic difference, and that these skills may leave them better equipped for writing center work than monolingual coaches.

Redesigned coach handbooks must also open up space for multilingual coaches by discarding what Severino identifies as the "assimilationist" approach to acquiring English. The assimilationist approach rests on the assumption that multilingual students can and should achieve complete native speaker fluency as well as proficiency in the norms of U.S. academic discourse. The assumption that multilingual students should assimilate into dominant cultural and linguistic norms underpins the assimilationist approach. Coach handbooks tend to rely on the assimilationist model, which views any divergence from the norms of Standard American English as an error to be corrected and a deficiency to be rectified (Severino, "The Sociopolitical"). *ESL Writers: A Guide for Writing Center Tutors* is an edited collection, and though some chapters are grounded in monolingual and assimilationist assumptions, other chapters argue that writing centers should discard the assimilationist model as "unrealistic" and recognize that ESL writers "will probably always write with an accent" (Matsuda and Cox 43; Severino, "Avoiding" 54). Furthermore, these chapters suggest that this accent should not be viewed as a deficiency or liability. Such a view is broadly in line with an "accommodationist" approach, which is more of an attempt to negotiate linguistic difference as opposed to erasing difference altogether (Severino, "The Sociopolitical"). Taking such a view opens

up space for multilingual coaches, who often speak an accented variety of World English, but are nonetheless proficient in their use of the language. The accommodationist approach is also compatible with the New London Group's notion of Civic Pluralism, since it emphasizes situated and constructive negotiations of difference rather than attempts to manage and erase difference.

Along with the shift from an assimilationist to a more accommodationist approach to language difference, coach handbooks must also be redesigned to present multilingualism as the norm rather than English monolingualism. Such an approach would answer the call of Horner and Trimbur, who believe U.S. educators must abandon the "tacit language policy of unidirectional English monolingualism" that underpins writing instruction in the United States today (594). Such an approach would also align coach handbooks with scholars in Writing Center Studies who call for positioning multilingualism as the "conceptual norm" in writing center work (Grimm, "New"). Positioning multilingualism as the default in coach handbooks would normalize and validate the multilingual coach, work to level unjust linguistic hierarchies, and facilitate socially transformative negotiations of cultural and linguistic difference.

Redesigned Coach Handbooks as Heretical Challenges to the Orthodoxy

All textbooks, including coach handbooks, work to reify certain privileged theories and practices. Linda K. Shamoon and Deborah H. Burns maintain that coach handbooks tend to function as "bibles" that reify the "orthodoxy" of current writing center theory and practice (226). They warn that "the power of this orthodoxy permeates

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writing center discourse" and that it can forestall alternative approaches to theory and practice (227). Viewed from this perspective, orthodoxy becomes an impediment to the kind of flexible coaching required for writing center work. After all, as anyone who has ever worked in a writing center knows, coaching is a dynamic and context-specific activity that resists the rigidity of practice based on a one-size-fits-all orthodoxy. No one set of coaching strategies can ever work in every situation, in other words, and yet the continual reification of certain practices tends to promote the opposite conclusion. The non-directive, student-centered coaching espoused by Jeff Brooks in his landmark article "Minimalist Tutoring: Making the Student Do All the Work" has long been a basic tenet of writing center coaching, for example. However, there are clearly times when directive coaching can be effective, as Shamoon and Burns argue and as research in the field has shown (Thompson *et al.*; Thonus, "Triangulation"). Flexibility, adaptability, and reflexivity thus become the marks of a good coach, not the ability to adhere to a set canon of skills and values.

Coach handbooks do not just reify writing center practice, however. They also reify privileged coach identities and the ideological assumptions that underpin them. Handbooks remain particularly powerful defenders of orthodox theory and practice because they are read by undergraduate coaches, the frontline troops of writing center work. Unlike writing center directors, coaches are far less likely to have a sustained encounter with scholarly work in the field that challenges orthodox assumptions. Redesigning coach handbooks to push against reification and orthodoxy, as opposed to maintaining them, therefore becomes a particularly urgent task. Micro-level reflexive

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design practices of the sort I describe throughout this chapter can work against reification and challenge orthodox assumptions about the identity of the normal coach. However, these micro-level redesigns can only be effective when coupled with macro-level reflexive design practices that explicitly problematize dominant assumptions about coach identities. I am advocating redesigned Generation 3.0 coach handbooks that take a heretical stance against current theory, particularly theory that reifies certain coach identities while simultaneously discounting alternative identities. I am advocating that handbooks take a heretical stance against certain orthodox practices as well, such as the hiring practices that favor the identity template of the normal coach. By taking this heretical stance, Generation 3.0 coach handbooks can not only promote the hiring of diverse coaching staffs, but provoke a productive brand of critical reflexivity among those coaches that do get hired. This point takes me back to Stephen North's landmark article, which I draw upon when I say that the idea of a writing center coach handbook must be an inclusive one that fully accounts for the multiple, diverse, hybrid, evolving, and at times conflicting identities of today's writing center coaches.

Chapter 4

Redesigning Travel Guidebooks for Inclusive and Ethical Usability

A sign marks a nondescript street corner far up in the Mid-Levels district of Hong

Kong Island. "Mosque Street," the bilingual sign proclaims in English, and in Cantonese,

"嚤囉廟街" (Mo Lo Miu Gai). Every day thousands of commuters walk past this sign

and the nearby Jamia Mosque that gave the street its English name. Few of the workers

heading downhill to high-rise offices in Central or back upslope to their residential

towers in the Mid-Levels give much thought to the street's name. Unless they happen to

be members of the city's small South Asian community, that is—the Indians and

Pakistanis, the Bangladeshis, Nepalese, and Sri Lankans. Their ancestors founded the

mosque 160 years ago, long before the street it now borders had an official name. The South Asians of Hong Kong speak Cantonese, and they know that the name of the street derives from the phrase"嚤囉差" (*mo lo cha*) a somewhat antiquated Cantonese racial slur for South Asians, particularly Sikhs and dark-skinned South Indians. Calls from the local South Asian community to change the Cantonese name to the more neutral "回教廟街" (Wui Gaau Miu Gai, or Moslem Temple Street) have been shrugged off by the Cantonese citizens of Hong Kong, who comprise 95 percent of the population. They claim that changing the street name would be impractical and inconvenient, and not worth the fuss. As far as the Cantonese are concerned, Mo Lo Miu Gai is just another street name (Kadison).

Street names like Mo Lo Miu Gai, however, are material representations of the dominant linguistic and cultural ideologies of Hong Kong. The city's bilingual street signs are therefore much more than mere navigational aids—they are ideological declarations that enforce power differentials geared to majority interests. These declarations cause real harm to real people, such as the South Asians of Hong Kong, who must walk to their place of worship on a street named for a slur that degrades them. Like street signs, Hong Kong travel guidebooks help users navigate the labyrinthine districts of the city while simultaneously buttressing dominant ideologies. This too causes real harm to real people. In this chapter I argue that just as street names like Mo Lo Miu Gai must be changed, so too must the signposting in travel guidebooks that privileges dominant ideologies, and hence certain users, while simultaneously marginalizing other users as *mo lo cha*.

Travel Guidebooks as Technical Communication

I situate my discussion of Hong Kong travel guidebooks in Technical Communication, a field that has traditionally been associated with the corporate and government workplace. However, in recent years the field has engaged in a lively debate about what exactly constitutes technical communication. Does it only pertain to documents produced at Microsoft and the Internal Revenue Service? Or can technical communication include cookbooks and do-it-yourself manuals for home repairs? Jo Allen notes that no "universally acceptable" definition of technical communication has emerged from this ongoing debate (68). She suggests that such definitional disputes should be abandoned, as they serve no useful purpose, and goes on to advocate "an extensive and flexible definition" of technical communication (75). Such a definition would avoid "simplistic" definitions that work to exclude certain forms of instructional text, such as the cookbooks that Allen readily accepts as technical communication (68, 75).

Miles A. Kimball takes this broad definition of technical communication as a given, and argues that technical communication scholars should expand the scope of their research to include "extra-institutional documentation." Examining such documentation is critical, he suggests, because it "help[s] form the postindustrial world as much as the corporate and governmental technical documents that are typically the focus of technical communication research" (84). In his examination of extra-institutional technical communication, Kimball considers two automobile manuals produced by car owners

rather than car manufacturers, though he also notes that such documentation can include "dangerous" forms such as terrorism manuals and instructions for computer hacking and tax evasion (84).

In an attempt to answer Kimball's call to examine diverse forms of extra-institutional documentation, I focus on the travel guidebook, a widely popular but little examined form of technical communication that often straddles the line between institutional and extra-institutional technical documentation. Specifically, I consider the ways that guidebooks serve as ideological enforcers that privilege dominant ways of knowing while simultaneously marginalizing alternate knowledges. In doing so, I enter an ongoing conversation in Technical Communication about the ideologies and power differentials embedded in technical communication as well as the ethical responsibilities of the technical communicator. I also join a closely related discussion about various forms of instructional texts, such as operator's manuals, computer user instructions, pregnancy handbooks, and sewing pattern instructions. (See, for example, Durack, "Patterns"; Johnson; Paradis; Seigel.)

As a frequent traveler abroad and a travel guidebook designer, I am well aware that travel guidebooks shape the experiences of the user/traveler in significant ways. Certainly guidebooks influence the mundane practices of travel—where the user lodges and dines, what historic and cultural sites he visits, and so on. Travel guidebooks are designed to offer the user this kind of explicit *tactical instruction*, which provides the user with a degree of control over an unfamiliar foreign context. However, guidebooks

also offer implicit *strategic instruction* to the user that bolsters dominant ideologies. [24]

Travel guidebooks offer tactical user knowledge, in other words, but they offer this

knowledge within a larger strategic framework that reinforces dominant ideological

assumptions. Guidebooks can therefore be said to legitimize certain ways of knowing

and to be profoundly ideological in nature. As Nicholas T. Parsons observes in his

comprehensive history of the genre, from the first guides written by the Greek traveler

Pausanias in the second century AD to the slick full-color titles published today, the

travel guidebook has always "reflected the national identities and cultural assumptions of

its authors" (257).

Because dominant ideological assumptions and ways of knowing are naturalized

and transparent, travel guidebook designers seldom account for them. Users who share

these assumptions and ways of knowing are similarly unaware of the ideological

dimension of travel guidebooks. Users never question the ideological signposting, in

other words, because for them the signs are a normal part of the streetscape.

Consequently, ideological assumptions remain largely unexamined in the design and use

of travel guidebooks. Rather than attempt to challenge the status quo, the designers of

travel guidebooks and many other forms of instructional texts typically focus instead on

what Bradley Dilger terms "extreme usability." The design logic of extreme usability

makes ease of use the primary objective, and accomplishing this goal requires that the

ideologies embedded in a text remain implicit and unquestioned. To return to the

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[24] I derive the concept of strategic and tactical instruction from the work of Miles A. Kimball and the French theorist Michel de Certeau. For an understanding of strategies and tactics in technical communication, I draw on Kimball. Kimball in turn draws on de Certeau, who first explored the concept of strategies and tactics in *The Practice of Everyday Life*. (Originally published in French as *Arts de Faire*.)

example at the start of this chapter, Hong Kong's South Asian community has requested

that the city government replace racist street names like Mo Lo Miu Gai. Their request

has been dismissed for reasons that supposedly pertain to usability, and they are told that

renaming streets would cause undue confusion. Likewise, travel guidebook designers

and users alike view any attempt to challenge the ideological street signs embedded in

their texts as an impediment to usability. In both cases, the focus on usability obscures

deeper ideological projects that serve dominant interests while simultaneously

peripheralizing certain users as *mo lo cha*.

Selection of Travel Guidebook Titles

In this chapter I focus on how usability, ideology, and identity impact the design

and redesign of travel guidebooks. For methodology, I rely on rhetorical analysis. [25]

However, the sheer size of the travel guidebook genre presents a significant challenge to

this methodology. After all, there are thousands of travel guidebook titles in print today.

Lonely Planet alone publishes some 650 guidebook titles and sells over six million

guidebooks a year, making it the largest publisher of English-language travel guides. In

2003, the firm had a gross income of $73 million (Parsons 265). Insight Guides, another

dominant player in the travel guidebook market, has nearly 400 titles in its catalogue.

Frommer's publishes more than 330 titles, while Rough Guides now offers more than 200.

Time Out Guides covers some 50 destinations, while Fodor's produces 14 different series

of travel guides (Mantell). ThingsAsian Press, the publisher of my guidebooks, has sent

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[25] For an overview of my methodological approach to the rhetorical analysis of instructional texts, see
chapter three.

a dozen travel guidebooks to the printer since its first guide in 2004, but plans to expand its catalogue and become a major player in the market for travel guidebooks to Asian destinations.

Guidebooks published by Lonely Planet and its rivals literally cover every location on the planet, from Peru to Papua New Guinea, and a rhetorical analysis of such a large and diverse body of guidebooks remains far beyond the scope of this chapter. I have opted instead to focus on seven travel guidebooks that can serve as representative examples of the broader travel guidebook genre. I employed simple selection criteria when choosing these seven titles. All are commercially published guides to Hong Kong in the Pearl River Delta region of China. Moreover, they were all published within the last decade and rank among the most popular titles for U.S. travelers to Hong Kong. All seven guidebooks take a how-to approach to travel designed to help facilitate the user's navigation of Hong Kong from a geographic, cultural, linguistic, historic, and gastronomic point of view. Furthermore, they are all geared to a general audience. For this reason, I have not included niche guides that cater to specialized audiences, such as the affluent, luxury-minded travelers that are the target users of the guidebook *Hong Kong Chic* (Suarez). In addition, I have not included pocket guides to Hong Kong, such as Lonely Planet's *Hong Kong Encounter* or DK Publishing's *Top 10 Hong Kong*, because their low page count and limited textual content places them in a different category of guidebook (Fallon; Fitzpatrick, Gagliardi, and Stone). Finally, I have not included titles that straddle the line between two genres, such as *Hong Kong: A Cultural*

History, which is a hybrid blend of the travel guidebook and travel narrative genres (Ingham).

I have chosen to focus on guidebooks to Hong Kong both because I know the city well and because I have written a guidebook of my own on the subject. This allows me to bring a degree of personal expertise and experience to bear on my rhetorical analysis of these titles—an expertise I could not call on if I were to analyze guides to cities I have never visited. In addition, limiting my rhetorical analysis to Hong Kong guidebooks gives that analysis a focus and coherence that might be lacking were I to analyze guides to a variety of international destinations. Finally, focusing on guides to Hong Kong strikes me as particularly kairotic, given China's increasing cultural, military, and economic clout, as well as its deep involvement in the process of globalization. Furthermore, if this process has an epicenter in China, it would surely be found in Hong Kong, one of the most globalized cities on the planet (McDonough and Wong).

The seven travel guidebooks I subject to rhetorical analysis in this chapter include the following titles:

Fodor's Hong Kong: With Macau and the South China Cities (Kidder *et al.*)

Frommer's Hong Kong: With Macau and the Best Shops & Street Markets (Reiber)

Hong Kong & Macau: A Teeming Fusion of East and West (Lonely Planet) (Fallon)

Insight City Guide: Hong Kong, Macau & Guangzhou (Le Bas *et al.*)

National Geographic Traveler Hong Kong (Macdonald)

The Rough Guide to Hong Kong & Macau (Brown and Leffman)

Time Out: Hong Kong, Macau & Guangzhou (Dembina *et al.*)

I do not rhetorically analyze my own guidebook to Hong Kong, titled *Exploring Hong Kong: A Visitor's Guide to Hong Kong Island, Kowloon, and the New Territories*. Rhetorically analyzing my own guidebook strikes me as a conflict of interest, since I am not exactly a disinterested party when it comes to my own work. Just as importantly, however, *Exploring Hong Kong* belongs to a somewhat different category of guidebook. *Exploring Hong Kong* is a parallel project to this dissertation, and while I would not categorize it as a radical departure from the conventions of the genre, the guide nonetheless incorporates many of the redesigns I call for in this chapter. In addition, *Exploring Hong Kong* contains far less how-to information than the average guidebook and takes a more narrative approach to the history, culture, and natural environment of Hong Kong. Given all this, rhetorically analyzing *Exploring Hong Kong* alongside the seven guidebooks listed above strikes me as unproductive. A more useful approach is to look to *Exploring Hong Kong* for examples of the new design practices for travel guidebooks that I advocate in this chapter. I discuss these examples in detail in chapter five.

When I use the term "travel guidebook," I am referring to book-length instructional texts that provide the user with how-to information for traveling in foreign cities, cultures, and countries. I am not referring to literary travel narratives such as, for example, Paul Theroux's *The Great Railway Bazaar* or Pico Iyer's *Video Night in*

Kathmandu. Essayist and social commentator Paul Fussell, in a treatise on travel and travel writing, makes the distinction between the two genres clear:

> Just as tourism is not travel, the guidebook is not the travel book. The guidebook is to be carried along and to be consulted frequently for practical information. How many *rials* are you allowed to bring in? How expensive is that nice-looking hotel over there? The travel book, on the other hand, is seldom consulted during a trip. Rather, it is read either before or after, and at home, and perhaps most often by a reader who will never take the journey at all. Guidebooks belong to the world of journalism, and they date; travel books belong to literature, and they last. Guidebooks are not autobiographical but travel books are, and if the personality they reveal is too commonplace and un-eccentric, they will not be very readable. (360)

Though Fussell is somewhat dismissive of guidebooks, he nonetheless offers a useful definition of the genre. I can further refine his definition by adding that while travel guides show considerable diversity in topics, which can range from a single city to an entire continent, they all share the same basic objective of equipping the user with the practical knowledge necessary to function as a traveler in an unfamiliar environment. Since all travel guides share this objective, it is not surprising that they usually follow a more or less standard format. The genre is rather rigidly codified, in fact. All of the Hong Kong guides discussed in this chapter, for example, cover the same forms and categories of information, often organized in very similar fashion. This information

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covers the history and culture of Hong Kong, the districts of Hong Kong and the

significant points of interest they contain, restaurants and the local cuisine, hotels and

other accommodation, shopping opportunities, local languages, and how-to information

on everything from ferry routes to emergency health care. All of the guides feature

numerous street maps and employ many of the standard stylistic devices characteristic of

technical documentation—headings, lists, page tabs, bold-face print, textboxes, and so on.

These design features are all geared to ease of use. Extreme usability, in fact, remains the

first priority of contemporary travel guidebook design.

Travel Guidebooks and Extreme Usability

Usability remains a central concern for the designers of instructional texts,

regardless of whether they are working in an institutional or extra-institutional context,

and can manifest itself as both a process and/or an outcome. As a *process*, usability is a

design method for determining how successfully users can manipulate a technological

artifact. Usability testing is the most common example of this design method. Designers

may or may not choose to employ such design methods, however. Travel guidebook

designers, for example, typically neglect usability testing because it is time-consuming

and expensive.[26] As an *outcome*, usability is simply a design goal. All instructional texts

are designed for usability outcomes, which simply means that they should be able to

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[26] While travel guidebook publishers and designers generally forego traditional usability testing, they often solicit user feedback and incorporate this feedback into updated editions of their guidebooks. Though highly subjective, the zero-cost nature of this informal usability testing nonetheless makes it attractive to guidebook publishers. The designer of Lonely Planet's *Hong Kong & Macau*, for example, thanks more than 100 users of the previous edition for providing "helpful hints, useful advice and interesting anecdotes" (Fallon 6).

successfully instruct the user in how to perform a given task—programming a DVD player or performing routine maintenance on an automobile. Moreover, this instruction should make performing the task as simple and easy as possible for the user. Ease of use, in other words, becomes the primary criterion for judging an instructional text. The cultural, economic, and political contexts of instructional texts and the technologies they describe are excluded from consideration, since such contexts are seen as impediments to ease of use. Ethical considerations are seen as irrelevant for the same reason.

Dilger links the ascendency of this "extreme usability" to the development of an "ideology of ease," which has become the dominant consideration in the design of technological artifacts bound for consumer consumption (48, 51). This ideology positions "making it easy" as the primary objective of any instructional text and focuses on ease of use to the exclusion of all other factors (47). Like ease itself, Dilger suggests, extreme usability "encourages out-of-pocket rejection of difficulty and complexity, displaces agency and control to external experts, and represses critique and critical use of technology in the name of productivity and efficiency" (52). As a result, extreme usability can only offer the user an "instrumental knowledge" of a technology, but never a deeper and potentially empowering "conceptual knowledge" of that technology (56). In an instructional context geared to extreme usability, technology is assumed to be autonomous and hence beyond the "capability and control" of the user, whose primary concern is ease of use (47). Users are able to manipulate technologies for limited tactical purposes, but they lack critical understanding of the larger strategic systems of

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technologies and have no say in their design and dissemination. As a result, users are disenfranchised and disempowered.

Extreme usability has had a profound impact on travel guidebooks, which are increasingly designed for instrumental or tactical knowledge alone. Travel guidebook users are instructed in how to "use" a city like Hong Kong, for example, but they receive little or no instruction in how to understand that city at a conceptual or strategic level. Extreme usability in Hong Kong travel guidebooks is epitomized by abbreviated pocket guides to the city, such as Lonely Planet's *Hong Kong Encounter* and Frommer's *Hong Kong Day by Day: 17 Smart Ways to See the City* (Fallon; Ortolani). These pocket guides have fewer pages and a smaller physical size than the standard full-length, full-size guidebooks published by the same companies. With its four by six inch dimensions, the Lonely Planet pocket guide fits in the palm of the hand, for example, and contains half as many pages as the standard guide from the same publisher. The pocket guides contain limited text, often arranged in lists designed for quick scanning, and focus primarily on ease—how to quickly and easily figure out what sights to see, where to stay, and how to move about the city. DK Publishing's *Top 10 Hong Kong*, for example, consists of nothing more than lists of top 10s (Fitzpatrick, Gagliardi, and Stone). Even the complex narrative of Hong Kong's historical development is reduced to a list of "Top 10 Moments in History" (30). Given the limited text and page count demanded by extreme usability, pocket guides cannot offer a deeper and more critical understanding of the city. Though the textual heft of full-length travel guidebooks gives them the potential

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to offer users instrumental *and* conceptual understanding, full-length guides nonetheless restrict their focus to extreme usability and tactical knowledge.

By removing cultural, economic, and political considerations from instructional texts and focusing exclusively on tactics and instrumentality, Dilger suggests, extreme usability removes these texts from their social context and location within strategic systems, which consequently renders ideologies transparent and invisible (63). As a result, existing lines of power are reinforced, users are disempowered, and dominant ideologies such as ease and expediency reign supreme. As Dilger explains, extreme usability "reduces user engagement, forbids considering the wider scope of culture, and limits the ends of usability to achievements of expediency" (47). As a result, travel guidebooks designed for extreme usability align with system-centered models of technology that work to disempower the user.

The Positioning of Guidebook Users

Scholars in Technical Communication and the closely related field of Technology Studies argue that users live in a system-centered world dominated by scientific and technological ways of knowing (Johnson 25; Longo 74). In such a world, users are rendered largely powerless. Langdon Winner asserts, for example, that users have no say in designing systems of technology and that these systems position users for "passive utilization" of technologies over which they have little real control (287). Instead, the technology controls the user, often with detrimental results, from global warming to epidemic obesity. Robert R. Johnson explains that a system-centered environment is

"based upon models of technology that focus on the artifact or system as primary, and on the notion that the inventors or developers of the technology know best its design, dissemination, and intended use" (25). In such an environment, technical communication is system-centered and technical communicators function as mere transmitters. Users, meanwhile, "are inevitably ancillary, or, in some cases, they are nonexistent because the system is powerfully hegemonic: the system is the source and ultimately the determiner of all" (26). System-centered technology positions the user as, at best, a tool-user endowed with situated tactical knowledge that Johnson terms "cunning intelligence" or *metis* (53). At its worst, he suggests, such a system positions the user as a powerless "idiot" (45).

Hong Kong guidebooks are complicit in this ranking of expert/designer over novice/user, with all the power differentials this hierarchy implies. The guidebooks perpetuate what Johnson terms a "discourse of expertise," which is characteristic of technical communication that positions the user as entirely dependent upon the knowledge contained within an instructional text (10). This discourse of expertise devalues user knowledge and privileges designer knowledge, as embodied in the guidebook. This view of technology relies on "an expert/novice binary of knower/unknower" in which the expert is the source of all knowledge, not the end user, who becomes a mere "practitioner" (13, 47). As a result, travel guidebooks are positioned as repositories of expert knowledge. Though this positioning is usually implicit, it is occasionally explicit. Four of the Hong Kong guidebooks prominently feature the word "expert" on their back covers, for example. *The Rough Guide to Hong*

& Macau claims that its users can expect "expert background on everything from Chinese cuisine to Hong Kong's futuristic architecture" (Brown and Leffman, back cover). *Time Out: Hong Kong, Macau & Guangzhou* claims to be written by a "team of local experts with a unique insider perspective" (Dembina *et al.*, back cover). The Insight guide boasts of its "expert writers," while the Fodor's guide highlights its "expert writing" by "local experts" (Le Bas *et al.*, back cover; Kidder *et al.*, back cover). The underlying assumption, of course, is that the user is a non-expert.

As a non-expert, the guidebook user acquires her understanding of how to manipulate the technological systems in Hong Kong from situated practice, not from designing those technologies. I understand how to use Hong Kong International Airport from catching so many flights there, for example, not from any technical knowledge of aviation. However, Johnson suggests that such contextually specific user knowledge is devalued and "subverted beneath a discourse of expertise" (10). Travel guidebooks tend to project this discourse of expertise and rank the value of information in prescriptive fashion. The Rough Guide opens with a list of "23 things not to miss" in Hong Kong, the Fodor's guide with a list of "Top Attractions," the Insight Guide with "The Best of Hong Kong," and the Frommer's guide with "Favorite Hong Kong Experiences" (Brown and Leffman 11; Kidder *et al.* 6; Le Bas *et al.* 10; Reiber 6). All this listing may or may not be a bad thing, but in any case, there is no question that the guidebooks prescribe visits to certain places and that users follow these prescriptions in the belief that they are expert recommendations. The guidebooks are positioned as sources of authoritative knowledge to be trusted over the user's own knowledge produced before or during her trip to Hong

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Kong. The complicating factor is that guidebook designers are experienced users of technologies in Hong Kong rather than the architects of these technologies. This positioning of the designer as user therefore challenges the expert/novice and knower/unknower binaries described by Johnson as well as the discourse of expertise. Guidebook designers neither *design* technologies for strategic systems nor transmit the expertise of system-centered designers. Rather, guidebook designers *use* technologies for their own tactical ends, and then pass this situated user knowledge on to the guidebook user. The fact that Hong Kong travel guidebooks are designed by experienced technology users for an audience of inexperienced technology users places the guides in a gray zone between institutional and extra-institutional technical communication.

The Positioning of Guidebook Designers

Travel guidebook designers work for commercial publishing houses, and as employees of these firms, they produce institutional technical communication. However, guidebook designers are unconstrained by the usual financial arrangement that requires technical communicators to conform to their institutional employers' expectations in order to maintain the financial stability of continued employment. Guidebook writing is almost never a primary source of income for designers, so publishing houses have limited financial leverage over them. In their bio notes only one of the Hong Kong guidebook designers is identified as an employee of his publishing house, while three explicitly identify themselves as freelance writers and another four have bios that imply this line of

work.[27] Parsons suggests that the primary motivation of travel guidebook designers is not a financial one, since they typically make a "paltry" living at best from their work. Rather, the motivation stems from the designer's zeal to share his knowledge and expertise of beloved foreign locales. As Parsons explains, "Compiling guidebooks has probably always been a labour of love, if not a downright quixotic enterprise, in which financial reward was secondary to the mission to inform" (276). In this sense, guidebook designers have more in common with extra-institutional technical communicators, who are not beholden to the demands of corporate and government employers and often produce instructional texts for reasons that are not monetary in nature.

This is not to say that travel guidebook designers are completely free of corporate demands, however. Freelance guidebook designers may be more willing and able to walk away from an institutional employer than a traditional technical communicator working for Microsoft or the IRS. However, once a guidebook designer opts to sign on with a corporate entity like Lonely Planet, she is bound by her employer's rules. Like many technical communicators who produce instructional texts, for example, travel guidebook designers are often required to quite literally follow a master template supplied by the institution they work for. All Lonely Planet guides, for example, share a similar visual and textual design indexed to usability. Parsons even suggests that institutional design templates have a greater influence on contemporary guidebook design than the rhetorical choices of individual designers (xxi). However, guidebooks designers

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[27] Beth Reiber, designer of the Frommer's guide, identifies herself as a "freelance travel writer" (ii). Phil Macdonald, designer of the National Geographic guide, describes himself as a "freelance journalist and writer" (8). Victoria Patience, a contributor to the Fodor's guide, calls herself a "freelance writer" (416).

are not completely constrained by their publishers. By virtue of their topical expertise,

they have considerable latitude in the material they can choose to include in their

guidebooks. The template can and generally will require guidebook designers to include

a section on local restaurants, for example, but ultimately only the designers have the

expertise to select and rate the restaurants that will be included in this section. While the

template is strategic, in other words, designers have some degree of tactical freedom

within that template. In my own case, I had an atypically large degree of autonomy in

preparing the text of my guidebook to Hong Kong. This allowed me to make topical and

rhetorical choices not normally seen in Hong Kong guidebooks, such as the decision to

eliminate the usual listings of hotels and restaurants as well as the decision to take an

explicit stance in favor of preserving Hong Kong's historical, cultural, and natural

legacies.

As the demands of the template suggest, travel guidebook designers cannot be

categorized as producers of extra-institutional technical documentation. Kimball defines

such documentation as "technical communication happening outside, between, and

through corporations and other institutions" (67). Travel guidebook production, however,

remains situated *inside* corporate institutions like Frommer's, Fodor's, and Lonely Planet.

Consequently, guidebook designers are accountable to their publishers in many ways and

often wish to continue what they view as a mutually beneficial relationship—many of the

Hong Kong guidebook designers have written multiple titles for their publishers. I have

as well. It would perhaps be most accurate to say that guidebook designers straddle the

line between two very different kinds of technical communicators, one subservient to

institutional demands, and the other largely free from them. Consequently, travel

guidebooks have both institutional and extra-institutional characteristics.

The most significant institutional characteristic of travel guidebooks is that these

instructional texts are produced within a corporate framework. In contrast, the most

significant extra-institutional characteristic of guidebooks is that they are created by the

users, rather than the *designers* or their tech-writing surrogates, of the systems the

user/traveler must negotiate. The user-produced tactical knowledge found in guidebooks

works against the system-centered technologies that disempower the user. As Kimball

puts it, "If institutions own the house and set up the game strategically, individual players

try to overcome the odds with good tactics" (71). The Hong Kong guidebooks offer their

users a compendium of these tactics, all based on the user knowledge and experience of

their well-traveled designers. Users have limited options when arranging flights to Hong

Kong, for example; they must select from flight times, fares, routes, and carriers they

have no role in determining. However, in an attempt to restore some of this lost control,

the Hong Kong guidebooks push back against the system by giving advice on how to

work the system for better itineraries, fares, and seating. The Lonely Planet guide

advises users that "the cheapest fares usually apply to a few seats per flight only, for

example, so be prepared to switch dates to get the best rates. Mid-week travel, with a

weekend overnight, is often cheaper" (Fallon 109). Fodor's provides a full page of travel

websites to facilitate comparison shopping, and suggests that users "check on prices for

departures at different times and to and from alternative airports" (374-75). The

Frommer's guide even has advice on how to get two seats for the price of one: "To have

two seats for yourself in a three-seat row, try for an aisle seat in a center section toward the back of coach" (Reiber 36).

As compendiums of user-produced tactical knowledge, travel guidebooks work against the usual system-centered order of technology. When we are users in a system-centered world, Johnson tells us, "we take for granted that which we do and unwittingly surrender knowledge and power due to our lack of reflection on our mundane interactions with technology" (10). However, a travel guidebook works to prevent this surrender of knowledge and power by offering the user a wealth of tactical knowledge for manipulating technologies, even though the guidebook is simultaneously an act of technical communication by an expert privileged with a discourse of expertise. Guidebook designers make little attempt to reflect on the ideological assumptions governing their relationship with these technologies, however. They merely consider how they can best manipulate these technologies for their own tactical ends, and then share this knowledge with their users.

Hong Kong guidebook users understand that the designers of these guides know much more about "using" the city than they do; furthermore, users value this expertise and seek the resultant sense of control it can offer. In putting this expertise to use when visiting Hong Kong, users validate the expert user knowledge the guidebooks contain. Users also provide a financial validation of this expertise in their willingness to pay the $16 to $23 cover price of the guidebooks discussed in this chapter. Users believe that guidebook designers have the user knowledge to explicate the travel-related technologies at work in Hong Kong—the metro lines, the airport and airlines, the local currency, and

so on. The user's faith in the designer is certainly reasonable. After all, the designer is an expert user of the technological systems in Hong Kong. The designer knows how to get from Central to Lok Fu on the MTR metro system, for example, or how to use the local mobile-phone network. However, it is important to note that the designer has learned how to manipulate these technologies from *using* them, not from *designing* them. This user expertise is what qualifies the designer to write a guidebook in the first place, and this experiential knowledge is the same kind of street-savvy "knowledge of know-how and use" that Johnson ascribes to the typical user of technological artifacts (5). Guidebook designers did not design the Octopus Card metro pass, for example, and they certainly cannot explain the technologies that make it work so efficiently, but they do know how to use this pass to get around Hong Kong. More importantly, they know how, where, and when to travel with this pass, because they have spent enough time exploring Hong Kong to know what places are most worth seeing. In producing this kind of knowledge, the guidebook designers gain a degree of tactical expertise that can be readily transferred to guidebook users. The designers of the Octopus Card, on the other hand, are not concerned with this kind of user knowledge. Their system-centered knowledge focuses instead on the technological artifact—the pass and the larger strategic system of rail lines, trains, and corporate investments—rather than on its users and the ways they will employ the pass tactically for their own ends.

Ultimately, Hong Kong travel guidebooks work to both broaden and restrict the options available to their users. Users gain a degree of tactical control from Hong Kong guidebooks, which are designed for extreme usability. These guidebooks provide users

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with the expert user-produced knowledge necessary for manipulating the technological

systems they will encounter when traveling in Hong Kong, such as the international

currency markets that determine the relative values of the currencies users exchange—

U.S. dollars for Hong Kong dollars, Hong Kong dollars for Macanese pataca or Chinese

yuan. However, though users gain tactical knowledge from Hong Kong guidebooks

designed according to the principles of extreme usability, this very focus on usability

obscures the fact that users are aggressively policed by the ideological assumptions and

ways of knowing embedded in the text, photographs, and even the maps of these same

guidebooks.

Travel Guidebooks, Ideology, and the Other

Just as street signs have always been an integral component of cities, maps have

always been an integral component of travel guidebooks. From a usability standpoint,

street signs and guidebook maps serve the same practical function of orienting and

guiding users to their destinations in unfamiliar terrain. Like street signs, however, maps

are much more than mere navigational aids. In an influential essay in the field of

Technical Communication, Ben F. Barton and Marthalee S. Barton argue that

cartography is an ideological pursuit that "naturalizes and universalizes a set of practices

so that the phenomenon represented appears to be described rather than constructed"

(235). In this naturalizing of ideological assumptions and practices, maps are "complicit

with social-control mechanisms inextricably linked to power and authority" (235). These

social-control mechanisms work to repress or exclude "the otherness of the Other" in the service of privileged ideologies (239).

What Barton and Barton observe about maps in general can also be specifically applied to the maps contained in Hong Kong guidebooks. A travel guidebook is an attempt by both the designer and the user/traveler to control a foreign environment and render it recognizable. The designer overlays his linguistic, cultural, and national template over a city or country so as to make the strange familiar. In this sense, a guidebook, like any map or street sign, is implicitly ideological. All seven Hong Kong guidebooks use exonyms, for example, which means that rather than Cantonese place names in Chinese characters, the guidebooks rely on English-language place names that may or may not be translations of the original Cantonese names. The focus on extreme usability makes English-only maps a logical choice, even though such maps erase the linguistic complexities of Hong Kong. The racist implications of the Cantonese name for Mosque Street are rendered invisible by monolingual English maps, for example, and alternatives to colonial-era English-language place names like Aberdeen are completely erased.

As I explain in chapter two, the suburb city of Heung Gong Tsai (香港仔) can be translated as Little Hong Kong, or more literally, Little Fragrant Harbor. However, the maps in the Hong Kong guidebooks consistently refer to the city as Aberdeen, which the colonial government named after the British Foreign Secretary who oversaw the acquisition of Hong Kong in 1841. The maps do not include the name Heung Gong Tsai, much less 香港仔, even though Cantonese is the *lingua franca* of Hong Kong. The

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English-language maps found in these guidebooks can therefore be viewed as an attempt to erase "the otherness of the Other" by replacing the local Cantonese-language place names with English ones for enhanced usability. The maps can also be viewed as hegemonic in both a linguistic and political sense, for in using a colonial-era name like Aberdeen, the guidebooks perpetuate a colonial hierarchy in which powerful English-speaking nations decide not only what and how they will name Hong Kong, but the world in general. My point here is not to indict the designers of these guidebooks. After all, in Hong Kong English, Aberdeen is officially known as Aberdeen. When locals or expatriates refer to the city in English, they rarely call it Little Hong Kong and never Heung Gong Tsai. They call it Aberdeen. What I am arguing is that the ideologies underpinning the use of the place name Aberdeen have not been challenged by guidebook designers, who are primarily concerned with usability, and as a result these ideologies have been rendered transparent and free to do their work between the lines of what appears to be a neutral instructional text devoid of ideological content. As Barton and Barton observe, "to do its work, ideology depends on its dissimulative nature not being recognized" (234). The dissimulative nature of ideology is certainly evident in Hong Kong guidebooks, though they are by no means unique in this regard.

After all, travel guidebook designing has always been an ideological pursuit, as Parsons makes clear in his treatment of Pausanias, the "father of the modern guidebook" (42). While Parsons describes Pausanias as "an honest reporter," he then goes on to suggest that this second-century Greek traveler "also had an agenda based on deeply held assumptions about the world" (29). The designers of contemporary travel guides and

other instructional texts have ideological agendas as well, and consequently the ideological dimensions of technical communication rank among the primary concerns of scholars in the field. Longo, for example, argues that "struggles for value are contained within technical writing" (16). An example of this struggle can be found in the ways that Hong Kong travel guidebooks privilege a "normal user" who embodies dominant identities and ideologies that have been normalized and rendered transparent. James Paradis argues that all instruction manuals have an "agent," which he describes as "a fictional operator who represents an average or suitably qualified individual" (367). In the case of the Hong Kong guidebooks this average agent is positioned as White, male, able-bodied, heterosexual, and native English speaking. As a result, the guidebooks provide little or no recognition of any users who might not fit this normative template.

The omission of alternative user identities in Hong Kong guidebooks mirrors larger trends in technical communication. Scholars have extensively documented how technology—and hence technical communication—has traditionally been constructed as male despite the contributions women have made to technological development (Cowan; Durack, "Gender," "Patterns"; Gurak and Bayer; Lay; Wajcman). Technology has also been traditionally defined as White, middle-class, and monolingual English. In *Race, Rhetoric, and Technology*, for example, Adam J. Banks argues that various technology sectors are "continuing to define the rhetor and the technology user as White by default" (12). Cynthia L. Selfe and Richard J. Selfe assert that computer technologies developed out of White, male, middle-class, professional culture and that English has become the "default" language of computers (435). Technical communication also defines the user

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as able-bodied. Jason Palmeri's work in Disability Studies shows that technical communication supports a "regime of normalization" that reifies physical able-bodiedness as normative while working to marginalize those with disabilities (49-50). As a user identity, White, male, middle-class, able-bodied, heterosexual, and English-speaking is positioned as normative and therefore transparent in technical communication. This is certainly the case in all seven Hong Kong guidebooks.

Like many forms of technical communication, Hong Kong guidebooks rely on a variety of rhetorical strategies that, as Barton and Barton so aptly put it, work to repress "the otherness of the Other" (239). As I explain in chapter three, however, I pay particular attention to a pair of related design practices that serve as representative examples of these rhetorical moves. I call the first move *strategies of separation and containment* and the second move *strategies of omission and erasure*. The Hong Kong guidebooks rely heavily on these two rhetorical strategies, which work to manage cultural, linguistic, and national difference in ways that assimilate, exclude, ignore, contain, marginalize, or erase that difference. In some cases, racial, national, and linguistic identities that do not correlate with the identity of the normal user are simply omitted and erased. Cantonese linguistic identities, for example, are completely effaced in monolingual English maps. This erasure is a logical extension of extreme usability, which can only be achieved when users are relatively homogenous. In other cases certain user identities are separated and quarantined in special chapters, subsections, and textboxes. By placing gay and lesbian, women, and disabled users in specially designated subsections, for example, guidebook designers set up a dichotomy between

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the normal user and the Othered user.[28] These subsections separate the normal user from

the Othered user and list additional resources where the Othered user can go for

information specific to that user's Othered identity. The guidebooks are thus positioned

as a source of knowledge for normal users only, which once again aligns with the

demands of extreme usability. In some cases, the short subsections devoted to these three

identity groups promote stereotypes commonly held by the normal user, which further

reinforces the dichotomy between the normative and Othered user.

   National Geographic Traveler Hong Kong employs strategies of omission and

erasure against gay and lesbian users, who are never mentioned anywhere in the text.

This leaves the default assumption that normative users are heterosexual unchallenged.

However, the other six Hong Kong guides rely on strategies of separation and

containment by quarantining gay and lesbian users within special subsections. These

subsections are typically devoted to either gay and lesbian travelers in Hong Kong or to

the city's gay and lesbian nightlife.

   The Rough Guide to Hong Kong & Macau, for example, quarantines gay and

lesbian users in two subsections titled "Gay life" and "Gay nightlife" (Brown and

Leffman 223, 270). The "Gay life" subsection consists of a single paragraph of less than

70 words, which lists where to go for further information on what it rather vaguely terms

"gay venues" in Hong Kong (270). In this manner gay and lesbian users are positioned

as an Other whose needs the guide, with its presumed audience of normal users, does not

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[28] Student travelers, senior travelers, and travelers with children are also given special subsections in Hong
Kong guidebooks, but as these categories of users are not socially marginalized to the degree that gays and
lesbians, women, and the disabled are, I have opted not to discuss them in this chapter.

need to seriously address. Likewise, Lonely Planet's *Hong Kong & Macau* devotes a

four-paragraph subsection to "Gay & Lesbian Travellers" and a six-paragraph subsection

titled "Gay & Lesbian Venues." The first subsection consists largely of information

about where to go elsewhere in the book for information about "gay-oriented saunas" and

other "gay and lesbian venues" (Fallon 74, 178). Both *The Rough Guide* and the Lonely

Planet guide list phone-in counseling services as a resource for gay and lesbian users,

which implicitly suggests that they are in need of counseling (Fallon 74; Brown and

Leffman 270). Needless to say, neither guide lists any resources devoted to the

counseling of heterosexual users.

While the Hong Kong guides do make a token attempt to address the needs of gay

and lesbian users, they do so in manner consistent with the stereotypes held by the

primary audience of normal users. Both *The Rough Guide* and Lonely Planet's *Hong

Kong & Macau* promote the stereotype of the gay male as a frivolous, sexually

promiscuous *bon vivant*, thereby reifying the dichotomy between normal and abnormal

user. The two-paragraph "Gay nightlife" subsection in *The Rough Guide* reinforces the

stereotype that gays and lesbians are sexually promiscuous by focusing on gay-oriented

bars and karaoke lounges. One club is even listed because it features "plenty of dark

corners," which implies that its gay and lesbian clientele are primarily interested in sexual

liaisons (Brown and Leffman 223). The Lonely Planet guide, meanwhile, flippantly

describes gay men as "boyz out on the town" (Fallon 178). In the portion of the guide

devoted to Macau, a single short paragraph laments the lack of gay entertainment options

and advises gay and lesbian users to patron gay-friendly clubs, bars, and saunas in Hong

Kong instead (315).[29] The Insight City Guide *Hong Kong, Macau & Guangzhou* takes a

similar approach to *The Rough Guide* and Lonely Planet guide, with two perfunctory

subsections devoted to "Gay & Lesbian Travellers" and "Gay/Lesbian Nightlife" (LeBas

220, 231). The sections are short, focused on sexual liaisons, and casually sexist—with a

gay club described as a "serious cruising joint for men" and the patrons of a lesbian

karaoke lounge referred to as "girls" (220). Fodor's *Hong Kong* contains a short

subsection titled "Gay & Lesbian Spots" that covers Hong Kong's nightlife, but offers no

additional information (Kidder *et al.* 220).

While Frommer's *Hong Kong* uses strategies of separation and containment to

manage gay and lesbian users, it does not employ these strategies consistently. In

addition, the guidebook is less inclined to fall back on easy stereotypes. The guide

includes a two-paragraph subsection on "Gay & Lesbian Travelers" that consists largely

of contact information for organizations, guidebooks, and websites devoted to gay and

lesbian travelers (Reiber 29). Once again, the implication is that the Frommer's guide is

for the normal heterosexual user, while gay and lesbian users should find their own

resource materials. The Frommer's guide does take a more inclusive approach in the

section devoted to entertainment and nightlife, however. While the guide lists gay-

friendly bars and clubs, these establishments are not listed separately from the default-

straight bars and clubs, and there is no mention of saunas or massage parlors.

Unlike the other six guidebooks, *Time Out: Hong Kong, Macau & Guangzhou*

devotes an entire chapter to gay and lesbian users. While this five-page chapter amounts

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[29] Most Hong Kong guidebooks contain a chapter devoted to Macau, the former Portuguese colony that lies
some 40 miles to the southwest of Hong Kong.

to an expanded strategy of separation and containment, the chapter nonetheless offers a more sensitive and nuanced portrayal of gay and lesbian life in Hong Kong despite the considerable column space devoted to gay nightlife. Alone among the other guidebooks, for example, the Time Out guide offers a contextualized explanation of the gay saunas that are an integral part of gay life in Hong Kong:

> For a place the size of Hong Kong, there are an impressive number of gay saunas. This is not all that surprising given that many local gay men live at home with their families—saunas provide a discreet venue for meeting up and relaxing, and end up functioning as de facto living rooms.
>
> (Dembina *et al.* 229)

However, the Time Out guide then goes on to reinforce stereotypical assumptions about gay men by adding that a local organization offers free HIV testing at some saunas. Gay men are thus associated with HIV, when in fact HIV should be associated with certain behaviors rather than certain identities (Scott). The Time Out guide has nine designers contributing to the text, and this may perhaps explain why a short subsection elsewhere in the guide titled "Gay and lesbian" merely lists two local gay and lesbian organizations, both of which are described as offering counseling (Dembina *et al.* 302). While the Time Out guide should be lauded for making a more in-depth attempt to discuss gay and lesbian life in Hong Kong, the guide nonetheless separates and contains gay and lesbian users from normal users while simultaneously bolstering dominant stereotypes that portray homosexual identities as dangerous, deviant, abnormal, and in need of correction.

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All seven Hong Kong guidebooks consistently marginalize female users to an even greater extent than gay and lesbian users. This marginalization of female users remains consistent with broader trends in technology and technical communication, which feminist scholars argue is male gendered. Judy Wajcman, for example, argues that technologies "embody and reinforce power relations" between not just the generic designer and user, but the male designer and female user as well (133). She asserts that technology has a "male bias" that limits and suppresses the role and expertise of female users (137). Feminist scholars conclude that traditional definitions of technology exclude female users, while dominant interpretations of technical communication as male deny the contributions of women to labor, science, and technology (Durack, "Gender").

The male-gendered nature of Hong Kong guidebooks is apparent in their consistent marginalization of female users. Only three of the seven Hong Kong guidebooks make a token acknowledgement of female users, for example. The operative rhetorical strategy behind this acknowledgement is one of separation and containment, with female users quarantined in short subsections of one to three paragraphs. The Lonely Planet guide devotes just three short paragraphs to "Women Travellers" (Fallon 64). In comparison, the guide assigns the same number of paragraphs to the subsections titled "Toilets" and "Left Luggage" (62). *The Rough Guide* includes two short paragraphs devoted to "Sexual harassment" and "Women's Hong Kong" (Brown and Leffman 46, 272).[30] The second subsection advises that "women's issues have yet to make much of an impact in Hong Kong," then goes on to list contact information for the

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[30] Puzzlingly, the "Women's Hong Kong" subsection is listed under "feminism" in the index.

Hong Kong Federation of Women, a battered women's shelter, and a women-only hotel (272). This is the extent of the information given, and no other attempt to address the needs and interests of female users is made. The Insight guide contains a single 50-word paragraph titled "Women." This paragraph is illustrative of the marginalized status of female users, given that the same guide devotes *five pages* to homosexuality in Hong Kong, primarily from a gay male standpoint. The Frommer's, Fodor's, Insight, and National Geographic guides make no reference to women users, which amounts to a rhetorical strategy of omission and erasure.

In a manner similar to women users, disabled users are also marginalized in Hong Kong guidebooks. This marginalization is grounded in dominant assumptions about what constitutes a normal body. In an article published in *Technical Communication Quarterly*, Palmeri notes that "scientific and technical discourses participate in the social construction of bodies in ways that reinforce social hierarchies and marginalize certain kinds of knowledges" (51). This phenomena can certainly be found in the Hong Kong guidebooks, which position disabled users and their ways of knowing as abnormal and hence subservient to the dominance of the normal user and what Palmeri terms an "ableist society" (49).

The Hong Kong guidebooks actually give more consistent attention to disabled users than gay and lesbian or women users, with six of the seven guides containing short subsections for disabled users. Though the National Geographic guide makes no reference to gay and lesbian users or women users, for example, it does feature a single 56-word paragraph devoted to "Travelers with Disabilities" (Macdonald 241). The

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Lonely Planet guide discusses all three categories of Othered users, but devotes the most

information—five paragraphs—to "Disabled Travellers." This information provides a

quick summary of the challenges disabled users will face in Hong Kong and lists some

relevant local resources (Fallon 64). The subsections in the Frommer's and Insight

guides take a similar approach, albeit with fewer paragraphs. Lonely Planet warns of

"substantial obstacles in Hong Kong" in the first sentence of the subsection devoted to

disabled users (Fallon 74). Frommer's cautions that "Hong Kong can be a nightmare for

travelers with disabilities," while the National Geographic guide claims that using a

wheelchair in Hong Kong "can be a nightmare" and that disabled users "should forget

public transportation" (Reiber 29; Macdonald 242). As a result, disabled users are

implicitly dissuaded from going to Hong Kong and their lives are characterized in starkly

negative terms. Likewise, the considerable efforts made by the Hong Kong government

to increase handicapped access are completely ignored, such as the audible crosswalk

timers that have become one of the city's signature sounds. Hong Kong is

conceptualized, in other words, as the able-bodied designers believe they would find it

should they become disabled. The designers are unable to rely on user knowledge

derived from their own situated practice, and so it is not surprising that the information

they provide has little value from a usability standpoint.

Interestingly, *The Rough Guide* takes a somewhat positive approach to disabled

users, claiming that they "will find Hong Kong easier to manage than they might have

imagined" (Brown and Leffman 47). The Time Out guide takes a similar approach and

mentions specific measures taken by the Hong Kong government to serve disabled

citizens, such as the widespread use of Braille and priority seats on public transport (Dembina *et al.* 300). However, the Time Out guide and *The Rough Guide* still position the disabled user as Other through strategies of separation and containment. This rhetorical move normalizes the able-bodied at the expense of the disabled.

Gay and lesbian, women, and disabled are all identity categories that can be construed as blending White and Other. In other words, users who fall within one or more of these three Othered identities can simultaneously identify as White. As a result, while the Hong Kong guidebooks repress "the otherness of the Other," they simultaneously reify the user as White. None of the seven guidebooks mention the race or ethnicity of its users—both categories that could be construed as something other than White. By constructing a normal user that is de-facto White, possibly with an affiliated abnormal identity pertaining to sexual preference, gender, and degree of able-bodiedness, all seven guidebooks have effectively ruled out any discussion of how a non-White racial identity might shape a user's experiences in Hong Kong. As a result, users from alternative racial backgrounds will discover significant gaps in the expert user knowledge contained in the guidebooks.

Many of the North Americans who travel to Hong Kong are of Chinese descent, for example, and yet none of the guidebooks recognize that these users might not stand out in Hong Kong, but blend in, with all the complications that this situation might cause. Instead, the guidebooks assume that all users will stand out as White travelers in a Chinese city. According to *The Rough Guide*, this can be a good or a bad thing. In the section devoted to crime and personal safety, for example, the guide advises that "as a

Westerner it's unlikely you'll be stopped in the street and asked for ID" by the police.

The guide also warns that if a user is out late at night, "there's nothing you can do to

avoid standing out" (Brown and Leffman 46). In both cases, the user is presumed to be

White.

Likewise, the guidebooks emphasize the Cantonese word "*gweilo*" (鬼佬), which

translates literally as "ghost man" and figuratively as "white devil." "*Gweilo*" is an all-

purpose and at times pejorative word for White foreigners, and it is often the first and

sometimes only Cantonese word that White foreigners in Hong Kong ever learn. While a

foreigner who is not White might also be called a "*gweilo*," he or she is more likely to be

called by one of the racially specific slurs in Cantonese used to refer to foreigners of non-

White racial backgrounds. Such terms include "*mo lo cha*" (嚤囉差), of course, but also

"*hakgwei*" (黑鬼), which literally translates as "black ghost" or "black devil," and "*johk*

sing" (竹昇), which refers to American- or Canadian-born Cantonese, particularly those

who do not speak Cantonese.[31] With the exception of the Time Out guide, however, the

guidebooks do not mention any of these slurs, since the user is assumed to be default

White.[32] When the National Geographic and Insight guides describe the expatriate

population of Hong Kong, for example, they associate the term "g*weilo*" with expatriates

of North American, Antipodean, and European countries (Macdonald 18; Le Bas *et al.*

37). *The Rough Guide* lists "*gweilo*"—but not "*hakgwei*" or any other Cantonese slurs—

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[31] In Cantonese, *johk sing* can be translated as "hollow bamboo," with the implication that a foreign-born Cantonese person is Cantonese on the outside, but hollow on the inside. Furthermore, water poured into a *johk sing* container does not pour out either end, which implies that a foreign-born Cantonese cannot join either Chinese or Western culture.

[32] Alternative spellings include *gwailo*, *haakgwai*, and *jook sing*.

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in its glossary of Hong Kong terms and associates the slur with "Westerners" (Brown and Leffman 353). These rhetorical moves position "*gweilo*" as the only slur significant enough to mention, while simultaneously suggesting that the citizens of Western countries are White and bolstering the assumption that White is the colorless norm for users and their home countries.

As the above examples illustrate, two contradictory goals drive the design of Hong Kong guidebooks. On the one hand, the guidebooks are *implicitly* designed to privilege a normal user while simultaneously marginalizing users constructed as abnormal—a design objective that aligns with dominant ideological assumptions. On the other hand, the guidebooks are *explicitly* designed for extreme usability. However, promoting the normal user through rhetorical strategies of separation and containment or omission and erasure leaves a substantial portion of users poorly served. This inability to serve all users undermines the usability of the guidebooks and compromises their ethical stance. The next generation of Hong Kong guidebooks must therefore be redesigned for a more inclusive and ethical form of usability that can serve any and all users. The street signs, in other words, must be replaced with new signposting that can still directs users to their destinations, but without marking some of them as *mo lo cha* along the way.

Redesigning Travel Guidebooks

The redesign of travel guidebooks will first require a radical repositioning of guidebook designers, who are typically aligned with "transmission" approaches to technical communication. This traditional view of technical communication relies on a

"windowpane theory of language," which holds that language is nothing more than a neutral and transparent delivery system (Miller 49). The windowpane theory dovetails with the conventional transmission model of technical communication in which the technical communicator merely transmits the expertise of the designer to the user (Longo; Slack). However, Technical Communication scholars assert that while instructional texts have traditionally been viewed as neutral conduits for technical information, they actually work as control mechanisms for dominant ideologies, such as ease and extreme usability, technological and economic expediency, and global fast capitalism (Barton and Barton; Dilger; Katz; Longo). As Carolyn R. Miller eloquently puts it, "If we pretend for a minute that technical writing is objective, we have passed off a particular ideology as privileged truth" (52). Though positioned as neutral, in other words, technical communication nonetheless performs ideological work.

For this reason, technical communicators can no longer hold to the transmission model and assume ideological and ethical neutrality. Jennifer Daryl Slack argues that technical communicators must be reconceptualized as situated meaning makers who are actively "adding, deleting, changing, and selecting meaning" when they design instructional texts. As meaning makers, Slack suggests, technical communicators exercise power and therefore must be "held responsible" and behave responsibly (172). The New London Group echoes this imperative for designers—a broad term that clearly includes technical communicators—to take responsibility and behave ethically: "As transformers of meaning and makers of culture, we are all deeply responsible for the immediate consequences of our Designing and, in a larger sense, our individual and

collective futures" (Cope and Kalantzis 205). In this sense, technical communicators are designers of what the New London Group terms new "social futures." Taking responsibility for designing—for making meaning—opens up space for progressive social change. Indeed, I believe this responsibility mandates that technical communicators design for equitable social futures.

In the case of travel guidebooks, designers must shift from a focus on extreme usability to a more ethical brand of usability that takes cultural and historical context into account. For example, travel guidebooks can be redesigned to encourage users to unmask dominant ideologies and consequently gain a more nuanced understanding of the places they travel to. Since Hong Kong was a British colony until its return to China in 1997, de-normalizing ideologies associated with European and U.S. colonialism and neocolonialism should be an important goal of a redesigned guidebook to Hong Kong. In *Hong Kong: Culture and the Politics of Disappearance,* Ackbar Abbas conducts exactly this kind of de-normalizing when he considers the Museum of Tea Ware in Flagstaff House, the former headquarters of the British military garrison that now occupies a green corner of Hong Kong Park. The museum's exhibits say nothing of tea's role in the opium trade or the British military's role in wresting Hong Kong from China in the mid-1800s. Abbas argues that the museum whitewashes history and plays to dominant cultural narratives in Hong Kong that cause history to disappear, "not in the sense of history having come to an end, but in the sense of its *persistence along certain ideological guidelines*" (68; emphasis original). What Abbas says of the Museum of Tea Ware, of course, could be said of Hong Kong guidebooks as well. They also operate along certain

ideological guidelines without acknowledging, much less challenging, the persistence of those guidelines. A redesigned guidebook, however, would be more aware of these ideological guidelines and push against them.

Additional ethical issues that redesigned travel guidebooks might focus on could include global warming and other environmental concerns, globalization and the world market, the hegemony of English and how, as Min-Zhan Lu has put it, other languages are "peripheralized by the power of English under fast capitalism" ("An Essay" 24). These issues are occasionally addressed in the Hong Kong guidebooks, but only in scattershot fashion and without any coherent or sustained attempt to critically engage with the questions they raise. Dominant ideologies and ways of knowing are left transparent and unexamined as a result. *The Rough Guide*, for example, observes quite correctly that "most visitors [to Hong Kong] get by without speaking or reading a word of Chinese" (Brown and Leffman 349). All of the Hong Kong guidebooks reinforce this monolingual approach with their English-only text and cartography, not to mention their failure to engage the user with questions about *why* English speakers need not worry about having to speak Chinese while in China. To their credit, *The Rough Guide* as well as the guides from Lonely Planet, Insight, and Time Out include short chapters or subsections on learning basic Cantonese phrases. Users are encouraged to try these phrases out and to "persevere" in their attempts to communicate (Le Bas *et al.* 235). Nonetheless, I would argue that users would gain a great deal from an explicit discussion of how and why English has become a hegemonic language. I am arguing, in other words, that redesigned travel guidebooks must provide users with the tools to identify and

question the ideological guidelines that shape their perceptions of the world they are traveling in.

Redesigning travel guidebooks for inclusive usability will require the validation of user identities typically defined as Other through rhetorical strategies of separation and containment (gay and lesbian, women, disabled) or omission and erasure (racial, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds that do not correlate with dominant monocultural and monolingual assumptions). This validation will necessitate replacing the normal user with a more inclusive roster of users with multiple and at times conflicting identities. There may always be an agent in technical communication, as Paradis argues, but this agent cannot be averaged into some kind of general user without buttressing dominant ideologies and identities at the expense of marginalized ones positioned as *mo lo cha*. The agent or normal user in redesigned travel guidebooks, in other words, must be reconceptualized as multicultural, multilingual, and multinational.

Despite the empowerment that redesigned travel guidebooks can offer to *all* users, including those that fit the profile of the normal user, I suspect that many users are likely to resist such a guidebook's challenging of dominant identities, ideologies, and ways of knowing. Many if not most users are, after all, deeply invested in the ideology of ease and extreme usability, for example. Many users with identities that fall within the boundaries of the normal user will also likely resist any attempt to de-Other alternate identities while simultaneously marking their own identities as social constructions rather than normalized givens. Most guidebook users both want and expect what they perceive to be objective and usable facts; they do not want to interrogate those facts, especially if

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such an interrogation forces them to address difficult questions about their own ideological assumptions. For all of these reasons, travel guidebooks redesigned for ethical and inclusive usability will have to be somewhat subversive in their rhetorical strategies.

Though I discuss these subversive rhetorical strategies in detail in chapter five, I nonetheless think it would be useful to briefly discuss them here. Guidebook maps, for example, offer a particularly productive site for implementing subversive rhetorical strategies. Guidebook designers can borrow usefully from Barton and Barton's argument that mapping methodology can be redesigned so that "difference is not excluded or repressed, as before, but valorized" (245). As I note earlier in this chapter, all seven Hong Kong guidebooks feature monolingual English maps. However, a redesigned Hong Kong guidebook could feature English-Cantonese bilingual maps as a subversive rhetorical strategy that challenges the dominance of English monolingualism while simultaneously working to normalize multilingualism. To return to the example of Aberdeen, a bilingual guidebook map of Hong Kong Island might label the city as follows:

Heung Gong Tsai (香港仔) / Aberdeen

As a result of bilingual mapping practices, users would understand that speakers of English and Cantonese have entirely different ways of knowing Hong Kong. In the process of using bilingual maps, users would internalize and "valorize" an alternate way of knowing that allowed them to better understand Hong Kong from a cultural and

linguistic standpoint. This understanding would only enhance usability, since this new knowledge would provide users with a more nuanced sense of how to "use" the city.

Johnson argues that technical communicators must "have a deeper, more conscious understanding of what it is they do" (xiv). This understanding must position technical communicators as meaning makers, as Slack suggests, and be based on an ethical dimension, so asking what redesigned travel guidebooks might look like requires asking how they will focus on the ethical dimensions of travel in order to place these dimensions on an equal footing with usability concerns. Such a shift would profoundly redefine the travel guidebook, since the genre would shift from a focus on ease, extreme usability, and expediency to a focus on ethics and inclusivity. This new focus would align with calls to reconceptualize technical communication as a humanistic endeavor. In a landmark essay published 30 years ago, for example, Carolyn R. Miller argues that technical communication should be viewed as a discipline with "humanistic value" (48). Longo, among others, has taken up this call for what she calls "humanistic technical writing," which blends humanistic forms of knowledge with more positivistic ways of knowing. Such a blend creates "alloyed knowledge" capable of critiquing the ideological forces in play in technical communication (164). This alloyed knowledge also legitimizes marginalized forms of knowledge and consequently allows technical communicators to address complex social problems that defy easy remedy when viewed through our current "scientific knowledge/power system" (166). This new alloy, in other words, can support an ethical and inclusive approach to usability that challenges dominant assumptions.

As Parsons points out in his history of the genre, the best travel guidebooks are powerful heuristic devices that help users to know the world (280). Consequently, designing such texts carries substantial ethical obligations. If travel guidebook designers like Parsons and me are to meet these obligations, we will have to redesign the genre with a full understanding of its heuristic potential. Just as street signs shape the user's perception of city streets, guidebooks shape the user's perception of the world, and for this reason, guidebooks must be redesigned with the utmost of care. Rather than merely *confirming* how users know the world, guidebooks must instead *challenge* how they know the world. Through this challenging, redesigned travel guidebooks can help build a better world.

Chapter 5

From 香港to Hà Nội:

Travel Guidebook and Coach Handbook Design as a Political Act

When I think about my work as a travel guidebook designer, I recall a story told

by the anthropologist Edward M. Bruner about his short-lived stint as a tour guide.

Bruner was hired as an academic lecturer for high-end tour groups traveling to Indonesia.

He took his academic role seriously and asked the tour group members some difficult

questions about their cultural expectations. This experiment in what Bruner terms

"interventional tourism" produced mixed results with the tour groups and complete

antipathy from the owner of the tour company. In the end, Bruner's attempt at interventional tourism got him fired (7).

Though Bruner had little success with interventional tourism, I nonetheless think he was on the right track. In fact, I like to conceptualize my work as a guidebook designer as a form of interventional tourism. I want my guidebooks to challenge the cultural assumptions of their users in ways that cause them to acquire deeper understandings of the places they travel to. I want to offer them conceptual and strategic instruction rather than just instrumental and tactical instruction.[33] I know that I run the risk of annoying or even angering guidebook users by taking an interventional tourism approach, however. This could mean bad customer reviews on *amazon.com* and fewer guidebooks sold. Ultimately, I could share Bruner's fate and lose my job. For all of these reasons, I know that my approach to interventional tourism has to hinge not just on alternative rhetorical strategies not normally seen in travel guidebooks, but on *subversive* rhetorical strategies. I have to be interventional without the user noticing.

Unless, of course, I have the luxury of designing a travel guidebook for users who are already receptive to interventional tourism. Rick Steves targeted just such an audience for his *Travel as a Political Act*, an innovative new guidebook for progressive-minded users that focuses not on a specific destination, but on a specific way of travel. Steves explains his brand of travel as follows:

> When we return home [from abroad], we can put what we've learned—our newly acquired broader perspective—to work as citizens of a great nation

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[33] See chapter four for my explanation of these terms, which I derive from Kimball and de Certeau.

> confronted with unprecedented challenges. And when we do that, we
>
> make travel a political act. (iv)

Unlike the members of Bruner's tour group, the users of *Travel as a Political Act* are self-selected and inclined to accept the guide's brand of interventional tourism. However, I am designing guidebooks for mainstream users, who generally have little interest in mixing travel with politics. These users are looking for extreme usability, not interventional tourism. So while the users who purchase *Travel as a Political Act* will likely respond positively to interventional tourism, mainstream users will likely resist such engagement.

I point these realities out as a way to preface this chapter, which I devote to the implementation of reflexive design practices in my guides to the history and culture of Hong Kong (香港), Macau (澳門), and Hanoi (Hà Nội). Specifically, I discuss how travel guidebook designers can utilize the theoretical framework of this dissertation, and how this utilization can play out in terms of rhetorical strategies, subversive or otherwise. In this chapter, in other words, I describe how a focus on interventional tourism can turn travel guidebook designing into a political act.

Redefining the Travel Guidebook Designer

While travel guidebook design may seem like a contemporary art, the practice actually began at least eighteen centuries ago. In fact, travel guidebook designers can trace their lineage all the way back to Pausanias, the second-century Greek traveler who

pioneered the genre (Parsons).[34] Guidebook designers have served millions of travelers

for nearly two millennia, from medieval pilgrims bound for the Holy Land to

contemporary backpackers bound for the beaches of Thailand. Though they may have

served travelers well over the centuries, however, travel guidebook designers are not

above reproach. The texts they design are often problematic in their reflection of

dominant ideologies and power structures. Guidebooks were and are a product and

promulgator of European and U.S. colonialism and neocolonialism, for example. As

Nicholas T. Parsons explains in his exhaustive history of the travel guidebook, "if one

accepts that tourism, like most forms of investment, aid, and other intervention in poor

and vulnerable countries, contains an element of witting or unwitting colonialism, then

the guidebook will inevitably be complicit in this" (262).

Fortunately, there is no inherent reason why guidebook design must support

colonialism or other hegemonic projects. The genre can be redeemed through a

comprehensive redesign that centers on the use of reflexive design practices. This

redesign must make negotiation with difference its core value, and this reconfiguration

turns guidebook design into a political act. Undertaking such a redesign requires

designers to take responsibility for their own designing and to recognize that through this

practice they are creating what the New London Group terms "social futures." These

new social futures might reproduce the ideologies of the present, or they might challenge

and replace them. Steves chose the latter option when he designed *Travel as a Political*

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[34] Parsons reminds us that his history of the guidebook genre is "Eurocentric," but that the guidebook has a long history in other cultures as well, including Islamic culture and various cultures in Asia (256). While I restrict this dissertation to the redesign of Euro-American English-language guidebooks, research into the design practices of guidebooks produced in other languages for other cultures would be a productive and complementary exercise.

Act. He clearly understands and accepts the ethical responsibilities associated with designing, as evidenced by his guidebook and his hopes for a new and more progressive social future.

Just as Bruner sought to redefine the role of the tour guide, I seek to redefine the role of the travel guidebook designer. My goal is to position these designers as empowered technical communicators, with all of the professional and ethical obligations that such a role implies. I want guidebook designers to move beyond the traditional approach to technical communication, which positions the technical communicator as little more than a neutral transmission system (Slack). I want guidebook designers to acknowledge that they are situated individuals who subjectively assemble meaning and negotiate difference, not disinterested parties who merely collect and catalogue objective facts that never come into conflict. I want designers, in other words, to account for their own subjectivity.

I want users to be fully aware of the subjective nature of travel guidebook design as well. Travel guidebook publishers are not particularly interested in fostering this awareness, and consequently the inherent subjectivity of their guidebooks is often concealed beneath a veneer of objective neutrality. Most travel guidebooks downplay the names of their designers. None of the guides to Hong Kong that I discuss in chapter four feature a designer's name on the front cover, for example. Instead, they display trusted brand names—Fodor's and Frommer's, Rough Guide and Lonely Planet. In effect, the brand itself becomes the designer. The names of the individuals who actually did the

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designing, meanwhile, are buried on a front or back page separate from the main body of text. In some cases, the names simply disappear.

Determining exactly who designed a guidebook is further complicated by the fact that different editions of the same guidebook often have different designers. This is a common practice in the travel guidebook industry for reasons that have to do with expediency and profit—it is far cheaper and quicker to have a new designer modify an existing text than to design an entirely new one. The editors of *Time Out: Hong Kong, Macau & Guangzhou*, for example, thank "all contributors to previous editions of *Time Out Hong Kong*, whose work forms the basis for parts of this book" (Dembina *et al.* 4). The names of these contributors are not provided, however, and exactly what portions of the text they designed is not specified. In the case of the Lonely Planet guide to Hong Kong, the publisher switched designers between the 10th and 11th editions. Steve Fallon took over for Damian Harper, but Fallon merely modified and updated Harper's text. Fallon alone is credited with designing the 11th edition, however. This layering of "designership" makes it difficult for the publisher, much less the user, to determine who the actual designer is of any given portion of a guidebook's text.

Removing the designer's name from the front cover is both a calculated rhetorical strategy and a convention of the travel guidebook genre, as is the use of the third-person point of view, which further reduces the presence of the designer. The first-person voice remains limited or simply nonexistent in the Hong Kong guides, for example, which lends them an objective, journalistic quality. This erasure of the designer works to position guidebooks as objective compendiums of factual information rather than

subjective collections of impressions, experiences, and opinions. As Parsons notes, while some guidebooks are polemical, most adopt a neutral tone that disguises the designer's cultural assumptions as natural truth. As a result, "underlying cultural or other assumptions emerge only by default" (xxii).

The subjectivity of guidebook designers is not something most users really consider, since the designer has been so thoroughly scrubbed from the text. Just about every traveler I meet in Asia seems to be toting a guidebook, but they almost always refer to these guidebooks by their publishers, not their designers. "Well," a traveler might tell me over an iced *cà phê sữa* or cold bottle of Bia Hà Nội, "it says in the Lonely Planet book that you can catch the night train from Hanoi to Sapa." In my experience, users rarely refer to the designer of a guidebook by name, unless they are a guidebook designer themselves or have met the designer personally. In general, travel guidebooks are perceived as de-authored texts, which means that, among other things, the designers do not have to concern themselves with ethical issues—they can just list the pubs and post offices, the bus stations and backpacker guesthouses, and be done with it. As a result, travel guidebook designers can dodge ethical questions while simultaneously upholding the ideologies and lines of power implicitly embedded in their texts.

As a first and rather obvious step towards repositioning guidebook designers as subjective and situated individuals, designers must insist that their names be placed on the front covers of their guides. They must insist on this point even if a team of designers created different portions of the text, as is frequently the case. Getting the names of designers on the front cover is a reflexive design practice that establishes much more than

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just some well-deserved name recognition, though none of the guidebook designers I know would turn such recognition down. Rather, it is an issue of establishing that guidebooks are written by real people with situated identities composed of unique assortments of knowledges, biases, ideologies, and experiences. Making this point explicit for the user would be a significant step forward for the travel guidebook genre, as it would counter the assumption that travel guidebooks are objective fact devoid of ideological content.

I am fortunate to work for a publisher—ThingsAsian Press—that supports innovative design practices, including those that I would classify as reflexive design practices. ThingsAsian Press consistently foregrounds the identities of its designers, for example. My name is on the front cover as well as the spine of both of my guidebooks along with the name of the photographer—my wife, Jill Witt. Just as significantly, the company name and logo are absent from the front covers of my guidebooks. I also use the first-person voice throughout my guides. In fact, I made sure that the introductory chapters in both guidebooks contain the word "I" in the very first sentence. I also include short biographical descriptions and photographs of Jill and myself at the back of each guidebook, though in future editions I will likely choose to put them at the front of the text in order to reinforce that my guidebooks have a designer. These simple rhetorical strategies are subversive because while they appear to merely identify me as the designer of *Strolling in Macau* or *Exploring Hong Kong*, they simultaneously remind the user that I am a subjective and situated designer rather than a neutral transmission system that is no more animate than a fax machine or radio. However, these rhetorical strategies are

not sufficient in and of themselves, because while they emphasize that I *am* situated, they tell the user very little about *how* I am situated.

Situating the Travel Guidebook Designer

Foregrounding the fact that travel guidebooks are designed by real people is crucial, but this rhetorical move will only take travel guidebooks to a new level if those real people explain where they are coming from. Literacy expert James Paul Gee believes that we are all ethically obligated to reveal our "tacit" assumptions or theories when those assumptions might privilege us at the expense of others (Gee, *Social* 20). I believe that this imperative is particularly critical when designing instructional texts that deeply influence user knowledge, such as travel guidebooks. As Parsons points out, the best travel guidebooks are heuristic texts that shape how users come to know the world (280). As such, they are instruments of great power that always work to uphold certain tacit assumptions. For this reason, travel guidebook designers are ethically obligated to reveal their ideological allegiances, particularly those that have been normalized as common sense and consequently rendered invisible.

As part of this effort to make their tacit ideological assumptions visible, guidebook designers must situate themselves for their users. This is a reflexive design practice that is common in academic writing, but largely absent from instructional texts, particularly those designed in institutional contexts. Designers must explicitly situate themselves so that users will have some sense of where designers are coming from. As a

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guidebook designer, I believe that this is an ethical obligation, and consequently I make my ideological positions clear in the introduction to my guide to Hong Kong:

> While I sought to be fair and objective when writing this guidebook, I nonetheless found myself pulled into the ongoing debate about the city's future. Indeed, my concern for the city's future remains a dominant theme of this guidebook. Land-reclamation schemes, redevelopment plans, and massive infrastructure projects that often benefit corporate interests more than the average citizen continue to destroy the city's heritage. Both the history and the culture of Hong Kong stand at extreme risk, as epitomized by the recent demolition of the old Star Ferry Terminal in Central despite a strong public outcry. The city's natural environment is also in jeopardy, as evidenced by the ongoing development of Lantau Island and the increasingly endangered pink dolphins that swim off its shores. Fortunately, Hong Kong residents have begun demanding that their government rethink its emphasis on continual—and highly profitable— development no matter how destructive to the city's heritage and natural environment. I stand in support of Hong Kong residents fighting to preserve their city's heritage, and I hope this book can make some small contribution in the battle to preserve Hong Kong's historic, cultural, and natural legacy. (Bailey, *Exploring* 8)

Michael Ingham's *Hong Kong: A Cultural History*, which straddles the line between guidebook and travel narrative, provides yet another example of how guidebook

designers can situate themselves. Ingham does not pretend to be objective and does not position himself as a neutral delivery system. Instead, he directly acknowledges his own subjectivity in the preface to the main text:

> I make no apologies for my ideological positions, which are not, I hope, inflicted too heavy-handedly on the reader. Being non-committal and dryly factual throughout would make for anodyne prose in a book such as this, and would in any case be inappropriate in the context of such a vibrant city-with-attitude as Hong Kong undoubtedly is. (x)

Ingham ends his preface with a dedication that reveals his ideological position when it comes to the question of democracy in Hong Kong. After thanking various friends and family members, Ingham ends the preface with the following statement: "I dedicate the book to the resilient spirit of the people of Hong Kong, who—unlike their Chief Executive—are prepared to stand up for the universal suffrage they know is their right" (xi). On the question of democracy in Hong Kong, as with many other issues, Ingham ensures that users know exactly where he stands.

Steves offers yet another example of how guidebook designers can situate themselves. In a manner that echoes Bruner's interventional tourism, Steves positions himself as a "travel teacher" in his guidebook *Travel as a Political Act* (vii). He tells his users that

> By the nature of this book, you'll get a lot of my opinions. My opinions are shaped by who I am. Along with being a traveler, I'm a historian, Christian, husband, parent, carnivore, musician, capitalist, minimalist,

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member of NORML, and a workaholic. I've picked up my progressive

politics (and my favorite ways to relax) largely from people I've met

overseas. And I seem to end up teaching everything I love: history, music,

travel…and now, politics. (ix; ellipses in original)

Steves makes his own ideological position clear, and in doing so, foregrounds the

subjective nature of his guidebook. This rhetorical maneuver is one that I believe all

travel guidebook designers are ethically obligated to perform, and yet very few do. As a

result, the ideological theories held by designers that inform the design of their

guidebooks remain opaque or simply invisible to the user, and the subjectivity of their

guidebooks remains largely unacknowledged.

The kind of explicit self-situating that I am calling for tends to interfere with

extreme usability, the primary design goal of most instructional texts, including travel

guidebooks. Situating the designer works against extreme usability, which seeks to erase

all vestiges of historical, political, and cultural context in the interest of ease and usability

(Dilger). The institutional design templates that many travel guidebook designers must

adhere to are typically geared to extreme usability. However, while I am certainly

concerned with usability issues, I am not personally or professionally beholden to an

ideology of ease or extreme usability. Though my guidebooks feature a uniform visual

appearance based on a master design template developed by ThingsAsian Press, I am not

required to follow any form of institutional template when it comes to textual

organization, style, and content. This gives me the freedom to make design choices that

are not available to guidebook designers focused on extreme usability, such as

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eliminating the tedious hotel and restaurant listings that are the bane of guidebook designers from Munich to Manila. Such listings are an expected component of guidebooks geared to tactical instruction and extreme usability, but these are not my concerns. Rather, I am concerned with strategic or conceptual instruction, and for this reason focus on the history, culture, and politics of the cities I describe in my guidebooks. Such an approach is a reflexive design practice, and it is well suited for interventional tourism.

Challenging Dominant Assumptions

Just as travel guidebook designers are obligated to make their ideological assumptions visible to the user, they are also obligated to employ rhetorical strategies that push back against dominant assumptions, particularly when that shove opens up space for strategic and conceptual knowledge that can help the user negotiate cultural, linguistic, and national difference. Implementing rhetorical strategies of this sort might seem to invite trouble. After all, as Steves observes, the conventional wisdom in the guidebook industry is that "injecting politics into your travel writing is not good for business" (3). Guidebook designers who challenge dominant ideologies are likely to be perceived as challenging the belief systems of their users, and this can provoke a ferocious backlash. As I can attest from personal experience, users who are dissatisfied with a guidebook for any reason can display an impressive degree of umbrage. An *amazon.com* customer review of *Frommer's Hong Kong*, which was designed by Beth Reiber, began with the following rant: "If there is a hell for travel writers, I hope Beth Reiber will burn in it"

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(Delta). While I have not yet been on the receiving end of a review that consigns me to

my own special guidebook fire down below, I have been the target of at least one

scathing customer review. While the review seems to be concerned with usability, a

telling comment about editorializing suggests that the real issue has to do with my

situated examination of Macau's historical and cultural context. Rather than just the facts,

in other words, I provide my take on the facts as well. The review begins by stating that

Strolling in Macau "sounds more editorial than informative," and goes on to conclude

that "it was completely useless and a waste of money" (L. to "Amazonian"). I can only

imagine what would have happened if I had more overtly inserted politics into my

guidebook. This is why, in fact, I often rely on subversive rhetorical strategies that

operate below the radar.

One such rhetorical strategy involves the use of photographs that are subversive in

terms of how they depict the cities covered in my guidebooks. In *Hong Kong: Culture*

and the Politics of Disappearance, Ackbar Abbas notes that "stereotypes of otherness"

are common in photographs of the city (98). One such stereotype is a Chinese junk under

full sail in Victoria Harbour with the high-rise skyline of Hong Kong Island in the

background. The covers of the National Geographic guide to Hong Kong, the Frommer's

pocket guide *Hong Kong Day by Day* and the DK Publishing pocket guide *Top 10 Hong*

Kong, and Ingham's *Hong Kong: A Cultural History* all feature just such a photo, which

promotes what Abbas identifies as simplistic East-meets-West, modern-versus-ancient

dichotomies (71). In a reflexive consideration of design practices that is extremely rare

in guidebooks, however, *Time Out: Hong Kong, Macau & Guangzhou* deplores the use of

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such stereotypical photos, and singles out shots of Chinese junks and rickshaws as "stale images from a long-ago past" (Dembina *et al.* 25).

In my own guide to Hong Kong, I opted not to include photos of Chinese junks, both because such images perpetuate stereotypes and because they are factually misleading. After all, as far as I know, there is only *one* authentic Chinese junk left in Hong Kong—the restored *Duk Ling* (*Clever Duck*), originally built in Macau and now used for harbor tours and charter cruises. As a calculated rhetorical strategy, the elimination of photos that depict Chinese junks, rickshaws, and other "stereotypes of otherness" is subversive by omission. Few users will notice their absence. The strategy of adding photos that push against stereotypes of otherness, on the other hand, is subversive by inclusion. My guide to Hong Kong, for example, includes photos of tugboats, barges, ferries, police patrol boats, and container ships. Collectively, these photos depict Victoria Harbour as the modern working port that it is. Rhetorical strategies of inclusion and omission will provoke little or no resistance from users, while simultaneously challenging stereotypes and providing a more nuanced portrayal of Hong Kong. These rhetorical strategies make it possible to facilitate interventional tourism without the backlash.

Inclusive Usability

Travel guidebook designers are ethically bound to take an inclusive approach to usability that pushes against the notion of a normal user and incorporates a broad sense of user identity. As I discuss in chapter four, the normal user mirrors dominant identity

markers and is the presumed audience for instructional texts, including travel guidebooks. The designers of these guidebooks construct user identities as White, male, able-bodied, heterosexual, and English speaking. Users who do not fit the identity template of the normal user are marginalized as a result—shunted to special subsections of guidebooks or simply ignored altogether. Not uncoincidentally, extreme usability and the normal user are complementary, since catering to a more diverse roster of users goes against the logic of extreme usability. The nature of extreme usability requires streamlined and homogenized user identities, since more diverse identities complicate usability. Designing guidebooks for more inclusive usability does not preclude a guidebook with a high degree of usability, of course, but it does preclude a simplistic approach to usability. An inclusive approach, in other words, is a more complex one by virtue of the multiple user identities that must be acknowledged, validated, and accommodated.

While inclusive approaches to guidebook design remain uncommon, the Hong Kong guides offer the occasional example of rhetorical strategies that both take an inclusive approach to user identity and attempt to explicitly de-normalize dominant monocultural and monolingual assumptions. Unlike the other Hong Kong guidebooks I discuss in chapter four, for example, *Time Out: Hong Kong, Macau & Guangzhou* contains a full-page textbox devoted to Cantonese racial views and racial discrimination in Hong Kong (Dembina *et al.* 16). The textbox makes no assumptions about user identity and discusses Cantonese racial attitudes and racial slurs for foreigners of diverse backgrounds, including Sikhs, Punjabis, and other ethnic groups from the Indian Subcontinent; the Filipinos and Indonesians who comprise the bulk of the city's domestic

workers; foreigners of African descent; and lastly, White foreigners. The Time Out guide is careful to link the racial slur "*gweilo*" (鬼佬) with a White racial identity rather than a national identity. In linking "*gweilo*" with U.S., European, and Antipodean national identities, the other six Hong Kong guidebooks construct these nations as White-only, a subversive rhetorical move that bolsters the normal user and positions White as the colorless norm. In refusing to make such a move, the Time Out guide challenges dominant assumptions, promotes conceptual knowledge, and takes a more inclusive approach to user identity.

A focus on inclusive usability requires new rhetorical strategies, as the examples from the Time Out guide illustrate. Older strategies, meanwhile, may have to be retooled or simply discarded. Inclusive usability necessitates, for example, that designers abandon rhetorical strategies of separation and containment as well as strategies of omission and erasure. These rhetorical strategies have been such an integral part of travel guidebook design for so long that they have become commonsensical and hence unquestioned, as a story from my own work as a guidebook designer demonstrates.

When I designed *Strolling in Macau*, I included a four-paragraph subsection titled "Handicapped Access" (Bailey 185). My well-intentioned goal was to better serve disabled users, but in attempting to do so, I had uncritically fallen back on strategies of separation and containment. In the years after *Strolling in Macau* was published, I began working on this dissertation and conducting the reflexive process of articulating my ethical responsibilities as a guidebook designer. Consequently, when I designed *Exploring Hong Kong*, I abandoned strategies of separation and containment altogether.

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Rather than a special subsection for disabled users, I employed an alternative rhetorical strategy that integrated descriptions of possible physical barriers into the primary text of the book. When describing the near-vertical trek up 3,000-foot Lantau Peak, for example, I do not reference disabled users. Instead, I begin my description of hiking conditions with the following statement: "The trail to Lantau Peak is physically demanding and should only be attempted if you are comfortable with a steep and lengthy uphill climb" (Bailey 184). I address this description to *all* users and let individual users decide for themselves whether they can handle the strenuous clamber up the rocky face of Lantau Peak. This approach is broadly in line with my recommendation that designers should not presume to speak for other identities.

While I believe that guidebook designers should be cautious about speaking for identities they do not hold, I also believe that designers should always acknowledge those alternative identities. To give just one example of how this acknowledgement might play out, the designers of Hong Kong guidebooks could do a much better job of acknowledging the city's diverse linguistic identities. The text of each Hong Kong guidebook is entirely in English, for example, with the exception of chapters or subsections devoted to learning basic Cantonese phrases. Other than these chapters, which amount to strategies of separation and containment for non-English linguistic identities, there is no use of the *lingua franca* of the city that the guidebooks purport to describe. As a result, the guides refuse to engage with linguistic difference and rely on strategies of omission and erasure to efface Cantonese from the text. More broadly, the designers of the Hong Kong guides fail to problematize the dominance of English and fail

to make the guidebooks reflect the multilingual nature of Hong Kong. As a result, potentially productive opportunities for interventional tourism are lost.

Unique design opportunities are lost as well. Designers working in other genres understand that linguistic engagement is possible in diverse forms of text. Certainly this is true in creative works, such as Cormac McCarthy's novels, which often blend Spanish and English. Even the popular television series *Heroes* playfully shifts between English and Japanese, with occasional forays into Spanish, French, and other languages. In academic texts, a good example of this engagement is LuMing Mao's *Reading Chinese Fortune Cookie: The Making of Chinese American Rhetoric*, which integrates Chinese characters into its English-language text. I perform a similar rhetorical strategy in this dissertation by supplying the Chinese characters for Cantonese words like "*heung gong yan*" (港人) or "*tai fung*" (大风).

In my guidebooks to Hong Kong and Macau, I address language issues in ways that accentuate the multilingualism of both cities.[35] I place particular emphasis on linguistic hybridity, which allows me to subtly reinforce that globalization is an ongoing process of hybridization. This take on globalization runs counter to dominant narratives, which present globalization as a process of differentialism, in which cultures are pure and unchanging, or homogenization, in which all cultures inevitably converge to a Western template (Nederveen Pieterse). Positioning globalization as a process of hybridization is

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[35] Though Cantonese is spoken by approximately 95 percent of the population in Hong Kong, the city is officially trilingual, with Mandarin and English widely spoken. Macau is also multilingual, with Cantonese the dominant language. The use of Mandarin and English is increasingly widespread as well. Though Portuguese is still an official language in Macau, a relatively small number of residents speak the mother tongue of the city's former colonial masters.

a subversive rhetorical move because hybridization undermines dominant monocultural

and monolingual assumptions. I make this move in *Exploring Hong Kong* when I discuss

the linguistic hybridity of the city's place names:

Hong Kong Place Names: An English-Cantonese Fusion

The English-language names of geographical features in Hong Kong reflect the mix of Cantonese and English spoken by its residents. Districts, villages, and islands sometimes have English names, sometimes have Cantonese names, and sometimes have both. Often they have names that blend both languages. Here's a quick guide to how places got named in Hong Kong.

English names—The colonial British gave English names to many locations in Hong Kong, including, for example, Central, Admiralty, and Happy Valley. However, Cantonese speakers have always used different place names with entirely different meanings when referring to these same locations. Thus English speakers would say "Causeway Bay" while Cantonese speakers would say "Tung Lo Wan" (Copper Gong Bay). English spellings still follow the British model in Hong Kong, which is why, for example, Victoria Harbour is usually spelled with the letter *u*. In deference to this practice, I have used British spellings for place names throughout this book.

Cantonese names—Many place names are based on the original Cantonese name, such as Lo Wu, Cheung Chau, Sheung Wan, and Chek Lap Kok. The names are not translated into English and since most English speakers don't speak Cantonese, the original meaning of the place name is lost. Very few English speakers know that Cheung Chau means "Long Island," for example. Spellings for Cantonese place names are not particularly consistent either. For example, Wan Chai, Wanchai, and Wan Tsai are all acceptable spellings for the same district.

English-Cantonese names—Place names often combine both languages. Aberdeen, for example, is sometimes called Little Hong Kong, which is a semi-translated version of the Cantonese name for the city. Lantau Island, Tolo Harbour, and Chungking Mansion are all examples of names that blend both languages.

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> **Other languages**—Sometimes a foreign word slips into place names, as in Aberdeen Praya Road or Stone Nullah Lane. *Praya* is the Portuguese word for a waterfront promenade. The term made its way to Hong Kong via Macau, the former Portuguese colony 40 miles (64 km) to the southwest. *Nullah* is an Anglo-Indian word for a rocky watercourse or drainage ditch. The term came from Hong Kong's Indian community, which has been present in the city since the arrival of the British.

<div align="right">(Bailey, <i>Exploring</i> 80)</div>

Elsewhere in *Exploring Hong Kong* I emphasize the city's multilingual character and attempt to enact a form of interventional tourism by encouraging the user to engage with Hong Kong's complex linguistic history:

> **The Names of Hong Kong (香港)**
>
> Most Hongkongers *(Heung Gong Yan)* speak Cantonese, though quite a few speak English and/or Mandarin Chinese as well. This makes a task as simple as naming Hong Kong rather complicated. After all, what you call the city depends on the language you speak.
>
> **Hong Kong**—The most common English-language spelling of the city's name.
>
> **Hongkong**—A less common alternative spelling sometimes seen in Hong Kong English.
>
> **Heung Gong**—Cantonese spelling of Hong Kong when rendered in the Roman alphabet.
>
> **Fragrant Harbour**—The most common translation of the Cantonese name for Hong Kong. Hong Kong English generally conforms to the spelling rules of British English, which means "harbor" is spelled with a "u" in Hong Kong. Speakers of U.S. English, however, would spell "harbour" without the "u".
>
> **Incense Port**—An alternative and less commonly used translation of the Cantonese name for Hong Kong.

Xianggang—The most common Mandarin Chinese (*Putonghua*) spelling of the name when rendered in the Roman alphabet.

Hsiang-kang—A less common Mandarin Chinese spelling of Hong Kong.

香港—Chinese characters for Hong Kong, which are the same in both Cantonese and Mandarin. The character 香means "fragrant" or "incense," while the character 港 means "harbor" or "port."

Hongkers—Expat slang for Hong Kong, probably of Aussie origin.

Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China—The official name for the city since the end of British colonial rule in 1997. The former Portuguese colony of Macau is the only other Special Administrative Region in China.

HKSAR—The official abbreviation for the city since the 1997 handover to Chinese rule.

The Crown Colony of Hong Kong—The official name of the city during British colonial rule (1841-1997).

(Bailey, *Exploring* 170)

In future editions of *Strolling in Macau* and *Exploring Hong Kong*, I intend to design for an even stronger multilingual flavor that will include, for example, multilingual maps and multilingual front covers that feature the Chinese characters for Macau (澳門) and Hong Kong (香港). I also plan to incorporate Chinese characters into the primary text itself, so that whenever I refer to the district of Wan Chai, for example, I would also include灣仔in parentheses. At first glance, this approach might appear to interfere with usability—particularly extreme usability. However, such an approach actually enhances usability at the tactical *and* strategic level. In terms of tactics, the user gains the ability to identify place names in Cantonese characters. This can come in handy

when trying to catch a public light bus, for example, because these ubiquitous minibuses often do not display their destinations in English. At the strategic level, acquiring some familiarity with Cantonese, no matter how superficial, can give the user some conceptual insight into the multilingual culture of Hong Kong. Ultimately, by building a multilingual character into my guidebooks, I am turning travel guidebook design into a political act.

Travel Guidebooks as Heuristic Tools

Let me close with a story connected to my experiences as a travel guidebook designer. Two years ago Jill and I traveled to Vietnam to research my third guidebook, titled *Strolling in Hanoi: A Visitor's Guide to Vietnam's Capital City*.[36] One rainy Christmas morning we left our apartment on Thuy Khue and took a taxi to Hoan Kiem Lake, the heart of the city's Old Quarter. Our taxi skirted the green expanse of Ba Dinh Square and the imposing grey bulk of Ho Chi Minh's Tomb. We then passed the sodden national flag writhing atop the tower of the Hanoi Citadel. The Army Museum stood next door, and I could see tanks, cannons, fighter planes, and other relics of the American War on display in its rain-slicked forecourt. A few motorbike riders shrouded in rain ponchos sped down the otherwise empty stretch of Dien Bien Phu Street. The city had taken the day off, and the wet and chilly weather had driven the Vietnamese from the normally crowded sidewalks. The locals had all disappeared into the warren of back

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[36] I am currently designing the initial draft of *Strolling in Hanoi*, which has a tentative publication date of 2011.

alleys where most of Hanoi lived. Like some kind of conjurer's trick, they had vanished like ghosts into this hidden city within a city.

The Hanoians had left the sidewalks to the tourists, who tended to stay out of the alleys, with their claustrophobic tunnels and disorienting twists and turns. Undeterred by the weather, the Australian backpackers, Japanese tour groups, American *Việt Kiều*, and French college students on winter holiday were out in strength and determined to explore the city. Since the Vietnamese were all at home huddled over charcoal braziers and electric heaters, the foreigners stood out on the empty sidewalks. Many appeared to be lost, which hardly surprised me, since Hanoi's narrow streets have no logical pattern to them, and they all tend to look alike. Every street corner seemed to have a band of European or North American tourists huddled around an open guidebook, gesturing at a street map with concerned expressions and trying to figure out where they were and how to get to the Temple of Literature or Hoa Sua Restaurant or simply back to the refuge of their hotel room.

All those guidebook-packing tourists drove home for me the awesome heuristic power of travel guidebooks. All those foreigners were coming to know Hanoi through the lenses of their rain-spattered guidebooks, their Lonely Planets and Rough Guides, their Frommer's and Fodor's. I understood like never before that I had been entrusted with a great responsibility. I had been entrusted not just with designing a guidebook that would equip users to navigate Hanoi's tangled street grid, but with equipping them to negotiate the profound cultural, historic, and linguistic differences they faced in Hanoi. I had been entrusted with the job of mediating between cultures and ensuring that the

contact between them was characterized by negotiation rather than a refusal to engage. If users could learn to negotiate cultural difference in Hanoi, then they could go on to negotiate cultural difference anywhere. And if they could negotiate anywhere, then they could change the world. My design work, in other words, could have serious and lasting repercussions. This called for a carefully crafted guidebook, one that required considerable reflexivity on my part. The project demanded interventional tourism, which meant that I would be designing *Strolling in Hanoi* as a political act.

Our taxi pulled over to the curb opposite Hoan Kiem Lake, which mirrored the low-rise buildings of the Old Quarter on its unruffled surface. Despite the grey weather, Hanoians had congregated around the oval-shaped lake to play badminton, meet lovers on park benches, perform calisthenics, burn joss sticks at the Ngoc Son Temple, and enjoy leisurely strolls around the tree-shaded lakeshore. Jill and I paid the 65,000 *đồng* fare and climbed out of the taxi. I readied my notepad and pen, and Jill readied her camera. For a moment we took in the scene. And then we went to work.

Writing Center Coach Handbooks: Designing Generation 3.0

When Jill and I flew home from Vietnam several weeks later, I swapped working in the city center of Hanoi for working in the writing center of Michigan Tech. While Hanoi and Tech often seem light years apart, I can nonetheless see the parallels between my work as a travel guidebook designer and my work as a writing center specialist. The redesign of coach handbooks that I propose in this dissertation is an inherently political act, for one thing. Additionally, such a redesign is thoroughly interventional in that I

advocate new handbook designs that challenge dominant assumptions about writing

center theory and practice. I draw on the social model of design proposed by the New

London Group when I say that the design of a coach handbook may more or less

reproduce or more or less replace current paradigms of writing center theory and practice.

The Generation 2.0 coach handbooks that I interrogate in chapter three belong to the

former category, while Generation 3.0 handbooks clearly belong to the latter. Generation

3.0 coach handbooks can be designed to push against current theory and practice in ways

that fully account for the cultural and linguistic realities of contemporary writing center

work, which is characterized by a postmodern interplay of difference rather than a rigid

adherence to monocultural and monolingual templates.

For this reason, Generation 3.0 coach handbooks must be designed around the

assumption that the default identities of their users—i.e., undergraduate coaches—are

multicultural and multilingual, not monocultural and monolingual. However, this diverse

sense of coach identity cannot move beyond what Mary Kalantzis and Bill Cope call

superficial "spaghetti and polka multiculturalism" unless writing centers are

reconceptualized as inclusive communities of practice (136). To put this in the

terminology of Etienne Wenger and Jean Lave, writing centers must offer coaches the

opportunity to advance from legitimate peripheral participation to full participation

(*Situated*). All coaches must be offered this participation, not just the mainstream,

monolingual coaches who fit dominant paradigms of coach identity. Such participation

can allow coaches to gain what Wenger calls "negotiability," or the ability to make

meaning within a community of practice (*Communities* 197). This negotiability can give

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all coaches a say in the ongoing evolution of writing center knowledge, and the more

diverse the coaches, the more likely this evolution will be characterized by the redesign,

rather than just the reproduction, of existing theory and practice. Ultimately, all coaches

play a role in designing the social futures of not just their individual community of

practice, but the broader community of practice that encompasses all writing centers.

Generation 3.0 coach handbooks must also work to change the role of writing

centers within the academy. Historically, writing centers focused primarily on the

individual mastery of grammar skills, an approach grounded in what Brian V. Street

terms the autonomous model of literacy. In recent decades writing center practice has

productively evolved to a focus on collaboratively negotiating academic discourses, an

approach that aligns with the ideological model of literacy first developed by Street as

well as social models of learning of the sort proposed by scholars like Kenneth A.

Bruffee ("Peer"). Contemporary writing centers must now broaden their focus on

developing the skills necessary for negotiating academic discourses to developing the

skills needed to negotiate *all* forms of difference, be it difference between academic

discourses or difference between cultures, languages, nations, histories, and ideologies.

This ability to negotiate difference is a key communicative skill for all students, as they

will have to engage with an expanding array of difference no matter what path their lives

might take.

Along with a focus on the negotiation of difference, Generation 3.0 coach

handbooks must also embrace the concept of multiliteracies proposed by the New

London Group. Generation 3.0 handbooks must not only recognize that writing center

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work now takes place in a digital environment characterized by multimodality and new media—they must position that environment as normative. Writing center theory and practice can no longer assume that the academic essay printed on 8.5 by 11 inch paper is the default document for writing center work (McKinney). Writing centers must move beyond writing, in other words, and become the multiliteracy centers advocated by John Trimbur and other scholars in Writing Center Studies (McKinney; Sheridan; Trimbur, "Multiliteracies").

Generation 3.0 coach handbooks must also be designed for the globalized contexts where all writing center work now takes place. Among other things, this global focus means that redesigned coach handbooks must approach globalization as an ongoing process of hybridization (Nederveen Pieterse). This approach disrupts the simplistic binaries that now pervade Generation 2.0 handbooks, such as the "our culture" versus "their culture" view of coaching ESL students that renders multilingual and/or international coaches a conceptual impossibility. This global focus also means that Generation 3.0 handbooks must look beyond the United States and incorporate writing center theory and practice that stems from diverse contexts throughout the world. The practices of the multicultural and multilingual coaches working at campuses like the American University of Sharjah (AUS), for example, should be fully integrated into redesigned coach handbooks. This will allow Generation 3.0 coach handbooks to serve writing centers located outside the United States, which have been largely ignored by Writing Center Studies (Ronesi). Even more critically, this redesign will allow U.S. writing centers to learn from the practices of multicultural and multilingual coaches like

those at AUS. This move aligns with the focus on an inclusive community of practice that must underpin the design of Generation 3.0 handbooks, since writing centers located abroad will become full participants in a broad community of practice that formerly consisted *only* of U.S. writing centers.

As part of this recalibration to a global context characterized by the accelerating interplay of cultural, linguistic, and national difference, Generation 3.0 handbooks must reconceptualize writing center work as geopolitical. Writing center specialists must recognize that the work performed in writing centers has implications that extend far beyond the academy, and that these implications must be fully accounted for in writing center theory and practice. To give just one example of how writing centers are geopolitical, James Fallows of *The Atlantic Monthly* argues that U.S. universities are the primary point of contact between the United States and China. A logical extension of his argument is that writing centers stand at the epicenter of this contact, given the number of Chinese students who make use of them. Consequently, writing centers have the ability to shape U.S. and China relations, which is a profoundly geopolitical role. If writing centers are geopolitical, it follows that coach handbooks are as well. Writing center specialists have not yet recognized the geopolitical implications of their work, however, and Generation 3.0 handbooks can take a lead role in repositioning writing centers as geopolitical entities capable of pursuing specific geopolitical goals, such as ensuring that relations between the United States and China are characterized by a productive negotiation of difference instead of a destructive refusal to engage.

Major textbook publishers have yet to publish a Generation 3.0 coach handbook, opting instead to revise and update previous editions of Generation 2.0 handbooks. New editions of *ESL Writers: A Guide for Writing Center Tutors* and *The Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors*, for example, came out in 2009. However, these new editions are not significantly different from previous editions. While there are no Generation 3.0 handbooks in the catalogues of major textbook publishers, I suspect that prototypes of Generation 3.0 handbooks are being developed as in-house coach handbooks by writing centers scattered across the globe. *The Michigan Tech Writing Center Handbook*, an in-house publication, is a good example of such a prototype. This handbook reflects the values of a writing center that conceptualizes itself as a community of practice, takes negotiating with difference as its core competency, and intends to rebrand itself as a multiliteracies center. For the future of coach handbooks, the field should look to in-house publications like *The Michigan Tech Writing Center Handbook*, which have the freedom to push against orthodox conceptions of writing center theory and practice in ways that mass-market coach handbooks produced by Bedford/St. Martin's, Pearson Longman, and Harcourt Brace simply cannot.

Like travel guidebooks, coach handbooks are powerful heuristic texts. For this reason, designing Generation 3.0 handbooks carries a heavy burden of ethical responsibility. First among these responsibilities is the obligation to create inclusive designs that foster writing center communities of practice where *all* members, no matter what their cultural and linguistic background, can acquire an equal say in shaping the theory and practice of those communities. Only then can coach handbooks reach their

full potential as heuristic texts for the culturally and linguistically diverse coaches who

will work in twenty-first century writing centers characterized by the continual,

productive, and welcome interplay of difference.

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