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Bootlegging Literacy Sponsorship, Brewing Up Institutional Change

Tracy Hamler Carrick

This paper considers how community literacy programs factor into broader economies of literacy development. The author analyzes two Appalachian community literacy projects, Shirley Brice Heath's ethnographic project in the Carolina Piedmont and Highlander Research and Education Center's organizing efforts with the Appalachian People's Movement, to construct an image of sponsors of diverted literacy, people and institutions that employ three interdependent tactics to usefully redirect the means by which literacy travels through the educational marketplace.

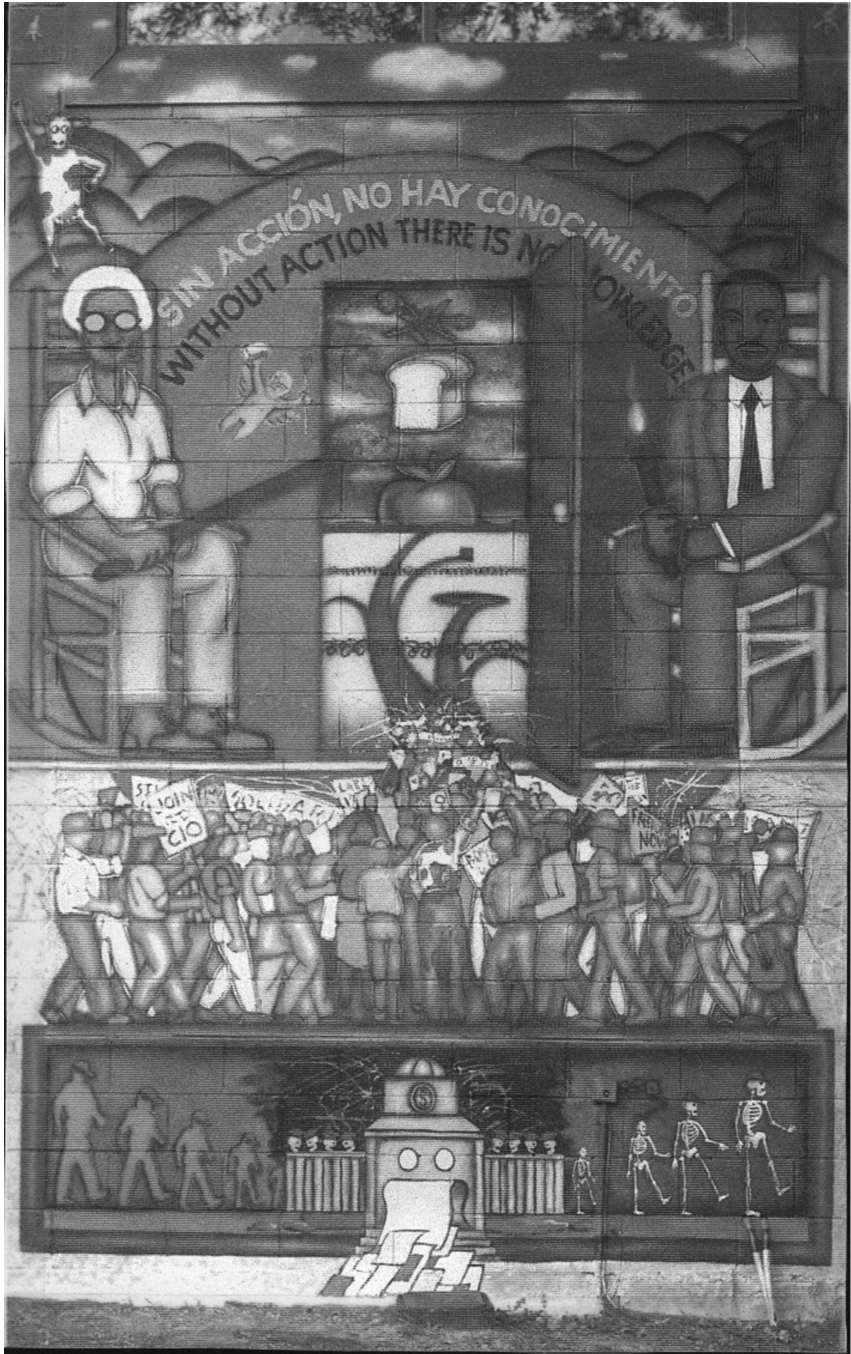
> *You have to bootleg education [. . .] The people begin to get their history into their hands, and then the role of education changes.*
>
> *—Myles Horton, Highlander Research and Education Center*

Spirits

Why not begin with the spirits that first intoxicated readers twenty-five years ago, with the people of the Piedmont of the Carolinas whose words co-mingle with those of Shirley Brice Heath on the pages of *Ways with Words: Language, Life, and Work in Communities and Classrooms*? In this decade-long study of the Piedmont, Heath opens up the sociolinguistic imaginations of all who imbibe the rich language inscribed on otherwise lifeless pieces of bound paper.

Heath's work is significant for many reasons. Her work reveals what has come to be disciplinary fact: literacy learning is deeply informed by home environments, while school performance is directly related to cultural values, heritage discourse practices, and sociolinguistic rituals of home. Moreover, in the narrative she presents, Heath demonstrates the way teachers, community leaders, families, and children themselves can work together to create an educational environment that can build bridges between what and how children already know and what and how they need to know as they enter into mainstream institutional settings. Heath, finally, is an extraordinary embodiment of literacy sponsorship, bootlegger's style.

I begin my article with this discussion of Heath for two reasons: First, the works assembled in this issue are meant to celebrate the extensive contributions of Heath's influential text, *Ways with Words*; the methodological innovation of her research design; and the impact her project has had on composition and literacy studies, academia



Mural by Mike Alewitz, located at Highlander Research and Education Center (Buhle and Alewitz)
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more broadly, and, indeed, well beyond. My article begins with a discussion of Heath and the project she initiated in the Piedmont because, like many others, I see the people of Trackton and Roadville on the first pages of my internalized master narrative of community literacy studies; I honor that beginning by revisiting the enduring features of this landmark community literacy project. Furthermore, because Heath's work in the Piedmont likely appears somewhere on the pages of all readers' disciplinary narratives, it provides a most familiar setting upon which to project a study that explores relationships between critical literacy sponsorship and meaningful educational change. To enrich this inquiry, I step from the Piedmont of the Carolinas to another Appalachian locale, a 106-acre farm in the foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains to examine the community literacy sponsorship of the Highlander Research and Education Center. The Highlander Center has worked for over seventy-five years to sponsor dynamic forms of literacy and to achieve, in many instances, the kind of institutional change that, at least by 1982, had eluded the good people of the Piedmont.

Current work in literacy studies examines, names, and defines the literate practices that diverse cultural groups develop in response to the hegemony of dominant institutions and the forms of literacy such institutions underwrite and control. It also articulates the ways individuals struggle to resist and accommodate institutional(izing) forces within economies of literacy sponsorship and development. Few studies, however, have considered the various institutions created to support and mobilize efforts to challenge the "organized economic and political interests [that] work so persistently to conscript and ration the powers of literacy for their own competitive interests" (Brandt, *Literacy* 5). These institutions in due course endorse policies that can thwart educational, social, and political parity. By extending Deborah Brandt's framework of literacy sponsorship and Jeffrey Grabill's three tactics for creating institutional change within community literacy programs, I consider how community literacy sponsorship at Highlander can "empower people to take democratic leadership towards fundamental change" (*Mission*).

Highlander

The Highlander Research and Education Center, which was earlier named the Highlander Folk School, was co-founded in 1932 by Don West, who left the school after a year, and Myles Horton, who served as the school's Educational Director from its founding until his retirement in 1970. Founded as "an adult education center for community workers involved in social and economic justice movements" (*About Us*), Highlander works to ensure that everyone—even and especially those who have been historically disenfranchised by mainstream educational systems—has access to education, to the means by which they might change their material realities. An internationally celebrated research institution, Highlander portrays itself as a community school concerned more with activism and grassroots organizing than with education per se. Though *The New York Times*, in recognizing Highlander's role in establishing Civil Rights Era Citizenship Schools, credits the school with leading "the largest and clearly the most effective mass literacy campaign ever undertaken in the United States" (Narvaez), the school is currently more visible among community activist groups and community development scholars than it is to mainstream researchers and teachers involved with literacy education.[1]

The school was initially located in Monteagle, Tennessee, on a farm donated by Lillian Johnson, an educational activist and suffragette. In 1961, after the school's charter was revoked by the state, Highlander relocated under its new name to an urban setting in Knoxville, Tennessee, where it remained for ten years. Presently, the school is located on a bucolic farm in the foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains, twenty-five miles east of Knoxville. The school itself is humble: a single schoolroom containing thirty-five wooden rocking chairs placed in a circle, a grand fieldstone fireplace, and a piano. A wall of windows affords spectacular views of the swaying fields, strong mountains, and big sky. There is an administrative building, a small resource center, a modest cafeteria, and a daycare facility. Students live communally in dormitories; when I visited Highlander during the summer of 2004, there were two rooms for women, two rooms for men, and several private family rooms. The school provides three hearty meals a day (typically local fare like fried chicken, beans and rice, grits, biscuits, and cobbler); evenings are filled with music, dancing, storytelling, and conversation under the bright moonlight and in the warmth of a crackling bonfire. And then there are the expansive and beautiful grounds in the midst of the foothills of Appalachia where students can enjoy time for peaceful reflection and stroll with others as they casually build relationships and coalitions (Kohl and Kohl) in a serene, secluded atmosphere. Highlander staff members provide nourishment to the school's visitors, people who are sometimes weary—physically and emotionally exhausted— from the work and struggles they face at home. These are people who, as Highlander describes on its website, "suffer most from the injustices of society" (*About Us*). By maintaining such an intimate and nurturing living and learning environment, Highlander staff make it possible for visitors to indulge themselves in reflection, to focus on learning, to design plans of action, and even to dwell in possibility.

Royce Pitkin, former president of Goddard College, close personal friend of Horton, and long-time Highlander supporter, speaks to the importance of these particularly unique contributions. In a November 2, 1953, letter to John Schwertman, Director of the Center for the Study of Liberal Education for Adults, Pitken explains that students who attend schools like Highlander must do so under extremely challenging conditions. They are often "people who have had relatively little opportunity to study and to ponder on some of the basic or fundamental issues in life" (Pitkin), the kind of quiet, pensive reflection Pitkin terms "this something more" in the following quote. Often among the working poor, students with families to care and provide for cannot easily arrange for extended trips away from home and work. And, when away, they are often beholden to the grave circumstances they've left behind. As Pitkin writes:

> To do this "something more" most effectively, the individual needs relief from the daily pressures of life for a long enough period of time to gain perspective and to think deeply about those aspects of the humanistic tradition that have meaning to him. For most persons this requires getting away from the job, the immediate worries of home and community and the daily routines.

The school's core values have endured for over seventy-five years: As its website promotes, the school works "to provide education and support to poor and working people fighting economic injustice, poverty, prejudice, and environmental destruction. We help grassroots leaders create the tools necessary for building broad-based movements for change." Reaching out to under-represented populations—farmers, laborers, and later, civil rights activists, student organizers, and international human rights workers—Highlander's basic curricular infrastructure takes shape through three forms of programming: a community school for those who live locally; a residential education program, typically lasting for a weekend or two weeks, for those who travel to Highlander from worldwide locations; and an extension program, which sends Highlander staff sometimes for extended periods into communities throughout the world, often to help former students implement program ideas initially developed at the school (Isgrig Horton).

Naturally, however, Highlander has changed over time in response to the local ideas, interests, and concerns of those who sit in its rocking chairs, especially members of the local community. In its early years, for instance, Highlander worked with people in the vicinity to form agricultural, food, and childcare cooperatives and to seek grants to support their efforts (Glen). It also offered traditional academic coursework in economics, cultural geography, psychology, history, and literature. Interestingly, however, students complained that faculty "dwelled on abstractions" (Glen 29), and they demanded courses that "would teach them *how* to think" (Horton and Freire 174, emphasis added). "The biggest stumbling block," Horton observed, "was that all of us at Highlander had academic backgrounds. We thought that the *way* we had learned and *what* we had learned could somehow be tailored to the needs of poor people, the working people of Appalachia" (Kohl and Kohl 68, emphasis added). The Piedmont teachers in Heath's community literacy project, of course, had a similar moment of discovery when they began the process of identifying their heritage literacies and educational values. And like the Piedmont teachers, the staff at Highlander eventually recognized that educators need to critically locate their own languages and identities and the assumptions they make about learning if they are to effectively address the educational needs and desires of students whose native literacies and learning rituals are different than their own.

Bootlegging

> *From all angles—policy to pedagogy—literacy needs to be addressed as a civil rights issue.*
>
> *—Deborah Brandt*

In her book *Literacy in American Lives*, Deborah Brandt documents the ways that ordinary people accumulate literacy over their lifetimes. As she retells stories collected through eighty one-on-one interviews, Brandt locates individual experiences within both local and global socio-economic histories. In doing so, her project unfolds as a complex analysis of the economies of literacy development; she illuminates the mundane, crafty, strategic, and sometimes unusual ways that people acquire new literacy skills and adapt existing practices as they respond to changing political economies. Of particular interest here is the conceptual framework that Brandt designed to ground

an analysis that, as she describes, "can begin to connect literacy as an individual development to literacy as an economic development" (*Literacy* 19). Brandt proffers an approach she identifies as "sponsors of literacy." As she explains:

> Sponsors, as I have come to think of them, are any agents, local or distant, concrete or abstract, who enable, support, teach, model, as well as recruit, regulate, suppress, or withhold literacy—and gain advantage by it in some way. [. . .] Sponsors are delivery systems for the economies of literacy, the means by which these forces present themselves to—and through—individual learners. (*Literacy* 19)

Since sponsors of literacy "set the terms for access to literacy and wield powerful incentives for compliance and loyalty" (*Literacy* 19), it is perhaps not surprising that, as Brandt reports, they often occupy prominent spaces within people's memories. From friends to family members, co-workers to supervisors, fellow worshippers to religious leaders, librarians to teachers, literacy sponsors are people endowed with the power, authority, or credentials of the private, professional, religious, and civic institutions they inhabit. But literacy sponsorship, Brandt adds, is not simply about explicit or tacit pedagogical exchanges between individuals; it is also deeply entrenched in its own economy, an economy of literacy sponsorship in which those who sponsor "lend their resources or credibility to the sponsored but also stand to gain benefits from their success, whether by direct repayment, or indirectly, by credit or association" (*Literacy* 19). And according to Brandt, since sponsors of literacy are typically affiliated with one dominant social institution or another, they—individual sponsors and, by proxy, the institutions they represent—do not simply benefit from the widespread distribution of certain forms of literacy; they themselves have a hand in creating markets that depend upon such literacy. In short, literacy is not economically disinterested: Sponsors work in both subtle and explicit ways to "underwrite" the literacy development of people who will ultimately produce, consume, and otherwise propagate the goods and services that the sponsoring institutions themselves provide.

Without question, Heath is etched into the memories of the people she lived and worked with in the Piedmont; their literacy development was influenced by her friendship, collaboration, teaching, professional knowledge, perhaps even simply by her presence in the community for nearly a decade. But the kind of literacy sponsorship Heath made available is uniquely situated in Brandt's scheme. Though Heath worked to make it possible for those she sponsored—the middle-class teachers enrolled in her graduate course as well as the working-class school students of Roadville and Trackton—to better access the dominant literacy most valued by mainstream institutions, she also encouraged them to engage in literate practices that enabled them to see beyond these institutions. As Heath explains:

> I believed that teachers could make school a place which allowed these children to capitalize on the skills, values, and knowledge they brought there,

> and to add on the conceptual structures imparted by the school. Children and teachers across cultural groups, if provided adequate information in suitable forms, could learn to articulate relations between cultural patterns of talking and knowing, and, understanding such relations, to make choices. (13)

Interestingly, although Heath worked within the schools to a certain extent—she trained public school teachers at the local state university, she co-designed curricular materials with them, and she spent considerable time with schoolchildren both in and out of class—she also worked outside of the schools, perhaps even against them, as she cultivated the kinds of critical literacy that made "choices" visible. On one hand, her sponsorship enabled teachers to better prepare students to enter into and support the mill economy of the Piedmont; on the other hand, it may have also poised students to work outside of it, both physically and ideologically. Like the real and folk bootleggers who traverse the dimly lit mountains and hollows of Appalachia to distribute contraband bottles—alternative choices to mainstream consumables—Heath delivered critical literacy skills—queered brew—to the teachers and students of the Piedmont.

Like Heath, Highlander has developed ways to bootleg literacy sponsorship, although the school's methods are decidedly different. Two are especially interesting. First, the kind of literacy Highlander sponsors is not necessarily motivated by economic interests or values. Like typical literacy sponsors, Highlander offers educational contexts that focus on reading, writing, research, and analytical skills. And like Heath, though perhaps to a greater extent, the school also emphasizes the critical rhetorical strategies people need to understand local social and economic problems. Unlike Heath, however, Highlander has an explicit activist agenda that targets adult learners who are already engaged in social change efforts, people who are often working against considerable opposition from powerful institutions who ultimately control economies of literacy. In Highlander workshops, diverse people work together to learn how to analyze their localized problems, situate them within larger social and political contexts, and collaboratively design plans to solve them. As explained in the school's mission statement:

> We bring people together to learn from each other. By sharing experience, we realize that we are not alone. We face common problems caused by injustice. By affirming our cultural and racial diversity, we overcome differences that divide us. Together we develop the resources for collective action. By connecting communities and groups regionally, we are working to change unjust structures and to build a genuine political and economic democracy.

In this way, Highlander supports the kind of community literacy that is imbued with the (corpo)real, the material realities of life that can be read in a face, on a hand, with language, through a voice. These embodied public literacies that reverberate through

collective efforts breathe life into a single social force, the body politic. Highlander's approach to literacy sponsorship is clearly opposed to that of most educational institutions; most educational institutions construct literacy as an object, a skills set that strips literacy of its social and material histories. Brandt argues that the mainstream view of literacy began to take shape in the early twentieth century "as economic values eclipsed religious and civic ones" (*Literacy* 144). Nineteenth-century traditions of mass literacy in America were grounded in religious and political causes; that is, individuals learned to read and write for religious salvation or to gain fuller access to citizenship. But by the twentieth century, school literacy became more deeply associated with economic interests. And as a result, Brandt, citing Jenny Cook-Gumperz, claims that literacy "began to neutralize, [. . .] becoming a 'decontextualized skill' with little intrinsic connotation" (*Literacy* 144).

Highlander offers an alternative way to construe literacy education, a way that, like Heath's Piedmont project, intentionally and strategically weaves the dynamic interplay of community languages, local histories, material conditions, and social and cultural conflict into its curricula, pedagogies, and educational mission. The school's mission statement describes this process: "The power of the Highlander experience is the strength that grows within the souls of people, working together, as they analyze and confirm their own experiences and draw upon their understanding to contribute to fundamental change." Cultivated in a context such as this, the diminished connection of literacy to religion and citizenship is enlivened in new ways: Highlander promotes a form of community literacy that is rooted in a civic religion that nurtures a deep faith in participatory democracy and a moral commitment to social justice. Like outlaw bootleggers, that is, Highlander operates within its own system of values and rewards.

Second, unlike Heath's individual model of literacy sponsorship, Highlander offers an institutional model. But unlike the models of literacy sponsorship typical of dominant institutions, Highlander does not seek to transmit a packaged set of literacy skills to the often underserved people who visit the school. Rather, it works to unsettle the economy of literacy sponsorship in a more conceptual way: by creating an educational context that encourages people to explicate what they already know, what Horton calls "the mining of the experience that students bring with them" (Kohl and Kohl 149). The rationale for this pedagogical strategy is simple: if you "get people to talking about the most important thing that had to happen in their communities" (*You Got to Move*), Horton explains, they "develop their capacity for working collectively to solve their own problems" (Kohl and Kohl 132). "I really think that what's special about Highlander," Bernice Johnson Reagon asserts, "is the risk they're willing to take. They trust people, that if you can give them some space to talk about who they are, then you have to respect what they come up with, and have to try to figure out ways to help them. And they will come up with the steps they can take in their lives to change" (*You Got to Move*).

Take but one example. During the 1970s, Highlander began working with the Appalachian People's Movement to stop invasive strip mining and toxic dumping in their communities. Many who came to Highlander as part of this effort, such as Mary Lee Rogers, considered themselves unlikely activists, even unlikely students; she explains, "Well, we was just ordinary housewives. We taught ourselves to drive. We didn't go anyplace that we didn't take the kids, which was the grocery store and maybe to the laundromat. We didn't get involved in anything, not even the PTA. We didn't feel like we had anything to donate" (*You Got to Move*). She came to Highlander because, as she

adds, she “was trying to help a friend, trying to help myself [. . .] We would stop the truck and it would be over” (*You Got to Move*).

But women such as Gail Story found that, once at Highlander, they could do even more than change their communities; they could change themselves. As Story recalls: “I didn’t like the way I was, being a housewife. Ignorant. We weren’t involved in anything because we didn’t feel like we knowed enough to be involved in anything. We felt our education was inadequate to stand up to anybody and talk about our problems” (*You Got to Move*). According to Bernice Robinson, who attended Highlander during the 1950s and later became the teacher of the first Citizenship School, finding power within is an important aspect of Highlander sponsorship. She contends:

> There are people who have gone to Highlander with their self-image down here, and they were really up here, because they did not have the proper image of themselves. I think Rosa Parks was one of the better examples of that. Her self-image was low, until she decided that “I’m really up here, and I’m going to do something about it, because I have the power.” (*You Got to Move*)

To be sure, once at Highlander, women such as Rogers and Story worked together to name and define their struggles and, with prompting, to perform the critical problem-solving process described by sociologist Kerry Strand as one in which they “question, examine, challenge, and propose alternatives to the taken-for-granted social world as they have come to know it, both through their own experience and as they have been taught or told about it” (30). But they also recognized the limits of what they could do. This is where Highlander’s sponsorship proves so essential. The school encourages people to redirect existing skills and knowledge to accomplish new tasks, tasks that could ultimately challenge economic and political systems that typically ignore the needs of their communities, institutions that attempt to render them powerless. At Highlander, Rogers and Story applied early experiences with the scientific method to collect useful data, like taking soil samples, measuring erosion levels, and tracking other environmental changes. They also built upon existing reading and research skills to decode legal and policy documents and to conduct research on the effects that certain chemicals and mining practices had on bodies and ecosystems (*You Got to Move*). Horton describes the process most plainly:

> We tried to stimulate their thinking and expose them to consultants, books and ideas, but it was more important for them to learn how to learn from each other. Then they could go back to their communities and keep on learning from each other and their actions. Since our workshops were brief—a couple of weeks or even a long weekend—they had to be tied to learning that had already taken place and was related to a problem they were still working on. We served as a catalytic agent. (Kohl and Kohl 152)

A catalytic agent indeed. Highlander provides the physical and ideological space for people to see how they can participate differently in their communities, to re-see how they might put to use the literacy skills they have, and, in recognizing what they do not know, to confidently seek out that knowledge or skill from others. Highlander provides literacy sponsorship at the precise moment that people realize they want more from themselves and from society. Most mainstream literacy sponsors do not promote grassroots activism as a viable by-product of their sponsored forms of literacy: activism does not significantly factor into the economy of literacy. In mobilizing people and the dominant forms of sponsored literacy they bring with them, Highlander works to accomplish "a subversive diversion of literate power" (Brandt, "Sponsors" 183). This is how Highlander comes into focus as a very different kind of literacy sponsor, as a sponsor of literacy diversion. Highlander endorses and facilitates collective literacy diversion.

As Brandt observes in the essay "Sponsors of Literacy," sometimes the sponsored reassign the dominant forms of literacy that they acquire: Sponsored literacy can be diverted, can be appropriated by individuals to serve their own self-interests. Sponsored individuals can either subvert the economic system that depends upon dominant forms of literacy or circumvent the system entirely to serve other systems or institutions. This is an appropriate place to locate Highlander in Brandt's scheme, though it functions rather differently from the two examples Brandt provides. In both examples, Brandt's interviewees crafted personal strategies for reassigning the literacy sponsored by employers: one used workplace skills to improve her evangelical work, the other to manage household finances (Brandt, "Sponsors"). Though these faith- and family-based diversions of literate power may not appear subversive, Brandt argues that they are. As she explains, "Once a principal sponsor of the initial spread of mass literacy, evangelism is here rejuvenated [by Carol White] through late-literate corporate sciences of secular persuasion, fund-raising, and bureaucratic management" ("Sponsors" 182). Further, Sarah Steele's "efforts to move her family up in the middle class involved not merely contributing a second income but also, from her desk as a bookkeeper, reading her way into an understanding of middle-class economic power" ("Sponsors" 183). As illustrated above, Highlander provides an institutional setting, an educational context that makes possible subversive literacy diversion of this sort, even promotes it as the most desirable outcome.

Like Heath, Highlander offers alternative choices to mainstream consumables. As a sponsor of literacy diversion, Highlander delivers to the people of Appalachia and beyond the resources necessary for queering the brew, for usefully queering the economy of literacy sponsorship.

Brewing

> *[F]or those interested in change and agency, community-based literacy institutions are fundamental spaces for access to literacies. These literacies, in turn, are one way in which individuals who lack such access can attempt to enter powerful institutions in their communities. Access to institutions through the use of certain literacies is important, then, and a significant social and public policy issue.*
>
> *—Jeffrey Grabill*

In *Community Literacy Programs and the Politics of Change*, Jeffrey Grabill builds a comprehensive institutional case of a community literacy program, the Western District Adult Basic Education Program. In conducting an institutional analysis of this program, he shows how institutions locate and control the meaning and value of literacy and reveals the ways in which these programs both succeed and fail to meet the needs of the communities they serve. He argues for "participatory institutional design," contending that participatory decision-making that includes, even privileges, the least powerful members of a community (119), can best "intervene to change institutional systems and therefore alter the meaning and value of literacy" (xix). Grabill concludes his lucid analysis with a set of three tactics that, he suggests, "can be used by teachers, researchers, and students within universities to create avenues for institutional change" (146) to create the kind of spirited intellectual environment necessary for changing well-intentioned (though somehow flawed) institutions like the Western District community literacy program. Grabill's tactics for change are research, teaching, and policy making (service). While Grabill promotes these tactics as actions designed for university affiliates invested in community literacy sponsorship, it is productive to consider how Grabill's tactics might also be useful for other participants in the economy of community literacy development, like the students and teachers of the Piedmont and the women who organized the Appalachian People's Movement.

Both Heath and Highlander established fertile contexts for imagining change within the institutions their respective students had a need and a desire to transform: They bootlegged traditional economies of literacy development and sponsorship, and, in doing so, they became significant resources in efforts to achieve institutional change. Heath's work, of course, is already somewhat visible in Grabill's model. The research and formal teaching documented in *Ways with Words* remains, even today, an extraordinary example of how two of Grabill's tactics for change can be executed. While certainly Heath's work throughout her career has both directly and indirectly led to significant changes within community literacy programs and national public policy, her work in the Piedmont, at least as it is presented in *Ways with Words*, did not result in significant public policy changes. In fact, as she reports in the epilogue, in the early 1980s, national school reform policies forced out the culturally responsive pedagogy and assessment that had generated enthusiastic community-wide involvement and engaged young people in the kind of literacy education that enabled them to taste success. To be sure, Heath is not the first to recognize the deleterious effects of the conservative school reform policies that were put in place in the early 1980s. But, although Heath put much in place to prepare the people of the Piedmont to respond to these changes, it was not enough, and Grabill's work provides an interesting perspective why.

Through her literacy sponsorship, the teachers and the students of Roadville and Trackton conducted research (Grabill's first tactic) in their home communities that "help[ed] redefine the meaning and value of literacy and provide[d] access to and voice to the powerless" (Grabill 150). They also developed a model of teaching (Grabill's second tactic) that "allow[ed] students and teachers to move into community contexts in structured, meaningful, and potentially long-term ways in order to solve problems" (Grabill 153). They did not, however, consider what it would require to relocate this knowledge, to move it from exclusively classroom spaces to more the more public places where educational policy is discussed and formulated (Grabill's third tactic).

This is not to say that Heath or, more preferably, the people of the Piedmont could have made a difference if they had been public policy participants, if they had had access to conversation at the public policy-making level. But it is possible that they could have.

Highlander, on the other hand, works with its sponsors to execute, often with great success, each the three tactics for change identified by Grabill. Research plays a significant role in Highlander's institutional mission. The school sponsors and conducts interdisciplinary community-based research that supports global social justice efforts; it also serves as a clearinghouse for related research and scholarship. Indeed, research was a significant aspect of Highlander's work with the People's Movement of Appalachia. With the school's assistance, members of this group conducted research, as illustrated above, which both substantiated and, in many instances, lent greater authority to individual experiences. Their research also "made institutions visible and uncover[ed] those boundaries and ambiguities where change is possible" (Grabill 150). Highlander also emphasizes teaching that links the school to local communities with an explicit pedagogical goal of working together to solve problems. Furthermore, Highlander introduces students to pedagogical methods that can be easily replicated at home; it prepares its students to become teachers themselves, a pedagogical method itself that not only extends the school's literacy sponsorship but also ensures that teaching and learning will become more deeply infused with local community needs, perspectives, and values. Engaging with public policy, however, is perhaps the aspect of Grabill's model that Highlander is most attentive to. Unlike Heath, Highlander devotes considerable effort to leadership training. As reflected in the school's mission statement, Highlander "creates educational experiences that empower people to take democratic leadership towards fundamental change." Sometimes the pedagogical methods are subtle; the school creates educational contexts that challenge people to assume roles necessary for becoming agents for change at home. As Horton explains:

As I have argued, community literacy sponsorship is a particularly distinctive form of sponsorship, and one that deserves further consideration, especially as practitioners and scholars seek to more deeply account for the ways that community literacy programs factor into broader economies of literacy development.

> The best way to educate people is to give them an experience that embodies what you are trying to teach. If you believe in a democratic society, you provide a setting for education that is democratic. You believe in a cooperative society, so you give them opportunities to organize a cooperative. If you believe in people running their own unions, you let them run the school so that they can get the practice of running something. (Kohl and Kohl 68-9)

On other occasions, however, Highlander offers explicit coursework designed to prepare people for leadership in their communities. In early residential workshops designed for labor unions, for instance, the school developed courses in parliamentary law, public speaking, union-community relations, and the production of shop papers (Isgrig Horton). Courses like these prepare students to locate themselves and their concerns in public spaces. They provide specific reading, research, and writing skills necessary for effective public discourse; they also enable students to develop the kind of strategic rhetorical positioning necessary for engaging the civic and political dimensions of their individual and community struggles.

As I have argued, community literacy sponsorship is a particularly distinctive form of sponsorship, and one that deserves further consideration, especially as practitioners and scholars seek to more deeply account for the ways that community literacy programs factor into broader economies of literacy development. In analyzing the community literacy efforts of Shirley Brice Heath in the Piedmont of the Carolinas and of the Highlander Research and Education Center in Appalachia, I offer three ways to imagine community literacy sponsorship, each of which construes sponsors as bootleggers. First, community literacy sponsors can make available forms of literacy that are not typically available in mainstream institutions. Second, they can assign values to literacy not characteristically espoused by mainstream institutions. Finally, they can provide educational contexts in which the sponsored can learn how to circumvent economies of literacy distribution and, ultimately, work to subvert them.

Community literacy sponsorship can assume myriad forms. Logically, it must. As Grabill contends, community literacy efforts are most successful when decision-making power is shared equally with all community members, especially members with the least power. The particular forms that community literacy sponsorship takes, then, must be carefully negotiated from community to community. To this end, I offer the metaphor of bootlegging as a broad way to conceptualize community literacy sponsorship.

To make the metaphor more generative, I have tempered it with Grabill's model for institutional change within community literacy programs. His model provides some structure, a few essential ingredients if you will, that can enable would-be bootleggers to begin crafting their own locally grown brands of diversionary literacy sponsorship. To be sure, Grabill's model provides a way for community literacy sponsors to envision ways to critically construct reciprocal relationships with sponsored members of the community. He illustrates how teaching, research, and engagement with public policy can be important tactical elements for changing not only institutions, but also the meaning and value of literacy. As I consider, however, the structural features he provides—the three tactics for change that academics can use to work for change within local community literacy institutions—are also fitting for the community members who must also work for change themselves. By applying them in strategic ways, as illustrated here, community literacy sponsors and those they sponsor can work together to brew up enfranchising, participatory processes that can both bootleg economies of literacy and re-route the means by which literacy as a consumable good travels through the educational marketplace.

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Notes

[1] In 1957, Esau Jenkins, Septima Clark, and Bernice Robinson (with Highlander sponsorship) opened the first Citizenship School on Johns Island, South Carolina. They set out to prepare people to more fully participate in civic life, and they began by designing literacy curricula that would prepare the many African Americans who could not read or write to pass Jim Crow literacy tests that prevented them from voting (Kates). But the curricula grew, according to Horton: "Along with becoming literate, they learned to organize, they learned to protest, they learned to demand their rights, because they also learned that you couldn't just read and write yourself into freedom. You had to fight for that and you had to do it as a group" (Kohl and Kohl 104). Citizenship Schools quickly spread throughout the South; conservative estimates suggest that over 100,000 African Americans qualified to vote after having attended a Citizenship School (Glen).

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