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Identity Papers

Bronwyn T Williams

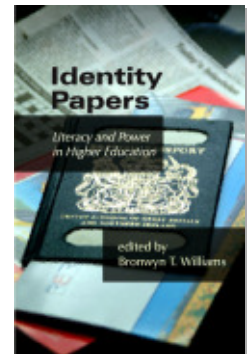
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NOTES

CHAPTER 2 (ZEBROSKI)

1. Perhaps the most important resource for the scholar interested in working class studies is the Center for Working Class Studies (CWCS) at Youngstown State University. They hold regular conferences, publish a newsletter, do community service, and support the scholarly investigation of class and the working class. The website of CWCS is <http://www.as.yzu.edu/~cwcs>. We are not alone.

CHAPTER 5 (PAULINY)

1. This column, dated January 11, 2005, addresses questions asked by four academic women (“Doreen,” “Eileen,” “Kathleen,” and “Maureen”), all of whose queries circulate around issues of professional mistreatment. To provide a fuller sense of Ms. Mentor’s response to these women, I quote her here at length: “Ms. Mentor’s sage readers will note that all of this month’s letters come from faculty women—who, like clerical staff, and maintenance women, are overworked and underappreciated. Even Ms. Mentor, in all her majesty, is not sufficiently worshipped. As for her correspondents, Doreen, in the classic minority bind, finds that she’s expected to represent everyone who is ‘other,’ and devote her time to ‘otherness’ instead of to the research and writing that feed her. [...] Someone’s also playing with Eileen, whose schedule mysteriously was ‘changed.’ And now her job, apparently, is to rise above it all, do without rest or money, be several places at once, and be cheery (‘collegial’) at the same time. Ms. Mentor doubts that anyone could do that without serious drugs.”
2. See her full-length advice text, *Ms. Mentor’s Impeccable Advice for Women in Academia* for more examples of heteronormativity, including her suggestion to a job candidate that she keep her homosexuality private (36), and her comment that coming out is only appropriate as a post-tenure activity (200).
3. Once again, I quote Ms. Mentor’s response (from her February 6, 2004 column) at length here to offer a more comprehensive sense of her perspective: “Ms. Mentor sighs and recalls the sage counsel drummed into all her agemates, during that late Victorian era: ‘Don’t do it in the road. You’ll frighten the horses.’ This month’s subject is really discretion: What to share with whom, and whether your private life should be public news. While doing her daily deletion of e-mailed ads for nude celebrities, Ms. Mentor observes sourly that sex has become the most public subject in American life—yet one with the fewest clear rules.”
4. Within this essay, I use “queer” not simply to denote the identities “lesbian” or “gay,” but rather to mark a particular kind of critical view. To borrow from Kathy Rudy’s definition, for my purposes here, I understand the term queer not as referencing the “matter of being gay [...] but rather [as] being committed to challenging that which is perceived as normal” (Rudy 2001, 197).
5. In my Introduction to Fiction course, for example, I often taught Dorothy Allison’s *Two or Three Things I Know for Sure*, which overtly discusses her experiences as a lesbian feminist. As well, I sometimes organized my Second-Level Writing class around sexuality, and asked students to read such articles as Adrienne Rich’s “Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence,” Judith Halberstam’s “Drag

- Kings: Masculinity and Performance,” and Cheryl Chase’ “Hermaphrodites with Attitude: Mapping the Emergence of Intersex Political Activism.”
6. For a list of some of these, please see the References section of this essay.
 7. Although not an advice text per se, Linda Garber’s collection, *Tilting the Tower: Lesbians Teaching Queer Subjects* (1994), does offer numerous suggestions to lesbian faculty members. It advises readers about how and when to come out, discusses the pitfalls and possibilities inherent in overtly discussing one’s sexuality in a professional setting, and comments on how queer politics can collide with the more hegemonic and heteronormative principles of academic institutions. So although the text was compiled in order to “extend the conversation about the institutionalization of lesbian and gay studies and the need for a forum in which teachers can share their pedagogies and strategies for professional survival and success,” it also elucidates the absences contained in the many texts compiled explicitly for the purpose of providing advice (ix).
 8. For more on this connection, see the essays by Ronald Strickland and Robyn Wiegman cited in the References section of this piece.

CHAPTER 7 (CARPENTER AND FALBO)

1. This argument has been made over the careers of these scholars; however, the following work is most relevant to our discussion in this paper: David Bartholomae, “Inventing the University” (2001); Mariolina Salvatori, “Toward a Hermeneutics of Difficulty” (1988); Min-Zhan Lu, “Professing Multiculturalism: The Politics of Style in the Contact Zone” (1999).
2. Literacy narratives by Maya Angelou, Frederick Douglass, and Lorene Cary are frequently taught at Lafayette, so some Writing Associates will have encountered these texts.
3. Nancy Sommers (2003), in her recent CCCC talk observed that her undergraduate writers, at the end of a FY writing course, did not “improve” in ways that could be perceived on the page. And for this reason, she argues, assessment of the students’ performance in writing at the end of a FY writing course is not very useful.
4. This is not a possibility Bartholomae excludes, but rather one that has been muted as a result of the ways in which his argument has come to be associated with the situation of the basic writer.
5. It is worth noting as an aside, perhaps, that we see ourselves in this image: though our education histories are different (private vs. public institutions) we both identified ourselves (because our teachers so identified us) as “good” writers, and yet we often found ourselves, like Colton, crossing our fingers and hoping for the best.
6. In his essay, Bartholomae cites Flower’s distinction between “reader-based” and “writer-based” prose (514).

CHAPTER 9 (OTTERY)

1. My use of “the university discourse” in this case is based upon Jacques Lacan’s topological mapping of discourse structure in *Seminar XX*. An excellent discussion of the cause and deadly effects of this university discourse is Ellie Ragland’s “Editorial: L’envers de la Psychanalyse.” In the university discourse, a master signifier is the production of intellectual exchange. But since a master signifier is always already in place, in the so-called exchange of university discourse, no real meaning or knowledge is created. The discourse becomes one of mindless repetition of what has become platitude—a staple or commodity that one “buys into.” The example that appears in Ragland’s discussion is: “1) no one feels inclined to learn anything from a [real] leader (master, teacher, [elder], etc.); 2) the referent for group knowledge itself becomes the discourse of opinion, indeed, the word of the strongest (‘might makes right’)” (3). The “bought into” opinion, like any other popular commodity,

becomes the costliest desire that determines the value of the currency in—in the case of the university and similar institutions—the “marketplace of ideas.” American Indians had little choice other than “buying into” the Westernized discourse of Christianity. The only option was a quicker death.

2. Will and Rudi Ottery, 30 and 21. They cite Francis Jennings (*The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest*) and Roderick Nash (*From These Beginnings: A Biographical Approach to American History*) as she writes of one cause of belief (that existed/exists and was/is expressed in language) that places Christians in a place of superiority over the indigenous people they converted or killed:

Although the Massachusetts Bay Colony Puritans have been portrayed as a superior, chosen people with completely noble motives, this perspective is somewhat misleading. They did have this self-perception and their charter did indicate a missionary purpose, but their colonization was a commercial venture and their objectives included power, wealth, and land. . . . As Puritans, they believed that everyone was destined for damnation except for God’s chosen few—and they were this chosen group of saints. Their government and church were one, so only church members could vote. To be a church member required convincing both one’s peers and self that one was a regenerated, elected and saved saint. Anyone who disagreed with Puritans was not only wrong, but in league with evil.

3. Will and Rudi Ottery, 27 and 28. “Varying reports of the Pequot casualties range from 300 to 700. Two English were killed and one of these was killed by a colonist. Twenty English were wounded, and of these some complained they had been shot by other colonists. [Captain John] Mason and his men apparently shot at everything that moved.”
4. Lyons (2000) writes, “Sovereignty is the guiding story in our pursuit of self-determination, the general strategy by which we aim to best recover our losses from the ravages of colonization: our lands, our languages, our cultures, our self-respect. . . . Attacks on our sovereignty are attacks on what it enables us to pursue; the pursuit of sovereignty is an attempt not to revive our past, but our possibilities. Rhetorical sovereignty is the inherent right and ability of *peoples* to determine their own communicative needs and desires in this pursuit, to decide for themselves the goals, modes, styles, and languages of public discourse.”
5. I’m indebted to E. L. Doctorow’s (2002) “Ultimate Discourse” for this idea that “What we call fiction [myths, traditions] is the ancient way of knowing, the total discourse that antedates all the special vocabularies of modern intelligence.”
6. One cannot help but notice the parallel between Malcolm learning that “he himself was the byproduct of an ancestral rape, the mother of his mother having been raped by a white man . . . a knowledge, always already there within his consciousness” and Occom’s own ancestral story, the massacre of his mother’s people at Mystic River.
7. Jacques Lacan’s formulation of “the modulation of time” in “the instant of the glance, the time for comprehending, and the moment of concluding” is found in “Logical Time and the Assertion of Anticipated Certainty: A New Sophism.” *Newsletter of the Freudian Field*, 22, (Fall 1988), 4–22.

CHAPTER 12 (WORSHAM)

1. As quoted in Ball (2002) who references the quotation as appearing in Zipes (1998).
2. *Post-traumatic Culture* is Farrell’s (1998) term, employed to signify both a clinical and cultural syndrome. See also Felman (1992), “Education,” who calls the twentieth century a “posttraumatic century,” and LaCapra (2001), who calls ours a “time marked by trauma.”

3. This article was originally composed in the spring of 2002 and thus very much in the context of the events of September 11, 2001.
4. Jameson (1984) identifies the postmodern condition with this kind of free-floating anxiety and dread.
5. See Ball (2000), Mowitt (2000), and Caruth (1995), all of whom make this same point (or something close to it) about the power of the concept of trauma to disrupt and call into question our notions of epistemology and historiography.
6. See also Bernet (2000), who argues, rather convincingly, that subjectivity is always already traumatized and that the notion of a substantial subject is a fiction. He argues that subjectivity can only be constituted and maintained through “surviving the dramas that ceaselessly menace its existence.” What menaces existence are events that are “nonappropriable and, in consequence, traumatizing”: “Being a subject would thus be a matter of being a subject by virtue of losses of identity and subsequent attempts to reconstitute a subjectivity, this subjectivity being henceforth no more than a vulnerable subjectivity, a wounded *cogito*” (160).
7. See Santner (1992) for a lucid discussion of the distinction between mourning and narrative fetishism. In the context of this distinction, see also Eng and Kazanjian (2003), who provide an understanding of the politics and ethics of mourning. Their discussion of Walter Benjamin’s distinction between historical materialism and historicism is especially relevant to an understanding of mourning and narrative fetishism. They argue that historical materialism provides the means by which we may productively (and hopefully) mourn the remains of lost histories and histories of loss, while historicism and, by implication, narrative fetishism, precipitate despair and hopelessness.
8. The literature on the relationship between narrative and healing written by psychotherapists and medical doctors is fairly extensive. See, for example, White and Epston (1990). The literature about “the personal,” personal narrative, experience, and healing is also extensive in composition studies. See, for example, Anderson and MacCurdy (2000), Berman (2002), Borrowman (2005), Brandt et al. (2001), Read (1998), and Spellmeyer (1996). For a more carefully nuanced treatment of the concept of experience, see, for example, Scott (1994), Horner and Lu (1996), and my own effort at “working through,” via personal narrative, experiences of personal and professional loss. Since this article was composed, *JAC* has published two special issues on trauma, rhetoric, and writing.
9. I received a copy of the most recent effort to link writing and healing, Borrowman’s (2005) *Trauma and the Teaching of Writing*, just before this article went to press; therefore, I could not include it in this discussion. However, I note that only one of thirteen articles in this collection draws on, or even mentions, what is now an extensive body of scholarship on trauma and its pedagogical implications. I note this fact because it suggests to me the kind of willed ignorance that sustains the protective shield constituting the discipline of composition and that supports the way in which “narrative” and “experience” are fetishized in the field. This willed ignorance corresponds to the limited vitality that I note in my discussion here of the discipline of composition.
10. Laub, for example, provides a useful discussion of the hazards of listening to the text of trauma.