

making decisions on campus. “Creating a Center for Communication Design: Negotiating Pedagogy, Disciplinarity, and Sustainability in Communities of Practice” by Jennifer Sheppard rounds out the discussion by describing her approach when asked to create a Design Center at her institution; her reliance on communities of practice and sustainability are applicable to anyone tasked to create a new center on their campus. The final piece, the “New Media New English” interview by a composite student, is a delightful send-up of *Rolling Stone*-type interviews and finishes the collection on a high note.

The companion website (<http://www.rawnewmedia.net/>) offers chapter summaries, authors’ biographies, and few supplementary materials; I longed for more to truly showcase the possibilities of the online environment (for example, an audio or video version of the “New Media New English” interview would have been wonderful). This was my one area of disappointment with the book—the lack of new media texts, delivered through the website or some other form, to better illustrate new media’s potential. I imagine Ball will take up this challenge in her upcoming edited collection (with Debra Journet and Ryan Trauman) *The New Work of Composing*. Until then, I wholeheartedly recommend *RAW New Media*.

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The Writing Program Interrupted: Making Space for Critical Discourse, edited by Donna Strickland and Jeanne Gunner. Portsmouth: Boynton/Cook, 2009. 214 pp.

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The Writing Program Interrupted: Making Space for Critical Discourse approaches writing program practices from critical perspectives while also advocating theories that disrupt and push back against existing bodies of knowledge. My own perception of the field had been filtered through a historical lens created from my study under Edward White and his stories about Kafkaesque universities exiling writing programs and centers to bungalows without functioning copiers and political struggles over budgets and tenure-lines. Due in large part to White’s storytelling, I have come to value WPA scholarship in part for the role that experiential knowledge played in the creation of dominant WPA narratives. Donna Strickland and Jeanne Gunner, the editors of *The Writing Program Interrupted*, create a space that challenges dominant discourses about issues ranging from pragmatism to self-identifications of sex and gender in the role of WPA. The editors present a “congested” compilation of subversive and contradictory perspectives in critical discussion that John Trimbur aptly describes in his foreword to the book as “troubled and sometimes troubling examinations of the WPA

conscience”(x). These troubling examinations often begin with interdisciplinary approaches that are sometimes controversial and can be accurately described as interruptions of hegemonic consensus.

The sixteen chapters of *The Writing Program Interrupted* are structured into three parts, although the subject matter sometimes blurs the boundaries of these sections. Part 1 looks at the “The Cultural Work of Writing Programs,” while part 2 discusses “Alternative WPA Discourses,” and part 3 addresses “Subjectivity, Identity, Reflection.” In “Conservative Writing Program Administrators,” Jeff Rice problematizes prescribed practices and even the Outcomes Statement. Redefining what one might think of conservative WPAs and challenging the rhetoric of the familiar, Rice supports Mark Bauerlein’s reclamation of the value and potential of conservative texts in order to provide divergent voices outside of narrow, liberal WPA visions. Specifically, Rice frames these attitudes as anti-intellectual for their role in silencing new “visions or ideas” for what WPA work could be or where it could go (2). Rice contributes to the theme of interruption by advocating for more conservative texts while simultaneously critiquing traditional conservatism for its “conflation of efficiency and stability” that privileges a scientific managerial style (9).

Also in part 1, Tom Fox looks at what is excluded from the priorities of WPA scholarship. Fox’s “Standards and Purity” warns against dominance by default; administrators continue the use of university screening tests targeting English language learners for lack of a better option. This dominance then carries over into cases of racialized projects like Proposition 187 in California, which prohibits educational services to undocumented children. Fox contends that standardized tests that target English learners embody a practice in need of disruption because the bureaucratic discourse found in administrative work “does the dirty work of exclusion” (15).

The powerlessness that Fox experiences when advocating for English learners is shared by Laura Bartlett Snyder who examines the exploitation of feminized labor in WPAs. Snyder argues that women’s weakened role in the management and exploitation of women and their labor points to gaps in WPA literature. She considers how “dominant feminist theories have been inadequate in explaining the role of gendered labor practices when women manage women” (34). Pushing back against those who advocate liberal feminist practices as an administrative strategy, Snyder cites the continued exploitation of a feminized labor force as a practical demonstration of how liberal feminist practices still fail to prepare compositionists turned WPAs to advance labor struggles.

In the last chapter of part 1, Tony Scott focuses on promoting the awareness of the conditions of WPA labor. Speaking on behalf of the adjunct and part-time faculty position, Scott argues that they “have had the right to engage in collective bargaining taken away from them”(42). Scott points out the disconnect between what PhDs learn about teaching and the “material conditions of teaching” within a university (44). Furthermore, Scott asserts

that graduate students identify with the faculty and administrators in hopes of “joining their ranks” (48) while the adjunct labor force continues to suffer silently within institutional hierarchy with only marginal concessions made for this disgruntled and voiceless labor force.

In part 2, “Alternative WPA Discourses,” Sidney I. Dobrin theorizes space, place and symbolic violence. Dobrin’s conception of violence is a productive intervention that advocates for new developments beyond FYC requirements. These requirements have been a concern of WPAs in much the same way that the evaluation of intellectual work has been a focus of WPA scholarship. Concerned with the commodification of the intellectual work of WPAs, Bruce Horner goes against some traditional views of teacher unions. Horner posits that teacher unions should be a beginning strategy and not a solution; at the same time, Horner questions the arguments of composition teachers who feel they should be fairly compensated for the work they do because they assume that “in general, such a correspondence exists”(79).

Analyzing the potential for disruption based on queer subjectivity, William P. Banks and Jonathan Alexander provide an investigation into the performance of queerness in the WPA role. Banks and Alexander discuss the frailty of “insider” and “outsider” binaries, as well as the political implications of both identity and language. Banks and Alexander conclude that queerness can function as a “set of tactics that make guerilla attacks against the center” (97). Banks and Alexander interrupt WPA concerns with FYC by advocating discussions of sexuality in composition because of the strong link between “language, image and identity” (98). Interestingly, the Banks and Alexander’s chapter in part 2 speaks to the Christopher Burnham and Susanne Green chapter, “WPAs and Identity,” in part 3. Similarly, Burnham and Green call into question the identities constructed and projected in WPA literature. With regard to teaching, Burnham and Green intervene with nuanced definitions of identity and promote reflecting on identity in order to become a better educator.

In part two, Jane E. Hindman’s “Inviting Trouble” makes the case for the collection of disparate approaches to critical disruption by reinforcing critical reflection as a generative practice that challenges subordinating silence. Hindman asserts “inviting troublesome questions enhances a healthy system” (100). She argues that anger, as a part of the trouble provoked by critical introspection, has a useful function in the struggle against the silencing of colonial influence. In a similar critique of WPA’s colonizing effect, Wendy Hesford, Edgar Singleton and Ivonne García confront the persistence of corporate multiculturalism in the academy that challenges the authority of instructors in the ethnic minority. Once again a chapter in part 3 crosses over with the subjects raised in part 2 as the cultural specificity of composition and WPA literature serves as the point of departure for Lisa Emerson and Rosemary Clerehan’s piece “Writing Program Administration Outside the North American Context.” The administrative culture in New Zealand is far less flexible in the pedagogies and curricula than in the United States. For

this reason, approaches based on composition and writing scholarship from North America do not immediately meet the needs of New Zealand students.

In the last chapter of part 2, “The Pragmatics of Professionalism,” Thomas P. Miller and Jillian Skeffington demonstrate the collaborative agency and inquiry through their piece that enunciates the philosophy of pragmatism for public agency and coalition building. Identifying the WPA ethos as having a “practical, results-oriented mindset” (127), Miller and Skeffington advocate a pragmatic lens for best working within a hierarchical system “thinking against the consequences that follow”(131). Part 3, “Subjectivity, Identity, Reflection,” continues with the subject of pragmatism as Joe Marshall Hardin’s “The Writing Program Administrator and Enlightened False Consciousness” champions the perspective that enlightened false consciousness stands in the way of change. Hardin argues that many theories of agency exist without the necessary enlightenment of the subject. Hardin rejects the ability of WPAs to be neutral and argues against pragmatic administration that tells us to “do our jobs” (143). As a counterpoint to Miller and Skeffington, Hardin frames pragmatism as just another “position along a continuum of differences inside the system” (144).

In the rest of part 3, Kathryn Valentine interprets the decentering of agency as allowing for meaning-making by graduate students who question authority. In a more traditional WPA discussion, Margaret Shaw, Gerry Winter and Brian Huot address the power of WPAs in “Analyzing Narratives of Change in a Writing Program.” Looking at three narratives, the authors affirm the implications of rank and gender in the privilege afforded to different writing program administrators. While Shaw, Winter and Huot address differences in WPA positions within the same institution, Suellynn Duffey’s “Place, Culture, Memory” questions whether WPAs differ too much among institutions and locations to theorize a monolithic WPA position.

The audience for *The Writing Program Interrupted* is a specialized one familiar with WPA scholarship and practices. It is reminiscent of Linda Adler-Kassner’s call to rethink WPA work in *The Activist WPA*; however, *Interrupted* also continues with the work begun in Shirley K. Rose and Irwin Weiser’s *The Writing Program Administrator as Theorist*, only in a more critical trajectory. Because the collection seeks to intervene and disrupt existing conversations in WPA literature, a limitation is that some of the more theoretical chapters speak at, instead of in conversation with, the existing body of WPA scholarship. Still, this collection provides critical counterpoints to the existing body of scholarship that could be useful in a WPA or professional seminar. This text would be especially useful for instructors of WPA courses who would like to engage students whose research interests include critical theories. *Interrupted* creates space in the continuum to propose positive change. At the same time, *The Writing Program Interrupted* provides a point of departure for WPAs looking to (re)invigorate their practices with critical theory.

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