University of Louisville

ThinkIR: The University of Louisville's Institutional Repository

5-2023

Rainforests of the mind: Conceiving transnational composition from a mobilities perspective on knowledge.

Tobias Lee
University of Louisville

Follow this and additional works at: https://ir.library.louisville.edu/etd

Part of the Language and Literacy Education Commons

RAINFORESTS OF THE MIND: CONCEIVING TRANSNATIONAL COMPOSITION

FROM A MOBILITIES PERSPECTIVE ON KNOWLEDGE

by

Tobias Christopher Lee
B.A., Duquesne University, 2003
M.A., School for International Training Graduate Institute, 2012

a Dissertation submitted to the faculty of
the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Louisville
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in English/Rhetoric and Composition

Department of English
University of Louisville
Louisville, Kentucky

May 2023

RAINFORESTS OF THE MIND: CONCEIVING TRANSNATIONAL COMPOSITION
FROM A MOBILITIES PERSPECTIVE ON KNOWLEDGE

by

Tobias Christopher Lee

A Dissertation Approved on

April 7, 2023

By the following Dissertation
Committee:

_____

Bruce Horner, Dissertation Chair

_____

Andrea Olinger, Committee Member

_____

Susan Ryan, Committee Member

_____

Christiane Donahue, Committee
Member

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABSTRACT

RAINFORESTS OF THE MIND: CONCEIVING TRANSNATIONAL COMPOSITION

FROM A MOBILITIES PERSPECTIVE ON KNOWLEDGE

Tobias Christopher Lee

April 7, 2023

This research project stems from my experience teaching academic writing at the state university in Qatar. To investigate the factors overdetermining the deeply standardized curriculum there, I draw on scholarship in mobility studies, political economy, and the history both of Qatar and of composition instruction in the US, from which the curriculum is drawn. These explorations ultimately lead me to comment on the fraught enterprise of subjecting writing and language to commodification, which I identify as part of broader trends characterizing neoliberal economic globalization. To further develop this critique, I conduct a critical multi-sited autoethnographic study that questions preconceived notions of correctness in writing, revealing how education is increasingly tied to the demands of global economy.

Chapter one develops an anti-essentialist perspective on ideology, demonstrating both the transnational appeal of an autonomous model of literacy and the frictions that deny its claims to universality. In chapter two I delve into the details and history of the Qatar University Foundation Program, looking at how it has been shaped, again, by points of ideological alignment across local and global exigencies. Chapter three takes

the autoethnographic approach to the subject of postsecondary instruction in English

academic writing, providing both context for my teaching experience in Qatar while

substantiating broader observations about how writing knowledge is mobilized according

to both local demands and increasingly global ideologies. In chapter four, I return to

Qatar to sketch a tactical approach (de Certeau) to working with(in) these trends,

situating the work within a broader perspective that aligns with institutional demands

while refusing to deny the multifarious points of friction that drive the creation of

knowledge.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Globalization, n: The action, process, or fact of making global; esp. (in later use) the process by which businesses or other organizations develop international influence or start operating on an international scale, widely considered to be at the expense of national identity. (OED Online, March 2022)

According to a Google Ngram[1] search, the term "globalization" started gaining traction around 1980. From about 1995 to 2005, uptake was rapid, with representation within the corpus more than quadrupling. Since 2005, though, it has seen a marked decline. It could be that the term doesn't seem as useful as it once did. Perhaps people are finding new language to talk about the phenomenon in a more specific way. "Neoliberalism," for example, has been steadily increasing since first gaining uptake around the same time as globalization, though as of 2019, it was only at globalization's 1996 level. Another possibility is that the term is not as relevant now because it names an event that seems to be complete, a change that has happened and which we now must live with: "We live in a globalized world." However, if so this should be cause for concern as that sense of completion implies a normalization, and thus erasure from our view, of the

1 Google Ngram Viewer (https://books.google.com/ngrams/) allows users to search its corpora for linguistic patterns. The corpus I used was its most recent (2019) corpus of books predominantly in English and published in any country. Data is normalized by the number of books published in a year.

ways in which globalization is being achieved or maintained and its ongoing effects (e.g. on national identity).[2]

When things become normal, one takes them for granted, developing habits and devising plans that depend on that normalcy. Invariably, there will be difficulties executing those plans. One becomes perplexed, frustrated as things don't go according to plan. But the deeper the sense of normalcy about something, the less likely that one will factor it into one's efforts to find out what went wrong. In plain view, it nevertheless hides from sight.

It is this sort of frustration that led to the project I undertook for this dissertation. After many years of teaching postsecondary courses in English language and academic writing in countries around the world, I had had many good times, enjoyed many sustaining moments of that feeling of connection with a student where things "click" and one feels one has made a difference. But there was considerable frustration, too. In the last place I worked–Qatar University's Foundation Program (QUFP)–I became increasingly fed up teaching a heavily standardized and problematic curriculum to a justifiably indifferent class and living in a hot and dusty desert that was quickly disappearing beneath shopping malls with ice rinks and fake canals. While there, I worked with wonderful people—students, teachers, and administrators alike. What follows is by no means an indictment; instead, it is an attempt to understand what we all seemed to keep bumping up against, a felt sense that the work was neither fulfilling for teachers nor in the best interests of the students.

---

[2] Given the advances in communication technology over the same time period, one can see how such a view may take hold. From the 1990s through the dot-com bust and into the 2000s, the players in this area were multiplying and dying off in a frenetic struggle for market dominance. Since then, the scene has settled considerably, such that global technology and the nature of the communication it enables have been relatively stable.

For this project, I sought a deeper understanding of these intractable frustrations, not just for myself, but for the thousands of students funneled through this curriculum, the construction and maintenance of which, I will show, reflect a view of knowledge and language as amenable to commodification. In particular, I wanted to answer the following questions.

1. How did the program I was teaching in come to develop and depend on a carefully standardized version of what seemed to be a thoroughly irrelevant and outdated curriculum? Though scholarship in composition theory and pedagogy develops, what is it that enables the perpetuation and reinforcement—in a time and place far removed from their genesis—of practices subject to longstanding critique?

2. What consequences arise as students, teachers, and administrators engage, according to their respective roles, the literacy practices enshrined in this curriculum? If these practices are but static representations of knowledge of writing and language, what knowledge *is* created? What are the effects on the people involved and how does their involvement affect (or effect) literacy and writing knowledge?

3. As dominant understandings of language and writing knowledge as static universals are shown to be problematic, what are alternative framings that reflect the nature of such knowledge more accurately? What kind of work would those framings encourage? And how might these be posed in the face of hegemonic ideologies?

In my effort to answer these questions, I drew on an interdisciplinary (sometimes transdisciplinary) range of theories related to knowledge mobilization and mobility studies, critical ethnography, feminist critiques of political economy, and composition studies. I employ these as a lens on my data, which comprise the results of a version of autoethnographic inquiry developed through this project along with the extant documents of the curriculum itself. My analysis and discussion take shape in four chapters, which I develop according to my articulation in chapter one of four principles of a mobilities perspective on knowledge that can guide the reframing work for which I ultimately advocate; these are *differing as the norm, open-endedness, identity as an on-going process,* and *working with(in) structures of power*.

Chapter one develops an anti-essentialist perspective on ideology, demonstrating both the transnational appeal of an autonomous model of literacy (Street, 1984) and the frictions that deny its claims to universality. I discuss the concept of the "knowledge economy," looking at its role in globalization via its uptake in development rhetoric. I consider how the collocation of "knowledge" and "economy" has encouraged innovations in commodification and how these support an autonomous model of literacy in settings as seemingly disparate as English for Academic Purposes (EAP) in Qatar and transfer scholarship in the US. Through this analysis and my reading of relevant theory, I derive the aforementioned four principles and assert their utility for resisting the pressures of knowledge economy rhetoric.

In chapter two, I delve into the details and history of the Qatar University Foundation Program, looking at how it has been shaped by points of ideological alignment across local and global exigencies. I give overviews of both Qatari history and

the history of the program, finding parallels between these and global education trends. I conclude with the observation that the apparently stable curriculum built on apparently stable knowledge is in fact constantly changing according to interests that are coming into and out of alignment.

Chapter three takes the autoethnographic approach, providing context for my teaching experience in Qatar while further substantiating my observations about how writing knowledge is mobilized according to both local demands and increasingly global ideologies. The approach to autoethnography that I develop aligns with recent scholarship on the method in composition studies while incorporating ideas from critical ethnography and mobility studies that help me to tailor the approach to my particular purpose and "global" experience. In relating my experiences, I hope to evince in narrative form the mobility-related themes of the other chapters.

In chapter four, I return to Qatar to sketch a tactical approach (de Certeau) to working with(in) these trends, situating the work within a broader perspective that aligns with institutional demands while refusing to deny the multifarious points of friction that drive the creation of knowledge. I demonstrate how reframing the apparently rigid curriculum in light of the four mobility principles on language and writing knowledge can reveal actions that support both the program goals and an open-ended view of human potential while resisting the uncritical reproduction of dominant ideology.

In my conclusion, I don't claim to have found the cure for all the difficulties stemming from the misapplication of commodification logic, but I do argue that the ongoing work of developing a broader and more nuanced picture based on an understanding of knowledge as practice and language and writing as inherently "mobile"

activities reveals a measure of hope where before I could see none. In this view, globalization does not refer to a completed event; it connotes an ongoing array of activities, conscious and unconscious, that often conflict according to the interests involved but sometimes achieve a momentary alignment. Attempts to coordinate globalizing activities depend on the stability of such alignments, but such stability is only claimed, an illusion maintained through the unrecognized (as such) labor of those underprivileged in and by the broader systems of power of which they are part. Continually working to maintain the visibility of these activities and alignments can prevent the sense of these as normal and help us to recognize our role both in supporting and transforming these systems.

CHAPTER 1: THE LOGIC OF THE "KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY" AT WORK IN

POSTSECONDARY ENGLISH COMPOSITION EDUCATION

I begin by giving some attention to recent trends in economic globalization premised on knowledge as a relatively stable commodity, narrowing my focus to how these are playing out in education, specifically literacy instruction. I turn to postsecondary education in Qatar to illustrate the mechanisms by which these trends apply transnationally. I then bring in a critical analysis (Tsing) of these recent political-economic trends that introduces a mobility perspective showing *differing*, rather than stability, as the norm. Tsing's work and that of other scholars aligned with it provide me with a theoretical lens with which to analyze research in academic literacies and transfer, allowing me to illustrate the difficulty of transcending these epistemological trends while highlighting examples that do, and through this analysis I derive characteristics of scholarship that resists the pressures of commodification.

It's the (Knowledge) Economy, Stupid

> Perhaps [the knowledge economy's] greatest impact lies in changing society from one of predetermined occupation into one of choices for the individual. It is now possible to make one's living, and a good living at that, doing almost anything one

wants to do and plying almost any knowledge. This is something new under the sun. (Drucker, 1969, 255-6)

Hitherto, Qatar's progress has depended primarily on the exploitation of its oil and gas resources. But the country's hydrocarbon resource will eventually run out. Future economic success will increasingly depend on the ability of the Qatari people to deal with a new international order that is knowledge-based and extremely competitive. (*Qatar Vision 2030*, 2008, 13)

I first want to spend some time with this idea of the "knowledge economy." Popularized by Peter Drucker's (1969) *The Age of Discontinuity: Guidelines to Our Changing Society*, the term and its synonyms (e.g. information economy, Information Age) name an economic trend shifting the focus of the economy away from manufacturing and toward the production and ownership of knowledge. In this way it is positioned as the logical result of a natural progression in economic activity beginning with agriculture, through industrialization, to a system based predominantly on the exchange value accorded to intellectual activities assumed to be separable from physical labor. This apparent telos has resulted in a strong uptake in discussions of the ambitions appropriate for "developing" countries.

This trend parallels increasing global competition, which has rewarded nimbler corporations less dependent on rigid supply chains and stable commodities and encouraged the rhetoric and organizational reshufflings associated with "fast capitalism." Where in the past it had been possible to build a corporation around the reliable production of a commodity with a relatively stable value, now "commodities are the residue of each new fast capitalist success story" (Gee et al. 28). To turn a profit in these circumstances, companies might strive for lower cost production, but more lucrative is to prioritize innovation and the creation of new consumer identities linked to the values the

company claims to embody. With increasing automation and the worsening prospects of what is deemed unskilled or purely physical labor, the focus of this "post-fordist" economy shifts to the "intangible assets" of knowledge and the ability to not merely anticipate but create new markets.

These developments have therefore encouraged greater alignment between education and the workplace and parallelism in their behavior. The alignment itself is nothing new, but the trends and rhetoric associated with the "knowledge economy" increase the pressure to achieve it while posing new ways in which this might be problematic as efforts to achieve such coherence lead to the application of economic logic to knowledge and language. Their apparent neutrality and proliferation across all spheres of activity make their effects difficult to resist or even recognize. As well, in my experience teaching in countries across the Arabian Peninsula and southeast Asia, I have found the deleterious effects are underacknowledged in education–specifically, language and writing instruction–in non-Anglosphere contexts. Pitched as prerequisites for acceptance into a higher global economic class, attempts to commodify language and writing knowledge are too often imported, or implemented, uncritically as nations and institutions, both in the US and abroad, strive for viability in this new world order (see Donahue, 2009; Lu, 2006).

For an example of how these associations are constructed, consider the World Bank's (2007) *Building Knowledge Economies: Advanced Strategies for Development*, in which it asserts the need for developing countries to embrace this new state of affairs. The priorities it lists for middle-income countries keen to improve the nature of their participation in the global economy are to "ensure that disciplines and curricula are what

the economy requires" and "aim for international qualifications and transferability" (118). As I demonstrate in detail below, this ultimately represents a shift of the educational agenda away from the goals of the nation-state toward the service of global capital (Morrow & Torres, 2000). This is readily visible in, for example, the assertion by Western gatekeepers of language and genre conventions as objective universals (transferable, international) rather than socioculturally situated and dynamic, such that deviations in writing from authors with different sociocultural backgrounds are prejudged erroneous (Canagarajah, 2002), leading to academic publishing practices that maintain the West as the center of knowledge production (Lillis and Curry, 2010; Motta-Roth, 2012; Muchiri et al., 1995). The result is that language and writing education are put to the service of neoliberal initiatives that prise open the local economy, rendering it subject to the demands of global capital that heavily favor dominant powers.

It is important to understand this phenomenon of the knowledge economy and its global interpellation as not entirely new, lest we enable repetition of the sins of the past. In her analysis of the conditions enabling the exploitation and destruction of Indonesian forests, Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing (2005) observes the centrality of the *frontier* as a trope in capitalist ideology. She argues that defining an area as a frontier creates it as a space on the edge of humanity, dehumanizing the existing inhabitants as the landscape is viewed purely in terms of resources to be extracted. Frontiers are wild, unsettled, and not yet well-regulated. The erasure of peoples, the regulatory confusion, and the difficulties of enforcement enable irresponsible exploitation and the swift accumulation of vast profits. But as areas to discover and exploit, frontiers are inherently unsustainable as an engine of profit. Once the area has been exhausted, the insatiable capitalist mindset, not

content with the comparatively modest sums to be made in a well-regulated economy, casts about for the next frontier. We can see this mindset at work in the trends described as the knowledge economy. To become a *resource*, knowledge has to be understood as abstract and stable, separate from the messiness of practice, and in this form it can be captured and transferred, bought and sold. Designating countries and/or people as "developing" devalues the knowledge there, creating an area ripe for and vulnerable to capitalist exploitation. And just as the labor involved in the conversion of forests into commodities is erased, the ongoing student labor in the creation of the knowledge valued in this economy is unrecognized as such.[3] Consistent with the effects of other instances of frontier labeling and exploitation, this approach to knowledge ultimately functions to concentrate power and wealth.[4] The term "knowledge economy" suggests a kind of free exchange of these assets, a "marketplace of ideas" in the literal sense, but just as free trade is anything but free, what the term masks is an array of activities that serve hegemonic interests. Rather than a geographical area, this frontier is a realm of human activity, and thus both transnational and inexhaustible.

A Global Phenomenon

3 See, for example, Miller (2001, 37, emphasis original), who seems at once to condone the colonization mindset while overlooking the role of student labor in the creation of value: "... the truth is, historically, composition *has* been a colony of the English department. But, what may have escaped our attention as a result of our field's determination to keep our embattled status uppermost in our minds at all times is the fact that we are a *resource-rich* colony: all the work that is created by the first-year requirement and that is performed by teaching assistants is work that is of considerable interest to other, resource-starved departments looking to fund students in their graduate programs."
4 Cf. Horner (1994), who proposes a shift in the conception of basic writing from "frontier field" to "border land," a shift which can help teachers and scholars to overcome the popular belief in so-called basic writers as cognitively immature and their writing as lacking sophistication. Border land, instead, implies a space of conflict and negotiation, which more accurately reflects the reality of literacy work in the BW class.

The first step to resisting the "frontierification" of knowledge is the recognition of it in practice. To that end, in this section I identify the ways in which I see the influence of the knowledge economy playing out in postsecondary English writing education in Qatar.

I begin with an example of this recognition work that demonstrates how knowledge economy logic encourages the irresponsible elisions of difference that enable it to "move" across borders. Horner (2016) illustrates this with his analysis of one scholar's contention that the Council of WPAs should embrace branding as a means of countering the popularly held reductionist view of composition. The argument is that we can defeat the invitation to articulate writing knowledge in terms of discrete, stable, and replicable skills by instead defining our work and our programs in terms of a consistent set of values and intellectual commitments. As an allowance for variation this would seem to work against prevailing conceptions of writing as a technical skill, i.e. that as writing teachers our work is vulnerable to automation, however "smart," in the form of software like Grammarly or Microsoft Word's Editor function (which "helpfully" scores this chapter at 89%, a high B). The issue arises from the effort to consolidate and stabilize/standardize these values as a brand that is essentially in competition with these others. The brand would be a mark of quality that consumers could trust, assured of the prospect of better writing instruction, and better writing. But a CWPA brand, though it focuses on values and beliefs, is still claiming ownership over the ability to pronounce on quality and leaving uninterrogated the ideologies that promote and benefit from this vision. Editing software built on codifications of language use does point to a need for a more robust understanding of composition; however, as Horner shows, the attempt to encourage one by asserting a CWPA brand that claims uniformity across programs as

well as a consistently "high-quality" product is still a reflection of commodification logic, but now in a post-fordist guise. As alluring as this combination of expertise and a unified front is, such a move continues to deny the contingent reality and valuations of writing and its infinite possibilities, which are the possibilities of humanity.

Similar post-fordist pronouncements on quality by brands seeking to dominate new and/or niche areas of the market can be readily seen in the language of accreditation bodies, which become increasingly problematic as they extend their reach internationally. I focus on two organizations in particular here, the Commission on English Language Program Accreditation (CEA) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), for their global ambitions and because both have been pursued by Qatar University. CEA began in 1999 as a national accrediting body and has now become a highly sought-after stamp of quality among English language instruction programs around the world. According to their mission statement, they aim to "promote excellence," which they believe "takes many forms," and to "lead by setting widely accepted standards in English language instruction and administration," standards which they promise to "ensur[e]... reflect current best practice" (CEA, n.d.). The paradoxes and ambiguity inherent in these statements (how it can set standards which are already widely accepted is not clear, for example) reveal the fraught logic of their enterprise. They seem to acknowledge the incredible potential for diversity across English programs worldwide and over time. Yet they claim to be able to recognize and give their stamp of approval to programs judged against a standardized set of criteria, justifying their logo as a universal mark of quality. SACSCOC has accredited institutions of higher education in the southern states of the US for over a hundred years. It is now

active throughout the country, and has in recent years extended its work internationally. Their vision statement is "to serve as the premier model for shaping and ensuring the quality of higher education throughout the world" (SACSCOC, n.d.). Adding a layer of remove from directly claiming to shape and ensure quality merely positions SACSCOC as foremost among accrediting bodies–the *premier* model–in the burgeoning market of globalized education. Similar statements can be found on the sites of other accrediting agencies, which generally seem keen to advertise their global reach (or "impact," according to SACSCOC) as an indication of prestige. But seeking to extend their reach as widely as possible inevitably leads these organizations into contradictions which they would explain as for example different versions of excellence, but which in fact should call into question the motives behind their expansion. Who gets to pronounce on quality (language/writing) education, and why, we might well consider. As Fraiberg et al. (2017) note, reflecting on Chinese and American government struggles over accreditation and intellectual property, there is an increasing anxiety in this era of economic globalization to control what gets deemed legitimate education.

Part of the problem with post-fordist branding as an answer to fordist conceptions of knowledge is that the two are not incompatible (Horner, 2016). As I show in the next chapter, Qatar University's CEA-accredited Foundation Program, a series of college preparation courses that extends into students' undergraduate work, relies heavily on a rigid implementation of the five-paragraph theme essay. Even in the most advanced course (a research-oriented "academic writing" course similar to a second-semester freshman composition course in the US), students are penalized for writing more or less than five paragraphs for a 1200-word essay. With its assertions of the possibility and

value of a stable model of academic writing, while maintaining the CEA "brand," the QUFP curriculum exemplifies how both versions of commodification can coexist. The flexibility of the former (the ambiguity of "excellence") allows for and condones the rigidity of the latter (the five-paragraph essay).

We can see another version of this complementarity in literacy instruction at international branch campuses (IBCs). Compelled by neoliberal government policies defunding higher education to compete with each other for enrollment dollars, universities in the US increasingly develop their brand and capitalize on the prestige of a Western degree in developing countries by recruiting more international students (Rose & Weiser, 2018) and establishing IBCs. While their curricula may appear less fordist because the programs are more closely tied to that of the home campus–no five-paragraph essays here–this attempt at friction-free importation constitutes another instance of the shipping container logic of fordism, except now the container is the university, transformed into a brand.

The market for IBCs is developing countries keen to improve their position in the knowledge economy. Qatar, for example, conceived Education City as the keystone of its plan to transition the country away from its dependence on oil and gas reserves. Such a shift would require developing its "human resources" through education, and for direction and expertise, it turned to Western experts. This led to consultations that directed massive reforms at QU and to the direct import of institutions themselves, hence the proliferation of IBCs, which advertise the consistency and integrity of the university brand. This prompts efforts to create equivalencies between the experience–treated as relatively homogeneous–at home institutions and that at IBCs, such that they can claim to

15

offer the same degree. However, as a review of the literature reflects, the difficulties of ensuring consistency in the product become quickly apparent. "[The] move to value the local teaching context can, perhaps, potentially work against the mission of a global university that has been charged to protect its brand," observe Wetzel and Reynolds (2015, 112) of Carnegie Mellon-Qatar. Similarly, next door at the Weill Cornell Medical College-Qatar, Weber et al. (2015) describe the result of their efforts to create such an equivalency: "Like a third cousin, what we have arrived at bears little resemblance to our origin campus in Ithaca, New York" (89). Writing from the Georgetown University branch across the road, Anne Nebel (2017) criticizes the monolingual ideology underpinning English composition instruction in Qatar as fundamentally at odds with the complex linguistic landscape there. Relatedly, Mysti Rudd and Michael Telafici (2017), from Texas A&M's branch campus, recount the difficulties of trying to use the same textbooks as the home campus writing program (*They Say I Say* and *Writing about Writing*). Finally, Ryan Miller and Silvia Pessoa (2017) address the proliferation of American IBCs in the MENA generally, arguing for a more flexible and context-sensitive implementation of traditional Western pedagogy.

These glimpses into the transnational extensions of accreditation and curricula show that the combination of fordist and post-fordist versions of commodification underpinning the so-called knowledge economy is key to the way writing knowledge is being mobilized transnationally. I suggest that this is because alignments are made possible by the post-fordist innovations in commodification. While branding certainly pre-dates the concept of the knowledge economy, its centrality, made possible by the latter's detachment of knowledge from physical labor, from *practice*, in modern times has

enabled the exploitative globalization of language and writing education–the creation of a

new frontier–by offering the language of shared values and identities. The frictionless

transportation of language and writing knowledge offered by a fordist perspective on

knowledge was available but would not have been imported as readily if its associations

related merely to the purported status quo in the US. What use, for example, would the

state university of Qatar have for skills the exchange value of which did not extend

beyond American borders? It was the creation of the notions of "critical thinking,"

"academic writing," and "effective communication" (all of which can be found in

QUFP's program learning outcomes and individual writing course learning outcomes),

the implication that these were the purview of Western academia, and their association–a

post hoc fallacy–with thriving in the new hyper-competitive global economy (see

Cameron, 2002). This language creates the alignment with Western academia, opening

the door to the fordist commodifications offered as a shortcut to achieving these hazy

objectives.

But here I should clarify: it is not the Western-ness that is the problem; it is the

misapprehension of the nature of knowledge. Innovations originating in the West may be

to blame, but as usual, blaming gets us nowhere; it matters little who opened Pandora's

box. The biggest threat posed by the knowledge economy isn't the maintenance of the

West as the center of power and ongoing disenfranchisement of so-called developing

countries per se but rather the proposition that others can participate in this exploitation.

The West keeps its own in their place, class-wise, as it does others. Just as the "fourth

world" (Morrow & Torres, 2000) names a geographically non-specific condition of

disenfranchisement, consistent with the relegation of the nation-state, the logic and

frontier affordances of the knowledge economy are available transnationally.

Knowledge is increasingly made subject to commodification in efforts to fulfill the visions laid out by these organizations. When the World Bank calls for stricter school-workplace alignment and international qualifications and transferability, when accrediting agencies seek to burnish their prestige through "global impact," when colleges and universities engage in importing/exporting through degree equivalencies, branding[5], or formulaic writing models marketed as part of the solution to the country's fraught position in the global economy, they are legitimizing and extending this view of knowledge. This is more than mere marketing rhetoric or assessment shortcuts; these visions and practices construct a "uniform student" (Dobrin, 2009, 68) and speed the transformation of individuals around the world into human capital (Horner et al., 2017, 4).

Explorations of Resistance

To recap: the knowledge economy, a popular trope in the language of development, is a new frontier for capitalist exploitation, and as such, it is not altogether new but rather an innovation on existing practices. This innovation is the post-fordist commodification work of branding of/as the language of shared values or abstract skills, which strengthens economy-education alignments and enables the transnational articulation of this frontier. In this section, I first delve further into Tsing's (2005) ethnographic investigations into globalization in its modern form. I then trace echoes of

---

5 Carnegie Mellon University's branch campus in Qatar, for example, trumpets the top rankings of the main campus on the other side of the world.

these insights in recent composition research, highlighting areas that can be developed to resist the "frontierification" of language and writing education, both in the US and abroad.

In her "ethnography of global interconnection," Tsing (2005) investigates the myriad local and transnational communications that resulted in environmental exploitation and social injustice in Indonesia. As she gathers her data, she uncovers contradictions and misalignments at every link in these chains of communication, leading her to the conclusion that these differences do not merely hinder communication but *are* communication. The mechanics of this are captured succinctly in the paradox of generalization. Drawing generalizations depends both on a priori recognition of commonality and subsequent willingness to negotiate difference. There must be some pre-existing commonality—what she calls an "axiom of unity"—among the elements about which one would generalize. Establishing this starting point then disposes one to see connections across difference as the generalization is "naturally" extended. Taken together, these moves enable the articulation of wider truth(s). In practice, Tsing observes, these two aspects of generalization obscure one another: we recognize convergences across difference as such, neglecting the conditional axiom of unity that enabled them, but this taken-for-granted commonality has itself a way of erasing any difference encountered as the generalization takes root. Recognition of this conceptual slippage drives her exploration of *friction*, or the piecemeal negotiations across difference that facilitate the "movement" of universals—ideas that are (supposedly) uniformly understood and applicable across spatiotemporal variation. By movement here is meant the uptake and dissemination of universals, but also the capacity of universals to mobilize

people.

Given her focus on the destruction of Indonesian forests, Tsing analyzes "nature" as a universal concept with considerable power for such movement. The term brings together disparate groups—village elders, young adventurers from the cities, and environmentalists—in efforts to confront rampant deforestation. Though not without some successes, their collaboration is troubled by variance in their definitions of nature. Environmentalists see the animals and forests but not the humans. The village, however, is in the forest—villagers are part of and codependent with nature, while the adventurers want to preserve it as a coming-of-age resource for the youth before they settle down with "modern" careers back in the city. Nevertheless, to the extent that overlap between these groups' conceptions allows them to articulate shared goals, they are able to collaborate toward some environmental protections. There are other groups, however—notably, foreign capitalists and corrupt government actors—who conceive nature in a way that facilitates their exploitative use of the land. With roots in Enlightenment epistemology that maintains subject-object dichotomy, the Western trope of the frontier—a boundary between humans and the wild, and a site for resource extraction—has long positioned capitalists (from sugar plantations to oil, wood, etc.) as working for the benefit of civilization. Myriad communications between these groups involving negotiations of difference—creating, obscuring, and multiplying misalignments around the concept of nature and many others—lead to the events that have made headlines and impacted the lives of millions, creating both fortunes and bankruptcies, displacing peoples and wreaking havoc on the environment.

Reflecting on the paradox of friction behind all of this, Tsing observes,

> Engaged universals travel across difference and are charged and changed by their travels. Through friction, universals become practically effective. Yet they can never fulfill their promises of universality. Even in transcending localities, they don't take over the world. They are limited by the practical necessity of mobilizing adherents. Engaged universals must convince us to pay attention to them. *All* universals are engaged when considered as practical projects accomplished in an heterogeneous world. (Tsing, 2005, 8, emphasis original)

The question of universal essences has been a subject of philosophical debate since Plato; Tsing's contribution is to deny the imagined purity and stability of things by contending that their very existence depends on the idiosyncrasies of understanding that defy a homogenizing definition. We would look past these differences, however, toward the enabling power of universality. The yen for universals and the self-disguising nature of generalization are thus fundamental to the construction and communication of knowledge. In this way, rather than conceiving knowledge as something that can be contained and divided into uniform, stable chunks, like bars of gold or barrels of oil, it becomes more accurate to think of knowledge as a *practice* ("a capability produced and reproduced in recurrent social practices and always in the making," Orlikowski, 2006, 460). Any apparent stability of knowledge is an illusion generated by practices that maintain while inevitably changing it, inflecting it according to the conditions of each new instance. As mobilities scholars point out, knowledge is, "paradoxically, both fixed and mutated as it is mobilized across boundaries" (Fenwick & Farrell, 2012, 3).

The concept of generalization has been developed in composition studies, specifically in research related to academic literacies and transfer, concerned as these are with questions related to the preparation of students for "academic writing." There has long been the assumption that learning to write for a university context involved reaching

toward a set of abstract, Platonic forms that were transferable, or general writing skills (Petraglia, 1995). Reflecting on this assumption, Beach (2003) has suggested we forego the term *transfer* in favor of *generalization*. This represents a shift in (Anglophone) transfer theory as he likewise observed that *change* was implicit in the process of generalization as ideas take on new individual and organizational associations. Some years later, in her investigation of knowledge transfer in a linked courses program, Nowacek (2011) provided a concrete example that closely recalls Tsing. Two instructors from different disciplines engage in an ad hoc discussion of essay conventions for the benefit of their class. In what could have been a productive moment, they define the key terms "topic" and "thesis," in the process bumping up against important differences but brushing them aside to avoid conflict and present (transfer) a unified, coherent pedagogical message. The differences, they thought at the time, were personal, and they sought to avoid the semblance of competition. With the benefit of time and through careful analysis, Nowacek shows that the variance in their definitions of these terms stemmed from their disciplinary training, reflecting genre expectations and ultimately different ways of knowing. She details other instances of disciplinary differences going unacknowledged or unexplored but which were nevertheless perceived by students, resulting in confusion and difficulties when they tried to write for these instructors.

    This finding echoes an earlier study by Lea and Street (1998, 7), who in their interviews with instructors observed that "underlying, often disciplinary, assumptions about the nature of knowledge affected the meaning given to the terms 'structure' and 'argument'" (among others). They found that differences in the ways instructors talked about common terms were attributable to epistemological variation, yet instructors used

these terms uncritically in the interviews and in their feedback to students to make generic claims about academic writing (i.e. universals that "can never fulfill their promises of universality"). Student difficulties in meeting instructor expectations were again assumed to reflect student deficit rather than ambiguity of instruction or contradictions across the institution. Thaiss and Zawacki (2006) as well report similar findings in their cross-disciplinary study of writing instruction. The phenomenon is starkly evinced in a comparison of rubrics that share a considerable range of common terms (e.g. "clear," "appropriate voice," and "argument") that are, on investigation, interpreted quite differently between departments and instructors, largely in line with disciplinary ways of knowing that go unacknowledged. "The terms represent 'insider' talk, and so each term, such as 'evidence,' covers a wide range of inferred connotations for that group of readers [such that] what might appear to be 'transparent' criteria are in fact to a great degree impenetrable to those outside the discourse" (Thaiss & Zawacki, 87; cf. Perkins (1999) on troublesome and foreign knowledge). Together these authors reveal that, whether as a result of pressure to conform (see the QUFP moderation sessions I describe in chapters two and three), an aversion to conflict, disciplinary siloing, or ignorance enabled by institutional authority, fundamental differences are commonly papered over in the articulation of academic conventions. This is mobilization; as such, friction is inevitable, and left unacknowledged it leads to considerable frustrations that are perhaps most keenly felt by students.

Such scholarship is worth emphasizing, given the increasing pressure on academic institutions to behave as corporations and the conflicted role of literacy instruction in the trends comprising the knowledge economy. A way of thinking about

language and knowledge becomes the unmarked cultural norm, such that it "makes sense" to develop arguments premised on the possibility of fixing knowledge outside of practice and treating it as predictable. Yancey et al.'s (2014) emphasis on a set of twelve key terms and Adler-Kassner's and Wardle's (2016) threshold concepts, particularly as reified in textbooks and marketed as teacher training shortcuts, echo the call for a CWPA brand discussed earlier (see also Brown's (2020) critique). This is not to say that we shouldn't conduct, publish, and learn from classroom studies, but rather that we should do so with a different understanding of what it means to produce such research, one that assumes and is interested in how the friction we might wish away as troublesome is what enables conversations on/in writing, whether construed as instruction or scholarship. In the remainder of this section, I envision the broad contours of an approach to scholarship that reflects such an understanding while undermining its own potential for commodification.

Takes differing as the norm At the heart of a mobility perspective is the simple truth of change as the only constant. Coming to a better understanding of the ramifications of this for our work will provide the basis for my other suggestions. And once again, Tsing will be helpful here. As she demonstrates, noticing difference helps us to recognize the friction that both enables the semblance of, while denying the logic of, smooth flows of information. Researchers of transfer have increasingly written on the importance of noticing difference particularly for the high-road (i.e. mindful, conscious) transfer they aim to cultivate. Yancey et al. (2014) assert that noticing differences in writing tasks can encourage a novice mindset–a prerequisite for embracing new concepts–and

circumstances conducive to this should therefore be promoted. Echoing Nowacek on the importance of making salient the variation across disciplines in knowledge-making practices, Clarence and McKenna (2017) introduce a framework that allows us to talk about and understand the reasons behind these differences. However, efforts to categorize or promote the noticing of difference (across tasks, genres, or disciplines) often proceed from an assumption of their stability, which constitutes an *erasure* of difference (Bawarshi, 2017; Leonard & Nowacek, 2016). In other words, this is finding difference where one expects to find it, which is, well, sameness (see, for example, criticisms of studies in contrastive rhetoric, e.g. Donahue, 2009; Matsuda & Atkinson, 2008). Instead, researchers might assume difference and be wary of stability, recognizing it as an illusion sustained through unequal power relations (Adey, 2006) and depending on continual (re)production, in large part in the hands of students.

Forwarding trends they identify in academic literacies scholarship, Lillis and Scott (2007) argue for a *transformative* understanding of the work of (student) academic writing, which involves attention to the ways in which conventions and the ways of knowing they index clash with each other and/or those that students bring with them, with an interest in how academic writing "itself" is thereby changed. "Academic writing," as a concept, is continually being updated–it wouldn't exist in the present if it weren't–and if we are to study it and teach it, then we must not simply remain vigilant about the latest changes; change in academic writing must itself be our object of study. Kaufhold (2017) affirms this view with her study of MA theses, demonstrating that people draw on wide-ranging life experiences in ways which invariably transform the new literacy practice they confront, such that practices (e.g. theses) can never be said to

be settled; they are patterns of activities that do not exist without those activities, each necessarily unique, taking place (see also Pennycook, 2010; Tusting, 2000; and, from a rhetorical/posthumanist perspective, Boyle, 2018, on *transduction*). Inquirers into knowledge transfer in composition might therefore concern themselves less with hoped-for changes in students in relation to stable conventions than with how these conventions are changing, and if they appear stable, which ones appear more stable and why. For as Tusting (2000) reminds us, drawing on theories of relativity, any temporal assessment, e.g. assertions of stability, is relative to one's position. If nothing is fixed, then differing is indeed the norm, but one to which we've become unused as educational priorities shift from cultivating curiosity to generating profit, ostensibly for students but perhaps more accurately for the institutions and industries that increasingly structure and define our educational systems.

Open-ended, non-finite Much research on transfer concludes with evidence-based suggestions (or even textbooks) for how teachers, administrators, and/or professional organizations can re-structure curricula with a view to controlling and increasing writing knowledge transfer. This follows in the tradition of efforts to justify a required course in writing. Given its history as a "service course," FYC's valuable but often threatened status has hinged on whether it truly prepares students for college-level writing. But working from this standpoint, as others have shown (Horner, 2016; Strickland, 2011), puts researchers in a reactionary stance that constrains the nature and outcomes of their work, amounting to a version of what Gibson-Graham (2006) call "capitalocentric" thinking. They offer this term to describe the tendency, even among anticapitalist

scholars, to think the world in capitalist terms, which implicitly attributes homogeneity and hegemony to capitalism. In other words, if we talk about capitalism as monolithic, we maintain it as such. This tendency in effect allows our noncapitalist visions, relations, and work to be circumscribed, predetermined, or erased by defining them in opposition to the monolith that we ourselves create. Thus, scholarship that proceeds from the service course exigence maintains and extends that exigence and generalizes the "problem" of transfer, constraining the nature and outcomes of our scholarship, such that recognition of the disciplinary variation of "college writing" has merely inspired more abstract versions of GWSI, e.g. the concept of "discourse community" rather than five-paragraph theme (see Prior & Olinger, 2019).[6] This mentality has influenced the genesis, nature, and trajectory of conversations on transfer, giving it a local character that, unacknowledged, will increasingly shape international conceptions of writing as Western traditions are valued and replicated according to knowledge economy pressures.

Capitalocentrism is more than a metaphor here. As Strickland (2011) demonstrates, the service course mentality has its origins in the separation of composition from cognition and the feminization of the former. With the advent of the large, bureaucratic corporations of industrial capitalism, writing became associated with dictation to female assistants, leading to secretarial training taught by women, for women, that prioritized writing as a technical skill. These associations took root in the popular mindset and influenced programming in higher education. The situation we find ourselves in today whereby, in spite of abundant evidence denying this capitalist fantasy,

6 Makoni and Pennycook (2007) identify a similar phenomenon in how the Western construction of the idea of languages as discrete and relatively stable constrained the efforts of scholars studying linguistic complexity, resulting in concepts such as code-switching and multilingualism that merely extend the larger issue.

we still find ourselves trying to justify our work according to its terms, should occasion some skepticism of calls for greater alignment between the profit-driven demands of the workplace and education.

A recent issue of *CCC* exemplifies the conundrum we find ourselves in. A longitudinal study of transfer (Smith et al., 2021) hinges on the interviewees' prompted[7] comparisons of how writing was valued in their classes versus in their worksites, implicitly reinforcing the role of education as workplace training. In the authors' equation, successful transfer requires that students develop personal and evolving theories of writing; however, they maintain throughout that "writing effectively involves adapting one's writing to different purposes, audiences, and genres" (20) and are solely interested in academic-work connections. This amounts to a *closed*-ended formula: there seems to be very little space for what "personal" might look like, and the manner in which a student's theory can "evolve" is similarly narrow in this understanding of transfer. In order to achieve the assumed goal of integration between work and school writing, students are led to conclude that good writing is a relatively straightforward matter of tweaking to suit different contexts. One student notices, for example, that her "paper for her communication course was similar to an article she wrote for her communications co-op at a software company in that 'they're both kind of a linear story'" (13). In another example, a student concludes that "good grammar skills were important both for his classes and when developing website content for jobs" (12). Rather than a radical re-thinking, this is simply the multiplication of a single, stable, "correct" way of writing; it is still writing as an ideologically neutral and repeatable set of skills designed

7 As the authors note in their "limitations" section, "...the study itself influenced students' perceptions. During our interviews, at our prompting, they arrived at insights they might not have on their own" (11).

to position students as nimble workers in the new "flexible" economy (see Brown, 2020). Under the rhetorical guise of economic empowerment we perpetuate the literacy myth (Graff, 1979), which reflects and extends knowledge economy logic and maintains literacy education as a service discipline. Rather than seek to empower students, we might affirm the power they have as always already contributors to a system that relies on their labor. Rather than a reductive notion of good writing as a question of choosing between conventions, of sites of transfer as stable and discrete, and of successful education as smooth transfer, we might revive an open-ended conception of writing as an inherently creative process, of writing to know, of knowledge as practice. As it is, this notion of transfer recalls the problematic erasure of differences that Tsing highlights in the string of transnational agreements that resulted in large gains for some and destruction for others.

Two other articles from the same issue of *CCC* provide some critical context for this study, and together they demonstrate the ongoing influence of hegemonic economic relations on language and literacy instruction and its extension transnationally. Smith et al. (2021) highlight the diversity of their study participants: "eight were international and 10 were students of color" and "they reported speaking 17 languages other than English" (9). Yet this fact, given as a strength of the study, combined with the closed-ended, technical conception of what a theory of writing should look like, creates a situation echoed eerily by another article in that issue revisiting the 1960s-era practice of teaching Black students as ESL students (Thomas, 2021). The active disenfranchisement of minority and nondominant groups continues if they are expected to embrace a prescribed outcome claiming ideological neutrality. Increasingly, we see the scope expanding not

only to include international students in the US, figured homogeneously as a feather in the institutional cap, but internationally, as I demonstrate in later chapters.

Later in the issue, Sullivan (2021) interviews two well-known scholars in the field who have recently found themselves forced by neoliberal restructuring of higher education in their state to seek employment elsewhere. The author frames the interview with a passionate discussion of the negative effects of neoliberal policies on our ability to contribute to the public good. Privatization and reduced government funding achieved through neoliberal policies pressure institutions to participate more fully in the knowledge economy, hampering their ability to reach underserved populations and compromising their educational agenda. As reflections of knowledge economy logic, the notion of transfer as knowledge mobilization between discrete sites, the emphasis on understanding these sites as a generalized work/school dichotomy, and the specificity of the desired outcome and its purported ideological neutrality that I describe above contribute to, rather than resist, the "dystopian world of education being built around us" (Sullivan, 2021, 126). It may not be "around" us if we ourselves advance these values in our research and pedagogy.

Rather than participating in the maintenance of this status quo by reaching for solutions to the transfer problem, we might instead report on work done, producing records of the explorations of friction we undertake with our students to encourage this kind of work while demonstrating that everything is local to both time and space (Brandt & Clinton, 2002; Fraiberg et al., 2017; Latour, 1993). Mobility–of people and of knowledge–is an ongoing product of social relations (Blommaert & Horner, 2017; Fraiberg et al., 2017), and research that reflects rather than resists this awareness by

refusing to offer pat solutions presents an implicit rebuke to efforts to reduce education to a capitalist enterprise. Scholars—such as Fraiberg et al. (2017) applying Engeström's theory of "knotworking" and Wargo and De Costa (2017) writing about "literacy sponsorscapes"—who concern themselves with tracing the myriad influences and idiosyncrasies of individual students' writing practices offer fascinating glimpses into literacy that stymie any attempt to create prepackaged, one-size-fits-all curricula that would claim to appease those demanding evidence of transfer. Other researchers are experimenting with tweaks to the traditional vessels of academic writing (i.e. monographs, edited collections, and journal articles) to enact this open-ended approach, explicitly positioning their work as part of an ongoing *conversation* rather than a standalone, finished *product* (e.g. Blommaert & Horner, 2017; Horner, Hartline, Kumari, & Matravers, 2021).

Related to identity as an ongoing process Since the advent of activity theory and the shift toward an understanding of literacy as socially situated (Barton & Hamilton, 1998; Barton, Hamilton, & Ivanič, 2000; Russell, 1995), research on transfer has increasingly reckoned with the passivity attributed to students in traditional understandings of literacy education. Scholars have begun to accommodate more agency in their conceptualization of transfer, recognizing creativity and individual differentiation. DePalma and Ringer (2011), for example, shift the notion of transfer from *reuse* to *reshape*, leading them to argue for a view of students as "potential contributors to an ever-changing rhetorical context" (142). Relatedly, many scholars have shown the importance of student perception and/or disposition for transfer. If students don't perceive relevance, believe

themselves to be experts (e.g. based on AP credits), or maintain an inflexible mindset,

transfer is less likely to occur (Bergmann & Zepernick, 2007; Driscoll & Wells, 2012;

Harvey & Stocks, 2017; Reiff & Bawarshi, 2011; Wardle, 2012; Yancey et al. 2014).

This attention to agency and perception appears to be inspiring a broader focus on

identity, particularly as non-fixed and in dynamic interplay with sociomaterial context.

Consider, for example, Yancey et al.'s (2014) observation that students who possess a

sense of themselves as experts on writing miss learning opportunities because their

position towards the material is demotivating. While this an important step toward a

richer understanding of transfer, positing expert status as a reliable predictor of poor

transfer recalls the universal student fallacy–and an autonomous model of literacy–that

troubled the field's obsession with cognitive processes in the early 1980s. By contrast, we

might consider Lea and Street's (1998) observation that inability to map previous

successes onto current endeavors has less to do with disposition (assuming student

deficit) than with the mixed or ambiguous expectations of the current situation.

Additionally, we might consider two cases from Fraiberg et al. (2017): they identify a

student whose expert positionality prevents learning, but they find that this was not for

lack of motivation but because she was unable to get criticism and worthwhile discussion

from her peers. On the other hand, another student in their study found that he benefited

from his expert status by using it to learn more deeply through teaching his peers. These

examples reassert the "localness" of knowledge practice by looking at the borderless,

idiosyncratic, shifting sociomaterial "knotworks" of (students') literacy practices.

As Lillis and Scott (2007) point out, a shift from autonomous to ideological

models of literacy that emphasize the sociocultural nature and power dynamics of literacy

practices demands this kind of richer contextual data. In the quest for such data, for insights into identity as a sociomaterial process, we might draw on inquiries into the effects of globalization and migration on identity. Such scholars forward a sense of the self as an ongoing project of hybridization amid shifting transnational flows (see Appadurai on "imagined lives," 1996) and "asymmetrical dialectics between difference and sameness" (Moslund, 2010, 93). Complaints about globalization as homogenizing replication–"McDonaldization"–are shown to overlook processes of *indigenization* (Appadurai) and the contortions of *mimicry* (Bhabha, 1994) that deny the power implied in the claim to perfect replication or friction-free extension of, for example, literacy practices. We can see evidence of this in Fraiberg et al.'s (2017) observation of Chinese students wrestling with curricular expectations that they hold certain values or principles (e.g. democracy), which, considering the foregoing, may owe as much or more to post-fordist branding than actual practice. With this in mind, we might focus our scholarly inquiries into knowledge mobilization–as open-ended, differing reports detailing transformations of language and writing conventions–on this "wrestling." Shen's (1989) classic article detailing the experience of feeling compelled to take on a new identity in order to succeed at writing in a new culture serves as a powerful precedent, and recent work from Alexander (2019) and Canagarajah (2020) provides further examples of what this work could look like in the classroom and in scholarship by sharing and discussing student literacy autobiographies that challenge the simplistic narratives offered or implied in knowledge economy rhetoric. As importantly, teachers and scholars might refuse the status of expert, which conveys a relatively inert knowledge of writing, supporting the inscrutable myth of "academic writing" (Lea & Street, 1998). Instead, as I attempt in the

third chapter, we might actively explore how our *own* ongoing hybridization influences the ways of knowing that inform our writing practices and expectations. In our research we might inquire: what pressures do writers in academia, be they students or teachers, perceive, or what desires and aversions are they wrestling with as they engage new literacy practices? How do these influences affect their positionality vis-à-vis these practices and the ways that they change and are changed by them?

Works with(in) these forces to deny their force Research along the lines suggested above can and must take place within the situation as we find it. It should reflect this awareness and be concerned with the manifold influences on our thinking about writing and language that comprise knowledge economy pressures. Not only is this the sober reality; it may in fact be the best way, rather than trying to introduce top-down solutions that become reified in a way that contradicts them.

I develop this idea of working with(in) the hegemonic by starting with some basic thoughts on names. Naming allows us to talk about things. Naming gives thingness, it is ordering the universe, delineating chaos, taming the wild frontier… The act of naming can be an exercise of power, and names themselves have a kind of power. They shape the way we think and talk about the world. But of course, the act of naming is never complete: as they shape us, we shape them too. Every understanding of a name is different–no dictionary could ever capture this diversity. We bring different experiences, different associations, and these inflect the way we use the name as well as how we understand others' usage. Indeed, that understanding itself is a kind of usage. If only we could pause this constant churn, freeze it in a trademark, control it with a copyright! Try

as we might, the unruliness of language persists. But while we can't quite control it, we can perhaps prevent some of the problems that arise or proceed from this slipperiness of meaning by remembering that this is the nature of communication. We can be vigilant in this awareness and skeptical of claims to stability. We might therefore both expect and tolerate more ambiguity while taking an interest in the differences, in the endless differentiation. In this way we look outside ourselves. We communicate with compassion. And we might short-circuit that phenomenon by which names can collect, agglomerate, and grow into monsters that haunt us and constrain the possibilities of our work. Before closing, I act on these reflections, take a step toward resisting the trends I've reviewed, by explicitly considering the two names that lie at the heart of this chapter: "knowledge economy" and "transfer." The uptake of these two terms has had significant consequences in policy and research; they have shaped the nature and direction of our work, and the power they have gained merits a rigorous scrutiny of their "thingness."

The name "transfer" has long been criticized as mechanistic, implying a friction-free movement between discrete sites. The implication in terms of knowledge is that, if one sees a similarity between A and B, one may be able to use some elements that worked for A as one works on B. This makes sense if writing is a collection of technical skills. Scholarship has moved past this to a more complex understanding of writing, but we retain the transfer metaphor, leading us to theorize "high-road" transfer as reaching to a more stable, abstract principle as we move between sites, providing a takeaway that can be mapped onto future endeavors. The Smith et al. (2021) study I described earlier reflects this with their list of interviewee responses which they found suggestive of transfer, all of which connected "work writing" and "school writing," e.g. "Rebecca was

asked to engage in critical thinking both in her Environmental Ethics class and during her co-op with the Environmental Protection Agency" (13). The authors proceed in this way even after acknowledging criticism of the term "transfer" as a travel metaphor. Perhaps this term, given its economic associations and recent economic trends, predisposes us to a view of knowledge mobilization as generalization without regard for difference, i.e. one in which the losses and slippages that Tsing demonstrates are papered over in the eagerness to see consistency ("transfer"). But, as we've seen in the critiques of the application of post-fordist branding to knowledge and calls for "academic writing," figured homogeneously, these elisions of difference, while problematic for many, always end up benefiting someone (Lea & Street, 1998; Horner, 2016; Nowacek, 2011; Street, 1984; Thaiss & Zawacki, 2006). The idea(s) of transfer and the epistemology it encourages make it difficult for scholars and educators to see our own generalizations because we occupy the position of power and represent the ideology that they serve. Transfer, as a metaphor, maintains in one who engages in studies of it the belief that movement occurs between discrete sites, and since we are ostensibly not the ones learning, i.e. making movements between discrete sites, we assume inertia, stability, authority (Adey, 2006).

By (re)asserting knowledge as never fixed and conventions as always in a state of becoming, a mobilities perspective helps us to resolve this difficulty, leading us to new ways of theorizing knowledge mobilization less amenable to capitalist exploitation. Donahue (2021), for example, drawing on Bakhtin and French linguist Frédéric François, offers *reprise-modification*. The key is in the hyphenation: usage is at once a reuse–a return to–as well as a modification, a transformation. If generalization collapses the

distance between two points in space and/or time, reprise-modification expands it, inviting us to consider the limitless panoply of references mobilized by an utterance, a mobilization that is also inevitably a modification as those references are re-voiced in the service of some new communicative goal.

Knowledge in this view is a creative material process, rather than simply organized information. Such a view may not be "new," nor should it be seen as a simple negation of knowledge economy logic (and thereby, a kind of capitalocentric thinking). Instead, as Donahue's historical tracework suggests, this understanding of knowledge has been available to theorists and economists alike but is often overlooked or not given full voice. That knowledge is a creative material practice is recognized but lost in the incentivized desire for knowledge to be fixed in/as discrete pieces of information. An early and influential theorist of the "knowledge economy," Peter Drucker (1969) asserts that "For the 'intellectual,' knowledge is what is in a book. But as long as it is in the book, it is only 'information' if not mere 'data.' Only when a man applies the information to do something does it become knowledge. Knowledge, like electricity or money, is a form of energy that exists only when doing work" (252). The emphasis on practice resonates strongly with a mobilities perspective. However, he also credits the origins of this perspective and the economic focus on knowledge to Taylorism and the drive to break down manufacturing processes–and the human labor involved–into manipulable chunks, which must therefore be stable to a degree, recalling something more akin to data. This is a difference that is unaccounted for. Fast-forward, then, to the World Bank calling for technical education and transferability. Knowledge is equated with skills that are replicable, able to be transferred. Ambitious "developing" countries like Qatar,

sensing the exigence, then try to import knowledge in the form of IBCs, textbooks, fixed formulae and assessment "best practices," and accreditations, a demand for which the supply is quickly growing. Colleges and universities in the US, placed in a similarly precarious situation, strive to show evidence, data that proves a return on investment, an alignment–across curricula and with the workplace–that can be broken down, again, into manipulable chunks.

Knowledge, then, like "nature," has become a *universal*. It is understood differently, according to different interests, different contexts, from manufacturing to composition, and these differences are collapsed, creating the illusion of a zeitgeist. Erasure, rather than acknowledgement and exploration, of these differences gives the term power, an erasure motivated most nobly perhaps by the belief that, as in the literacy myth, we have hit upon the key to economic success, a universal that is universally available (at market price). But as Tsing shows, universals don't exist outside of their particular instance of use. As Donahue theorizes, every use is a reprise-modification. Investigations into knowledge mobilization (a misnomer, we might now recognize) that bear in mind the above observations can keep our feet on the ground and help us to avoid the inhuman practices carried out, consciously or not, in the name of intoxicating abstractions like the knowledge economy. Such scholarship would assume differing as the norm and, by the same token, would resist the urge to offer portable solutions. It would view identity as an ongoing process of hybridization and be concerned with how literacy practices are a reflection of influence as well a means by which influences are navigated and sustained in this identity work. Finally, incorporating and inculcating these observations may in turn help us to explore ways of working with(in) hegemonic forces

which deny them that hegemony.

In this chapter, I have focused mainly on the role of theory, from political economy to ethnography to so-called academic writing, in either the maintenance or disruption of the epistemology underpinning "knowledge economy" trends. The focus has been on the development of the idea that language and writing knowledge can be commodified and traded (transferred), leading me to inquire into prevailing assumptions about knowledge mobilization and how these align with trends in education and political economy. The next chapter continues the discussion by examining the overdetermined nature of one sedimented, apparently stable curriculum. I introduce the QUFP curriculum, specifically its academic writing component, looking at how it has changed over time and how these changes relate to events in the country's development within the context of globally hegemonic powers.

CHAPTER 2: ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND WRITING EDUCATION IN THE

QATAR UNIVERSITY FOUNDATION PROGRAM

In the previous chapter, I reviewed recent developments in political economy and discussed their uptake in literacy education, noting that transnational extensions of these phenomena are resulting in underacknowledged but increasing effects on so-called developing countries. I looked at how this extension has taken shape in one such country, Qatar, before bringing in scholarship on knowledge mobilization that problematizes the neoliberal premise that knowledge is amenable to commodification. I observed that a key site for the struggle to understand the nature of the mobilization of *literacy* knowledge is scholarship in composition studies on transfer. By putting this literature in conversation with Tsing's concept of friction and related research on academic literacies, I arrived at four overlapping characteristics of composition scholarship that can reveal the false premise guiding much decision-making and popular sentiment on knowledge of language and how to write.

In this chapter, I sketch the Qatar University Foundation Program (QUFP) academic writing curriculum before looking at how the genesis and persistence of the view of writing it represents are overdetermined by the constraints and influences of the faculty and administration as well as the history and political-economic situation of Qatar. This approach is informed in particular by the work of Gibson-Graham (2006)

(themselves drawing on Althusser) on anti-capitalist theorization, from which I take the concept of overdetermination. A field-dependent worldview that recognizes the ongoing, shifting influence of everything on everything else, overdetermination contrasts with essentialism, or the notion that things have stable, inherent qualities irrespective of their surroundings or the passage of time. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Gibson-Graham criticize anti-capitalist scholars for holding an essentialist understanding of capitalism, i.e. that it is always everywhere the same, a monolith against which they define their resistance efforts. The authors demonstrate both the inaccuracy of this view and that it leads quite problematically to what they call "capitalocentric" thinking, meaning to see the world in terms dictated by a supposedly uniform and ubiquitous capitalist logic, which predetermines and limits the possibilities of any endeavor. By reaching to such generalizations, we imbue them with disproportionate power and erase other ways of knowing and being. A non-essentialist analysis reveals variations and exceptions that reflect the contingent, situated nature of things, defying claims to universality and stability. Rather than static groups, we might see processes that constitute and are constituted by other processes that are ongoing and indeterminate. Instead of society as uniformly capitalist, we might then understand it as decentered, incoherent, and complex, which can open our eyes to multiple points of intervention in unjust, exploitative processes.

Turning to composition, assumptions about knowledge (of writing) influence the way it is taught and assessed, the way the quality of that teaching is measured, and indeed how one might structure a program and department around such an enterprise. In the following sketch, I show how the QUFP curriculum proceeds from an understanding of

language and writing knowledge as static and uniform, amounting to a *closed-ended* curriculum and a *finite* view of knowledge. Stability is preferred, particularly in the midst of frenetic change, but even the decision to lock down curricular documents such as rubrics is shown to be unproductive in this regard when we consider the complex and often contradictory influences on whose precarious alignment depends this belief in stability.

<center>Overview of the Qatar University Foundation Program</center>

Figure 1: Foundation Program English Courses
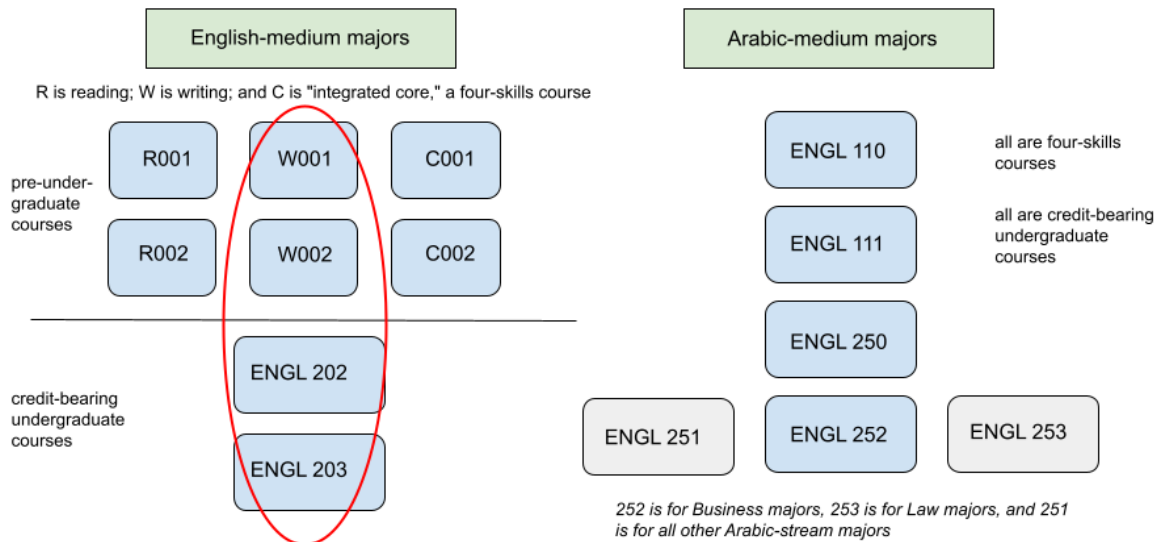
QUFP's English curriculum offers two tracks depending on the medium of instruction of a student's major. An Arabic-medium major requires four credit-bearing undergraduate English courses as part of the core curriculum. An English-medium major requires two terms of intensive English language coursework prior to commencing

<center>42</center>

undergraduate work, then two more courses after, for a total of four semesters. The pre-undergraduate coursework is separated into reading, writing, and four-skills "integrated" courses, while the latter two courses are predominantly academic writing (the last, ENGL 203, is similar in scope to a research writing-focused second-semester FYC course in the US). All English-medium track students take the Accuplacer ESL placement exam (comprised of adaptive language-focused multiple-choice questions, but no writing); they can also test out of courses via the IELTS or TOEFL. My attention is primarily on these English-medium track writing courses, which are circled in red in Figure 1, because they represent the bulk of composition instruction and are the most intensively focused on it, though my investigation will ultimately lead me to look more broadly at the Foundation Program and how it has evolved to this point.

This writing-focused coursework is designed to develop students' ability to produce five-paragraph evidence-based argumentative essays (progressing from 300 to 1200 words, but always five paragraphs). Elementary Writing Workshop (W001) focuses on paragraph writing, and the five-paragraph template is introduced in Intermediate Writing Workshop (W002). Among the outcomes described in the syllabus for the latter course are the following: "Before the mid-term, [students will be able to] produce [a] level-appropriate 5-paragraph cause or effect essay (minimum 300 words)" and "After the mid-term, produce 5-paragraph process and comparison/contrast essays (minimum 350 words)." Each essay is developed according to a carefully structured linear process with "idea charts" where students fill in the first, second, and third causes, or the first, second, and third stages (of a process essay), and for each of these main points, three supporting details are required.

Students generally progress from this course to ENGL 202, a credit-bearing course, in the first semester of their undergraduate program. The first SLO (student learning outcome) listed in the ENGL 202 syllabus is "By the end of the course the students will be able to use, organize and present ideas in the format required for academic writing, with: an introduction, including a hook, background information and a thesis statement, a three-part body with each paragraph having a topic sentence and supporting sentences, and a conclusion summarizing the main ideas." Students write two essays in this class. The first is a "cause-effect" essay, which should be 450-500 words, and the final draft of this essay "must contain five paragraphs." The second essay is argumentative, 500-550 words, and "The final draft must contain five paragraphs, one of which consists of a counter-argument and refutation."

According to the syllabus for the next and final English course, ENGL 203, among other skills to be acquired by the end of the term, "students will be able to apply previously learned essay structures to longer academic papers." This course introduces students to research writing: they practice summarizing, paraphrasing, and responding to ideas, and the coursework culminates in a 1000-1200 word term paper. The assignment description does not mention a requirement for the number of paragraphs, but a glimpse at the grading criteria for the outline component of this assignment shows that expectations hew to the five-paragraph theme. The introduction must contain "a hook, background information, and a thesis statement with a clear topic, clear focus, and parallelism in its points." After the words "thesis statement," the words "three main points" are added in bold typeface in parentheses. The body section of the essay outline criteria similarly emphasizes this point with its requirement of "three main ideas," the

word "three" again in bold typeface.

Turning to assessment protocol, the pattern of quantifiability and rigid writing process continues. In addition to the three main ideas/paragraphs criterion, the Intermediate Writing Workshop rubric defines the number of spelling errors, punctuation errors, and grammatical errors for each grade. The ENGL 202 and 203 term paper rubrics are similarly specific, extending this approach to the formatting (e.g. indenting, running headers) and referencing conventions. What is clear from these documents is that countability, explicitness, and lockstep procedure, in both composition and assessment, were the priority in their design.

The effort to articulate good writing as that which meets a set of fixed and easily countable criteria (i.e. easily recognizable matters of form) is further reflected in the apparently immutable nature of these documents and the rigorous measures taken to ensure their correct interpretation and delivery. Before every major assessment, there are moderation sessions (i.e. norming sessions), after which the course facilitator arranges for teachers to swap their classes' essays with each other for grading. Frustrations with this process and the rubric invariably arise but are suppressed in recognition of the latter's facility with a stack of 120 essays and of both as (claimed) best practices for achieving validity and reliability in writing assessment. Such an approach indexes a desire for uniformity, or the urge to appease that desire among stakeholders.

As others have shown (Cameron, 2002; Rezaei & Lovorn, 2010; Surma, 2018), this approach reflects a view of literacy as a technical skill, reducible to discrete, measurable chunks that can be scaled without distortion and universally acquired according to a predictable sequence—what Block (2002) calls "McCommunication." At

its core, it recalls Brian Street's (1984) description of an autonomous model of literacy. Street was naming a tendency to conceptualize reading and writing as skills isolable from the context of use, ideologically neutral, and equally available, at least in theory, to all. Since its formulation in postbellum Harvard's first-year writing course, theme-writing and the reifications of modes of discourse and methods of exposition that followed have long been the exemplar of such logic—knowledge of writing extracted, codified, and imbued with universality through the unquestioned efforts of those in power to wrangle a diverse student body into intellectual shape as they define it (Connors, 1997; Crowley, 1998; Tremmel, 2011). Process pedagogy in composition has weathered similar efforts, resulting in attempts to codify a strictly linear approach to drafting and revision that distort the original curricular innovation (Kastman-Breuch, 2002; Rose, 1983). These tendencies have gained traction and snowballed in the QUFP as it attempts to import commodifications of theme writing and process pedagogy and develops materials and practices that further entrench this conceptualization of literacy. Street argues that such a model is problematic because the guise of neutrality leaves power differentials unexamined, enabling unreasonable claims for what are in fact very limited and contingent practices. In the case of QUFP, this has enabled curricular choices prioritizing facility of instruction over educational value as the assumed value of this template, as a universal, goes unquestioned, sanctioned by widespread uptake (e.g. in textbooks and assessment "best practices"). In the next section, I investigate the evolving state of affairs that has encouraged this model at QU.

A Globally-Situated, Education-Focused History of Qatar, QU, and the QUFP

As several scholars (Brandt & Clinton, 2002; Horner, 2012; Zenger, 2018) have observed, attempts to define or understand literacy and literacy education in purely local terms are limiting in what they offer to an investigation when the factors that impinge on them are increasingly global in operation. The development of activity theory and criticism of autonomous models of literacy led to its conceptualization as socially situated, encouraging (but not demanding) attention to local circumstances (Barton & Hamilton, 1998; Barton, Hamilton, & Ivanič, 2000; Russell, 1995). Parallel to this trend, though, was the increasing capacity for global reach in the education industry, which reinforces a locally bounded program assessment through the one-size-fits-all logic of purported universals, the message being, here are the tried and true models; if there are any issues with their implementation, they are local and require local adjustments (Dingo & Strickland, 2012). Taking the wider view thus opens up to scrutiny these trends that might otherwise have gone unquestioned. We can recognize, for example, this convenient one-size-fits-all mindset as part of a powerful impetus toward commodification in the complex pattern of events cohering as neoliberal globalization (as opposed to other forms and means of interconnectivity). The reduction of language and writing to quantifiable skills begins to make sense as a response to demands for consistency and commensurability that are the prerequisites for participation in global markets (Horner, 2012). The growth of transnational capitalism, facilitated by fordist notions of repeatability and the smooth transportation of commodities, and neoliberal policies that increase privatization and diminish the role of the government, have incentivized the extension of economic logic to other areas of social activity, including education. As

Strickland (2011) shows, the history of composition instruction in the US has often reflected the influence of economic trends, and this pattern continues on a global scale under the influence or pressure of transnational capital.

Broadening our focus also helps us to understand how this way of thinking gets proliferated. Scholars of globalization and education often write about the diminishing role of the nation-state in setting (educational and other) policy given the increasing susceptibility of such policy to influence by transnational (though largely Western in geographical, financial, and intellectual origin) organizations including political-economic (e.g. WTO, the World Bank, OECD), commercial (e.g. textbook publishers), explicitly education-oriented (e.g. ETS [developer of the TOEFL exam] and accrediting organizations), and interdisciplinary think-tank (e.g. RAND) bodies. Whereas the traditional purpose of education might have aligned with the needs of the nation-state, this displacement of authority creates the conditions for interests to take root that are less advantageous to the nation and its citizens. The multiplication of decision-makers and influencers and the diversification of interests involved has profoundly altered the scope and purpose of education, largely toward a neoliberal agenda of free trade and expanding markets (and market logic). Burbules and Torres (2000) argue that this trend affects whether and how countries decide how much to participate or the nature of their participation in globalization, warning that shifts in educational policy resulting from this will be less in the interests of the nation-state and more in service to private, commercial, non-local bodies. Morrow and Torres (2000) echo the point in their contention that globalization compromises the role of the nation, which after the decline of the welfare state is assimilated into the "global, informational post-Fordist economy" with agendas

set by transnational bodies using the rhetoric of development. Production in this new economy is driven by the emptying out of history and context from ideas, conventions, and thinkers in order for them to be traded in global exchanges, generally to parties desirous of the prestige they apparently offer (Apple, Kenway, & Singh, 2002; Block, 2002; Cameron, 2002; Payne, 2012; Popkewitz, 2000).

As I show below, Qatar and the QUFP have become increasingly exposed to the processes of commodification at work on literacy and knowledge and their results. But this is not to suggest a one-way, top-down imposition. While these trends within education have gained coherence as well as powerful proponents, to assume they are or can be uniformly applied is to support the epistemological premise that gave rise to them. Though under considerable pressure to adopt them, nation-states can and do still exert influence over the nature of and extent to which these processes play out within their borders (Block & Cameron, 2002), and the situation "on the ground" is the result neither of purely local nor global forces. As Zenger (2016; 2018) observes, such a dichotomous framing precludes a nuanced survey. Drawing on Aihwa Ong's and Peter Michael Smith's deconstructions of the global/local binary whereby "global" ends up being associated with oppressive economic forces and abstract universals and "local" connotes culture and relative passivity, Zenger argues that the field of rhetoric and composition too often views the local in static terms of nature and innocence, negating agency. As she demonstrates with examples from the American University of Beirut, with its complex history and ties to the US and across the MENA region, "localities function simultaneously on local, national, and transnational scales" (2016, 143). In a similar vein, Lingard (2000), drawing on Appadurai's notions of "vernacular globalization" and

"scapes" (financescape, culturescape, etc.) which in their uptake intersect in unpredictable ways, proposes "context-generative micronarratives" to capture how the "new global educational policy consensus" I gesture toward above plays out differently according to the interplay of these various forces. In every instance, the manner of implementation or uptake—the resulting policies and practices—is inflected according to interpretations influenced by contested local history, politics, and culture as well as institutional dynamics and intra-institutional politics (Block & Cameron, 2002; LaFrance, 2019). Therefore, in the following I propose to attune to the context-generative micronarrative detailing the nature of these changes in Qatar. Avoiding the confusion of a too narrow view, I observe the interplay of globally hegemonic ideologies while attuned to local and temporal circumstances to understand how the curriculum came to look like this—a collection of stringent efforts to standardize the delivery of supposedly standard models of language and writing in a context far removed in both time and place from that of their conception. This will entail attention to Qatar, its history, and the nature of its exposure to the winds upon which these ideas have been borne, or in which they were born, as well as those powerful currents themselves.

Much of the rhetoric of neoliberal globalization centers on development and modernization. The country in a precarious position vis-à-vis global currents—because it is seen as traditional, "backward," or mismanaged—is offered or pursues the lifeline held out by transnational bodies. Loans are made on the condition that consultants are brought in, trade agreements are signed, and/or austerity measures are put in place. Qatar, however, does not fit easily into this narrative. Until fairly recently it could well have

been described as "underdeveloped," and indeed it has taken aggressive steps to

"modernize," but it has been able to do so more or less on its own terms, given the wealth

it enjoys as a result of its oil and gas reserves. For this reason, Fromherz (2012) argues

that Qatar, despite appearances, has not fully experienced "modernity" as it is commonly

conceived in the West, a conceptualization influenced by the Durkheimian

tradition/modernity binary whereby the latter is characterized by a shift in the basis of

identity formation from natal lineage to occupational milieu. Fromherz demonstrates that

in Qatar, despite its economic boom and considerable "modernization," lineage is yet a

dominant factor in Qataris' sense of self and orientation within society, a condition

facilitated by the insulation of Qataris from the labor involved in modernization. This

enables locals and ruling elites alike to outsource or ascribe any concomitant social ills to

the expatriate workers. And ultimately, Fromherz asserts, this state of affairs endangers

the country's future because the desperation and reckoning occasioned by modernity is a

condition for sustained economic growth.

Qatari society is organized largely according to tribal divisions, recalling the more

traditional, Enlightenment-style sense of community based on proximity, homogeneity,

and familiarity (Burbules & Torres, 2000). For Fromherz, this is a luxury afforded by the

outsourcing of the *anomie* resulting from modernization's disruptions of social norms to

the expat laborers estranged from their own families and communities. Along with the oil

and gas, he claims, this capacity will eventually run out, though likely much sooner. I

wonder, however, whether it might be more accurate to say that Qataris are pursuing a

middle ground as yet uncharted. They may be constructing a way to hold on to (while

simultaneously asserting or defining) some aspects of tradition and community while

"modernizing," effecting a new role within globalization trends that resists some of the unfavorable effects of neoliberal globalization: an experiment afforded by vast wealth and luxury that may nevertheless offer insights on resistance or mediation of the powerful and deeply attractive perceived economic perquisites of neoliberal educational reforms.

This section is structured around key moments in the relatively brief but eventful history of the QUFP and interspersed with relevant Qatari history. I begin with the events that made possible the founding of Qatar University in the 1970s. While infrastructure had been developing slowly since the discovery of oil in 1939, the conditions for more rigorous development—educational and otherwise—arose with the withdrawal of the British from the region and the formal establishment of Qatar as an independent state in 1971. The emir, Ahmad bin Ali Al Thani, who had been in power since 1948, was known (like his father) for being somewhat detached, ruling from his villa in Switzerland, and left much of the work to his cousin, Khalifa bin Hamad al Thani, named prime minister in 1971. A year after independence, with Ahmad out of the country, Khalifa seized control. This change in leadership was to have significant long-term effects; until this point, emirs held on to power by paying allowances to potential threats or appealing to the British for protection and validation. With the British presence waning, Khalifa, known and respected for being involved in the country's development, took a different tack and gambled on this reputation to reduce allowances and instead invest in housing, health, education, pensions, and other social infrastructure (Toth, 1994). Qatar's first institution of higher learning, the College of Education, was founded in 1973, and in 1977 it was expanded into Qatar University. In 1986, with input from the British Council, the English Language Teaching Unit (ELTU) was established. At the time, while there were some

"general English" courses, most of the offering was ESP-oriented, designed explicitly to cater to QU's various colleges, and all of these courses were credit-bearing (Szewczyk-Méziane, November 2019).

The conditions for major changes were again in place with a change in leadership in 1995, when the heir apparent, Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, overthrew his father, who, as with his predecessor, had become somewhat detached and was in Switzerland on vacation. Under Hamad's authority, the country began aggressively exploiting its reserves of natural gas, resulting in rapid economic growth, which enabled the implementation of a range of ambitious social and infrastructural projects and institutional reforms. In a further echo of 1970s events, by ushering in an era of prosperity for all Qataris, these measures ensured political stability for the new administration in the wake of the coup. A key area for focus in this developmental agenda was education—reforms were initiated across the board and the ambitious "Education City" was founded. Consistent with the political objectives of efforts aimed at increasing prosperity, Fromherz argues that this was a strategic move aimed at fostering a unified and supportive population. Echoing Popkewitz's (2000) contention that education is "the administration of the soul," and that educational policy, rather than merely creating a workforce or a means of pursuing social justice objectives, inculcates a particular definition of freedom and shapes the means by which an individual becomes self-motivated, Fromherz suggests that the Emir's educational project was an effort to replace "traditional forms of identity with those defined by the state" (2012, 160). In a region known for its long history of political instability and tribalism, this was an ambitious but

essential agenda to ensure the Al Thani hold on power and the integrity of the fragile state.

Thus, in 2003, with the economy picking up considerable steam and Education City well underway, the government and university administration set out to evaluate and modernize Qatar University, which served the majority of the higher education-pursuing population. A new president, Dr. Sheikha Abdulla Al Misnad, close friend of Sheikha Mozah, favored wife of the Emir and head of the government's educational reform efforts, was appointed, and she commissioned the (largely US-funded) transnational consulting group the RAND Corporation to evaluate the university, leading to a university-wide radical reform agenda. These measures led to the transformation of the ELTU into the two-year preparatory Foundation Program to bring it more in line with ELT trends globally (Szewczyk-Méziane, September 2020). The swiftly implemented new program (the pace, I think, is significant and I return to this later), now keyed to the TOEFL, moved away from ESP in favor of a more general "academic English," was no longer credit-bearing, and was required of all prospective undergraduates who did not achieve the minimum TOEFL score. With the help of the US Embassy, an ELT Fellow (a State Department program) was brought in to assist with the transformation, which involved the development of a new curriculum based on American textbooks.[8] These reforms also entailed the formation of a committee tasked with pursuing CEA[9]

8 For a related account, see Anson and Donahue (2015) on Dar al-Hekma College in Saudi Arabia, which commissioned the Texas International Education Consortium to assist in its development, resulting in a similarly problematic curriculum.
9 Founded in 1999, "the Commission on English Language Program Accreditation (CEA) is a specialized accrediting agency that focuses on post-secondary intensive English language programs and institutions. CEA's purpose is to provide a systematic approach by which programs and institutions can demonstrate their compliance with accepted standards, pursue continuous improvement, and be recognized for doing so" (CEA, 2021). Originally a national accrediting body, in 2005 it expanded its scope to include institutions worldwide.

accreditation, which the program attained in 2010. Thus, one of the main functions of these reforms was to broaden the program's remit, funneling the vast majority of QU students through a uniform, supposedly American-style curriculum built on the notion of "academic English." It extended the period of study for most undergraduates by two years and placed a burden of labor on students ostensibly to "catch up" with native English speakers by maintaining the standardization efforts of the TOEFL, a test designed to assess students' readiness for undergraduate studies in American universities.

The expansion of the program required the hiring of thirty new teachers, with faculty growing in number from 15 in 1986, to 60 in 2004, to over 90 in 2005. This growth also came with a shift in the teachers' background: earlier teachers were mainly brought over from the university's education department, but the teachers hired as a result of these reforms were, consistent with the aim of bringing the university more in line with global trends, from ELT-specific backgrounds, recruited from TESOL and IATEFL conferences.

Just eight years later, in 2012, the program underwent another fundamental change which again was spurred by political events and shaped by international forces, this time a little closer to home, and again connected to wider university reforms. These changes are popularly held to have been prompted by the regional turmoil around this time. The events and ideas of the Arab Spring were rippling across the MENA region, and while far less salient in the wealthy Gulf states, were nevertheless influential. The civil unrest and calls for democratic reforms posed a threat to longstanding monarchies in the region, and the Al Thanis, insulated somewhat by the wealth of the Qatari population, would have been wary of the susceptibility of an idle citizenry to unrest fomented by

regional powers (a frequent cause for concern, historically). Thus a sense of urgency was added to the government's until then somewhat half-hearted "Qatarization" efforts to enfold more of the Qatari population into the workforce, which is largely comprised of expatriates. Many locals had stayed away from undergraduate studies in part perhaps because of the lack of a sense of necessity but also because of the English language requirement (English being the language of instruction) and the effective gatekeeperism of the Foundation Program with its significant time investment (two years of preundergraduate work) and its reputation for being difficult to advance through, so the government's Supreme Education Council decreed in January 2012 that a number of majors at QU be taught in Arabic and the English language requirement lifted for students pursuing them.

As might be expected, this precipitated a mass departure of faculty in the Foundation Program (many of whom did not speak Arabic), who were either let go or feared for the future of their jobs. However, English language education at QU did not go away but was instead transformed again. With arguments for the significance of English to both the degree's and the university's "market value" (Haroon, 2012) weighing heavily on administration, the decision was made that students in Arabic-language majors would still be required to take English courses, but as part of their core curriculum (and thus, credit-bearing). Housed within the Foundation Program, the courses were not, however, a return to the ESP-style curriculum of the ELTU but were instead to still be centered on a "general English" objective with American textbooks.

In addition to the creation of the core curriculum courses, concerns regarding the gatekeeperism of the Foundation Program were further addressed at this time by cutting

the original Foundation program curriculum (for English-medium majors) from two years of pre-undergraduate study plus one year of undergraduate "post Foundation" study, to one year of pre-undergraduate study plus one year of post Foundation study (the current structure described in the first section).

Figure 2

Student Numbers at QU[10]
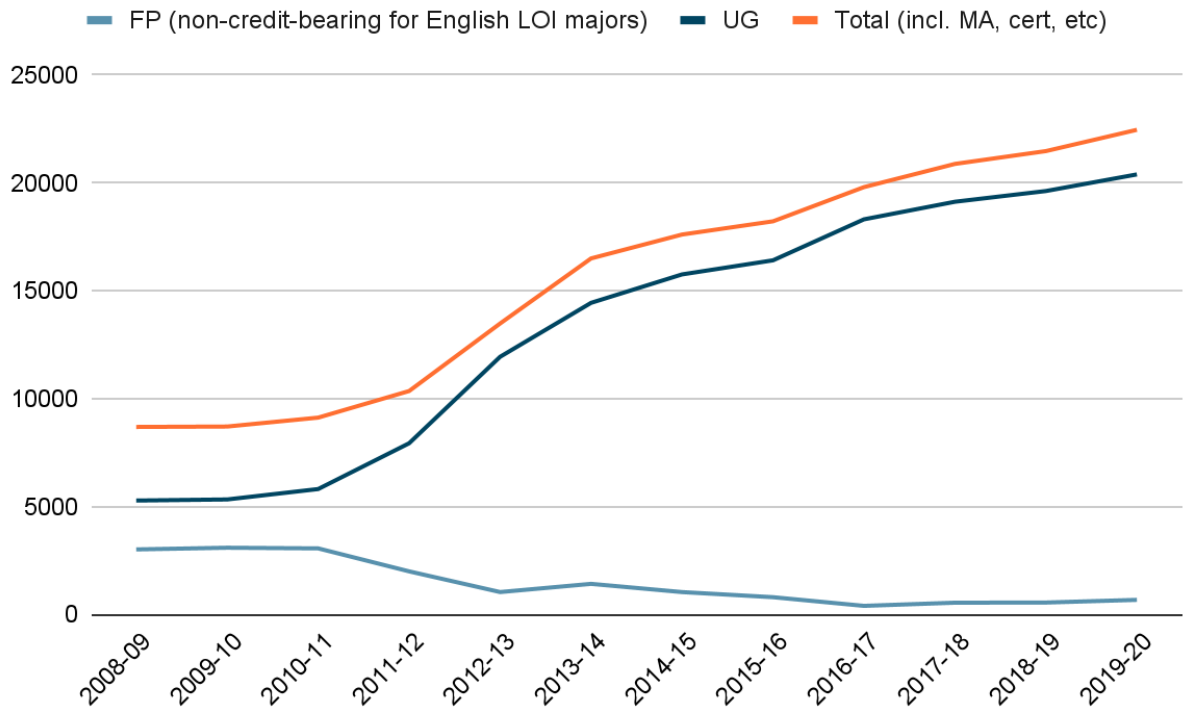
10 The terms "foundation" and "foundation program" can be confusing here. The name of the department is the Foundation Program (not technically viewed as a department within QU). Within this, there are Embedded, Foundation, and Post-Foundation. Embedded refers to the core curriculum English courses created in 2012 for Arabic LOI majors. Foundation refers to the pre-undergraduate English courses for English LOI majors. Post-Foundation refers to the undergraduate-level English courses that English LOI majors take. In this figure, FP denotes the pre-undergraduate English courses. (To confuse matters further, there's also an English Department, but that is for English majors and focuses on literature and linguistics.) Lastly, "UG" is all undergraduate students.

The upshot of these decisions was another massive expansion of the program, this

time owing to a precipitous increase in overall enrollment. Figure 2 reflects the

remarkable growth of the university spurred by the shift in the language of instruction,

which by removing the English proficiency requirement cleared a significant barrier to

the pursuit of higher education. This growth is nevertheless concurrent with the growth of

the Foundation Program since incoming Arabic-medium undergraduates still needed to

take English language courses. What this graph shows, then, is the popularity of the

Arabic-stream majors; the rise of a less "academic," less TOEFL-oriented, "general

English" curriculum; and the dwindling appeal of the more "academic" pre-

undergraduate courses of the Foundation Program's English-medium track. "Academic"

in this case can be understood at least partly as involving considerably more writing (as

described earlier) compared to the core curriculum courses.

Thus, if the 2004 reforms can broadly be characterized as aligning the university

more closely with Western/global trends, 2012 was in many respects a corrective. In

addition to the potential of the Arab Spring uprisings to inspire threats to Al Thani power,

it seems fair to say that another impetus for the 2012 reforms, not as easy to point to, may

have been resistance to the increasingly disproportionate influence of "global" education

trends. The 2004 reforms saw the university and the Foundation Program reaching more

people than ever before and doing so according to an increasingly foreign model. Rather

than preserving their own norm, Qatar, via Qatar University, particularly post-2004

reforms, found itself supporting the hegemonic tendencies encouraged by the

monolingualism that characterized so much of "the vast English export industry"

(Pennycook, 2008) and other aspects of the new "global education policy consensus"

(Lingard, 2000).

From this perspective, the 2012-2013 partial shift toward Arabic as a language of

instruction, while preserving elements of an American-style English language

curriculum, might therefore be seen as an assertion of agency in the face of neoliberal

globalization as well as the aforementioned measure of Al Thani self-preservation amid

unrest and calls for democratic reforms, and this would be consistent with the country's

history of savvy negotiation and mediation. In a region long characterized by shifting

alliances across multiple levels of power, Qatar's survival, rather than a straightforward

matter of hardy self-sustenance, has been contingent on its ability to deftly navigate and

negotiate with entities far more powerful than itself. Owing to the nature of its geography

(a small peninsula in the Arabian/Persian Gulf, making it of strategic importance yet

vulnerable), the emergence of a unified, independent entity took longer than surrounding

areas. Over the course of the nineteenth century, the peninsula was subject to claims by

the Saudis, Bahrainis, and Ottomans, while the British, out of an economic interest in

preserving maritime peace, labored through treaties and settlements to impose stability.

In the 1850s, one of the local sheikhs (tribal leaders), Mohammad bin Thani, began to

gain local prominence as their representative in negotiations with foreign powers. This

position turned into one of authority as he became known and respected for his canny

manipulations in forging agreements. Often involving concessions in exchange for

protections, these deals also led implicitly to the recognition of Qatar as an independent entity that never truly ceded its sovereignty, could never be completely colonized. Fromherz details a telling example of this in how the Al Thanis navigated the conflicting interests of the Ottomans and the British in 1868. Mohammad Al Thani sided with the British while his son Jassim sided with the Ottomans, yet rather than leading to conflict between them or these foreign powers, the ambiguity of their collective position resulted in a delicate balance of power, the preservation of sovereignty, and an increasing sense of unity among the local tribes.

This exercise of agency in the midst of hegemonic forces would lead to the exaltation of Al Thani to "a rallying point for unified Qatari action against overstepping outsiders," Fromherz notes (61), and has been the key to Qatari sovereignty and Al Thani power to this day. Indeed, the recent blockade of Qatar by other regional powers provides yet another example. In 2017, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and the UAE, after years of tension following Qatar's support for Arab Spring opposition, cut ties with the country and closed off their airspace, endeavoring to exert economic pressure that would force Qatar into alignment and effectively threatening its sovereignty. The timing was particularly sensitive since the emir, Tamim Al Thani, had only recently come into power (in 2013 after the abdication of his father, Hamad) and the country was deeply invested in massive infrastructure projects in preparation for hosting the 2022 World Cup. In the background, essentially taking over the role that Britain had played, was the US, which has its central command base for the region in Qatar and is said to have had a hand both in encouraging and resolving the blockade according to its interests vis-à-vis Iran and Saudi Arabia (MacDonald, 2021). The blockade failed to achieve the desired results, however, and

largely backfired on the nations that undertook it. Qatar responded by cultivating ties with Iran and Turkey, traditional foes of the blockading nations but with which Qatar had been at least cordial. They provided essential supplies and a window through which air travel could continue. Those relationships were strengthened while Qatar remained ready to reintegrate with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) nations. Domestically, rather than splintering the country or exposing weakness in the new leader, the blockade provoked a potent nationalism among Qataris and elevated Tamim to icon of the resistance. A stylized image of him—dubbed Tamim the Glorious—went viral throughout the country, with everything from SUVs to skyscrapers wrapped in his likeness. The young emir was praised for his level-headedness and savvy relationship-building, much in the way his ancestor Mohammad had been.

In addition to securing its own survival, Qatar has developed its negotiation skills and *wasta* (one's network of relationships—a matter of trust and security, and a primary factor in getting things accomplished in Gulf Arab culture) into a reputation as a mediator between foreign powers. It has hosted talks between the US and the Taliban, for example, and has played a key role in Palestinian-Israeli negotiations. But such a position does not exactly imply neutrality. Rather, Qatar has become known as an engaged player respected for its dogged but deft pursuit of consensus. Seemingly without enemies, it maintains a stake in all sides, drawing on its vast wealth to build alliances and support developing and developed countries alike.

Conclusion(s)

By situating it within these local, regional, and global histories, I aim to evince a view of the QUFP curriculum as the ongoing result of three key influences: neoliberal globalization, the scale and swiftness of changes in a rapidly developing country, and a coerced alignment across a precarious hierarchy of power. First, to review some of the concrete decisions manifesting the influence of neoliberal globalization, there was the early assistance of the British Council, setting a precedent at QU for consulting Western organizations with government associations, and later the hiring of RAND and a State Department-sponsored American ELT Fellow, leading to the reliance on TOEFL as benchmark and model for curriculum design. There are the attempts via Education City to directly import Western higher education with international branch campuses (six American universities, one British, and one French). As well, the country has participated since 2006 in the OECD's PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment, an international comparison of student performance on a standardized test), and the university itself has pursued SACSCOC and CEA accreditation. The efforts by Qatar to modernize its education system have brought it into contact with the transnational flows in which attempts to commodify knowledge and language thrive.

In addition to these more direct encounters, the logic of commodification may also owe some of its prevalence across the curriculum to the increasing opportunities for more passive exposure to it and its apparent affordances, given the widespread permeation of market logic into other areas of human activity. While this curriculum's ongoing reflection of the attempted commodification of language and knowledge owes something to the partnerships with Western organizations, the fact that the post-2011 evacuations of these and the reassertion of QU as the flagship national institution (i.e.

more reflective of Qatari culture, in contrast to the international branch campuses of the much smaller Education City), with its most popular majors in Arabic, did not unseat this logic suggests both an appeal and a less obvious origin. Pegging atomized writing practices–as quantifiable and stable–to the currency of a grade or academic credit reflects the fordist-like production of goods for exchange, and such practices persist in part because of the ease with which we might find ourselves so engaged when these become so prevalent as to pass for common sense, the incentives, monetary or otherwise, to do so realized (as a profit) but unregistered (cf. Prior & Olinger, 2019, on metasocial and metasemiotic ideologies supporting an autonomous model of literacy). Block (2019) demonstrates how the belief in this possibility can take root. He argues that the increasingly widespread term "language commodification" describes an impossibility and ultimately represents the misapplication of an economic concept. Following Marx, exchange value is derived from the cost of production, but determining the cost of production of language is impossible given its complexity. Nevertheless, he asserts, employing the term, even in a critical way, ironically exemplifies and contributes to the universalization of market logic. If one says that it *is* language commodification, even to decry its effects, then one implies that such a trick is possible, which contributes to rather than resists the very permeation of economic logic into other areas of life (e.g. education) that one might criticize (cf. Marx's concept of commodity fetishism). The term itself is not part of the QUFP lexicon, of course, but the structures and processes built up through years of exposure to such logic "repeat it" and its powerful incentives in terms of standardization.

Second, and relatedly, the scale of and swiftness with which the changes affecting

the QUFP occurred provided the motivation to avail of these incentives for the

standardization they appear to offer. Zenger (2018), writing about the American

University of Beirut, demonstrates how the tendency for the perception of crisis to create

a desire for quick, *prêt-à-porter* solutions can play out in writing education, and a similar

situation can be seen in the 2004 and 2012 reforms at QU. While the 2004 reforms were

more preemptive than reactive, the limited time frame given for the design and

implementation, combined with their wide reach (university-wide, but also nationwide),

encouraged a reliance on outside "experts" offering such solutions. In 2012, again the

scale was massive as the university expanded to accommodate thousands more students,

and the rush of diversity created administrative anxiety for control via standardization.

These reforms recall the long history in the US of periods of rapid growth leading to

rigorous efforts to standardize curricula (as was precipitated, for example, by the end of

the Civil War, the G.I. Bill after WW2, and the protests that led to CUNY's Open

Admissions policy). The overwhelming rise in the number and diversity (necessarily,

given the number) of students has tended to give rise to standardization measures based

on previous and/or hegemonic norms. In the case of CUNY Open Admissions, this

resulted in students being held to criteria developed for a different population (but

nonetheless claimed to be universal), deemed deficient, and labeled as "basic" writers

(Shaughnessy, 1976; 1977). At QU, the swift and radical nature of these changes also

required hasty, herculean curriculum development efforts and provided a strong incentive

to preserve or regain a sense of stability and uniformity. The increase and increasing

diversity of the students, in terms of both nationality (roughly half the student population

is Qatari) and education (a wider swath of the population motivated to pursue an undergraduate degree), though ironically providing more evidence of the nature of knowledge/writing practice as inherently diverse, led to a reliance on internationally-recognized standardized tests (by which students would be judged lacking), and encouraged both the importation and development of materials that would provide at least the semblance of consistency across time and space.

Faculty diversity can play a similar role in prompting the move toward strict standardization, as has been observed in large composition programs in the US that rely on contingent faculty or graduate students to teach the required first-year writing sequence (see Miller & Cripps, 2005). Their diverse backgrounds and/or absence from meetings, professional development seminars, and other department activities leads or is thought to lead to a lack of uniformity which is met with textbook and syllabus requirements in the effort to ensure a standard "product" and be accountable to (sometimes ambiguous) stakeholders (Gunner, 2012; Morrow & Torres, 2000; Strickland, 2011). At QU, the massive hiring campaigns not only grew the department but brought in teachers from over twenty-five countries. This diversity has become a point of pride (particularly considering its contrast with the practice, still fairly common in TESOL, of insisting, sometimes tacitly, on a narrow subset of "native" and preferably white speakers (Kandiah, 1998)), but nevertheless contributes to the anxiety for uniformity. Faculty are full-time and well-paid; there are three-year contracts but no tenure and no opportunity for promotion beyond lecturer. Annual appraisal is conducted in a manner similar to the assessment of students, i.e. with an emphasis on quantifiability: the number of committees, professional development activities, and acts of community service are all

kept track of. This approach to assessment might therefore be said to have been normed across department activities. Additionally, such practices gain traction among the faculty, not only because of what they might offer in terms of convenience, but also because of a strong job-security incentive, given the facts that presence in the country is contingent on employment and all of the teachers are expatriates.

This leads me to a third significant insight that this transnational political-historical perspective provides into the forces that shape and uphold this curriculum, which is the perhaps more passive realization of the benefit that accrues to certain parties from a limited, mechanistic version of language and writing knowledge. If neoliberal ideology (Harvey, 2005) and autonomous models of literacy (Street, 1984) connote in part the obscuration of those in power as market events and knowledge are held to be politically neutral, then a critique of these in practice must inquire as to who is benefiting. In their analysis of literacy as a transcontextual organizing technology, Brandt and Clinton (2002, 349), drawing on Brandt's earlier work, argue for attention to literacy sponsors as "those agents, local or distant, concrete or abstract, who enable or induce literacy and gain advantage by it in some way." The foregoing analysis of the QUFP curriculum highlights a complex chain of literacy sponsors. The textbook publishers and other Western organizations I mention earlier are obvious beneficiaries, but their influence is filtered through national, university, and departmental actors.

Until the development campaigns undertaken in the 1960s and 70s, education in the Gulf was largely religious in scope, emphasizing rote memorization of the Quran and moral instruction that discouraged criticism (which could invite polytheism), while valuing respect for religious authorities as the ones capable of interpreting scripture. As

an epistemological heritage, this tradition plays a role in conceptions of literacy today, troubling attempts to inculcate values (e.g. democracy) associated with literacy in the West (Weber et al., 2015) while encouraging formulaic production. As well, going back to Popkewitz's (2000) notion of the more existential functions of education, it is worth considering the relevance of this approach to education to the purposes of the ruling elite. Building on my previous point, there is a link between the urge to standardize knowledge practices and the desire for docile subjects. Tracing the history of writing instruction in the US, Strickland (2011) finds echoes of Keynesian economic policy–as patriarchal and interventionist–in the impetus to professionalize composition instructors. Students' writing was identified as poor (a move which itself performs a managerial function), and teachers, perceived as erratic and confused, identified as the problem. The solution was professional development, which Strickland shows only served to rigidify existing hierarchies by creating an informed and thus superior managerial class and a sanctioned and carefully regulated body of knowledge which teachers were expected to consume/conform with, their behavior thereby standardized and controlled. The traditional approach to education pre-modernization in Qatar played a similar role in the maintenance of power and hierarchy, and at the heart of it was standardization and formulaic production. For all the energy devoted toward the modernization of education, the Al Thanis–whose rule in Qatar dates back its inception in the 1800s–are still at pains to avert real critical engagement. Instead, the goal of maintaining the status quo and their power is more fruitfully pursued by encouraging an active role for Qataris in the economy and having a hand in the potential for education to contribute to a sense of national identity and unity. The rigidity of the current QUFP curriculum, both in terms of

its inscrutability among faculty and its pedagogical "formulaicity," can provide the semblance to the right parties of adhering to a prestige variant of composition pedagogy (i.e. American) while encouraging not critical thinking but alignment with orthodoxy. While the QUFP curriculum may not have been directly conceived of with these objectives in mind and QUFP faculty are all expatriates, the department is overseen by higher administration who have always been local and whose appointments owe something to *wasta* or who are in fact Al Thanis, ensuring the influence of local priorities.

Among lower administration and faculty, there is also a strong disincentive to teach critical thinking in any rigorous way, or to criticize anything themselves, stemming from a climate of self-censorship. I felt the chilling effects of this climate firsthand when, tasked with coming up with topics for a common assessment for ENGL 203, I suggested air pollution (a story I relate in more detail in the next chapter), but this was rejected by the (Canadian) course facilitator for being too risky (i.e. indirectly critical of the government). Such a climate is encouraged and enforced by the conservative religious culture as well as the country's strict blasphemy and privacy laws (Fiss & Kestenbaum, 2017; Guttenplan, 2013). In 2014, a new law was created ostensibly to discourage cybercrime but which raised international concerns due to its far-reaching and vague definitions. Given its provisions for harsh punishments for spreading "false news in order to jeopardize the safety of the state, its general order and its local or international peace" or publishing content that "violates any social values or principles, or publish[ing] news, pictures, audio or video recordings related to the personal or family life of individuals – even if it is true," the law was seen as a major blow to press freedom (Amnesty

International, 2014; Khatri, 2014; Kovessy, 2014; Murphy, 2014). These measures may to some extent be a reflection of a popular mindset—one which likely finds more purchase at QU, being the more conservative option for higher education. Students have been known to black out images they feel are inappropriate in textbooks. And in 2013, an anonymous group of QU students circulated a letter in which they decried the presence of immoral books and other materials in the university library (Doha News Team, 2013). The university responded by noting that its library catalogue was populated automatically via subscriptions to publishing houses, but nevertheless proceeded to adopt a "censoring policy... where we [are] able to delete the books which are against our culture according to clear standards..." (Doha News Team, 2013).

However, there may be more to the origins and persistence of this mindset than religious fervor. An insidious effect of a climate of censorship is that, from outside that climate, conclusions are drawn about the people based on their apparent docility. Chinese are said to be desirous of the community stability that censorship supports because they are a collectivist culture, for example, despite the long history of mass protests and other expressions of discontent. Similarly, in Qatar there are reports of a poet jailed for reciting a poem indirectly critical of the Al Thanis, and students at the Northwestern University branch campus (which focuses on journalism) have bemoaned the difficulty of practicing what they have been taught, with the efforts by one graduate of the program in that regard landing him in jail (Bollag, 2016). Instances of self-censorship and expressions of support for it may in fact be evidence of the fear of foreign influence, given the demographics, and, going back to Fromherz (2012), an anxiety for identity in the midst of rapid change driving the recuperation or creation of tradition.

I hope with these observations to have sketched the forces overdetermining the approach to literacy and language education in the QUFP. The history of religious education in the country and the influence from educational organizations operating in neoliberal conditions suggest the contours of such a curriculum while crisis-like circumstances repeatedly create an exigency for it, and a coerced alignment between interested parties maintains it in a particularly rigid fashion. More broadly, these points capture the ongoing friction and compromise that characterize the struggle for determining the nature and role of (higher) education in the country. Analysis of this struggle shows how the application of an emerging global education policy consensus depends on the perception of alignment, but the urge to see or create this depends on the neglect of clashing goals and values. Their inconvenient appearance reveals the challenge of self-determination in an age of hegemonic transnational political-economic policy, but such a challenge is not unfamiliar to Qataris. Al Thani educational policies would control and assert national identity and foster unity in the interest of preserving power, an interest which is generally in alignment with the prosperity of the country (too much deviation prompting a corrective coup). In recent times, such efforts have exposed them to the compelling influence of global education trends (British Council, RAND, etc.), which through their homogenizing class function (a nation of "basic writers"), militate against self-determination, contributing to the factionalism and unrest which prompted and were contained by the 2012 reforms. Consistent with the country's history of surviving in the midst of more powerful forces and its reputation for mediation, the country's leadership is trying to chart an ambiguous middle ground.

However, while not without its advantages, both in terms of what it may appear to represent to stakeholders (i.e. the import of an acultural, stable, and prestigious skillset) and pedagogically (e.g. ease of assessment), the current curriculum's enduring emphasis on formulaic production and quantifiability evinces a reification of knowledge of language and writing that works against literacy education. Morrow and Torres (2000), drawing on Manuel Castells, propose the term "fourth world" as a geographically nonspecific designation of people disenfranchised by informational global capitalism, e.g. through policies that marginalize them as illiterate or maintain them as such. Despite Qatar rating among nations with the highest per capita wealth, this may in fact be apropos. QU students who are taught "academic English" in the manner described above, "at the expense of the more fundamental forms of critical competence required for autonomous learning and active citizenship," are thereby excluded from meaningful engagement with the structures and processes that are shaping their lives (Morrow & Torres, 2000, 47). This ultimately runs counter to the primary goal espoused in the Qatari government's "2030 Vision" aimed at transitioning the country away from dependency on natural gas and toward a "knowledge-based economy" (*Qatar Vision 2030*, 2008, 13).

In the next chapter, I review my history as an English language teacher who focuses on writing education. I demonstrate in narrative form some key points of friction that point to tensions obscured in dominant conceptualizations of language and writing knowledge but which I feel should be taken up, rather than glossed over, in transnational conversations on composition. These are questions of self-determination and sovereignty, autonomous versus ideological models of literacy, and the nature of linguistic and writing

knowledge as human practices interwoven with identify formation versus understandings

of them as static and amenable to commodification.

CHAPTER 3: CRITICAL MULTI-SITED AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC INVESTIGATION

INTO POSTSECONDARY WRITING EDUCATION IN ENGLISH

In the previous chapter, I focused on one site of instruction in language and knowledge of writing, observing how both it and the curriculum in place there, despite claims to stability, are in fact always emergent (Cresswell, 2002) according to relations of power functioning on local, regional, and global levels.

If that chapter is the history of the place, then this chapter is the history of one actor within it. Here I recount in narrative fashion key moments from my thirteen years of experience as an itinerant English teacher. The focus is my time in Qatar (2013-2018), but I first provide an overview of the preceding years to give a sense of the experiences that shaped my approach to the work there. Writing this narrative allows me to raise and explore questions about the nature of English and writing education in postsecondary institutions, its consistency or lack thereof across space and time, how it can be shaped, who shapes it, and to what ends (cf. Scenters-Zapico, 2021). Through this exploration, I also demonstrate an example of how language and writing knowledge relate to identity as an ongoing process and how awareness of this can help one to resist post-fordist commodification as branding.

What I present to the reader here is the result, necessarily tentative and incomplete, of a recursive process of free-reined exposition with attention to emergent

patterns. I include anecdotes from outside the classroom, for my identity as a teacher is not limited to the classroom or the office, a fact I suspect many teachers will be able to relate to. It is designed (to the extent that it is designed) to suggest certain themes while also leaving readers to draw their own tentative conclusions, for this open-endedness in itself is a theme. This approach has led me to develop a heterogeneous style, combining analytical and evocative modes (Jackson & Grutsch McKinney, 2021) in order to show the cycles of learning and frustration, burnout and hope, complicity and conflict that characterize my career in education up to now.

The process of composing this was anything but straightforward and took longer than planned. One might say that as a writing teacher, I might have anticipated that, but I did think that I knew my story pretty well. I had certain moments in mind, but writing these triggered other memories that sometimes contradicted, sometimes corroborated my emerging themes. Combining this writing process with reading in ethnography and autoethnography felt like a slow-plodding archaeological expedition, tin cups, shovels, and surveying tools clanging in tow, down a serpentine and seemingly endless rabbit hole. What I have dug up, I have sorted out and arrayed here before you as in an exhibit. As such, there is a measure of curatorial discretion involved (cf. Brandt et al., 2001; Haswell & Lu, 2008). And so the reader may wonder, should I be believed? Did I, consciously or not, make decisions about what information to include and how to convey it with a certain agenda in mind? Among the bones left in the ground, are there fragments that others might have found significant? Most likely.

The question of ethos is central to personal narratives and ethnography. Commenting on a collection of anecdotes from composition teachers, Haswell (2008,

190) asserts that the claim to lived experience itself is at the heart of what makes a story work: "Experience is the token or talisman that certifies the teller and therefore the tale." Brooke and Hogg (2004) address the mechanics of this in their discussion of how ethos works in critical ethnography. They argue that Kenneth Burke's elaboration of Aristotelian ethos as *identification* can help us to articulate how the relationships between researcher, researched, and audience (can) work toward a shared space and common purpose (Burke's "consubstantiality"). Ethnographers develop personal connections with their research sites and participants, and vice versa, in and for the sake of the research project, and a reader's engagement with the text depends on finding or constructing some measure of shared purpose. Particularly given the deep level on which identification can happen, though, there is the potential for manipulation if the divisions overcome go unacknowledged by one of these parties. Applied to autoethnography, we can understand the researched as the multiple selves of the researcher defined chronotopically; their unity not taken for granted, they are examined for patterns. Distinctive features of the history I relate below are the frequency with which I moved and the great distances across which I moved. The start dates and end dates, the entries and exits, lend a natural division to my experience–indeed, each institutional experience stands out to me as so different from the others that I have long felt that I exist at the end of a long line of selves defined by borders formed through a curious alignment between place (visa or residency permit), work ("foreign expert"), and time (contract). The urge to demonstrate coherence across them is a familiar feeling. The moral question here is thus not only whether I'm admitting for public review all the relevant "bones" of my experience, but also whether I do my past selves justice by using them for this project, by synthesizing them for a purpose that

is shaped in part by my desire for acceptance into a community.

To both the researched and the reader, I submit that the overriding desire to be true to myself guides the ethics of my story-telling. Brooke and Hogg suggest that "to complicate ethos in this way means that ethnographers have the potential of coming to a project with the assumption that they are not alone in the research endeavor but are part of a complex process that allows for the boundaries of researcher and the researched to blur as identifications emerge and play out in the text and in action beyond the text" (127). While divisions must be acknowledged, there should be an openness to blurring. At the core of any critical ethnographic project, they argue, must be both an acknowledgement of differences and an openness to being changed. With this in mind, one of the key takeaways of this autoethnographic chapter is its demonstration not of the stability of identity, but its fluidity in relation to space and time as I invite past selves to be here with me and am open to being changed by the identifications I form with them in and for the current project.

In blurring these boundaries and overcoming these curious alignments, what I believe this synthesis work reaches to, as a nonfinite identity, is what Keller (2004) describes as movement as a mode of being in the world, or *dwelling-in-travel* (James Clifford, cited in Keller, 2004, 206). Keller argues for *multi-sited* ethnography in composition studies to push past the tendency to fix writers in static, pre-defined roles (e.g. "students") that determine how they and their work are read. Similarly, as Cresswell argues (2002, 20), *places* and their influence should not be taken for granted: "Places are never complete, finished, or bounded but are always becoming–in process." This is not to deny the role of places and positions, but to understand the roles themselves as

continually constructed and inconclusive, and thus to not be limited by a sense of their deterministic function in our behavior. Removing this limitation opens up the view to other influences and recognizes agency in identification(s). An insistence on movement as a (*the*) mode of being in the world, on mobility, then, entails both difference and an interest in seeing differences, while asserting one's own role in blurring or being blurred, as a contributor to the common–consubstantial–result.[11]

From Missionary to Mercenary

When I completed my undergraduate degree in English literature in 2003, I wasn't sure what to do next. I worked in a coffee shop, volunteered in the AmeriCorps. I wanted to travel, though, so a friend/former professor suggested applying to a TEFL (teaching English as a foreign language) certificate program at Kent State that was hosted in Dresden, Germany. Nearing the end of the program, I heard about a position at a university in rural China, so off I went. Many teachers I met in China fell into ELT similarly. A chance to travel. Young people were doing it for a year or two before going back to start their "real" career. Older people were at the end of their career and had always wanted to travel. I didn't meet any 老外 (foreigners) in their thirties or forties.

The demographics of ELT in China indexed a "common wisdom" against which it felt irresponsible to linger long, but I liked living there and grew attached to the work. It

---

11 Cf. Horner (2015, 215), drawing on Michael Byram (1997), arguing for a sojourner mindset in transnational writing program administration. Sojourners are changed by their travels as they change the places and people they visit, in contrast to tourists, who wish for a stability of places and people that they can move through and remain substantially "themselves," a distinction that applies here as I travel through my past to consider my past travels.

was at least literature-adjacent, and occasionally I got to teach writing. Ever since I became an English language teacher, I have gravitated toward teaching writing, though writing positions are often harder to get. The conventional wisdom is that anyone with some basic training (and, crucially, enjoying status as a "native speaker," even better if white, cf. Kandiah, 1998) can teach the other language skills, but writing is more advanced–you have to really know all that grammar, not to mention all that higher-order stuff about crafting sound arguments and making rhetorical appeals. At the same time, many people don't want to teach it because of the time required for marking essays. Still, it was a challenge that resonated with me for the prestige it seemed to carry and because I'd always enjoyed writing and had been told I was good at it.

My first job in rural China did not to conform to this view of writing instruction as reserved for more experienced teachers, but I suspect this was at least in part because the salary there would not attract those instructors. We could teach whatever and however we liked, with the sole stipulation that we assigned 500-word essays. There were no other guidelines or rubrics, no textbooks. I used a red pen, and I diligently circled and labeled everything I thought was an error. With a hundred essays to grade, marking took forever. There were five of us, all Americans in their early twenties, and as the only foreigners in that small coal town, we were a close-knit group. While there were no department meetings and we were generally left to our own devices, there *was* a kind of norming in the casual get-togethers we had. We shared handouts with error codes–VT, WC, SV–and helped each other come up with English names for our students (unless they had already chosen their own, as Nixon, Rainbow, and Hard-Working had). In hindsight, though,

these were two striking ways in which we read and labeled our students.[12]

After a year there, I wanted to move to a city and, since I now had experience to complement my certificate and (white) native speaker status, I was able to land a job at Xiamen University, a fairly well-known institution in southeastern China. I was hired to teach 12-14 sections of the required Oral English course, each with 30-40 students, per semester (classes met biweekly). Again, there was no oversight, no meetings, no textbooks. At the beginning, I mainly used dialogues from movies and radio shows (e.g. *A Prairie Home Companion*), though I also taught a passage from *Hamlet* once or twice (with a degree in literature, I suppose I wanted to think of myself as an English professor). As before, I calibrated my approach to teaching through casual conversations with friends. An older Australian teacher and I used to drink beer together outside a convenience store after teaching; he got me thinking about content in a way that was more relevant to students. Using local English-language newspapers and magazines, we developed units on topical issues like the fate of migrant workers and the changing role of women in Chinese society. This was an important step for me as a teacher, but still assumed a lot about my role there.

The secretary of the department, with whom I was friends, knew I wanted to teach writing. In my second year there, when they were short of teachers and needed someone for Academic Writing, a two-semester course for third-year English majors (a "real" course, so it seemed, with just one section of about fifteen students), she gave it to me even though I didn't have an MA. Again, with no oversight, textbooks, or any meetings with colleagues, I was trusted to design my own curriculum. I drew on my experience. I

12 Cf. Lees (1987, 1989) on basic writing teachers as an interpretive community that "writes" student essays, and students, inconsistently yet invariably as deficient.

remembered writing an argumentative essay on the death penalty in my first college

English class, at a branch campus of Kent State University in rural Ohio. So I built the

first semester on argumentative essays, ethos pathos logos, refutation and concession. I

had the same group of students for the second semester. I wanted to bring in a research

component and encourage a broader worldview, so I created a Model U.N. scenario in

which groups had to research a country and argue as its ambassadors for attention to their

country's issues using reports and presentations.

One can live a decent life on the salary there, but it won't make much of a dent in

American college loans, so after a couple years I moved to Seattle and got a job in the

intensive English program (IEP) at a community college. This is a roughly two-year

(often longer) pre-undergraduate program designed to help international students develop

their English language and academic skills. With my experience, I was able to get classes

in level five writing. There were just two of us teaching this course. It was a high-stakes

position because our job was to help students compile a portfolio of essays that we would

submit for blind review by the English Department faculty. Only a handful would get a

pass, meaning they would be allowed to "graduate" from the non-credit-bearing IEP and

finally commence undergraduate studies. No more of that freewheeling, teach-whatever-

you-like business; here we had meetings, textbooks, accountability. Standards and

standardization. I hewed closely to the models in the recommended textbook, Oshima and

Hogue's *Writing Academic English*, and worked hard to help students with their

grammar. But my performance was judged poor after that first quarter, when only a

couple portfolios from my class of about fifteen were selected (the other teacher had five

passes). The English faculty, I was told by our director (I never met them), complained of

formulaic writing and bad grammar, five-paragraph essays as if the students were in junior high. However, next quarter, without doing anything very differently, I had a whopping eight portfolios selected while the other teacher had just three. Suddenly I was back in the director's good graces. It see-sawed randomly like this. I commiserated in long phone calls with the other teacher, who'd been there many years–these English faculty just don't understand what we're trying to do here. And the director, she just wants to see results. Both the English faculty and the IEP faculty had sensible points, but the complex and uneven power dynamic kept us from coming to terms, and the students suffered mightily. They would try for a few more quarters, maybe transfer to a different college, try to find work under the table, or return to their home country.

As an adjunct there, I had started out at 75% of full-time. In the winter, I was at 50%. Spring quarter came, and I was down to 25%, just one class. It wasn't looking good. The director felt bad, but the 2008 financial crisis was rippling outward and affecting international enrollment, and I was the last hired in a department of twenty-five teachers, only one of whom was full-time. I was doing some online tutoring at this time as well, and now was going to have to pick up a third job. So much for paying off loans, I couldn't afford my rent. I decided to go abroad again. The job board on Dave's ESL Café (www.eslcafe.com) is infamous in ELT circles. Skim through there and pick a country that looks interesting and a job that sounds legit (universities are preferable to fly-by-night private language companies who might try to hold on to your passport). I spun the wheel and ended up in rural Oman with a proper salary of $2400 per month. With experience but still no MA, I wasn't yet trusted to teach writing. I found it to be a difficult place to live; though not without its charms and possibilities for adventure, as a

rural setting in a conservative culture, foreigners were generally tolerated but kept at a distance. I have many stories from that time–that self has more to say–but *this* story will move on lest we lose our reader.

I went back to Xiamen University. A city I loved, a job I could enjoy. Leaving there had been extremely difficult. Returning was a bewildering experiment in time travel, more thrilling than this time, though both have been instructive in their way. My secretary friend had arranged for me to teach a newly created version of the standard Oral English course that would be geared toward students planning to study abroad. It wasn't writing, but it was something I was passionate about. Perhaps interestingly, I now realize that teaching the course suggested to *me* a geographical contingency to higher education practices, given the course premise that there was something different about higher education in the US and that students would benefit from an introduction, though it was up to me to determine what that difference was. In addition to the intriguing content, the lack of oversight and the rush of academic freedom were a boon for my creative side; altogether, the depth of investment this position enabled and required cemented teaching as a vocation for me rather than a mere job. Nevertheless, that combined with the pressure of debt and, if I'm honest, the dawning impossibility of settling there, of ever being accepted as something other than a somewhat token "foreign expert," combined to impel me to pursue an MA in TESOL after a year.

I moved to Vermont and enrolled in the School for International Training's (SIT) Graduate Institute. In the first semester, I undertook an independent study in the teaching of academic writing. Fast-forward, a practicum at UConn, graduation, teaching in an intensive EAP summer program for Chinese students in Ithaca, NY, and then I moved to

Korea.

At the university in Seoul, I again wasn't yet trusted to teach writing. It was a probationary Conversational English course for my first semester. On arriving, I was startled to find that each week's lessons were planned for us down to the minute. The year before, the Canadian and American teachers, disgusted with textbooks, had decided to create their own curriculum. An enormous amount of work, they designed every activity, made all the handouts, created games and laminated all the pieces. It was all designed around key phrases they thought would be of practical use. Combined in the correct order, these would amount to a conversation (e.g. giving directions to a lost foreign tourist). Everything was simple and well organized: just pick up your packet from your mailbox each week and let us know if you have questions. Fresh out of my MA program with all sorts of big ideas, I was perhaps as disgusted as they had been with their textbooks, and I left after that semester.

With mounting cynicism and considerably more college loan debt, I decided to go back to the Arabian Peninsula, my hope for the long-term viability of this vocation waning. I didn't particularly love living in the desert or a conservative culture, but with an MA, at least I had a chance at some of the better-paying universities there. I got a lecturer position at Qatar University, the flagship state institution of that country. I was hired to teach in the QU Foundation Program's burgeoning "Embedded"[13] track, a series of newly created beginner to intermediate four-skills English courses required for undergraduates studying in Arabic-language majors. The university had been an English as a medium of instruction (EMI) institution, but when the Arab Spring hit, roughly half

13 So-called because English language instruction was *embedded* in the core curriculum, rather than preliminary to undergraduate work.

of the majors were switched to Arabic to be more accessible; however, some measure of English language proficiency was still deemed essential for students in these majors (see previous chapter).

Qatar University Foundation Program

I stopped at the convenience store on the way to campus to pick up some English-language newspapers to use in my class. The Peninsula, Gulf Times, Qatar Tribune. As usual, there is a photo of the Emir shaking hands with some foreign dignitary, and there are banal stories of minor bureaucratic matters. Below the fold, though, I was surprised to see a photo of Bob Dylan. He had his own brand of bourbon now. The story was from the syndicated press and had been expurgated. This was easy to see as there was white space where the words "liquor" or "alcohol" should be. "Bourbon," however, was apparently not in the database of unacceptable language.

Of course, censorship happened below the surface level, too. It was difficult to find local news of much substance. There was one online source, Doha News (dohanews.co), that tried to fill this void. The site gained traction (friction) in 2012 with its coverage of a fire at one of the shopping malls that caused the deaths of 13 children and six adults, an event that traditional media reported on slowly and in a limited way. As an independent outlet with servers located outside the country, Doha News was able to conduct and publish reporting that aimed for more balance and went a little deeper than the mainstream, state-sponsored news, though they would still avoid anything critical of the government or religion. However, they raised some eyebrows with their

content on journalism and media freedom, particularly their coverage of the 2014 cybercrime legislation. This law, discussed in the previous chapter, was in effect an anti-defamation law that, with vague wording and severe punishments, was criticized as a thinly veiled effort to limit free speech and encourage self-censorship. Doha News kept the legislation's development and passage in its spotlight, publishing several in-depth articles and quoting criticism from international sources. But the reporting that likely sealed its fate came a couple years later, in 2016, with a guest post titled, "What it's like to be gay and Qatari." Directly broaching a taboo subject in an effort to encourage dialogue and further human rights, the article made quite a splash in this conservative Muslim culture. A few days later, the site published a response from a reader, titled plainly "We do not tolerate homosexuality in Qatar." With this and other sensitive content raising local ire, Doha News was shuttered in 2017. It was revived after a while by new owners who proceeded to publish tamer content along the lines of the traditional media.

It's only the second week of classes, so I don't expect many students to show up yet. We've been told to keep track of attendance *from day one*. My friends and I roll our eyes at this because at least half the class will be over the maximum number of allowable absences by midterm and we'll have to fail them. Probably only a handful will be under the limit by the end of the semester because no one shows up in the last week or two either. Calling attendance in an empty room is laughable, but I suppose the intention was that, eventually, when students realized there were consequences to not showing up, they would get the idea, even if it took a couple semesters. Word would get out. It was a

necessary evil, a principled break from the lax norm with the students' best interests at heart. After all, how can they learn if they don't show up to class? Still, it seemed to put the brunt of the fallout from going against the grain on the teachers. We were the ones students would argue with. It made it difficult to build a good rapport with them.

The program was between a rock and a hard place. This policy was in part a response to the massive influx of students (and teachers) following the 2012 reforms. But it strengthened the growing reputation on campus of our program as an anomaly in the institution, given its alignment, as the state university, with the broader cultural values preferred in this country of tolerance and kindness. I heard whispers from friends in administration that there was occasional talk of our program's dissolution. By far the largest department on campus, did it represent a necessary transitional phase into higher education (linguistically or behaviorally) for students, or was it an expensive and ungovernable pseudo-department, most teachers with MAs only (no incentives on the table for PhDs), that posed constant headaches for upper administration?

I remember in 2015, the word came down: you can't fail students based on attendance. Someone higher up had gotten wind of our department's efforts to instill discipline, perhaps after so many students were failing, and had balked at the notion that it was for reasons unrelated to academic performance. The revised position decreed by our department administration was to maintain the strict policy but not *actually* fail students. More eye-rolling. What does that do to our credibility? Students will eventually realize the game and then probably won't trust us on anything. But while I found the hypocrisy difficult to take, other teachers, particularly those from the region, seemed less bothered by this ambiguous position. Perhaps it was because rules in this country were

more like guidelines. Many other unwritten factors, like *wasta* (connections) and the hierarchy of nationalities, were just as important.

About a month after I received my Qatari driver's license, I got a text message from the car rental agency. I'd been given a ticket for running a red light, an offense that carries a hefty fine of close to $2,000. I had heard about this fine and was always extremely careful, and quite anxious, at traffic lights. It was an unusually harsh penalty because traffic lights were only recently introduced in the country; most intersections were roundabouts, but they were slowly being converted, and apparently not everyone was quite used to them. This would teach people quickly! Still, it was unfortunate because wealthy locals (at whom this measure appeared to be directed) wouldn't really feel such a penalty. They might never even know about it unless they tried to leave the country, and even then they'd be able to pay it easily. On the other hand, there were reports of working-class people finding out that they'd racked up several of these violations–an impossible amount to pay off with their wages–and then absconding, without their passport, in a shipping container or similar, or, in one case, committing suicide.

I was devastated, wracking my brain for how this could have happened. The rental company said they had someone with a good relationship with the traffic police who would go there and try to negotiate on my behalf. Weeks went by, I called multiple times, visited the agency office a couple times, more than a month went by, but still nothing. After a couple months, I went to the police to try on my own. A crowd of men– Indian, Nepalese, Pakistani, Sri Lankan–were jostling loudly for attention from the row of officers at the long desk. Company drivers, private taxis, chauffeurs. I tried to join in

the chaotic scene. Eventually I get called over, well before my turn, though there isn't really any turn-taking. With bits of English, Arabic, and nonverbal communication, the Egyptian policeman and I arrive at the purpose for my visit. I insist that I've never run a red light. He pulls up the violation, which was caught on camera, and shows me his screen. There's a video of me pulling up to a red light, stopping, then making a right turn. It turns out that right-on-red is not a legal move in Qatar. I protest and plead, and he refers me to his superior. After a couple more visits, I eventually got the fine reduced to about $200.

On whom does the burden of reconciling the contradictions of a utopic vision fall? It is passed down from upper administration to lower administration to teachers and ultimately to students. It tumbles off the backs of the privileged nationalities down to the lowest and most vulnerable.

I wait a few minutes, then call attendance. This is when I was still teaching Embedded, which was little more than crowd control. About halfway through class, Fatima[14] walks in, slowly, ostentatiously, heavily made up and wearing four-inch heels. She's wearing a glossy black abaya with a pattern of rhinestones, and her hijab is almost halfway back on her head, showing a risqué amount of hair. The abaya swishes over the floor as she makes her way to the back of the class. Supposedly the female students are better behaved for male teachers and vice versa, but I'm not so sure.

I found it easy to get burnt out when teaching was like this. I didn't feel like I was making a jot of difference, and classes were just a grind. I show them the video about

14 All names are pseudonyms.

Canadians climbing Mt. Everest. We read aloud the passage about sharks. I walk back to my office through the searing heat, sweating through my shirt for the third time that day. The tea boy asks if I want a coffee. I chat with colleagues about midterm travel plans: a week in Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Turkey, or Marseille.

I wanted to prove myself and to get out of this draining teaching situation. I was eyeing the much smaller and more "elite," if masochistic, cadre of Post Foundation instructors who taught academic writing to students studying the English language-of-instruction (LOI) majors. This was where I belonged, what I was good at, and supposedly the students were more serious there. It was suggested I write a letter to the facilitator explaining my interest and my suitability. I got "accepted" and felt like I had finally made it. I was teaching advanced English writing and research to undergraduates at a big, up-and-coming university, my photo on their website, no more silly games, this was high-level *academic* work, a respectable position.

Before long, though, I became frustrated again. Students in these classes were better behaved, and I was happy to be teaching writing, but I was dismayed by how standardized, template-driven, and prescriptive (to both teachers and students) the curriculum was. Templates and grammar "rules" can be useful as shortcuts, as scaffolding. There is value in describing patterns of language use to learners–children learn languages quickly, "soaking them up," but, contrary to popular sentiment, adults can learn them faster because we can consciously study these patterns. But something was getting lost in the insistence on these as correct and final. The motivation behind these standardizing efforts seemed to have more to do with controlling the diverse

teachers and ensuring a uniform experience.[15] Increasingly, I felt that I was denying, rather than facilitating, for my students the kind of deep, honest engagement with language and ideas that essay-writing could be. Ironically, in my pre-MA jobs, *I* seemed to be the source of this limiting prescriptivism; then I got the MA and began to recognize such an approach as problematic, serving interests other than those of the students, only to find that the "better" jobs I was now qualified for embraced a very strong version of this formulaic approach.

Mohammad and I were working on the midterm for 203. It was a common exam with several paragraph-long prompts that students can choose to write a cause/effect essay on. It was hard coming up with new prompts because there just wasn't that much that was both "safe" to talk about and something about which students would know enough to write an essay on. And we needed to think of new topics because students would have talked with peers who already passed the course. Finally, I hit on air pollution. That was a major issue in Qatar. The fine dust blowing across the desert combined with the gas refineries and all the massive construction going on meant that Doha's air quality was often on par with the worst cities in the world. As I was finishing the prompt, George, the Post Foundation coordinator, came over to chat with us. I showed him my work and he said we couldn't use it. Discussing air pollution could be seen as criticism of the government. "I don't want those phone calls from parents or from the dean." Well what *could* we ask students about? We settled on obesity, another major

---

15 Cf. Miller (2001) and Miller and Cripps (2005), arguing that increasing standardization measures in a first-year writing program in the US can broaden the pool of labor available to teach those courses, thereby (perhaps too conveniently) solving a staffing headache for administration. Lofty (2004) observes a similar mentality in the shift of the meaning of teacher professionalization (at institutions in Maine and the UK) toward a measurement of their rule-following ability as statewide standards are developed.

issue in the country, but one which the government was actively addressing through media campaigns encouraging healthy diets and exercise infrastructure like walking and cycling paths. Even though this topic could cause some embarrassment, it was more acceptable than air pollution, I guess because the latter could cause discomfort to the government, and potentially us, whereas the former, only to the students. In this way, we aligned ourselves with government values and found ourselves mirroring its authoritarian and censorious behavior. Whether or not we fully realized it, we were mimicking the move to control discussion and thought, and to limit (define) critical thinking.

The negative consequences of an approach are not easy to recognize if they are structurally validated. We were encouraged by these broader structures of power we operated within and justified by our experience and our credentials: we know good writing, and we've worked with so many students over the years that we know them as well. As such, the difficulty Mohammad, George, and I were having stemmed as much from navigating the local taboos as from the fact that *we* were trying to figure out what *they* could write about, proposing both to know their thoughts, assuming homogeneity and intimacy, and the way they would perceive the world.[16] Unmindful of the impossibility of such an endeavor, we ultimately transferred the difficulty to the students, implicitly asking them to assume that homogeneity and that worldview.

16 Cf. Anson and Donahue (2015), who relate a similarly misguided approach at a university in Saudi Arabia. On the recommendation of their American educational consulting firm partner, the program adopted a textbook series that was later deemed problematic due to offensive content. They decided, in partnership with the American textbook publisher, to develop what were felt to be culturally accommodating textbooks. The ideologically safe but intellectually bland result led "students to complain of being disengaged from their writing and feeling a lack of purpose when coached to expand their ideas beyond the few sentences and paragraphs they manage[d], reluctantly, to produce" (32-33). These decisions were premised, Anson and Donahue argue, on an understanding of language as abstractable from context and reducible to a set of stable skills that could be replicated in a relatively straightforward manner.

Someone higher up concluded that Foundation Program faculty were having an easy time, so the head of our department decreed that all teachers were now required to be on at least two committees. They were also encouraging us to come up with new committees. Around this time I was tapped to join the "Best Practices Committee," an honor, as this was the brainchild of our new director.[17] She had asked the facilitators to choose outstanding faculty to comprise the new committee, which she would occasionally attend. Strangely, though, it was not clear what we were supposed to do, which made for some very awkward, and quiet, meetings. We eventually decided that we would get some video equipment and start taping "excellent" teachers for under-performing teachers to watch. Which teachers should we record? How do we know if their practices are the "best"? In the end it was decided we'd solicit volunteers.

My friend Ken had a wry sense of humor–he didn't take any of this seriously but knew how to give them what they wanted. Rather than join one of the real committees, which he found ridiculous, he proposed the "Time Management Committee," which would keep track of whether teachers start and end their classes on time. This was also both a joke and real, but on his terms. Members of the committee would walk around campus, randomly checking up on teachers. The HoD praised his initiative, but some of the teachers bristled at this new measure of surveillance. I'm not sure how much surveilling actually happened though.

We were also strongly encouraged to present at the annual conference on ELT that our department put on. They tied it to our appraisal, which meant a raise, so the

<hr />

17 Directors of the Foundation Program are always Qatari and generally have no background in ELT and little to do with the actual running of the program, which is the purview of the HoD, the coordinators, and the facilitators.

conference grew quickly. The presentations felt a bit light to me: "20 New Ways to Teach Vocabulary," "How to Use Kahoot to Gamify Your Writing Class." Sometimes you'd pick up a useful tip, and it's good to get people together to share ideas. Mostly, though, it seemed that people were giving empty talks to qualify for a raise and pad their CV while the department was trying to gain credibility in the eyes of upper administration through proliferating committees and the aura of professionalism. I was becoming rather cynical. It reminded me of the new library at that first university I taught at in rural China. A government-funded institution, they were coming up for review by authorities from Beijing, so they built a massive university gate recalling the Arc de Triomphe and a huge library next to it. They didn't have enough books, though, so they required all the students to donate five books each to fill up the shelves. One of my students asked me if I had any extra.

The semblance of productivity, the trappings of success. Perhaps "if you build it, they will come," but these seemed like pale imitations constructed for a particular short-term purpose, and once that was achieved, the unwanted books would gather dust and deteriorate, the light presentations would be quickly forgotten. But one senses that something is happening. The show is having effects beyond these short-term and largely political or self-serving goals.

It's the end of the semester, get your box of tissues ready. Seriously. Students will be coming in to complain about their grades and ask for "help." There are often tears. Sometimes they bring friends, gifts. There may be calls from their parents. Then they go to the facilitator, possibly to the head of the department. Once I got a call from the vice

president's office. It was a nice conversation: he wouldn't presume to tell me my job, but he wondered if I would consider reviewing a particular student's grade. Of course, I will take another look, perhaps I missed something.

As I write this at a large American university, I find myself re-assuming what I take to be the dominant American perspective that this institutional irreverence for grades is quaint, a tale from the hinterlands, perhaps this is why, if not at least a sign that, "they" are still "developing" (see "seriously" above). But at the time, I was just keen to toe the line, to figure out what my bosses wanted me to do. In China, I'd been asked to change all my grades so that they looked more "balanced." The secretary treated it as a matter of course. Like the library at the other Chinese university, things just needed to look a certain way. I lost sleep, wrote long letters to my mentors (didn't receive responses, which seemed like a kind of response), felt that my integrity was compromised, questioned the whole point of bringing in "foreign experts" (our official label for immigration purposes) with our rigorous methods and high standards. But by the time I got to QU, experience had taught me to travel lightly, to lessen the frustration by bringing less with me. From missionary to mercenary. Here it seemed relationships were more important than numbers; after all, where did those numbers come from, what did they really mean. There might be some truth there. Indeed, the reverence for grades that I inherit from my American educational background, by which I mean their finality, the absolute certainty behind them, is not so well-deserved, as literature on error analysis (e.g. Bartholomae, 1987; Lees, 1987, 1989; Williams, 1981) and studies in anti-racist assessment demonstrate (e.g. Davila, 2022; Inoue & Poe, 2012).

The moderation sessions were my favorite. Before every major assessment, the Post Foundation teachers would meet to normalize our approach to grading. The course facilitator would hand out a couple student essays, we'd mark them, then compare and defend our results. We would discuss the efficacy of thesis statements, argue over whether an example was relevant or contained enough detail. We worked from a common rubric, which played a very important role as the document on which all arguments had to be grounded. This rubrical exegesis could be enjoyable to me because, while challenging to many, I was quite good at it, at reading essays carefully, fitting them into the boxes, and defending my choices. But it soon became rather frustrating. Disagreements could become emotional. One person *just wouldn't get it*. Another would become insistent. The tension in the room would grow as the clock ticked on and no consensus was reached. Eventually, someone would just have to relent. Usually, the facilitator would simply decree that it was one way and not another way.

People often voiced their displeasure with some aspect of The Rubric, but it was generally off-limits, beyond question. It performed a unifying function, to be sure, but there was more to it than that. George, the Post Foundation facilitator, told me one time after I'd complained about it that meddling with it would be a nightmare–the discussions and disagreements would be endless. Plus, it goes much higher up than you realize; you don't understand how much trouble that would create. As it is, upper administration are okay with it. The PF curriculum is a well-oiled machine. It's polished, straightforward, and has been signed off on. It doesn't create waves, it doesn't result in issues with students. Indeed, Post Foundation had the reputation for being the well-groomed, respectable division. Since the recent restructuring, the newly created Embedded

curriculum was a mess, being reworked on the fly, with both teachers and students

unhappy. The Foundation curriculum was not much better–restructuring shrank it almost

overnight from two years to one year, so there was no shortage of angst there. But Post

Foundation had survived intact, and the facilitator did not want anyone rocking the boat.

I recall just two instances in my five and half years when rubrics in the writing

classes were changed. In W002, Intermediate Writing Workshop, there was a meeting in

which people voiced frustrations with the subjectivity of terms like "sufficient,"

"adequate," and "may impede communication." Moderation sessions were supposed to

normalize interpretations of such language, but after persistent disagreement, Marvin, the

facilitator, agreed to add numbers in parentheses after these terms. "So what do we think,

7-10 errors? 6-10?" The changes were made, but it didn't completely prevent

disagreement. In later meetings, people argued whether to count the same word

misspelled more than once, whether a short simple sentence counted as much as, say, a

compound-complex sentence (but then what if it's a *long* simple sentence?), and so on.[18]

I think the only time we changed the ENGL 203 rubric while I was there was

when George wanted to crack down on formatting. I'm not sure what prompted this–he

could be rather authoritarian. So we nailed down the various aspects of formatting, and

the grading formula was tweaked to give more weight to it. The result felt extreme: an

essay could drop by two letter grades if a few things were off about the formatting, e.g.

the running header was on the wrong side, the title wasn't centered, and the first line of

one of the paragraphs wasn't indented. George was insistent: it was about discipline,

following rules, and becoming detail-oriented–that was what we really taught. As with so

18 See Lees (1987, 1989) and Williams (1981) on the variability in teachers' sense of error and the
influence of positionality on whether what is claimed to be an error is actually recognized as such.

many of the rules, though, the implementation was uneven. The policy was to swap essays for grading, and it behooved one to stay on good terms with one's colleagues. I remember plenty of *sotto voce* conversations in the hallway or parking lot: "No, I'm not going to be that strict. That's ridiculous. If you're generous with my students, I'll be generous with yours." Even the teachers didn't follow the rules.

That paper-swapping system–an accountability measure–could be another source of frustration. Early on in my time in Post Foundation, I was helping a student organize her ideas for a five-paragraph comparison/contrast essay. I suggested that four paragraphs would be fine if it made more sense that way. I also warned her that those paragraphs would be longer, so maintaining unity and coherence could be more challenging. In the end, she wrote what I felt was a strong essay. However, when I got my papers back from Darlene, the colleague with whom I'd swapped and one of the veterans in Post Foundation who helped to mentor the newcomers, I was surprised to see that that student's essay had been given a D. I brought it up with Darlene, and she said that it was only four paragraphs. We took the matter to George, who made an exception for me after I explained that I had suggested this format to the student. But going forward, he warned, please don't deviate from the models.

In Seattle, students were being penalized for writing five-paragraph essays. Here, they were being penalized for *not* writing five-paragraph essays.

A few years later, when I'd been moved to Foundation writing classes, I tried expanding the models again. The template we used for a comparison essay was a "point-by-point" model, meaning that the writer would come up with three points on which to compare two things, and each point would be a paragraph. Feeling that students could

handle a bit more complexity and might benefit from some other options, and considering that there might be more leeway since Marvin was not as strict as George, I also introduced a "block" model whereby the essay is structured around the things being compared rather than the points. One devotes a paragraph to the various features of the first thing, then another paragraph for the second thing. Marvin found out and told me sternly not to do it. Students would be punished for deviating from the model, and teachers, too, would be reprimanded.

English 203 had a term paper instead of a final exam, but this was the exception. All the other courses in the Foundation Program had final exams. These mass assessments were very tricky to organize, as cheating was a major concern. Each room had to have two faculty invigilators who read out instructions from a script and stood like guards the entire time (at one point, they did start allowing us to sit down). Exams for a particular course all had to be taken at the same time, posing logistical challenges for the courses with a large number of sections. Sometimes we used the entire food court. They brought in a thousand or more desks and set them up at a certain distance from each other. There were head invigilators, area invigilators, and class invigilators, and of course you never invigilated your own class. I remember it feeling very inhuman, sort of what I imagined a processing center for refugees or illegal immigrants must be like.

Even with all these measures in place (or perhaps because of them), incidents were still common. Administration was always refining the procedures to prevent and address such incidents. At one point, someone came up with the idea of using yellow and red cards, as they do in soccer (a sport which many people are passionate about there–

Qatar owns or sponsors several major European teams, such as FC Barcelona and Paris Saint-Germain, and hosted the 2022 World Cup), to help bridge the language gap with lower-level students. And we had to stay on top of innovations in cheating. Before the final exam period started, we had to attend presentations on new technologies, such as tiny earpieces that went deep inside the ear. Students were supposed to put their phones at the front of the room, but they often had two or three phones. Most of the women wore the hijab, which covered the ears, and some the niqab, too, which covered their face. Female classes had to have at least one female invigilator who could ask students to remove the niqab for ID checks and in case of any cheating suspicion while the male invigilator turned around or left the room.

I admit that I took some pride in how well I was able to perform the strict duties. I could stand there for two hours, never looking at my phone. I could follow the directions, even if they were sometimes vaguely worded. Others had more trouble, were confused. Some people would resist and do it their own way. Eventually, administration grew frustrated by this inconsistency, so they made a video of someone reading out the directions which we all had to play, and they had the facilitators walking around to check on us. We were being disciplined as we tried to discipline the students, and there was resistance all around.

Around 2016, after many years in the position, George left and Inayat, a relative newcomer to Post Foundation but who had a PhD and wore a suit every day, was instated. Inayat seemed like an easy-going guy; he also didn't want to rock the boat, but he intimated that he would be more relaxed than George. He knew that many teachers

disagreed with the heavy toll for formatting errors, so early on, the phrase "start counting after 3 mistakes" was added to the rubric guidelines. This was a quick and easy way of softening that emphasis; it placated the teachers but did not require any attention from upper administration.

I read Inayat to be open to other changes. He seemed to value our input. So, when the College of Education offered an online course on rubric design, I signed up. It would look good on my annual performance review and help me to make some informed suggestions to Inayat. For my course project, I set about redesigning the 203 rubric from scratch. The result was well-received by the instructor. I informed Inayat, who expressed interest, and we met to discuss it. What followed was a very strange and memorable meeting. He came to my office and sat down with me. We went through the new rubric together and he slowly, through friendly suggestions and comments, *transformed* it into the old one. It seemed wholly unintentional, almost magical. I wondered if he simply had the old rubric so firmly in his mind that it felt right, and he was simply helping me to reach that goal. Or perhaps this was his way of politely but firmly asserting his authority and avoiding a large rock in the path of the boat.

In 2017, the country fell into a crisis. Its neighbors in the Arabian Peninsula (Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Bahrain) along with Egypt had long been frustrated with the upstart nation, particularly in the wake of the Arab Spring during which it supported opposition groups, most visibly through coverage on Al Jazeera (a Qatar-based news media corporation). Such behavior was out of line with the Gulf Cooperation Council[19]

19 The GCC, established in 1981, comprises most of the Arabian Peninsula: Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, the UAE, Kuwait, and Oman.

position and was viewed as a threat to the sovereignty of these countries. They imposed a

blockade on the nation, closing off land, air, and sea passage, severed diplomatic ties,

and gave a list of demands to be met before any discussion could take place. Qatar

dismissed the demands and turned to Iran and Turkey for assistance. The grocery stores

were quickly emptying out, but within a week, there was milk back on the shelves, though

now the labels were in Turkish instead of Arabic. As I discussed in the previous chapter,

the blockade largely backfired because of these other connections and Qatar's vast

reserves of funding. Loyalty to the young Emir, hitherto untested and whose abilities

were the object of some skepticism[20], increased, and the nation gained sympathy,

recognition, and support beyond the region as it took on underdog status. Of interest here

is its savviness, its wilful and independent spirit, and the apparent irony of supporting

these values in the opposition abroad while suppressing them at home.

It was also in 2017 that something happened that made me switch from Post

Foundation writing (ENGL 202 and 203) to lower-level Foundation writing (W001 and

W002). A few other teachers and I, all with MAs from the same institution, were told that

our degrees were no longer recognized. For the remainder of our current contracts, we

would be moved from the for-credit courses in Embedded and Post Foundation to the

non-credit-bearing Foundation courses in order to avoid any issues with the university's

accreditation. And we would need to get another master's degree if we wanted another

contract (contracts are for three years, and I was about halfway through my second). We

were flummoxed, but little information was available, and the advice was not to go

---

20 Rumor had it that the Father Emir's first son declined the role and the blockading countries likely timed
their action in part based on a sense of the new leader's weakness.

poking around too much. Anything beyond our department was opaque, off-limits, inscrutable; one served at the pleasure of the crown, so to speak. But since I didn't have anything else to lose, I made inquiries through friends and eventually was able to learn that the Supreme Education Council (SEC) was cracking down on fake credentials and had discovered that our alma mater, SIT Graduate Institute, did not provide GPAs. This is what I understand was most likely the issue. SIT (the "School for International Training") was one of the first schools to offer higher education in TESOL. They have a good reputation in the field but are also known for their less traditional, more holistic approach to education that emphasizes experiential learning and reflection. As such, it is a pass/fail program. Nevertheless, it is accredited, but this apparently did not satisfy the SEC.

I didn't mind teaching the lower-level courses–less grading, at least–but I was not about to undertake another MA program. In the end, this development provided the extra motivation I needed to put together my applications to doctoral programs.

From Frustration to Friction

The experience of writing, rewriting, and reflecting on my time as a language and writing instructor leads me to several observations, which I take a moment here to name.

At every turn, I with my colleagues believed that we knew (or could figure out) how to write and teach academic English, and yet, as this "longitudinal study" shows, what that looked like changed as the situation changed. Both my colleagues and I would say, often disagreeing, what good writing or correct language was, only to revise it, consciously or not, later. Someone says it's one way, and then another perceives the

flaws of that way as they try to implement it, so they conceive another way, which either never sees the light of day or simply leads to a replication of the problem. See for example the teachers in Seoul who were disgusted with the textbook and then created their own, or my efforts to design a rubric to replace the old rubric. We would come together to establish a rough norm, as the other foreign teachers and I did in the university in rural China, in conversations with my colleague in Seattle, and in the moderation sessions in Qatar, but the consensus we established was unique to that place and time and was always unevenly implemented–further uniqueness in space and time. Was I still learning what good academic writing was? Were others? Yes, but this appears to always be the case. Right now, somewhere, there are teachers arguing about what is correct, and their conclusions will be different than a discussion happening somewhere else. The development of writing knowledge, whether as a teacher or a student, appears to be less linear than it is commonly treated as. It seems instead to involve a process of assessing and adapting to one's circumstances, with whatever one might draw on as resources, and thus follows a predictable course only insofar as the circumstances in which it occurs and the resources that one might identify are wholly knowable and foreseeable. My experience therefore seems to encourage a wariness of conclusiveness and arguments for universality, and a curiosity about the ways in which our conditions shape our literate practices.

"Good academic writing" differed everywhere I went, whether left to my own devices, given a textbook, or expected to follow a set curriculum. What was consistent, though, was the belief in writing knowledge as stable. If it's stable, then why was there so much disagreement? This was a question that did not come up. Instead, we argued,

insisted; we took recourse to credentials, experience, or, more implicitly or without realizing it, our identity as white and/or a native speaker, the authority of these sanctioned by hiring practices, which seemed to treat knowledge of writing not dissimilarly from the way rubrics do: fixed criteria that if satisfied are a reliable indicator of expertise.[21]

Since no context is stable, assertions about quality (writing) that follow from a universalist mindset therefore must involve some elision of contextual information. This elision seems to enable the utopic visions I encountered and participated in. What this experience suggests is that such visions, while hailed for the ideal future they imagine, often function as an abusive exercise of privilege as the labor involved in shaping practice to meet impossible expectations is not recognized as such.[22] The apparent inability to faithfully realize the vision is then looked on as a failure unless one can offload the task onto someone with even less authority.

Labor did come up often in this review of my experience, and always in a negative sense. In rural China, my wrist ached from the all the error-marking. Rubrics in Qatar were tweaked to be "faster." Everyone, it seems, knew the writing teacher(s) in the department–in Korea, in Qatar, in Seattle–to be smart but with a strangely masochistic streak. Students, too, of course: in Seattle, they worked without reward (credit), and paid for the opportunity to do so quarter after quarter. In Qatar, the post-Arab Spring reforms improved the situation for many students, but English LOI majors were still required to

21 See Bartholomae (1987), Lees (1989), and Williams (1981), and more recently, Davila (2022) for how such identity markers influence conceptions of correctness in the US. Since standard written English can't be said to exist as a stable, uniform entity, then assessment becomes simply a reflection of the privileged status of those doing the marking versus that of the students.
22 There is a wished-for stability implicit in institutional visions, then, however movement-oriented they may seem, given that their realization falls on those without the privilege of articulating them. The movement they would elicit is movement within and which contributes to the stability of an institutional hierarchy.

take a non-credit-bearing year of courses (more on this in the next chapter). So often, they seemed to view their work as unproductive beyond the elusive exchange value of a passing grade, and with dull, achingly anodyne content, it was little wonder that we had trouble with attendance and discipline in Qatar (again, cf. Anson & Donahue, 2015). The reduction of knowledge to skills seems to convert teaching and learning into tedious assembly-line work, a frequent concomitant to writing education in my experience that indexes the influence of economic logic (see Taylorism), as I discuss in chapters one and two.[23]

Finally, the italicized vignettes are included to suggest that the problematic educational practices I narrate are not be considered sui generis but as part of broader epistemic trends. I intend the footnotes and citations to expand this function. They refer to parallel stories in the US and elsewhere, largely relating to the standardization of teaching and the treatment of writers deemed deficient (cast as basic, international, ESL/L2, or the more recent "diversely prepared"). I point these out to counter any impression (which I myself have had) that the issues I relate are but typical of an educational boondocks, a fiction that enables an uncritical business-as-usual.[24] Ironically, one might say that if these issues are typical of anywhere, it is the *American* educational system, since it is the source of so many exported teachers, textbooks, and curricula, but that would be to suggest an(other) unwarranted homogeneity. Instead, rather than

---

[23] Re: labor, I have in mind Brown and Dobrin's (2004) definition of critical ethnography: a move "away from learning about the Other toward instead a dialogic relationship with the goal of transforming the material conditions that oppress the ethnographic participant." A straightforward application to *auto*ethnography sounds rather self-serving, so I make the case somewhat reservedly, but to the extent that my story does shine light on widespread, unarticulated, but keenly felt oppression, I am motivated by the potential they assert for such work.

[24] For another parallel, see Chong (2016), who argues that southern exceptionalism in the US (regarding slavery) obscured oppression in the north (i.e. yes, bad things happened, but that's not *America*), enabling the feel-good, patriotic rhetoric that has been used to justify much damaging policy, both domestic and foreign.

American or "out there," what I suggest all of these stories index is the intransigence of autonomous models of literacy (Prior & Olinger, 2019; Street, 1984) underpinning an increasingly incentivized tendency to treat knowledge of language and writing as amenable to commodification for import/export (Donahue, 2009).

Such a statement becomes possible by widening the scope of analysis across space and time. As well, these realizations are afforded by the dialectic with past selves that I engage in through critical multi-sited autoethnography, for such an approach encourages an externalizing or ad hoc creation of selves. Whereas reflection would entail thinking "within" myself about how something went, autoethnography enables me to think and say "that person did that." The "critical" aspect acknowledges the divisions while simultaneously staying open to the blurring of identification; in this case, a priori divisions are brought under consideration while occasioning a new identification, for a new purpose. In this way, by helping us to notice received, taken for granted divisions, critical multi-sited (auto)ethnography (CMA) can unsettle the common-sense conclusions these divisions imply. In other words, if "mobility, like power, is a relational thing," then CMA can work to rebalance power differentials by criss-crossing apparently settled sites with new relations that reveal the stability of these sites as an illusion sustained through power asymmetries (Adey, 2006, 83).

To conclude, I simply observe that the manipulative identifications masquerading as visions of friction-free writing education seem always to be around. We seem always to be caught up in some vision, steered by an institutional Vision Statement, a professional association statement (e.g. the WPA Outcomes Statement), or individual

program missions. The visions always exist, power behind these always exists, and the

discrepancies of implementation always exist. In the following chapter, rather than create

new solutions that promise smoother implementation or that are capacious enough to

allow for more discrepancies, I draw on research on mobility and knowledge

mobilization to develop an alternative perspective that takes such differing not as

differing from a norm or a vision but rather as the norm, as a sign of life itself. From such

a perspective, frustrations lose some of their bite, becoming instead a response to the

sensation of the friction that enables the movement of people and of knowledge (Tsing,

2005). I try to revive, rather than ignore, contextual information, considering the forces at

work in its ongoing constitution, which leads me into explorations of how local

interactions are globally situated (Brandt & Clinton, 2002), both constituted by and

constituting the powers promulgating utopic visions.

CHAPTER 4: REFRAMING LANGUAGE AND WRITING EDUCATION IN THE QATAR UNIVERSITY FOUNDATION PROGRAM

In the first chapter, I articulated four principles of a mobilities perspective on literacy: such a view holds differing as the norm of language and writing knowledge and of these as open-ended and related to identity as an ongoing process, and as always accomplished with(in) hegemonic powers. In this chapter, I return to the Qatar University Foundation Program, as sketched in my autoethnographic writing and curriculum analysis, to consider the practical applications of these four principles in one site of (English) literacy instruction. I begin by reviewing my conclusions about this site, drawing on Tsing again to illustrate how the semblance of stability there is achieved through a precarious transnational alignment of interests. I then reimagine key moments and curricular features in light of the four principles–a process I dub "reframing"–to demonstrate how this problematic alignment cloaked in neutrality and prestige can be continuously revealed and destabilized by actors who are nevertheless working with(in) systems premised on utopic visions.

Rainforests of the Mind

"Blind to where they were, it was inevitable that they should become the destroyers of what was there." Wendell Berry, *The Unforeseen Wilderness* (1971, 25)

In the late 1960s, Wendell Berry was asked to write a piece in support of the Red River Gorge wilderness area a couple hours outside of Louisville, Kentucky, that was at risk of being flooded by a dam. After several years of walking there, both alone and with a photographer friend whose work would be included with the piece, he produced a long essay that ultimately helped to sway opinion against the project and preserve the area. His assessment of an orientation toward the unfamiliar all too common in modernity is echoed in Anna Tsing's description of the frontier mentality that has justified much capitalist activity over the past 500 years or so and continues, as I argue in the first chapter, in the logic of the knowledge economy. With competition racing ahead of traditional manufacturing, companies increasingly aim to get ahead by reaching toward the abstract. We cultivate "human capital" and dream up new ways to "harness" and put a price on innovation, such that *knowledge*, despite naming a spatiotemporally-specific human activity, is increasingly treated as amenable to the friction-free movement between stable sites.

As demonstrated in previous chapters, the ramifications of this for literacy education are concretely realized in the Qatar University Foundation Program. Just as the Indonesian rainforest had to be imagined as resource-rich and unsettled, the students in the QUFP are understood to be illiterate and undisciplined. And, similar to how the rainforest was viewed narrowly as lumber, the knowledge practices of students are measured according to a narrow set of criteria. As is often the case when a reductionist lens is applied to humans, the rhetoric is of salvation. Accreditors, experts, and policy

wonks want to help the developing nation transition into the new economy; well-meaning teachers and administrators create "success zones" and innovate new ways to teach the formulas for an ever more simplified and scaffolded "academic essay." But this position creates students as subjects whose labor in working to attain knowledge of how to speak English and do academic writing–areas of knowledge treated as fixed, originating in and "owned" by Western powers–maintains these reifications of practices as the standards they are purported to be and supports the activities and industries that would "save" these students from their lost and blinkered lives. As knowledge artifacts, these reifications have no value on their own; their value is generated through the practices of students (and teachers) in trying to achieve them. Like gold, these things have value only insofar as students devote their labor to attaining them.

To whom does this value accrue? The question behind all this passive voice is "who"? It's not a central body; there is no easy target for blame. Instead, it's aphids. In chapters one and two, I wrote about Gibson-Graham's (2006) concept of capitalocentrism, which describes the tendency to talk about capitalism as monolithic and homogeneous, and thence to define one's work in opposition to it, limiting the possibilities of that work and granting real power to the fictional beast that is created. Tsing (2005) helps us to short-circuit that process as she writes about "the heterogeneity of capitalism at every moment in time," reminding us of the simple fact that "capitalist forms and processes are continually made and unmade" (76). Globalization, then, describes contingent alignments between enterprises defining themselves in terms of complementary scales, e.g. local, regional, and global. Tsing captures the concept in a shorthand apt for the lumber industry: APHIDS, or articulations among partially

hegemonic imagined different scales. Rather than top-down imperatives, transnational phenomena are best understood as an index of different parties benefiting in different ways from serendipitous and unstable alignments premised on uninterrogated generalizations. To prevent the formation of monsters (and curtail blights) and better understand such phenomena, which often by seeming to extend beyond our reach can assume a taken-for-grantedness tinged with a certain prestige or exoticness, it can be helpful to take a closer look at these activities to identify the "aphids." In my chapter on the QUFP curriculum, I summarized my investigation in three points. And aphids (the insects), if you've ever seen them, often look like nothing more than small black points.

One observation was the strong presence of both fordist and postfordist commodification, which, as I've demonstrated, can be complementary. Commodification is increasingly encouraged across the full range of human activity by the perceived facility and ideological neutrality of market activities, a perception aided by the shift in the US and UK in the 1970s and 80s away from interventionist government policy toward neoliberal policies of privatization and free trade. The codifications in textbooks and the seal of approval of accreditations, for example, that reflect this trend are global in their reach, with a claimed universal applicability, and their language and ideology percolate into mission statements, syllabi, and assessments. These solutions from abroad, from "above," were at hand to the decision-makers at QUFP as they addressed my second observation.

My second point was the relative scale and swiftness of the changes in this program. The overnight policy shifts and rapid expansions characterized the local conditions shaping the 2004 and 2012 reforms in the program. With teacher and student

numbers multiplying, administrators were under pressure to establish consistency across hundreds of course sections. How can we manage this mushrooming diversity? How can we assess so much writing in a fair and timely manner? Here is a tool, a method, a solution that is objective, repeatable, and simple. Novice and experienced teachers alike, no matter where they're from, anyone can quickly learn the ropes. In this way, the program can advertise both the diversity of its faculty and its consistency–a further instance of the hypocrisies enabled by the combination of fordist and postfordist commodification.

Finally, I demonstrated that there were entities operating at the national/regional level who benefit from and support particular values in education. Since Qatar has existed as a state, it has been helmed by members of the Al Thani tribe, and Qatar's existence has always been contingent on their ability to maintain a measure of unity among the other tribes. One way of facilitating this is by ensuring a high standard of living among Qataris; however, with vast yet finite natural resources and in a hotly contested region, it has become increasingly necessary to diversify the economy and develop a more robust sense of national identity, of belonging. After the blockade, images of "Tamim the Glorious" became as ubiquitous as the national flag, draping skyscrapers and wrapping cars. And since the mid-nineties coup, the Qatari government has been increasing pressure on education to supply a workforce suited to its ambitions in the "knowledge economy" while discouraging the wholesale import of democratic values that might destabilize the Qatari government's fragile position. Hence we see education that can claim to develop "critical thinking," a term much vaunted in educational agendas in spite of, or perhaps because of, its vagueness and suitability for selective interpretation and application. (It

appears three times in the QUFP's "Vision and Mission" web page, which is just 200 words.) The state, as well as religion, are outside the bounds of what can be thought of critically. It's worth noting that religion can also perform a unifying function and in Qatar has historically been associated with education. Until the development that began following the discovery of oil, education was the purview of the mosques and consisted of moral instruction and rote memorization of the Qu'ran. The association of religion and education lives on at QU, which, as the flagship state university, projects itself as a more conservative alternative to the international branch campuses.

Describing these various interests and how their alignment produces this curriculum undercuts its claims to universality, showing it instead to be a set of reifications of literacy practices which are created/interpreted to serve the aligned purposes of these entities. Belief in their universality obscures this alignment and its contingency, perhaps even to the parties themselves, but their apparent timelessness depends on the labor of students in their engagement with them. As such, their door-opening promise lies mainly in their association with the superficial structures of course credits, GPA, etc.

Recalling Morrow and Torres (2000) on the concept of the geographically non-specific "fourth world" resulting from neoliberal globalization, by failing to acknowledge the sustaining work of students in the systems that exclude them, these transnational articulations actively work against students' (and the nation's) full participation in the economies they live in. Rather than studying a curriculum that reflects the nature of knowledge as practice, of literacy as a complex and context-bound meaning-making activity that cannot be reduced to pat formulae, the lion's share of their labor redounds to

the perpetuation of these standards that, by virtue of their assiduous decontextualization and the failure to introduce them as such, have precious little relevance to the linguistic challenges beyond the classroom (see Coles, 1969). The government sets targets for the percentage of the workforce that must be Qatari and enforces hiring mandates on companies, but the unspoken reality is that it is quite common to hire Qataris but then have an expat do their job. It looks good on paper, it's not talked about, but after living there for a while, one becomes aware of an elephant in the room. They're just nudged along, the Filipino maids do their homework, they're given cars, they wreck the cars, they're given new ones (or a driver), a plot of land upon graduation, a house after their marriage, a job they occasionally show up to. Flush with wealth, they are ripe for eye-rolling and ironic gestures of sympathy, but not that long ago, this was a poor country where pearl-diving was the main source of income and a vision of this glitzy future was nothing more than a mirage. Looking past the headline-grabbing luxuries, it's not hard to see the existential struggle for a sustainable future amidst the ravaging forces of transnational capitalism. The key is education, but this too is being undermined, as it is elsewhere, by aphids.

Curtailing the Blight

Somewhere, somewhere behind me that I will not go back to, I have lost my map. At first I am sorry, for on these trips I have always kept it with me. I brood over the thought of it, the map of this place rotting into it along with its leaves and its fallen wood. The image takes hold of me, and I suddenly realize that it is the culmination, the final insight, that I have felt impending all through the day. It is the symbol of what I have learned here, and of the process: the gradual relinquishment of maps, the yielding of knowledge before the new facts and the

mysteries of growth and renewal and change. (Berry, *The Unforeseen Wilderness* (1971, 110-111)

It is tempting to address this situation by simply proposing a new curriculum. But this is the revolution mindset: presumptuous, "capitalocentric," and frankly impossible given everything I've said about the friction of knowledge mobilization. As well, as I showed in chapter three, proposals for a better way bump up against the inertia of the existing program cloaked in compelling refinement and inscrutable thereness. Instead, disrupting this alignment is a matter of maintaining the visibility of its interests as they manifest in the curriculum, which can be achieved by continually reframing the work according to the four overlapping and deliberately unsettled principles I outlined in the previous chapter. This reframing work aligns with previous scholarship on an "academic literacies" approach to instruction. Lea and Street (1998) delineate three perspectives on writing instruction: a "study skills" approach, which resonates with the current QUFP curriculum, conceives writing narrowly as a relatively stable set of technical skills. "Academic socialization" takes a slightly broader view that acknowledges these skills as situated in the culture of the institution, but still leaves uninterrogated the ideologies and power relations that determine and sustain them. These latter considerations would be taken up in an "academic literacies" approach, which, by viewing students as active and essential participants in the life of the institution (and academia in general), enables us to recognize the transformative, rather than normative, effects of student labor regarding language conventions (Lillis & Scott, 2007). As Lea and Street note, the three perspectives are not mutually exclusive but may be understood as nested. "Reframing," then, becomes an appropriate metaphor for altering the understanding of writing

instruction in such a way that the work itself is substantively changed. In practice, this entails a revised disposition to the work, one that reflects an awareness of differing as the norm of language use, of literacy practices as open-ended and non-finite, and of literacy itself as a primary instrument of ongoing identity hybridization. Maintaining this broader and more detailed perspective (a large-format camera, say, compared to the cheaper crop-sensor affairs that dominate the market nowadays) does not pretend away the well-worn artifacts of language and writing knowledge nor the powers that maintain them in the center of the frame; rather, it helps us to see all of this more clearly as part of the nature of literacy practice, thereby working with(in) these forces to deny them that force (cf. Gee et al., 1998, 67).

In the following, I demonstrate opportunities for this reframing work in the moments of the autoethnography (chapter three) and the documents of the curriculum (chapter two). In chapter three, I demonstrated how both teacher and student engagement with the literacy practices enshrined in the curriculum are kept to a passive minimum. In chapter two, I described the curriculum itself, showing how it functions to circumscribe, and ultimately co-opt, student labor. Here I revisit key moments from these chapters to reframe them in light of the four principles I articulate in chapter one. As I hope to make clear, one cannot simply exchange one rubric for another, or rewrite an assignment description to be less prescriptive. Nor, I argue, would it be appropriate to do so, if, for example, administrators were persuaded of the ways in which the curriculum was deeply problematic. One designs another curriculum, then has an interest in the manner in which it is implemented, recreating the issue. Instead, and of greater value, is to work with the existing curriculum to develop a broader awareness of literacy, of literacy practices and

how they are shaped by ideology, and to help students develop strategies for negotiating meaning within these conditions. This work is necessarily ongoing and unpredictable, but at the heart of it lies the goal of continually reframing language and writing instruction in a way that reveals the aphids–the interests that come into alignment across complementary scales–their contingency (on teacher and student labor), hence their precarity, and the friction that gives the lie to their enterprise, or the autonomous model of literacy on which their enterprise is built, and in so doing engages students in labor that by recognizing their contributions enables them to realize its rewards.

I have related how the current manner of assessing writing in this program relies heavily on counting, which is applied to everything from spelling and punctuation to the number of paragraphs and the number of sentences within a paragraph. For introduction paragraphs in Intermediate Writing Workshop, for example, "detailed background information" equates to "3 - 4+ sentences/3+ compound or complex sentences after hook." The move to define these values in numeric terms stems from frustration with and disagreement about phrases like "spelling impedes comprehension" and words like "adequate," "mainly clear," and "effective." One instructor finds the amount of introductory material sufficient–perhaps she is more familiar with the content, or perhaps she dislikes writing that takes a comparatively long time to arrive at a cogent articulation of its argument. Another instructor argues that for him it feels unbalanced. And so on. Growing impatient, and sensing the slipperiness of these arguments, the facilitator suggests a cold hard number: Introductions must include at least four sentences, just be sure to tell your students that. But someone balks: What if they are just short, simple

sentences? I have a paper here with just two sentences in the introduction, but they are long and full of detail. Okay then: three to four (or more) sentences, must be compound or complex. Can there be any simple sentences? Time is running out, so we leave it there.[25] We swap final exam packets. A week later, my essays come back graded in ways that appear to diverge from the consensus.

A broader perspective on this approach to assessment contextualizes this frustration, this friction, in an awareness of writing knowledge as never settled, of knowledge as practice. The agenda in this meeting is to arrive at a consensus that teachers then bear in mind as they take on the task of assessing final exams. The range of opinions and the absurdity of the conclusion as a reliable definition of "good" writing might raise concerns, but if so these are dismissed because the teachers are operating within a structure that presupposes good writing can be codified and that they have the authority to do so. The implication is that, given their credentials, their years of experience, and the fact that they've been hired and given a position in the somewhat more selective writing program, through this deliberation these instructors can become a stand-in for future audiences. This as well presupposes a relatively static and homogeneous audience, audience as a passive consumer, and text a transparent, neutral medium if only certain formal conditions are met. As Lu (1991) demonstrates, however, the idea that language varieties are neutral vessels which students acquire in order to be able to choose between

---

25 The move to quantify good writing to this extent can be seen as at least in part a response to the overwhelming complexity of such an endeavor as norming. See Dryer and Peckham (2014), who argue for an *ecological* view of norming sessions. The authors trace interrater variation across multiple levels of influence, taking into account raters' past experience, relative professional standing, annoying habits of other raters, and the perceived status of the measurement tool (i.e. its alignment with the WPA Outcomes Statement), among other factors. They conclude with a telling observation: "Users who are more aware of the full complexities that produce scores are likely to be more circumspect in their use of that information than history suggests has been the case so far" (36).

them overlooks both the political weight of language choices and the shifting nature of those associations. The moderation sessions I describe can be looked at as rich proof of this reality, a kind of experiential learning exercise that could inform teachers' approach to assessment.

Reframing this scene shows that, rather than a barrier to consensus, the diversity of the faculty really *is* a strength (as advertised) here as their varying opinions evince the falsity of these claims. Rather than dismissing it, the framing I advocate for recognizes this diversity and shows these debates as valuable for throwing into relief the norm of endless differentiation in writing knowledge and the ways that power and positionality obscure this reality. The felt artificiality of reducing good writing to an imagined and vaguely worded average further points to the non-finite nature of writing knowledge. Instructors realize that the discussion could go on forever as more examples and justifications are shepherded to the cause.

As well, the ways in which instructors themselves all change and are changed by these interactions are overlooked in this narrow view. The factors shaping one's literacy practices are not limited to formal education and the process is never complete, a "vital sign" of life itself. In previous chapters, I've discussed the notion of expertise in writing. Drawing from scholarship on transfer (Fraiberg et al, 2017; Yancey et al., 2014) and academic literacies (Lea & Street, 1998), I showed that, whether student or teacher, the belief that one has mastered something non-finite can preclude a realization of expertise as socially situated and constructed and prevent an understanding of how one is changing as a result of the discussion, which would seem to work against the goal of helping others to manage their own literacy development. It would be better to model a version of

managing one's own ongoing literacy development than to reinforce with one's example the idea that literacy development can be complete. What would appear if the view of instructors as possessing "expertise" on writing were widened? A broader view of one's own literacy as "living" invites curiosity about the students' unique literacy practices and encourages appreciation of their humanity rather than abetting a reduction of their writing, and by extension them, to data (cf. Lu, 2006, on "living-English"). It may lead to a sense of unity, kinship, or common cause–an identification and a new consubstantiality, to return to Burke from chapter three–as teachers recognize that the studentship the people enrolled in their classes are going through is less a phase, a hurdle, or a speed bump, and more something that we're all always participating in. A course on literacy, then, would be part of a larger effort to engage and reflect on language and language learning processes. And a moderation discussion, in this framing, is still an important "norming" activity to engage teachers in before assessment, but as an honest discussion of values, of stereotypes, of languaging (cf. Davila, 2012). It will be unsettled. There will be disagreements. And that is very much the point. The job of the facilitator then is to *prevent* easy reductions or conclusions and instead highlight this variation, this diversity, this endless diversification, and encourage a reaching toward the political interests and contextual elements shaping the discussion, so as to encourage a mindset of humility, rather than hubris, as teachers engage in assessment of student writing.

Such a mindset as well, by refusing to maintain a belief in a stable set of skills, however elusive, encourages a different approach to how teachers then perceive error in writing. The recognition of language and knowledge as not existing outside of space and

time reframes the notion of correctness in language use. It becomes much more than a matter of adherence or deviation from conventions, and "error" becomes problematic for the privilege it assumes as a means of engaging a text (Davila, 2022; Lees, 1989; Williams, 1981). The certainty about the future that it claims amounts to a closed-mindedness, and one begins to fear for the automation of one's job. The perspective I argue for, however, invites consideration of how one may be predisposed by rubrics, textbooks, dictionaries, etc. to recognize error. One begins to ask who wrote these, when, where, and under what pressures or with what goals. And one may realize the importance of these relics that one is presented with lies not in their truthfulness, their reliable indexicality, but in their usefulness as props, as furniture that one finds in the room, so to speak. How do they structure one's interactions? To what end? How might one–teacher or student–use them toward a different purpose?

Considerations such as these would, incidentally, be consistent with the course syllabi in this program, which claim student learning outcomes (purposes) beyond the mere assimilation of conventions. Note the following SLOs excerpted from QUFP's writing course syllabi:

W001: Elementary Writing Workshop	- Edit writing as a process in self-reflection and peer-evaluation tasks - Write appropriately for genre, purpose, and audience
W002: Intermediate Writing Workshop	Analyze writing as a process in self-reflection / peer-evaluation tasks

	● Write appropriately for genre, purpose, and audience
ENGL 202: English Language 1 Post Foundation	● Apply critical thinking skills to reading and writing assignments
ENGL 203: English Language 2 Post Foundation	● Defend a position or choices they made during the writing process

These SLOs call for metacognitive attention to writing processes, as well as assignments, aiming to help students develop critical awareness as they navigate writing challenges along with the ability to explain their choices. They assume a degree of agency as they ask students to identify and implement genre conventions, clarify a purpose, and define an audience. But the implementation of these shown in chapters two and three reflects a narrow interpretation, a foreclosure on interpretation. Nevertheless, these SLOs create pedagogical space for exploratory interpretation that develops students' ability to navigate the "furniture" in a room. They invite the teacher to engage students on questions such as the following: What was your experience (process) of writing according to this template? (How) Did the essay stipulations shape the point that you expressed? Did you feel the need to adapt them? If so, did you adapt them, and how so? Whom did you imagine you were writing for and how did that inform your choices? Would you have said it differently in Arabic or in your dialect? What choices led you to write four, or six, or more paragraphs instead of five? Engaging students with such questions can develop a sense of language and writing practices as not a simple matter of acquisition but as a site of conflict, negotiation, and adaptation (Bawarshi, 2016). As

Horner (1992) argues, treating errors as an points for inquiry can encourage students to think about error in writing knowledge and language use as something they make choices about rather than simply an instance of failed replication.

Peer review sessions, which are baked in to this curriculum, can seem like a meaningless chore if language is being treated as purely mechanical, but they could prove much more interesting given that students hail from across the region and bring very different educational backgrounds and experience with English. Why does this usage strike you as an error? What does it mean to you? Do others agree? The set-in-stone rubric itself can be questioned in such sessions. What does "clear" mean to you and how do you try to achieve it in your writing? The instructor can't possibly know the answers to these questions. Such discussions therefore can underscore the reality of English conventions as variable across time and space and carrying different associations (Horner, 1992), and awareness of this reality would surely be more useful for the goal of writing appropriately for different audiences than mere rote memorization. Done carefully, questioning along these lines can suggest a non-essentializing view of language and writing knowledge, which in turn can help students to recognize the role they play in maintaining and changing language norms. It does not deny the reality of the formulaic models and the standardized rubric, but invites a critical stance on these that can inform an understanding of *all* literacy practices as contested sites of meaning negotiation inflected by power differentials.

In chapter three, I gave examples of classroom behavior issues and how these were interpreted among faculty variously as resistance, a lack of self-discipline, a matter

of culture, or of practical constraints. It was common for students to miss or come very late to class, to attempt to cheat on exams, to haggle over grades, and generally to test authority. This led teachers to argue that what we're really teaching is discipline–how to *be* a student–which inspires a renewed confidence in the importance of rules and regulations and the means by which we can encourage conformity. Hence there were professional development talks detailing the latest cheating technology, considerable attention given to invigilation protocols, such as the yellow- and red-card gamification of exams, and a tendency to translate grading procedures into matters unrelated (or tangentially at best) to composition, such as attendance and paper formatting (e.g. the ENGL 203 final paper rubric stipulates "Capitalization & Punctuation (1 space after common [sic], semi colon [sic] & period").

Using the four principles I draw from mobility studies as a lens to reframe the curriculum, or the particular ways it has been inflected by aphidic interests, can help us to interpret these behavioral "issues" in a way that avoids tit-for-tat escalations antithetical to the development and awareness of literacy practices. The notion of knowledge as fixed, or fixable, which begins to look problematic through this lens, implies a specific place from which to develop specific expectations. In defining this intellectual territory, the program is saying "This is where you need to be," rather than meeting students where they're at. This is a restriction of agency, both of teachers and of students, and for the latter generally without acknowledgement or consent, and the gutting of content makes it harder to perceive justification–the speed bump approach to education. With content limited to superficial interests or issues and authors irrelevant to student lives, literacy development treated as uniform and linear, and students' existing literacy practices

invisible or assumed inferior in an "English-only" approach that smacks of Western self-assurance, expressions of agency find other outlets, other voices.

An understanding that students and their literacy development are endlessly diverse and that literacy is tied to identity, itself understood to be a complex set of hybridizing processes at varying speeds (Moslund, 2010), suggests that behavioral "issues" may be a sign that the program is working to meet the needs of someone other than the students. "Needs analysis" and "student-centered learning" have become common jargon in education literature, and there is no shortage of ideas for how to achieve these. An obvious one for this context would be to let students pick or discover their own content. But given the constraints, from self-censorship among both students and teachers to the prescription of "all-inclusive" textbooks like *Sourcework* (the texts about which students will write are included in the textbook), applying these ideas can be impossible. However, there is curricular space for critical discussions with students, such that teachers *can* reframe their presentation of the material in such a way as to help students see a sense of agency vis-à-vis the prescribed conventions. And by maintaining this larger framing, we can flip on its head the common refrain that language and writing instruction lacks content (teachers of these courses often envy their colleagues in other departments for having content to teach, a view reflected in pay grades and status within the university hierarchy), so that the textbooks, their stories of Canadians climbing Mt. Everest and how to spot fake Louis Vuitton handbags, become subjects of collaborative scrutiny, even as we are immersed in them. Rather than trying to make them relatable and watching students' eyes glaze over and return to their phones, teachers might explore ways to be real with students, e.g. by eliciting their opinions on these artifacts and

situating these moments in a running discussion of where they are, what is and has been happening and what might happen, and what we can glean about literacy as a socially-situated collaborative negotiation in which semiotic resources are both made and remade in the creation of meaning (see Bou Ayash, 2019, on critical translation, or *trans*lation; Donahue, 2021, on reprise-modification). In this way, "course content" becomes a series of experiential learning opportunities with outcomes not wholly foreseeable that situates the textbooks, languages, writing conventions, students' own literacy practices, and the university in *time*. What I am arguing for here, then, is not a substitution of course content but a disposition that we can cultivate in ourselves with students as collaborators. Such a dis-position reveals any apparent stability of the curriculum to be a function of our labor, i.e. that of the program–the largest contingent of which is, of course, the students– which might help us all to see who is benefiting from that illusion of stability and how. To do otherwise than this is to underestimate our students and participate in the reductive, narrow positioning of them which we, and worse, they, if not quite rightly acting out against it, begin to believe.

The assignments themselves, constructed as a formula or template, problematic for their closed-endedness, can likewise be reframed. In chapters two and three, I wrote about the curriculum's emphasis on fixed essay genres–cause and effect, comparison, process, and argument. I recall a moment during a class brainstorming session for the cause-and-effect essay when one student struggled with the template's call for either three causes or three effects. She had chosen to write about the effects of having a house servant. When I asked her what she had in mind for her third effect, she mentioned

magic. She explained to the ignorant teacher that a common problem with these servants from far-off, poorer countries was that they could become jealous or resentful and then they might curse your child. I sighed and smiled inwardly, but was also a bit flummoxed as to how to respond. A belief in magic amounts to a refusal to investigate cause and effect. To talk about magic *within* a cause/effect essay simply did not make sense. Compounding the issue was the fact that in this case it seemed to be a contrivance that enabled a classist and racist view: without evidence, the servants were being judged guilty, which in turn would justify a certain treatment. I believed I was doing both her and the servants a favor by introducing them to the cold hard logic of cause and effect; this was what I was there for, to right these wrongs and save these people via a Western-style education. Out of the dark ages, into the bright light of truth!

Of course, the US has its own issues enabled by their means of accounting for events. Whether justifying a biased history through an apparently inscrutable chain of causes and effects that nevertheless conveniently leaves out certain causes or believing that a problem has been solved by jailing a perpetrator or forcing a resignation, explorations of causality that stop short can also cloak injustice. The essay model in question encourages such myopia by suggesting something "magical" about the number three. There must be more than two causes, but once we've identified three, we can stop. There are three causes for global warming: x, y, and z. As a class, we struggled with this arbitrary challenge. Sometimes the neat linearity of cause/effect logic also gave us trouble–was something a cause or an effect?

It seems the model I was teaching wasn't so at odds with, or much of a corrective for, a belief in magic. Neither is ideal because both represent a wilful ignorance of

complexity that enables the abuse of power: me with the white man's burden mentality realized in my foreign expert positionality, she with her master/servant mentality. The situation is ripe for reframing as a moment of friction to be explored rather than decided through power relations and my assumed expertise as an instructor (an American one, no less). The frustrations that I felt and that my students felt could occasion as a class taking up the topic of worldviews, of accounting and explaining, perhaps leading to a realization of the limitations of both the cause/effect essay template and magic and engendering a curiosity about how closing off inquiry can serve a particular interest. It is a conversation that cannot circumvent the fact that one still has to write this essay in this way if one wants a good grade. But this reality might not be so disheartening if it is reframed as part of a larger conversation about *all* genres as *performances* that "tak[e] place within certain asymmetrical relations of power… to achieve specific goals (which may not necessarily be the ones conditioned by the genre in use)…" (Bawarshi, 2016, 247). It is an open-ended suggestion for an open-ended conversation about keeping an open-ended approach to inquiry. I don't know where that would lead–possibly more conversations (possibly with administration), but it could lead to positive changes that may not be immediately apparent. In any case, perpetuating the sins of the status quo by letting such moments pass, by denying the friction, is not a desirable alternative.

Straightfoward efforts to devise interventions in or alternatives to assignment design in this program would fail to account for the top-down nature of the curriculum. However, there is space in the schedule to supplement the curriculum with in-class activities that situate it within a broader framing. These cannot be factored in students'

grades, but that could be an advantage if it results in a sense of these as low-stakes activities in which students are free to explore and experiment. Drawing on my approach to composing the third chapter, I am imagining a version of a journaling exercise. In that chapter, I theorized critical multi-sited autoethnographic inquiry as a means of noticing and overcoming the taken-for-granted but often political-economic divisions that structure our lives. By externalizing selves and "listening" to them, one can arrive at new identifications that cut across these divisions, insights that wouldn't be available in what would appear to be a common-sense framing.

Applied to the classroom, this exercise recalls scholarship exploring the value of incorporating recursion into writing curricula (Bartholomae, 1982; Horner, 2017; Rankin, 1990). Bartholomae (1982) describes an assignment sequence in which students keep a journal throughout the semester and then read it as a text on its own in order to write about what they have learned about themselves as language users. The assignment "defines the person writing as a composite of several people… simultaneously, a textual presence… and the interpreter of texts, someone who defines patterns and imposes order, form, on previous acts of ordering" (36-37). Language is the subject, but in an open-ended way as students are positioned as creators, rather than passive receivers, of knowledge as they reflect on themselves as language users. In a writing course at QU, some classtime could be devoted to journaling about one's experience with the course assignments, writing strategies, the idea of literacy development, correctness in language, and other topics that the student feels are related. There would be no "English-only" stipulation and creativity would be encouraged. At some point later in the semester, the teacher would ask students to read their previous writing as texts, written as if by

someone else–i.e. as primary sources–and to look for patterns and reach to hypotheses about language and writing knowledge. In this way, students would chart a secondary path through the curriculum that need not parallel the intended one. Such work could serve as a reframing device that echoes the other reframing work I describe above and underscores reframing as itself an ongoing process that is part of the reality of language use.

Frustration and Friction

Throughout this chapter I have wrestled with the fixity of this curriculum and the intransigence of department practices, considering how to work with(in) them without sponsoring the problematic views of language on which they are built (Lu, 2006). I argue that the usefulness of this exercise extends beyond what it may offer to a teacher in a similar position at QU, for as I have observed, it seems always to be the case that one is operating with(in) problematic ideological alignments. Sometimes I was more immediately the source of this limiting view of language and writing knowledge, sanctioned by hiring practices and encouraged by prevailing monolingual representations. Other times I saw myself quite consciously as employed to be the instrument of such alignments that seemed monolithic to me and which I was hand-tied within. The lesson, then, is not to engage in more utopic dreaming and vision-making but to develop strategies that help one, and can help one to help students, to maintain an awareness of ideological alignments working in language and writing education, for this indeed seems to be the reality.

Perhaps it is time now to talk about frustrations. Reframing in the way I describe reveals the friction, which one might rather deny, particularly when one perceives oneself to lack the agency to effect change. Much defeatist rhetoric stems from the idea that the problem is far bigger than one–there's nothing I can really do. But such a stance, collectively held, is what maintains the status quo. What I am suggesting therefore are tactical moves (Mathieu, 2005) that proceed naturally from an alternative stance on and within this program and the various interests it serves. It is a stance that is open to possibility because differing is the norm, and it recognizes that the dynamics of identity are bound up with this work, such that one is viscerally both part of what's working for exploitative interests while one works to expose these, meaning one must work with(in) these forces to deny them their force.

Writing on community engagement within composition studies, Paula Mathieu (2005) addresses the difficulty of overturning unjust practices deeply entrenched in our institutions. She draws on Michel de Certeau's distinction between *strategies* and *tactics*– the former describes the activities of organizations that dominate a specific place while the latter relates to those time-dependent actions available to the placeless other. Lacking control over space, the other waits for its moment, looking for opportunities to intervene in the measured plans of institutions. What I find interesting is how these two positionalities seem to coexist in composition studies, given its long history of conceiving counterhegemonic measures while situated at the heart of American academia. Strickland (2011) captures this duality in her assertion of a "managerial unconscious" in American composition studies. As the popular belief that we teach something common and fundamental to all academic work has led to large writing programs at the center of

increasingly corporatized universities, a substantial portion of the work that we do is administrative, work which performs a class function that is underacknowledged as scholars in this field align themselves–their identity–with the more palatable ethos of a teacher. Strickland argues that reconciling ourselves to this truth would involve recognition that we are a part of what we critique, and this broader perspective may bring into view opportunities for actions that redress the ills enabled by a class system and compounded by denial of our complicity. These actions would seem to complicate the distinction between strategic and tactical approaches. As I noted earlier, an awareness of the *friction* of knowledge mobilization favors a tactical approach rather than another top-down prescription, but an awareness of our role within strategies (our managerial unconscious) is key. To pretend we're not part of it, that we're "the other" while we nevertheless carry out the mission of the program, enables the sins of that mission because imagining that one can solely inhabit the "other" positionality amounts, again, to capitalocentrism, creating the monster and predetermining the tactics one might conceive if not leading one to feel one's hands are tied. We need to recognize that we are part of a place and to understand that it is "never complete, finished, or bounded but always becoming" while conceiving tactics from the epistemological stance I argue for (Cresswell, 2002, 20).

These tactics are not necessarily at odds with the strategy of the program, but with the "aphids" shaping its implementation. The QUFP's overarching program learning outcomes (PLOs) are as follows:

PLO 1: Interpret academic texts

PLO 2: Express ideas and facts effectively in writing

PLO 3: Use verbal skills to communicate effectively

PLO 4: Apply algebraic skills to solve mathematical problems[26]

PLO 5: Apply academic study skills

PLO 6: Demonstrate critical thinking skills

As noted previously, while it's hard to argue with these terms, their vagueness allows for (and perhaps enables, given the difficulty of assessing "effectiveness" and whether or not something has been "interpreted" correctly) fordist-type commodifications of language and knowledge that defeat their guiding purpose. Thus, this generality is also their weakness. The postfordist effort to fix things in the abstract, to claim ownership of them and to profit off of them, undermines itself as terms can never stay vague, or abstract, which can just as well work against aphidic interests as for them as the definitions are exceeded. What I am suggesting, then, is as follows. The *strategy* of the program, i.e. its means of achieving relevance, of presenting a "quality" identity to upper administration, students, CEA, etc., is reflected in its PLOs, mission, and vision. Teachers have an interest in upholding these, but there is also space within them, because of their vagueness, for *tactical* actions. The vagaries of generalization which postfordist activity is built on enable hegemonic interests, but they also allow for tactical interventions that privilege an alternative epistemology which asserts knowledge mobilization, through language, as reprise-modification (Donahue, 2021) or *trans*lation (Bou Ayash, 2019). From this view, all language, from which these directives are not excluded, as a material

26 The Foundation Program comprises an English department and a (much smaller) math department.

social phenomenon, is an index mobilized toward a specific agenda. As such, in allowing these outcomes to guide us, we cannot help but both fulfill and undermine their promise, and understanding this allows us to do so with more intentionality.

This understanding means that the moments of frustration I have described become less frustrating as they are recognized (reframed) as moments of friction that pose tactical openings. As I noted in chapters two and three, labor conditions among faculty contribute to the appeal of a reduction of language and writing knowledge to easily quantifiable constituents. Indeed, the relationship between less than ideal labor conditions and efforts to simplify or codify language and writing knowledge has a long history, particularly in the US (Connors, 1997; Crowley, 1998; Strickland, 2012). Acknowledgement of the influence of capitalist logic on composition has led to calls for unionization as a starting point for countering this trend (e.g. Godley & Trainor, 2004; Hendricks, 2004). However, this is a non-starter in authoritarian countries like China and Qatar and in a market where instructors are "a dime a dozen" (Anson & Donahue, 2015, 31, quoting an administrator at an institution in Saudi Arabia). Instead, I suggest that tactical moves to redress poor labor conditions in such a scenario might best take the form of informal efforts to reframe conversations on the work with colleagues and administrators along the lines of the four principles I have delineated. I've imagined some examples in the reframings above. Moderation sessions may present opportunities. Other opportunities may arise in conversations with colleagues and in classes. As well, the desire for university and departmental prestige driving the constant pressure to present at conferences, including the one the department hosts, can be used as a reframing opportunity if one presents on work happening in one's class. The challenge then

becomes to vigilantly maintain that open-endedness. This reframing work must continue as an implicit refusal to concede that knowledge, as a practice, can ever be locked down in a standardized curriculum.

As well, this framing is consistent with the ongoing identity work constituting Qatar's historical reliance on concessions (e.g. treaties with the UK, a US regional military base on its soil) and mediations that ironically work to preserve its sovereignty while intertwining its identity with others. The approach I sketch above ultimately aligns with and builds on the country's preferred subject position as participant-mediator vis-à-vis global powers, and could help it more effectively retain sovereignty in the modern era while positioning its citizens (and the students from around the region who attend QU) as competent actors in control of their education.

CONCLUSION

I conclude with one final frustration, which I've registered repeatedly in the course of this project as I've been both inspired but slightly disheartened to find that what I appear to be saying seems already to have been said (note all my "cf.s"). Sometimes it's a recent source, such that I seem to be part of a zeitgeist, a dawning awareness prompted and shaped by the current moment, but other times it's much older, with someone thirty or forty years ago seeming to have diagnosed issues I'm only now becoming aware of. I feel dispirited in part because my first reaction to such a discovery is that, as it's already been said, I can't simply say it again. A citation, a paraphrase, sure, but why reinvent the wheel? My dismay is also in part because, well, why haven't these important ideas enjoyed a broader uptake and influenced the curriculum at QU, or the community college in Seattle, or Korea, or any of the education that prepared me to become a teacher? In other words, why haven't they seen the kind of mobilization that the commodifications of language and writing knowledge I describe have…. Ah. I reframe my questions in light of the conclusions about knowledge (mobilization) that I've reached in these chapters. Revoicing, both in the writing and again in the reading, is always in a different space and time; it is always reprise-modification (Donahue, 2021). As I interpret and splice together the observations of others, I recreate them for a new purpose, which revives them but in an altered form, a form that exists only in the moment of its utterance. It may sleep as

information on a shelf or in a hard drive. And if and when it is read again, "it" will be changed again however slightly, even if as a reinforcement, just as it changes the one who voices it. As such, to look for instances (e.g. commodifications) of an idea is in a sense a fool's errand. One will never quite find what cannot quite exist. The textbook models, the rubrics, the accreditor's assurance of excellence, as attempts to commodify language and writing knowledge, suggest otherwise (see Bou Ayash, 2019, on the persuasiveness of representations of monolingual ideology), but they are furniture. One person finds a chair comfortable while another struggles endlessly to find the right position. Someone turns it around to rest their arms on the back, and another stands on it to reach a lightbulb or a window. Every instance of use wears it down or warps it further. Try as the designers and users may to predict, we don't know how it will be used, how it long it will last, whether it will remain in style.

This frustration, like all the others, loses some of its bite in this reframing as one stops trying to do what isn't possible and refocuses one's energy elsewhere. The most productive area, it seems, is toward vigilance in maintaining an awareness of this reframing as ongoing work. Literacy development, as I've noted before, is never complete, and reframing, as I've tried just now to demonstrate, can play an important part in that development. Frustrations, then, become a cue for such work. Frustration is the noticing of difference, of conflict, where one didn't expect to find it, hoped not to find it. The reframing I advocate reorients one toward the reality of differing as the norm. As such, it can reveal possibilities unimagined before as one perceives oneself as a participant changed by and changing an open-ended reality constantly in flux. Reframing does not obscure the power differentials at play but rather brings them to light and reveals

their dependence on precarious alignments, which one cannot help but both contribute to and destabilize, but with(in) which one can act with more focused intent.[27] To a teacher-scholar, often a representer of institutional (and geopolitical, if, say, an American in Qatar) power, this is an argument for humility, as not only a disposition but also a tactical move, and for more careful listening, both to and with one's students. With such a call, I echo Lees (1989), who in wrestling with Stanley Fish's argument for antifoundationalism[28], suggests "pedagogical humility." Instead of assuming that one knows (or can know) what students need, one stays open to points of frustration as "points of departure" for open-ended conversations about language and writing knowledge. The simple fact of keeping these conversations open-ended could prove instrumental in denying the semblance of permanence in literacy practices.

Such reframing work must then entail an openness to seeing other alignments, which need not be (or rather *are* not) limited to the teacher-student-text triangle. As she imagines the potential for interventions in the fraught conditions of post-secondary literacy education in the US, Strickland (2011) notes that teachers and administrators are often too invested in the situation to see or be able to do much. She reflects that graduate students less invested or tied up in department politics while also lacking the security of place (i.e. more of de Certeauian *other*, the placeless one who pursues time-dependent tactical actions) may be in a position to conceive more radical changes. It is such that I, as a graduate student and no longer a part of the QUFP, am better positioned now to

---

27 Cf. Akst (2021, 79, emphasis added) on the importance of cultivating *hope* in the face of overwhelming institutional power by demonstrating to students that "social justice work is an ongoing project of *small advances*." Considering that, on manual film cameras, after each exposure one thumbs a lever to advance the film to the next frame, we can understand social justice work as an ongoing exercise in reframing.
28 "[Q]uestions of fact, truth, correctness, validity, and clarity can neither be posed nor answered in reference to some extracontextual, ahistorical, nonsituational reality, or rule, or law or value" (Fish, cited in Lees, 1989, 157).

imagine the changes I suggest than when I taught there. I would extend this idea, considering it an argument for seeking out and listening to other/outside voices, and to tracing and perhaps forging other alignments. Maintaining an interest in highlighting and developing alignments outside the received ones is entailed in reframing work. These can cut across time and space in the way I do in my third chapter. And similar work is demonstrated in Canagarajah's (2020) collection of transnational literacy autobiographies where students trace the influences on their literacy development across social and national borders. A further example is Fraiberg et al.'s (2017) work identifying the classroom as but one site of intersecting demands on and opportunities for literacy work interconnected with many others less visible, and often less legitimate, in a sedimented, dominant framing.

These multiple, overlapping, contradictory, and precarious alignments recall something other than the smooth transnational flows of capital that are the highly visible fantasy of neoliberalism, and therefore perhaps a different image should be put forth. Before closing, I return to Tsing, but a different work this time. In her 2015 book *The mushroom at the end of the world: On the possibility of life in capitalist ruins*, she demonstrates through far-reaching ethnographic research the existence of "pericapitalist sites, where all kinds of practices, capitalist and otherwise, flourish, [enabling the] economic diversity [which] makes capitalism possible [while offering] sites of instability and refusal of capitalist governance" (301). Notwithstanding the term, pericapitalist activities give the lie to capitalocentrism, offering "the potential to liberate multiple economic subjectivities" (Gibson-Graham, 2006, 189) and reveal other forms of economic relations. Nevertheless, as Tsing shows, these frequently develop in "capitalist

ruins," the spaces ravaged in the "endless accumulation of wealth" and then forgotten. Thus, while other economic relations could persist without capitalism(s), they are also to an extent enabled by it.

Pericapitalist sites, Tsing argues, are in part characterized by their tenuous relationship with supply chains and capitalist oversight, and thus the labor in these pericapitalist sites is marked by precarity, which necessitates recognition of and collaboration across difference. Entities (in her example, mushrooms and trees) are brought together and seek out relationships with unlikely others in this ravaged land for survival. There is no telling how long these relationships will persist, and while it is all but certain that the entities will be changed by the engagement, there is no telling exactly how.

Tsing is describing how life takes root in ravaged land, in part as a result of that devastating exploitation. In so doing, she is arguing for a revisioning of capitalism as imbricated in complex networks of economic activity that are constantly forming and deforming. The nature of the relationships that "take root" are not wholly predictable, she demonstrates, and maintaining an awareness of this can be a source of hope. But for this to work for my purposes, I need to tweak it slightly, for Qatar is not a ravaged land. Surveying the bleak, flat, dusty landscape, scorched in the 130-degree heat, one might easily think of it as similarly barren. And indeed, those involved in development have treated it as such: a blank slate upon which to build an air-conditioned forest of glitzy skyscrapers. However, a more careful look reveals a rich yet fragile ecosystem. When I lived there, I would sometimes go camping up north, and there I would find clusters of burgeoning red-green mangroves supporting a host of small birds and insects. In the

morning if I was lucky, I would see flamingoes plodding through the muck and needlefish flitting vertically across the surface of the sea. I was humbled to find so much going on that I knew nothing about; life in all its complexity was coming into view.

So, rather than a scene of ruination, this is a view of a land under "development." It is a view afforded by that development (I wouldn't have been there otherwise) and thus a view *of* development, if my trudging unawares through the frame is understood as ultimately part of that development. That the desert ecology is endangered by these processes is well-reported, but this is not an argument against development per se. Rather, this larger and more detailed view entails a rethinking of development. The term no longer seems quite appropriate as clearly so much is already happening, so one might begin to think instead about how one is constituted in and by this ecology and how one might act with more responsivity and responsibility. It's a common enough argument, many will be familiar with it, but here I am revoicing it, in a different time and a different space, and for a different purpose.

REFERENCES

Adey, P. (2006). If mobility is everything then it is nothing: Towards a relational politics of (im)mobilities. *Mobilities*, *1*(1), 75-94.

Adler-Kassner, L. & Wardle, E. (2016). *Naming what we know, classroom edition: Threshold concepts of writing studies*. Utah State University Press.

Akst, L. (2021). Critical pedagogy and the composition classroom: Searching for a middle ground between epistemological despair and "radical hope." In Jackson, R. L. & Grutsch McKinney, J. (eds.), *Self+culture+writing: Autoethnography for/as writing studies* (71-84). Utah State University Press.

Alexander, K. P. (2019). Forwarding literacy in *I Am Malala*: Resisting commodification through cooperation, context, and kinship. *College English, 81*(3), 183-213.

Amnesty International. (2014, September 18). Qatar: New cybercrimes law endangers freedom of expression. *Amnesty International*. https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2014/09/qatar-new-cybercrimes-law-endangers-freedom-expression/

Anson, C. & Donahue, C. (2015). Deconstructing "writing program administration" in an international context. In D. Martins (Ed.), *Transnational writing program administration* (pp. 21-47). University Press of Colorado.

Appadurai, A. (1996). *Modernity at large: Cultural dimensions of globalization*. University of Minnesota Press.

Apple, M. W., Singh, M., & Kenway, J. (Eds.). (2005). *Globalizing education: Policies, pedagogies, & politics*. Lang.

Bartholomae, D. (1982). Writing assignments: Where writing begins. *Fforum: A Newsletter of the English Composition Board, University of Michigan, 4*(1), 35-45.

Bartholomae, D. (1987). Writing on the margins: The concept of literacy in higher education. In T. Enos (Ed.), *A sourcebook for basic writing teachers* (pp. 66-83). Random House.

Barton, D. & Hamilton, M. (1998). *Local literacies: Reading and writing in one community.* Routledge.

Barton, D., Hamilton, M. & Ivanič, R. (2000). *Situated literacies: Reading and writing in context*. United Kingdom: Routledge.

Bawarshi, A. (2016). Beyond the genre fixation: A translingual perspective on genre. *College English, 78*(3), 243-249.

Bawarshi, A. (2017). Economies of knowledge transfer and the use-value of first-year composition. In B. Horner, B. Nordquist, & S. Ryan (Eds.), *Economies of writing: Revaluations in rhetoric and composition* (87-98). Utah State University Press.

Beach, K. (2003). Consequential transitions: A developmental view of knowledge propagation through social organizations. In Tuomi-Gröhn, T. and Y. Engeström (Eds.), *Between school and work: New perspectives on transfer and boundary-crossing*, 39-61. Bingley, UK: Emerald Group.

Bergmann, L. S., & Zepernick, J. S. (2007). Disciplinarity and transference: Students' perceptions of learning to write. *WPA: Writing Program Administration, 31*(1/2),

124-49.

Berry, W. (1971). *The unforeseen wilderness: Kentucky's Red River Gorge*. University Press of Kentucky.

Bhabha, H. (1994). *The location of culture*. Routledge.

Block, D. (2002). 'McCommunication': A problem in the frame for SLA. In D. Block & D. Cameron (Eds.), *Globalization and language teaching* (pp. 117-133). Routledge.

Block, D. (2019). What on earth is 'language commodification'? In B. Schmenk, S. Breidbach, & L. Küster (Eds.), *Sloganization in language education discourse* (pp. 121-141). Multilingual Matters.

Block, D., & Cameron, D. (2002). Introduction. In D. Block & D. Cameron (Eds.), *Globalization and language teaching* (pp. 1-10). Routledge.

Blommaert, J., & Horner, B. (2017). Mobility and academic literacies: An epistolary conversation. *London Review of Education, 15*(1), 2-20.

Bollag, B. (2016, July 14). Importing higher education: A Qatari experiment. *Al Fanar Media.*

Bou Ayash, N. (2019). *Toward translingual realities in composition: (Re)working local language representations and practices*. Utah State University Press.

Boyle, C. (2018). *Rhetorica as posthuman practice*. Ohio State University.

Brandt, D., & Clinton, K. (2002). Limits of the local: Expanding perspectives on literacy as a social practice. *Journal of Literacy Research*, *34*(3), 337–356.

Brandt, D., Cushman, E., Gere, A. R., Herrington, A., Miller, R. E., Villanueva, V., Lu, M., & Kirsch, G. (2001). The politics of the personal: Storying our lives against

the grain. *College English, 64*(1), 41-62.

Breuch, L.-A. M. K. (2002). Post-process "pedagogy": A philosophical exercise. *JAC*, *22*(1), 119–150.

Brooke, R., & Hogg, C. (2004). Open to change: Ethos, identification, and critical ethnography in composition studies. In S. G. Brown & S. I. Dobrin (Eds.), *Ethnography unbound: From theory shock to critical praxis* (pp. 115-130). State University of New York Press.

Brown, T. (2020). What else do we know? Translingualism and the history of SRTOL as threshold concepts in our field. *College Composition and Communication 71*(4), 591-619.

Burbules, N., & Torres, C. (2000). Globalization and education: An introduction. In N. Burbules & C. Torres (Eds.), *Globalization and education: Critical perspectives* (pp. 1-26). Routledge.

Cameron, D. (2002). Globalization and the teaching of 'communication skills.' In D. Block & D. Cameron (Eds.), *Globalization and language teaching* (pp. 67-82). Routledge.

Canagarajah, A. S. (2002). *A geopolitics of academic writing*. University of Pittsburgh.

Canagarajah, A. S. (2020). *Transnational literacy autobiographies as translingual writing*. London: Routledge.

CEA. (n.d.) About CEA. https://cea-accredit.org/about-cea

CEA. (n.d.). *Mission and Values*. https://cea-accredit.org/about-cea/mission-and-values

Chong, S. S. H. (2016). Exceptionalism. In S. Romine & J. R. Greeson (Eds.), *Keywords for Southern studies* (pp. 304-315). University of Georgia Press.

Clarence, S., & McKenna, S. (2017). Developing academic literacies through

    understanding the nature of disciplinary knowledge. *London Review of Education*,

    15(1), 38–49. https://doi.org/10.18546/LRE.15.1.04

Coles, W. (1969). Freshman composition: The circle of unbelief. *College English 31*(2),

    pp. 134-142.

Connors, R. (1997). *Composition-rhetoric: Backgrounds, theory, and pedagogy*.

    University of Pittsburgh Press.

Cresswell, T. (2002). Introduction: Theorizing place. In Verstraete, G. & Cresswell, T.

    (eds.), *Mobilizing place, placing mobility: The politics of representation in a*

    globalized world (11-31). Rodopi.

Crowley, S. (1998). *Composition in the university: Historical and polemical essays*.

    University of Pittsburgh Press.

Davila, B. (2012). Indexicality and "standard" edited American English: Examining the

    link between conceptions of standardness and perceived authorial identity.

    Written Communication, 29(2), 180-207.

Davila, B. (2022). Perpetually foreign, perpetually deficient, perpetually privileged:

    Exposing microaggressions and challenging whiteness. In T. Do & K. Rowan

    (Eds.), *Racing translingualism in composition: Toward a race-conscious*

    translingualism (pp. 86-104). Utah State University Press.

DePalma, M., & Ringer, J. (2011). Toward a theory of adaptive transfer: Expanding

    disciplinary discussions of "transfer" in second-language writing and composition

    studies. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, *20*(2), 134–147.

Dingo, R. & Strickland, D. (2012). Anxieties of globalization: Networked subjects in rhetoric and composition studies. In D. Desser & D. Payne (Eds.), *Teaching writing in globalization: Remapping disciplinary work* (pp. 79-94). Lexington Books.

Dobrin, S. (2009). Freedom and safety, space and place: Locating the critical WPA. In D. Strickland & J. Gunner (Eds.), *The writing program interrupted: Making space for critical discourse*, 56-71. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook.

Doha News Team. (2013, September 10). QU library row sparks debate over academic freedom, cultural values. *Doha News*.

Donahue, C. (2009). "Internationalization" and composition studies: Reorienting the discourse. *College Composition and Communication*, *61*(2), 212-243.

Donahue, C. (2021). Mobile knowledge for a mobile era: Studying linguistic and rhetorical flexibility in composition. In Horner, B., Hartline, M. F., Kumari, A., & Matravers, L. S. (Eds.), *Mobility work in composition*, 17-35. University Press of Colorado.

Driscoll, D., & Wells, J. (2012). Beyond knowledge and skills: Writing transfer and the role of student dispositions in and beyond the writing classroom. *Composition Forum,* (26).

Drucker, P. (1969). *The age of discontinuity: Guidelines to our changing society*. London: Heinemann.

Dryer, D. B., & Peckham, I. (2014). Social contexts of writing assessment: Toward an ecological construct of the rater. *WPA: Writing Program Administrator, 38*(1), 12-41.

Fenwick, T., & Farrell, L. (Eds.) (2012). *Knowledge mobilization and educational research: Politics, languages, and responsibilities.* Routledge.

Fiss, J., & Kestenbaum, J. G. (2017). *Respecting rights?: Measuring the world's blasphemy laws*. United States Commission on International Religious Freedom.

Fraiberg, S., Wang, X., & You, X. (2017). Inventing the world grant university: Chinese international students' mobilities, literacies, and identities. Utah State UP.

Fromherz, A. (2012). *Qatar: A modern history*. Georgetown University Press.

Gee, J. P., Hull, G., & Lankshear, C. (1998). *The new work order: Behind the language of the new capitalism*. Westview.

Gibson-Graham, J. K. (2006). *The end of capitalism (as we knew it): A feminist critique of political economy*. University of Minnesota Press.

Godley, A., & Trainor, J. S. (2004). Embracing the logic of the marketplace: New rhetorics for the old problem of labor in composition. In Bousquet, M., Scott, T., & Parascondola, L. (eds.), *Tenured bosses and disposable teachers: Writing instruction in the managed university* (171-185). Southern Illinois UP.

Graff, H. (1979). *The literacy myth: Literacy and social structure in the nineteenth century city*. New York: Academic Press.

Gunner, J. (2012). Disciplinary purification: The writing program as institutional brand. *JAC, 32*(3-4), 615-43.

Guttenplan, D. D. (2013, April 21). Teaching the limits of media freedom is tricky in the Gulf. *The New York Times*.

Harvey, S., & Stocks, P. (2017). When arts meets enterprise: Transdisciplinarity, student

    identities, and EAP. *London Review of Education*, *15*(1), 50–62.

    https://doi.org/10.18546/LRE.15.1.05

Haroon, A. (2012, January 28). Elation, worries on the campus. *The Peninsula*.

Haswell, R. (2008). Taking in comp tales. In R. Haswell & M. Lu (Eds.), *Comp tales: An*

    introduction to college composition through its stories (pp. 183-194). Pearson

    Longman.

Haswell, R., & Lu, M. (Eds.) (2008). *Comp tales: An introduction to college composition*

    through its stories. Pearson Longman.

Hendricks, B. (2004). Making a place for labor: Composition and unions. In Bousquet,

    M., Scott, T., & Parascondola, L. (eds.), *Tenured bosses and disposable teachers:*

    Writing instruction in the managed university (83-99). Southern Illinois UP.

Horner, B. (1992). Rethinking the "sociality" of error: Teaching editing as negotiation.

    Rhetoric Review, 11(1), 172-199.

Horner, B. (1994). Mapping errors and expectations for basic writing: From the "frontier

    field" to "border country." *English Education, 26*(1), 29-51.

Horner, B. (2012). The WPA as broker: Globalization and the composition program. In

    D. Desser & D. Payne (Eds.), *Teaching writing in globalization: Remapping*

    disciplinary work (pp. 57-78). Lexington Books.

Horner, B. (2015). Afterword. In D. Martins (Ed.), *Transnational writing program*

    administration (pp. 332-341). Utah State University Press.

Horner, B. (2016). *Rewriting composition: Terms of exchange*. Carbondale, IL, USA:

    Southern Illinois University Press.

Horner, B. (2017). Writing language: Composition, the academy, and work. *Humanities, 6*(11).

Horner, B., Hartline, M. F., Kumari, A., & Matravers, L. S. (2021). Introduction. In Horner, B., Hartline, M. F., Kumari, A., & Matravers, L. S. (Eds.), *Mobility work in composition*, 1-16. University Press of Colorado.

Horner, B., Nordquist, B., & Ryan, S. (2017). Introduction. In Horner, B., Nordquist, B., & Ryan, S. (Eds.), *Economies of writing: Revaluations in composition*. Utah State University.

Inoue, A. & Poe, M. (Eds.). *Race and writing assessment*. Peter Lang.

Jackson, R. L., & Grutsch McKinney, J. (2021). *Self+Culture+Writing: Autoethnography for/as writing studies*. Utah State University Press.

Kandiah, T. (1998). Epiphanies of the deathless native user's manifold avatars: A postcolonial perspective on the native speaker. In Singh, R. (ed.), *The native speaker: Multilingual perspectives* (79-110). Sage Publications.

Kaufhold, K. (2017). Tracing interacting literacy practices in master's dissertation writing. *London Review of Education*, *15*(1), 73–84. https://doi.org/10.18546/LRE.15.1.07

Keller, C. (2004). Unsituating the subject: "Locating" composition and ethnography in mobile worlds. In S. G. Brown & S. I. Dobrin (Eds.), *Ethnography unbound: From theory shock to critical praxis* (pp. 201-218). State University of New York Press.

Kovessy, P. (2014, September 16). Qatar's Emir signs new cybercrime legislation into law. *Doha News*.

Khatri, S. (2014, March 13). Qatar's cybercrime law moves forward despite criticism. *Doha News*.

LaFrance, M. (2019). *Institutional ethnography: A theory of practice for writing studies researchers*. Utah State University Press/University of Colorado.

Latour, B. (1993). *We have never been modern*. Harvard University Press.

Lea, M., & Street, B. (1998). Student writing in higher education: An academic literacies approach. *Studies in Higher Education*, *23*, 157–172.

Lees, E. O. (1987). Proofreading as reading, errors as embarrassment. In T. Enos (Ed.), *A sourcebook for basic writing teachers* (pp. 216-230). Random House.

Lees, E. O. (1989). "The exceptable way of the society": Stanley Fish's theory of reading and the task of teacher editing. In P. Donahue & E. Quandahl (Eds.), *Reclaiming pedagogy: The rhetoric of the classroom* (pp. 144-163). Southern Illinois University Press.

Leonard, L., Rebecca, & Nowacek, R. (2016). Transfer and translingualism. *College English*, *78*(3), 257–263.

Lillis, T., & Curry, M. (2010). *Academic writing in a global context: The politics and practices of publishing in English*. Milton Park, Abingdon: Routledge. (2010).

Lillis, T. & Scott, M. (2007). Defining academic literacies research: Issues of epistemology, ideology, and strategy. *Journal of Applied Linguistics 4*, pp. 5-32.

Lingard, B. (2000). It is and it isn't: Vernacular globalization, educational policy, and restructuring. In N. Burbules & C. Torres (Eds.), *Globalization and education: Critical perspectives* (pp. 79-108). Routledge.

Lofty, J. S. (2004). State standards in the United States and the national curriculum in the

United Kingdom: Political siege engines against teacher professionalism? In S. G.

Brown & S. I. Dobrin (Eds.), *Ethnography unbound: From theory shock to critical praxis* (pp. 131-156). State University of New York Press.

Lu, M. (2006). Living-English work. *College English, 68*(6), 605-618.

Lu, M. (1991). Redefining the legacy of Mina Shaughnessy: A critique of the politics of linguistic innocence. *Journal of Basic Writing, 10*(1), 26-40.

Makoni, S. & Pennycook, A. (2007). Disinventing and reinventing languages. In S. Makoni & A. Pennycook (Eds.), *Disinventing and reinventing languages* (1-42). Multilingual Matters.

Mathieu, P. (2005). *Tactics of hope: The public turn in English composition.* Boynton/Cook.

Matsuda, P. K. (2008, Apr. 3). *Internationalizing composition: A reality check* [Conference session]. Conference on College Composition and Communication, New Orleans, LA.

Miller, R. E. (2001). From intellectual wasteland to resource-rich colony: Capitalizing on the role of writing instruction in higher education. *WPA: Writing Program Administration, 24*(3), 25-40.

Miller, R. E., & Cripps, M. J. (2005). Minimum qualifications: Who should teach first-year writing? In C. Handa & S. J. McGee (Eds.), *Discord and direction: The postmodern writing program administrator* (pp. 123-139). Utah State University Press.

Miller, R. & Pessoa, S. (2017). Integrating writing assignments at an American branch campus in Qatar: Challenges, adaptations, and recommendations. In L. Arnold, A.

Nebel, & L. Ronessi (Eds.), *Emerging writing research from the Middle East-North Africa region*, (pp. 175-199). WAC Clearinghouse.

Morrow R., & Torres, C. (2000). The state, globalization, and educational policy. In N. Burbules & C. Torres (Eds.), *Globalization and education: Critical perspectives* (pp. 27-56). Routledge.

Moslund, S. P. (2010). *Migration literature and hybridity: The different speeds of transcultural change*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan

Motta-Roth, D. (2012). Academic literacies in the south: Writing practices in a Brazilian university. In C. Thaiss, G. Bräuer, P. Carlino, L. Ganobcsik-Williams, & A. Sinha. (Eds.), *Writing programs worldwide: Profiles of academic writing in many places*. The WAC Clearinghouse. Retrieved from https://wac.colostate.edu/books/perspectives/wpww/

Muchiri, M., N. Mulamba, G. Myers and D. Ndoloi. (1995). Importing composition: Teaching and researching academic writing beyond North America. *College Composition and Communication, 46*(2), 175-198.

Murphy, B. (2014, September 19). Say what you want about Qatar. Just be careful about doing it on the Web. *The Washington Post.*

Nebel, A. (2017). Linguistic superdiversity and English-medium higher education in Qatar. In L. Arnold et al. (Eds.), *Emerging writing research from the Middle East-North Africa region*, (pp. 27-40). WAC Clearinghouse.

Nowacek, R. (2011). *Agents of integration: Understanding transfer as a rhetorical act*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.

OED Online. (2022, March). Globalization, n. In *OED Online*. Oxford University Press.

Retrieved March 7, 2023, from https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/272264

Orlikowski, W. J. (2006). Material knowing: The scaffolding of human knowledgeability. *European Journal of Information Systems, 15*, 460-466.

Payne, D. (2012). Pedagogy of the globalized: Education as a practice of intervention. In D. Desser & D. Payne (Eds.), *Teaching writing in globalization: Remapping disciplinary work* (pp. 1-16). Lexington Books.

Pennycook, A. (2008). English as a language always in translation. *European Journal of English Studies 12*(1), pp. 33-47.

Pennycook, A. (2010). *Language as a local practice*. London: Routledge.

Perkins, D. (1999). The many faces of constructivism. *Educational Leadership 57*(3), 6-11.

Petraglia, J. (Ed.). (1995). *Reconceiving writing, rethinking writing instruction*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Popkewitz, T. (2000). Reform as the social administration of the child: Globalization of knowledge and power. In N. Burbules & C. Torres (Eds.), *Globalization and education: Critical perspectives* (pp. 157-186). Routledge.

Prior, P. & Olinger, A. (2019). Academic literacies as laminated assemblage and embodied semiotic becoming. In D. Bloome, L. Castanheira, C. Leung, & J. Rowsell (Eds.), *Retheorizing literacy practices: Complex social and cultural contexts* (pp. 126-139). Routledge.

Qatar National Vision 2030. (2008). Qatar: General Secretariat for Development Planning.

Rankin, E. (1990). From simple to complex: Ideas of order in assignment sequences. *Journal of Advanced Composition, 10*(1), 126-135.

Reiff, M. J., & Bawarshi, A. (2011). Tracing discursive resources: How students use prior genre knowledge to negotiate new writing contexts in first-year composition. *Written Communication, 28*(3), 312-37.

Rezaei, A. R., & Lovorn, M. (2010). Reliability and validity of rubrics for assessment through writing. *Assessing Writing*, *15*(1), 18–39. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.asw.2010.01.003

Rose, M. (1983). Speculations on process knowledge and the textbook's static page. *College Composition and Communication*, *34*(2), 208–213.

Rudd, M. & Telafici, M. (2017). An Arabian gulf: First-year composition textbooks at an international branch campus in Qatar. In L. Arnold et al. (Eds.), *Emerging writing research from the Middle East-North Africa region*, (pp. 115-132). WAC Clearinghouse.

Russell, D. (1995). Activity theory and its implications for writing instruction. In J. Petraglia (Ed.), *Reconceiving writing, rethinking writing instruction* (51-77). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

SACSCOC. (n.d.). *Home - SACSCOC*. https://sacscoc.org/

Scenters-Zapico, J. (2021). Small m- to big M-mobilities: A model. In Horner, B., Hartline, M. F., Kumari, A., & Matravers, L. S. (Eds.), *Mobility work in composition*, 51-66. University Press of Colorado.

Scott, T. (2016). Subverting crisis in the political economy of composition. *College Composition and Communication 68*(1), 10-37.

Shaughnessy, M. (1976). Diving in: An introduction to basic writing. *College Composition and Communication*, *27*(3), 234-39.

Shaughnessy, M. (1977). *Errors and expectations: A guide for the teacher of basic writing*. OUP.

Shen, F. (1989). The classroom and the wider culture: Identity as a key to learning English composition. *College Composition and Communication, 40*(4), 459-466.

Smith, K., Girdharry, K., & Gallagher, C. (2021). Writing transfer, integration, and the need for the long view. *CollegeComposition and Communication, 73*(1), 4-26.

Street, B. V. (1984). *Literacy in theory and practice*. Cambridge University Press.

Strickland, D. (2011). *The managerial unconscious in the history of composition studies*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP.

Sullivan, P. (2021). Composition in the age of neoliberalism: An interview with Holly Hassel and Joanne Baird Giordano. *College Composition and Communication, 73*(1), 126-155.

Surma, A. (2018). Writing is the question, not the answer: A critical cosmopolitan approach to writing in neoliberal times. In X. You (Ed.), *Transnational writing education: Theory, history, and practice* (pp. 61-76). Routledge.

Street, B. (1984). *Literacy in theory and practice*. Cambridge University Press.

Szewczyk-Méziane, E. (November, 2019). The history of the Foundation Program, part 2: The establishment of the English Language Teaching Unit (ELTU): 1986-1990. *FP Jareeda*, 15, p. 13.

Szewczyk-Méziane, E. (September 2020). The history of the Foundation Program, part 5: 2001-2004. *FP Jareeda*, 18, p. 14.

Thaiss, C., & Zawacki, T. (2006). *Engaged writers, dynamic disciplines: Research on the academic writing life*. Boynton/Cook Heinemann.

Thomas, D. O. (2021). Beyond disciplinary drama: Federal dollars, ESL instruction for African Americans, and public memory. *College Composition and Communication, 73*(1), 52-79.

Toth, A. (1994). Qatar. In H. C. Metz (Ed.), *Persian Gulf states: Country studies* (3rd ed.) (pp. 147-196). Library of Congress, Federal Research Division.

Tremmel, M. (2011). What to make of the five-paragraph theme: History of the genre and implications. *Teaching English in the Two-Year College*, *39*(1), 29-42.

Tsing, A. L. (2005). *Friction: An ethnography of global connection.* Princeton University Press.

Tsing, A. L. (2015). *The mushroom at the end of the world: On the possibility of life in capitalist ruins*. Princeton University Press.

Tusting, K. (2000). New literacy studies and time: An exploration. In D. Barton, M. Hamilton, & R. Ivanic (Eds.), *Situated literacies: Reading and writing in context* (pp. 35–51). Routledge.

Wardle, E. (2012). Creative repurposing for expansive learning: Considering "problem-exploring" and "answer-getting" dispositions in individuals and fields. *Composition Forum* (26).

Wargo, J. M., & De Costa, P. I. (2017). Tracing academic literacies across contemporary literacy sponsorscapes: Mobilities, ideologies, identities, and technologies. *London Review of Education*, *15*(1), 101–114. https://doi.org/10.18546/LRE.15.1.09

Weber, A., Golkowska, K., Miller, I., Sharkey, R., Rishel, M., & Watts, A. (2015). The first-year writing seminar program at Weill Cornell Medical College – Qatar: Balancing tradition, culture, and innovation in transnational writing instruction. In D. Martins (Ed.), *Transnational writing program administration* (pp. 72-92). Utah State University.

Wetzel, D. Z., & Reynolds, D. W. (2015). Adaptation across space and time: Revealing pedagogical assumptions. In D. Martins (Ed.), *Transnational writing program administration*.

Williams, J. (1981). The phenomenology of error. *College Composition and Communication, 32*(2), 152-168.

World Bank (2007). *Building knowledge economies: Advanced strategies for development*. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank.

Yancey, K. B., Robertson, L., & Taczak, K. (2014). *Writing across contexts: Transfer, composition, and sites of writing.* Utah State UP.

Zenger, A. (2016). Localizing transnational composition research and program design. *Composition Studies, 44*(1), 141-143.

Zenger, A. (2018). Writing program administration, mobility, and locality at the American University of Beirut, 1970 to the present. In M. Rajakumar (Ed.), *Western higher education in global contexts* (59-79). Rowman & Littlefield.

CURRICULUM VITA

Tobias Christopher Lee
1042 Ellison Avenue, Apt. 2
Louisville, KY 40204
(440) 645-1845
tobias.lee@louisville.edu

Education

Ph.D. English/Rhetoric and Composition | University of Louisville, Spring 2023

Dissertation: "Rainforests of the Mind: Conceiving Transnational Composition from a Mobilities Perspective on Knowledge" [2023 Dean's Citation Award Winner]

Dissertation Committee: Bruce Horner (director), Andrea Olinger, Susan Ryan, and Christiane Donahue

Awarded University Fellowship (full stipend, tuition remission, no teaching load for two years)

M.A. Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages | School for International Training (SIT) Graduate Institute, Vermont, 2012

Portfolio: "The Dasein of Pedagogy: Teaching as 'Being in the World'"

Certificate in Teaching English as a Foreign Language | Kent State University, 2005

Hosted at Technische Universität Dresden, Germany

B.A. English | Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, 2003

Major: English literature; minor: philosophy

Graduate of the Honors College

One year of international study at the National University of Ireland, Galway

Scholarship

International Conference Presentations

"Becoming Literate in the 'Knowledge Economy': EAP, Mobility Studies, and Translingualism." Writing Research Across Borders (WRAB), 18-22 February 2023, Trondheim, Norway.

"Writing Interfaces / Interruptions." Co-presented with Chris Scheidler and Alex Way. Writing Research Across Borders (WRAB), 18-22 February 2023, Trondheim, Norway.

"Transnational Writing Education: What Transnational Relationships Make Possible." Transnational Writing Workshop, CCCC, 15-18 February 2023, Chicago, IL. [workshop canceled]

"Composing Decoloniality: Translingualism in Transnational Composition." The Latin American Association for the Study of Writing in Higher Education and Professional Contexts (ALES), 3rd Congress, 13 November 2021, João Pessoa, Brasil. [online]

"Writing in Qatar." International Researchers Consortium, CCCC, 9-23 April 2021. [online]

"Composing Decolonial Visions: How New Theories in Composition can Position WPAs as Agents of Change." SIG Writing, European Association for Research on Learning and Instruction, 12-19 June 2020, Umeå, Sweden. [conference canceled for COVID-19]

"Places as Commonplaces: Public Spaces Enacting Cultural, Religious, and Scientific Paradigms." Co-presented with Christopher Stuck and Catherine Lange. CCCC, April 2020, Milwaukee, WI. [conference canceled for COVID-19]

Local Conference Presentations

"Preparing for Partnership." Co-presented with Mary P. Sheridan. Engaged Scholarship Symposium, 12 March 2021, University of Louisville, KY. [online]

"Thoughtcrime: English Departments' Insistence on American Rhetorical Patterns." Sandanona Conference on the Teaching and Learning of Languages, May 2012, SIT Graduate Institute, Brattleboro, VT.

Teaching Experience

University of Louisville, Kentucky, USA | 2018-2023
- ENGL 101Introduction to College Writing (in-person, hybrid, and asynchronous online sections)
- ENGL 102 Intermediate College Writing (in-person)
- ENGL 306 Business Writing (hybrid format)

جامعة قطر (**Qatar University)**, Doha, Qatar | 2013-2018
- Post Foundation II (research / academic writing)
- Post Foundation I (EAP)
- Intermediate Writing Workshop (EAP)
- ENGL 110, 111 (four-skills English language)

서울과학기술대학교 (**Seoul National University of Science and Technology)**, South Korea | 2012
- English I (four-skills English language)
- Current Events I

Tompkins Cortland Community College, Ithaca, NY, USA | 2012
- Academic writing summer program for visiting Chinese students

University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT, USA | 2012
- Full-time internship for MA TESOL program
- Advanced listening/speaking, intermediate reading, writing, and grammar

厦门大学 **(Xiamen University)**, Xiamen, Fujian Province, China | 2006-08, 2010-2011
- Advanced English for freshmen in the international program
- IELTS speaking and writing tutoring
- Advanced writing course for English majors
- Literature and public speaking electives

كلية العلوم التطبيقية بصور **(Sur College of Applied Sciences)**, Sur, Oman | 2009-2010
- Beginner and intermediate English

South Seattle Community College, Seattle, WA, USA | 2008-2009
- High-intermediate reading and writing

Lingua Espresso (online tutoring for Japanese students – http://www.linguaespresso.com) | 2008-2009
- Online writing course for TOEFL and academic writing
- One-on-one tutoring in conversational and business English

山西农业大学 **(Shanxi Agricultural University)**, Taigu, Shanxi Province, China | 2005-2006
- Speaking, listening, and writing for graduate students
- Speaking and listening for undergraduate English majors

Bärnsdorf adult community course, Bärnsdorf, Germany | 2005
- Practicum for TEFL certificate course
- Conversational English with beginner-level grammar

Writing Center Experience

Writing Consultant for the Dissertation Writing Retreat, University of Louisville | 2022

Consultant in the University Writing Center, University of Louisville | 2021-2022

Volunteer Writing Tutor at Family Scholar House (nonprofit in Louisville, KY) | 2019-2020

Volunteer Tutor in the Qatar University Section of Writing and Language Support, Doha, Qatar | 2017-2018

Service

Graduate Student Representative, Transnational Composition Standing Group, CCCC | 2021-2022

Faculty Liaison, English Graduate Organization, University of Louisville | 2020-2021

Graduate Student Mentor, University of Louisville | 2019-2020

Languages

Mandarin Chinese (intermediate)

French (intermediate)

Arabic (beginner)

References

Bruce Horner
Professor of English
University of Louisville
b.horner@louisville.edu

Andrea Olinger
Associate Professor of English; Director of Composition; Director of the Thomas R. Watson
Conference in Rhetoric and Composition
University of Louisville
andrea.olinger@louisville.edu

Susan Ryan
Professor of English; Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs, College of Arts & Sciences
University of Louisville
susan.ryan@louisville.edu