DREAMS AND DISAPPOINTMENTS:
CHINESE UNDERGRADUATES AND INVESTMENT IN THE US WRITING CLASSROOM

BY

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DISSERTATION

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Abstract

Motivated by declining domestic investment in higher education, US universities have in the last decade begun enrolling international students from China at record rates (a 339 percent increase since 2005), raising concerns about how institutions and writing programs can serve this new cohort. In "Dreams and Disappointments," I argue that composition's post-1970s movement toward student-centered and rhetorical pedagogies has unwittingly left us with classrooms that marginalize these students in the white-dominated institutions their tuition dollars keep afloat. Drawing on a qualitative study of 28 Chinese undergraduates at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, the largest US enroller of students from China, I study how writing instruction often withholds the returns these students desire from what they see as an expensive educational investment. The students I interviewed and whose classrooms I observed described the mainstream writing classroom as central to their pursuit of linguistic fluency and as a portal into the campus mainstream, where they hoped to amass cultural knowledge they could leverage in a global and competitive job market. However, they more often through these courses came to see themselves as incapable of participating in campus life. One, for example, described how class discussions and essay prompts assuming knowledge of popular culture placed her on the classroom's periphery, convincing her that she lacked the cultural capital to study advertising or form cross-cultural friendships. By identifying such moments where these students' investments falter, this dissertation chronicles how writing instruction can enable the white mainstream of US campuses to remain unchanged and unchallenged, even as institutions increasingly rely on the tuition dollars of economically privileged international students.

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Chapter One

"Burning Dollars:" Language Rights and Investment in the Corporate University

"Every minute in the lecture you are burning dollars," Wen commented when asked about the high tuition and fees he pays to attend a US university. One of the 5,016 Chinese international students currently studying at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign ("Final"),[1] such remarks for Wen were not necessarily hyperbolic. Some of his Chinese peers, he explained, had calculated the exact cost of each class session they attend. "You're throwing away like five dollars every second," he explained. When he had first enrolled at Illinois, Wen had not been concerned about the high cost of his US education, optimistic about the potential benefits of studying in the US. Wen chose Illinois primarily because he believed that studying in the university's highly ranked chemistry department would increase his chances of being accepted to a prestigious US medical school—and because he was not confident he would have been accepted to one of China's few top universities. Moreover, he believed that Chinese universities were weaker than their US counterparts and their students less dedicated. Too often, he explained, college students in China are exhausted from the *gaokao*, the nation's competitive university entrance exam that drives some students to suicide (see Roberts).

During his first semester, though, Wen began to worry that his investment in a US degree might not yield the outcomes he desired, concerned especially that he was not developing the cultural capital that had partially drawn him to the US. Wen had hoped to become friends with domestic and other international students, join student organizations, and volunteer, but he found such campus participation out of reach due to his linguistic and cultural differences. "To break

[1] The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign is part of the University of Illinois system, which includes campuses in Urbana-Champaign, Chicago, and Springfield. Per university branding recommendations, I use "Illinois" throughout this dissertation to refer to the Urbana-Champaign campus ("Writing Style"), where this research took place.

the barrier for culture, you have to communicate," he said. "But to communicate, you have to eliminate the culture barrier. It's like a paradox." Importantly, Wen's self-perceived linguistic and cultural differences also surfaced in his writing classroom, where he struggled to grasp culturally-sensitive course content and interact with classmates during peer review. In response to this felt incapacity to engage with domestic peers, Wen instead focused his energies on his studies, saying, "There's no reason of not being focused on the teacher and not going to office hours."

In "Dreams and Disappointments," I study the experiences of students like Wen: Chinese undergraduates studying in science, technology, engineering, and business fields at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, which currently enrolls the most Chinese international students of any US university (Tea Leaf). These students are part of a growing population of Chinese college students studying abroad in pursuit of what anthropologist Vanessa Fong calls "developed world citizenship," the cultural and economic benefits of emigration or employment with a transnational corporation (Fong 11). At Illinois alone, the undergraduate Chinese population grew from 63 students in 2005 to 3,022 in 2016 ("Final"), comprising ten percent of the university's first-year class by 2014 (Cohen, "U of I Reaches"). Drawing on twenty-eight interviews with Chinese undergraduates and observations in four instructional settings, this dissertation investigates how writing classrooms can both support and subvert these students' goals for studying in the US, addressing the following questions: What forms of cultural and economic capital do Chinese undergraduates hope to cultivate by pursuing a US undergraduate degree? How do notions of linguistic and cultural difference—as well as US histories of linguistic and racial discrimination—shape how they envision their future careers and economic lives? Finally, what do their stories of segregation suggest about race in US colleges

and universities, which increasingly negotiate divergent civic, international, and corporate missions?

Throughout, I argue that college writing classrooms often frustrate Chinese undergraduates' goals for studying in the US, in the process marginalizing them along familiar racial lines. Specifically, I chronicle how classroom approaches thought to destigmatize students' linguistic and cultural differences—like collaborative and rhetorical pedagogies—instead reinforce Chinese students' campus segregation, ultimately persuading them that their marginalization is inevitable. For instance, even as my research participants routinely described supportive instructors and classmates, their experiences in first-year writing classrooms nonetheless made them question their abilities to form relationships with domestic peers and participate in campus life. Troublingly, such marginalization occurred most often as instructors designed classrooms and assignments that sought to create space for students' experiences and cultures, which nevertheless assumed a common classroom knowledge of US popular and political culture that was for these students alienating. By focusing on classroom moments that exposed and reinforced these students' cultural differences, "Dreams and Disappointments" examines how writing instruction can deny the returns Chinese undergraduates hope to secure from what they routinely describe as an uncertain and expensive educational investment. My dissertation thus considers how composition studies' sixty-year history of advocacy for students on the racial and linguistic margins of our campuses (see Wible, *Shaping* 9) falters in a moment of rapid demographic change and shifting institutional missions.

In particular, I argue that the civil rights politics historically informing composition's student advocacy (see Bruch and Marback 651-2) can obscure how Chinese undergraduates—and students of color more generally—navigate institutions that have pivoted away from their

civic responsibilities in favor of corporate and international missions. Throughout, I call composition scholars and instructors to recognize how access to higher education is increasingly determined by students' economic backgrounds as colleges and universities grapple with shrinking endowments and state appropriations (see Folbre 45-6, Stripling). In doing so, "Dreams and Disappointments" reconsiders narratives in composition studies that root the fraught campus experiences of non-white students in lawmakers' and campus administrators' efforts to protect the racial status quo (see Lamos, *Interests* 5-6), arguing instead that such conditions are shaped also by our campuses' increasing corporatization. A civil rights approach to student advocacy, for instance, asks how we can support the access and achievement of students of color—and how we can challenge the reality that "literacy education continues to institutionalize racial injustice" (Bruch and Marback 660). On the other hand, the experiences of my Chinese research participants force us to ask the following: How can we help these students contest the marginalization they face on campus without affirming their reduction of higher education to an investment? In other words, how do we challenge the investment logic underlying these students' pursuit of a US degree without exacerbating their racial segregation? Perhaps most significantly, how must we adapt our work with domestic students of color in institutions where our civil rights-era advocacy no longer resonates? While I take up such questions explicitly in chapter five, they underlie my effort throughout "Dreams and Disappointments" to understand institutional access and belonging in our corporate and international institutions.

In the rest of this first chapter, I outline the institutional shifts that have facilitated Chinese undergraduates' entry to US universities, as well as the disciplinary context that has shaped how composition scholars have responded to these students and to higher education's

corporate turn more generally. First, I situate Chinese undergraduates within the corporatization and internationalization of US higher education, which has quickened as colleges and universities face financial uncertainty and vie for visibility in a global and competitive higher education market. Secondly, I turn to composition's history of advocacy for students on the linguistic and racial margins of US campuses, arguing that scholars and instructors continue to imagine disadvantaged students of color as the beneficiaries of such work, overlooking substantive changes in how students gain access to and experience our institutions. Specifically, even composition scholarship that has grappled with internationalization and corporatization has continued to imagine that all multilingual students have similar experiences of marginalization, despite the rapid growth of middle-class and wealthy international student populations from countries like China, South Korea, and India. There, I argue that, in obscuring the institutional experiences of our students, we risk undermining the activist ethos that has animated composition scholarship and instruction since the civil rights era. The final two sections of this chapter introduce the qualitative study on which "Dreams and Disappointments" draws and offer an outline for the rest of this dissertation. Overall, this first chapter details the institutional and pedagogical contexts that Chinese undergraduates enter when they enroll at a US university, contexts that I argue diverge from those composition scholars have historically assumed for their work with multilingual writers and students of color.

Chinese Undergraduates and Higher Education's Corporate Turn

At first glance, the rapid growth of Chinese undergraduates attending the University of Illinois—a 4,696 percent increase since 2005—can seem exceptional, and, indeed, Illinois

enrolls more Chinese international students than any other institution nationally (Tea Leaf).[2] Yet, universities across the US have in recent years enrolled unprecedented numbers of international students, driven largely by their financial needs as states disinvest in public higher education and as endowments shrink at private institutions following the 2008 financial crisis (Altbach 8, 15). Nationally, the number of international students attending US colleges and universities increased 73 percent between 2005 and 2015, and the number of Chinese students at US institutions rose 386 percent during that same period.[3] In 2014-15, Illinois had the fifth highest international student population in the country, trailing New York University, the University of Southern California, Columbia University, and Arizona State University ("Fast Facts"). Unsurprisingly, the rapid and pronounced internationalization of the student body at many US institutions has raised a number of questions and concerns, including the impact of international enrollment on land-grant and other local institutional missions (Abelmann, "The American"; Wan, "College Writing"), how colleges and universities can best serve these students' classroom needs (Barker), and how domestic minority students fare when public institutions begin to recruit out-of-state and international students who can afford costly tuition and fees (Kiley).

Scholars and journalists have attributed the growing numbers of Chinese international undergraduates at Illinois and other US universities to a variety of causes. Those who study educational trends in China see the desire to study in the US and other western countries as a result of the growing belief among ordinary Chinese that education abroad will create opportunities for economic uplift, despite that significant class mobility is unlikely for much of

[2] The top five highest enrollers of Chinese international students are as follows: The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, New York University, the University of Southern California, Columbia University, and Arizona State University.

[3] In the 2004-05 academic year, 565,039 international students attended US universities, a number that rose to 974,926 by 2014-15. During that same time, the number of Chinese international students rose from 62,523 to 304,040 ("Fast Facts").

China's population (Kipnis 2). Perhaps most significantly, though, the growth of China's middle class—and the now-defunct one-child policy[4]—have for the first time created a mass market for US higher education in the country. In families with few nieces, nephews, and grandchildren, one-child has allowed extended family to concentrate financial resources on China's singleton children in ways impossible for the larger families of previous generations (Fong 4). Anthropologists Susan Greenhalgh and Terry Woronov have also linked educational migration to the state's one-child-era aspirations to "shrink the quantity and upgrade the quality of China's people" (Greenhalgh x, see also 14). Greenhalgh, for instance, argues that the singleton children of the one-child era were encouraged by schools and parents to become "self-interested, self-governing individuals" who view their own economic and academic success as bound up in China's global economic ambitions (45, see also Woronov 32-4). Even as Greenhalgh and Woronov point to China's political and economic motivations for encouraging large-scale study abroad, my own research participants often referenced less political goals. Most traveled to the US to study in science, technology, engineering, and business fields, believing in the academic superiority of US universities and that study in such areas would lead to high-paying careers in a competitive and global job market (see also Fong 112). Finally, some chose to attend a US university because they believed that the competition to be admitted to a US institution was less fierce. As one research participant bluntly put it, "In the United States, there's a bad education. It's not that competitive compared to the college entrance test in China."

Whatever their motivations, Chinese undergraduates have entered US institutions during a time of financial instability, and voices in academia and the popular press have speculated that US universities are all-too-eager to cash in on Chinese demand for western-style education,

[4] In October 2015, driven by concern that China's aging population would slow economic growth, China abandoned its decades-long one-child policy, now allowing families to have two children (Buckley).

especially as state support for public colleges and universities continues to decline (see Altbach 37, 123). For instance, during the same period that Illinois's Chinese undergraduate population grew 4,696 percent—and as the international student population on the campus more than doubled[5]—colleges and universities in the state of Illinois were experiencing an unprecedented decline in state funding, largely the result of decades of financial mismanagement by state lawmakers.[6] By 2011, state support for the University of Illinois had fallen to $697 million from $804 million in 2002, and the state was regularly behind in its payments to the university, owing approximately $500 million in back payments (FY 2012 Budget Request). More recently, due to a budget stalemate between the state's Republican governor and Democrat lawmakers, no state funds were released to state universities between July 2015 and April 2016, and only a small proportion of funds were released in April 2016 in response to the impending financial collapse of Chicago State University.[7] During this time of fiscal uncertainty, international enrollment has provided needed and significant revenue for the University of Illinois system. In 2013-14 alone, international students contributed $166 million to the Urbana-Champaign campus budget (Cohen, "U of I Reaches"), largely through tuition and fees that on average cost more than twice that of domestic students ("2015-16").

While colleges and universities have touted the instrumental benefits of international enrollment for domestic students—saying that institutional diversity prepares students for

[5] In the 2005-6 academic year, 4,807 international students attended the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. By 2015-16, that number had risen to 9,749 ("Final").

[6] Lawmakers have for decades underfunded the state's pension obligations, fueling the state's $6 billion budget deficit by 2015. Republican governor Bruce Rauner has proposed that the state address its financial issues through a pro-business agenda that slashes higher education funding and privatizes many state services (Davey and Walsh).

[7] Without state funding, Chicago State University officials announced that the university would need to close before the conclusion of the 2015-16 academic year. The university primarily serves students of color and has had a history of scandal and financial mismanagement. Recently, the university drew criticism for its eleven percent graduation rate, significantly lower than peer institutions that similarly enroll large minority populations (Illinois Business). The university perhaps most infamously drew public criticism when a university legal officer was fired for refusing to withhold documents requested under Illinois's public records law that shed light on insider contracts and corruption involving the university president (Cohen, "Ex-Chicago State").

globalized workplaces (Prendergast and Abelmann 47)—the financial benefits of internationalization are hard to ignore. Even as former University of Illinois president Robert Easter touted the diversity international students bring, he also admitted that these students' contribute to the university's fiscal health. "It brings dollars into the state," Easter was quoted in a *Chicago Tribune* article about the Urbana campus's changing demographics. "That can't be our primary objective, but it does contribute to the state's economy" (qtd. in Cohen, "U of I Reaches"). Again, Illinois is not alone in turning to international students as a revenue source, and higher education scholar Philip Altbach notes that international enrollment has kept some institutions afloat in face of probable financial collapse (54). Even as some see internationalization as an unavoidable consequence of globalization (Altbach 7), then, institutions' financial motives place internationalization squarely within the corporate turn that has been transforming US higher education since the 1970s (see Bok vii). As higher education scholar and former Harvard president Derek Bok notes, such corporatization has been driven not only by funding reductions but also by institutions' needs to compete for high-quality faculty and students (Bok 9-10), taking a variety of forms: partnerships that enable corporate sponsors to control curricula (Dingo et. al. 273), increased competitiveness between peer institutions (Tuchman 6-7, 29), the construction of branch campuses overseas (Ong 140), and the increasing recruitment of international students (Abelmann, "The American"). On the Illinois campus, corporatization is evident not only in revenue-generating internationalization initiatives—ranging from opening a Shanghai office (Cohen, "U of I Builds") to offering Illinois engineering degrees at China's Zhejiang University ("Engineering at Illinois and Zhejiang")—but also in partnerships between the Colleges of Business and Engineering and corporations like BP, Abbott Laboratories, Shell Oil, Boeing, Google, Microsoft, and Yahoo ("Corporate," "Engineering at

Illinois—Corporate"). Such partnerships have at many institutions raised concerns about the academic integrity of research produced in departments funded by corporate dollars (Bok 145-6) and the ethical implications of accepting donations from ethically-suspect companies like Dow Chemical, BP, and Abbott Laboratories (see Dunn, Newton 178-9).[8]

Importantly, the corporate turn on US campuses and its accompanying demographic shifts have been largely viewed by the US public as evidence that universities have abdicated their charge to cultivate citizenship and class mobility for local stakeholders, an imaginary of higher education that continues to hold sway even as the benefits of a college degree have historically remained out of reach for non-white populations (see Prendergast, *Literacy* 5; Wan, *Producing* 9). Unsurprisingly, then, the presence of large Chinese populations on many US campuses—ranging from community colleges to research institutions[9]—has incited national debate about higher education, raising a number of concerns. Many have accused Chinese students of "taking spots" and absorbing resources that states could otherwise allocate for domestic students (see Cohen and Richards) and stories of Chinese applicants who falsify standardized test scores and submit plagiarized application essays have abounded in the popular media (Abelmann and Kang 2). Others have described class and racial conflicts on campuses where wealthy Chinese students live in luxury campus housing and drive expensive import cars, reminding domestic students of the US's shifting position in the global economy and middle-class Chinese of economic inequality back home (Redden, "Tensions Simmer"). As Chinese

[8] Each of these corporations has been at various points criticized for environmental and ethical lapses: Dow Chemical famously produced Agent Orange and napalm during the Vietnam War and for years attempted to delay cleanup of a dioxin contamination around the company's Midland, MI plant (Mattera). BP has been criticized for numerous environmental abuses beyond its infamous 2005 Gulf oil spill (Lustgarten), while Abbott Labs in 2012 pleaded guilty to charges that its sales personnel had aggressively marketed at nursing homes a drug for dementia "despite the absence of credible scientific evidence that Depakote was safe and effective for that use" (Frieden).

[9] Universities beyond the research institutions where international students have historically been concentrated have increasingly enrolled international students (see Tea Leaf). For example, Green River College, a Washington state community college, recently turned to international enrollment to close a $4-5 million budget gap (Redden, "A Community College").

undergraduates arrive at US universities hoping to gain valuable cultural and career capital, they thus enter a fraught moment for US higher education: They are simultaneously sources of institutional revenue, they stoke anxiety about the US's global decline, and they are denied the returns they desire from their expensive educational investments, all while being subjected to racial segregation. "Dreams and Disappointments" considers the role of writing classrooms in refusing these students' educational goals amidst such tensions, looking to these students' experiences for what they reveal about student segregation and composition's activist tradition as universities pivot from their local, civic missions.

Composition's Activist History and the Enduring Influence of the Basic Writer

As a number of composition scholars have noted, writing programs are often "canaries in the mine" for any large-scale demographic and institutional shifts, given that they are typically the largest humanities instructional programs at many universities (Bizzell 181; Bousquet, "Tenured" 236; Prendergast, "Reinventing" 81). Unsurprisingly, then, internationalization and corporatization have not gone unnoticed by composition scholars. As Min-Zhan Lu and Bruce Horner note in their 2013 *College English* article, language issues have again captured the field's attention, largely due to the increasing presence of multilingual international students on US campuses (601).[10] Scholars like Paul Matsuda and Yu-Kyung Kang, on the other hand, have both linked the growing linguistic diversity of our classrooms to universities' uncertain fiscal circumstances, which have compelled institutions to enroll international students who pay full-price, out-of-state tuition (Kang 91; Matsuda, "Let's" 142). Matsuda and Kang in particular frame international enrollment as yet another of the revenue-generating initiatives increasingly common on US campuses. Perhaps most significantly, writing program directors and instructors

[10] Lu and Horner point to a variety of conferences, journal special issues, and book collections focusing on language difference as evidence of the topic's ascent in mainstream composition studies (601).

often find themselves needing to support growing multilingual populations with little extra funding—or little warning of plans to increase international enrollment (see Kang 91-2).

Yet, even as composition scholars and instructors have actively confronted internationalization and corporatization, I argue that our responses have been largely shaped by our past work with domestic student groups attending colleges in large numbers for the first time. Specifically, I contend that, as composition scholars and instructors have responded to recent demographic shifts, we have largely drawn on the field's civil rights-era encounters with "remedial" or "basic" writers, those students who entered writing classrooms as universities expanded access to the working class and students of color in the late 1960s and early 70s. In the following chapters, I study how such images of the basic writer informed my research participants' writing classrooms, most visibly as their instructors drew on pedagogies long thought to affirm the cultures and dialects of students of color. Specifically, I contend that, as instructors drew on such pedagogical traditions, they often overlooked the campus experiences and socioeconomic backgrounds of Chinese undergraduates, ignoring their educational goals and reinforcing their campus segregation in the process. In making such arguments, I align myself with composition scholars like Kelly Ritter and Steve Lamos, who have questioned the field's easy conflation of basic writers with racial disadvantage. For instance, Ritter has argued that, in organizing our student advocacy around images of open admissions-era basic writers, we risk concealing how the label "basic writer" is applied to students in different historical moments and at different institutions to reinforce mainstream literacy conventions (42-44). Similarly, Steve Lamos argues that our uncritical racialization of basic writers enables policymakers to "draw essentialist connections between race, intelligence, and overall ability," often in ways that lend force to their arguments that such programs should be dismantled ("Basic" 30).

Throughout "Dreams and Disappointments," I study how pedagogies organized around such images of disempowered basic or multilingual writers can unwittingly marginalize students in our international and corporate universities. In response, I call scholars and instructors to attend more closely to their students' educational goals and campus experiences, designing classrooms that can contest our students' marginalization and, when necessary, critique their motives for studying in the US. Even as I highlight the troubling ramifications of our continued reliance on images of the basic writer, though, I want to emphasize that I do not advocate that composition scholars wholly discard the field's tradition of civil rights-style advocacy. Campuses across the US have in the past year experienced a resurgence of hostility toward domestic students of color.[11] At Illinois, for instance, a "White Student Union" Facebook group likened participants in a Black Student Solidarity Rally to terrorists in spring 2015 (Wurth), and more recently, Trump supporters scrawled "They have to go back" in front of the campus's Latina/Latino Studies building (Bauer). All the while, the number of African American students attending the university has fallen below civil rights-era benchmarks (Des Garennes), and some speculate that this number will continue to decrease, given that the state's budget impasse left grants for low-income students unfunded during the bulk of the 2015-16 academic year and that the availability of such grants for 2016-17 is uncertain (Cohen, "Illinois Colleges"). In such contexts, composition scholars must continue to advocate for domestic minority students who encounter familiar forms of US racism on campus and may find access to four-year institutions increasingly difficult. Yet, I argue throughout this dissertation that the experiences of Chinese

[11] Incidents at the University of Missouri were held up by the popular media as representative of this new moment of racial hostility on campuses. A series of racist incidents in fall 2015 sparked widespread protest on the campus, leading to the resignation of the university president when members of the football team started a hunger strike. The protests also led the university to suspend its diversity campaign in pursuit of more effective campus interventions (Pearce).

undergraduates make clear how familiar patterns of campus segregation emerge also as students' educational investments—and not only their civil rights—are denied.

Importantly, though, even composition research grappling with internationalization and corporatization has continued to organize around basic writers and the civil rights-oriented activism that emerged from the field's work with such students. The case studies that follow thus provide more than examples of local pedagogical challenges or evidence that writing instructors have yet to align their classroom work with the field's progressive aims (e.g. Wible, "Pedagogies" 44). Instead, the experiences of campus segregation shared by my research participants make clear that composition scholarship and teaching have yet to fully grapple with the campus transformations wrought by internationalization and corporatization, placing our classrooms at risk of exacerbating the kinds of marginalization the field has historically struggled against. In the next two sections, I examine how the basic writing figure endures in two recent and influential trajectories of composition scholarship that have confronted our changing institutional contexts: calls for a translingual approach to language difference and research that considers the impact of campus corporatization on writing instruction. The interventions imagined in such work, I argue, too often fail to account for the shifting institutional spaces our students occupy and, as a result, enable the kinds of marginalization my research participants experienced. I introduce such work here so that, in the chapters that follow, I can begin to offer approaches to composition research and teaching better equipped to respond to our students' changing institutional lives. Moreover, the scholarship I introduce in these sections, given its visibility and influence, is likely to influence the first-year writing classrooms Chinese undergraduates and other international students enter, especially since such work has incited

field-wide conversations about how to best adapt composition's pedagogical traditions to altered institutional realities.

Composition's Translingual Turn and the Basic Writer

As the number of international students has risen on US campuses—and thus in many first-year writing classrooms (see Matsuda, "Let's" 142)—composition scholars have reconsidered the field's theoretical and pedagogical approaches to language difference. In particular, such work has pointed out that writing classrooms have historically buttressed white economic and political power by urging students to master mainstream dialects, in the process stigmatizing the languages and cultures of non-white students (see Lu and Horner 598). In response, Bruce Horner, Min-Zhan Lu, Jacqueline Royster, and John Trimbur published a January 2011 *College English* opinion piece advocating a "translingual" approach to language difference. This paradigm, they contend, would better align the field's research and teaching with "the facts on the ground" (303): The emphasis on standard English in most writing classrooms, they argue, presumes a stable boundary between English and other languages, ignoring how students draw on multiple linguistic resources as they write. A translingual paradigm, on the other hand, recognizes and appreciates that all communication combines different languages and dialects, and, rather than urging students to master mainstream conventions, they encourage writing that diverges from the standard English norm. In practice, this means that instructors should not rush to correct student writing but should instead read generously, protecting students' rights to "revise the language that they must also continuously be learning" (307). Importantly, much of the research that has taken up Horner, Lu, Royster, and Trimbur's call has claimed the growing linguistic diversity of our writing classrooms as a starting point (e.g. Trimbur, "Translingualism" 219), indicating that the translingual approach has become a way to

grapple with changing campus demographics like those examined in this dissertation. Yet, as I argue in the rest of this section, this body of work has continued to see domestic basic and multilingual writers as its beneficiaries, often in ways that overlook our multilingual writers' diverse backgrounds.

Translingual Literacy, "Students' Right to Their Own Language," and the Basic Writer

In their *College English* opinion piece, Horner, Lu, Royster, and Trimbur root their call for a translingual paradigm in composition's tradition of advocacy for underrepresented student groups. They reference explicitly the 1972 "Students' Right to Their Own Language" (SRTOL) resolution and its challenge to linguistic imperialism, endorsed by the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) in response to the organization's tumultuous 1968 convention.[12] In a solo-authored piece, John Trimbur offers a more detailed sketch of translingualism's antecedents, which he traces to SRTOL and early basic writing scholar Mina Shaughnessy's work with open admissions students at the City University of New York. Trimbur focuses especially on the insistence by early basic writing scholars that instructors read student writing carefully and patiently, uncovering the logic of their dialects and searching for evidence of their intellectual development (221-2). Trimbur points in particular to Horner's 1992 "Rethinking the 'Sociality' of Error" as a precursor of translingualism, contending that "the terms of translingualism, if not the word itself" are present in the piece (224). For Trimbur, translingualism is thus part of a longer trajectory of research that affirms students' language backgrounds and exposes the arbitrary lines drawn between languages (226).

[12] Geneva Smitherman notes that, while some composition scholars had been advocating for students' language rights since the 1950s, CCCC moved to formally recognize such efforts only after Dr. King's assassination, which occurred at the same time as the 1968 CCCC Convention in Minneapolis. In response to King's murder, Ernece Kelly delivered a speech at the convention that criticized the organization for marginalizing black scholars, authors, and languages, ultimately compelling CCCC to take controversial action on language rights (355).

While these pieces see translingualism as an outgrowth of the field's earlier advocacy, the trajectory of Bruce Horner's and Min-Zhan Lu's research makes especially clear that underrepresented groups are at the center of the translingual movement. Lu and Horner have been vocal advocates of translingualism, and their research has since the 1990s called attention to composition's ideological alignment with conservative efforts to undermine access and inclusion in higher education. For instance, in his 1996 "Discoursing Basic Writing," Horner contends that early basic writing scholars downplayed their political goals in order to make open admissions palatable to a skeptical public (209-10). Horner claims that this move from politically-charged classrooms has had a lasting impact on composition research and instruction, even as a number of scholars in the 1990s sought to repoliticize basic writing (199).[13] Similarly, in her influential critique of Mina Shaughnessy, Lu claims that Shaughnessy's work to move students into the linguistic mainstream upheld exclusionary educational standards that open admissions struggled against: Shaughnessy, Lu argues, ignores the shift in meaning that occurs when students are forced to approximate standard English, depoliticizing their writing and curbing its subversive potential (37).

As in their recent work on translingualism, Lu and Horner in these pieces call composition scholars beyond our ideological alignment with conservative political forces, which they argue has inhibited our advocacy work. In "'Students' Right'" in particular, Horner also begins to sketch an activist pedagogy that challenges such damaging language ideologies, drawing on Bourdieu's *Language and Symbolic Power*. There, Horner argues that writing instructors must acknowledge that the prestige attached to dialects "is contingent on a host of

[13] Such critical moves also characterize Horner's 2001 "'Students' Right,' English Only, and Re-Imagining the Politics of Language." There, he contends that the SRTOL statement—which had at the time he wrote his essay attracted the attention of a younger generation of composition scholars (741)—promoted similar attitudes toward language as English Only proponents, leaving the field unable to imagine pedagogy that can fully embrace students' language differences (749).

material social conditions," including factors like a speaker's wealth or race ("Students'" 751). In response to these realities, Horner outlines how writing instructors can encourage students to grapple with how and why some dialects are elevated over others—and see their own roles in upholding or contesting linguistic hierarchies (753). Horner's argument that our everyday acts of communication can displace standard English's status has resurfaced in his and Lu's work since "Students' Right," evident in their repeated claims that writing instructors must help students see their roles in sustaining or resisting unethical language attitudes. For instance, in his introduction to *Cross-Language Relations in Composition*, Horner argues that the contributors to that edited collection remind us that, every time students write, they reshape the "cultural ecologies" that determine what languages and dialects are legitimate or not (6). Horner's belief that writing classrooms can help students negotiate and challenge linguistic norms—an argument that reframes linguistic difference as agentive and productive—also animates Horner's and Lu's recent and influential work on translingualism, to which I now turn.

"Translingual Literacy, Language Difference, and Matters of Agency"

Lu and Horner's 2013 "Translingual Literacy, Language Difference, and Matters of Agency" combines Lu's long-term interest in the subversive quality of non-traditional usages (e.g. "An Essay," "Professing") with Horner's concern that writing classrooms often promote the very language ideologies many scholars oppose. I conclude this section on composition's translingual turn with "Translingual Literacy" because, even as Lu and Horner take linguistic change triggered by global migration as their starting point (582-3), they still emphasize the benefits of translingualism for students marginalized along linguistic and racial lines. In doing so, their piece demonstrates particularly well how the basic writer image continues to define

composition's student advocacy, especially given Lu's and Horner's continued influence on composition's advocacy work. For instance, both Lu and Horner edited the *Cross-Language Relations in Composition* collection with Paul Matsuda, helped to cowrite the *College English* opinion piece that incited the translingual turn, and edited a January 2016 forum on translingualism in *College English*. Additionally, the article I focus on here has been cited thirty times in the less than three years since its publication. As I study this article's conflation of language difference with socioeconomic disadvantage, though, I want to repeat that I endorse Lu and Horner's efforts to normalize language difference and remove the stigma attached to certain linguistic varieties. Again, given that campuses remain hostile toward underrepresented populations,[14] Lu's and Horner's work productively exposes how composition classrooms and research continue to reinforce such conditions. In other words, I don't intend to diminish the significance of their work, but I do want to caution against assumptions that all multilingual writers share similar histories and experiences of stigmatization, which can render invisible the changing ways that writing instruction marginalizes on our corporate and international campuses.

In "Translingual Literacy," Lu and Horner argue that the translingual turn calls into question many of composition's assumptions about student agency. They argue in particular that the field has neglected writing by underrepresented students that adopts mainstream conventions. Cautioning against seeing such work as a "betrayal of [students'] home or first languages" (583), Lu and Horner remind us that language difference is the norm in both standard and non-standard dialects (585), prompting them to revisit theories of agency. In particular, they turn to the work of Bourdieu, Butler, Giddens, and Pennycook to describe how each act of communication draws on and transforms language conventions. This reality, they contend, challenges our tendency to

[14] Composition scholars have since the 90s pointed out how colleges and universities have become increasingly hostile and inaccessible to domestic minority groups, retreating from civil-rights era access initiatives in favor of color-blind "merit" ideologies (see Hoang W389-40; Lamos, *Interests* 151-2)

see agency only in writing that recognizably departs from standard conventions, and they endorse in particular the postcolonial insight that "mimicry of dominant powers […] creates new means and new relationships between colonized and colonizer with the potential to undermine the status and distinction of the dominant" (589). Lu and Horner thus advocate writing classrooms in which students actively consider "what kind of difference to attempt, how, and why" as they write (592). More specifically, they argue that instructors must emphasize "writers' inevitable engagement in revision and translation," even those students who choose to write in standard forms (593).

Lu and Horner contend that seeing agency in both the different and the conventional further unsettles the boundaries monolingual ideologies assume between languages, benefitting students whose languages and dialects are often stigmatized as different. Our preoccupation with writing that unsettles the norm, they write, "places a double burden on members of subordinated groups" (584), reinforcing the categories of difference that marginalize them while simultaneously tasking them with contesting such categories. In contrast, recognizing the responsibility of all writers to work against repressive language norms distributes the burden of linguistic change more equitably (601) and helps make visible "the extraordinary art and risk involved in the deliberative language work of members of subordinated groups in their efforts to produce meanings and forms that seemingly iterate or deviate from the norm" (586). By uncovering the agency even of mainstream writing, they argue, scholars and instructors can move beyond "debilitating arguments pitting students' language 'needs' against their 'rights'" (597), giving students access to conventions while also helping them understand the ethical implications of using such conventions. Ultimately, Lu and Horner call instructors to teach and read for the agentive and political in all writing. Doing so, they argue, "is likely to improve the

chances of the survival of endangered languages, cultures, and peoples […] by helping to reshape the contexts in which we all live, and to advance the interests of the very peoples, languages, and cultures at risk" (600).

At the core of "Translingual Literacy," then, is a political project that stretches back to composition's encounters in the 1970s with basic writers, one that has compellingly outlined how language functions in our classrooms and culture "as a proxy to justify racial and ethnic prejudice" (598). For Lu and Horner, the growing linguistic diversity of our classrooms requires that writing instructors confront how our theoretical and practical approaches to language difference continue to uphold stigmatizing language ideologies. A translingual perspective, they contend, troubles the boundaries between languages that enable such marginalization and helps instructors honor the agency and risk of all communication, including the seemingly normative. Given the continued marginality of students of color on US campuses, Lu and Horner's pedagogy can draw all students' attention to their roles and our own in sustaining or disrupting such conditions. Yet, the Chinese undergraduates whose narratives are at the core of this dissertation unsettle the relationship Lu and Horner imagine between linguistic difference and marginalization. Universities go to great lengths to recruit and support Chinese international students, and the chapters that follow suggest that these students can feel entitled to campus services, unsurprising given the money they spend on a US education. As Chinese undergraduates secure institutional resources and visibility often unavailable to other students of color—and as they frame their marginalization as a diminishing investment—they draw attention to how institutional privileges are distributed differently on our corporate and international campuses. Race continues to matter, their stories suggest, but along different lines.

By organizing around the basic writing figure, then, pedagogy like Lu's and Horner's can obscure the shifting institutional spaces our students occupy. As I argue throughout "Dreams and Disappointments," classrooms that have yet to account for broad shifts on our campuses can place Chinese undergraduates' educational goals out of reach, often in ways that relegate them to the fringes of campus life. Yet, studies of translingualism imagine that linguistic discrimination continues along relatively unchanged lines, even as this work recognizes internationalization and growing linguistic diversity. Moreover, that Chinese undergraduates often framed their campus marginalization not as an affront to their rights or equality but as a failed investment also presents challenges, given that translingual advocates often rely on composition's civil rights-influenced language of advocacy and inclusion. How do we advocate for Chinese undergraduates and others who see their educations as an investment without affirming their reduction of higher education to an investment or commodity? How do we unsettle these students' educational ideologies without reinforcing their racial segregation? The case studies at the core of the following chapters seek to address these questions, considering how the field might broadly revise its student advocacy to confront these and other challenges. Importantly, though, translingual scholarship is not alone in placing basic writers at the core of its political project. Research that engages higher education's corporate turn likewise organizes around the basic writing figure, and I turn to that work in the next section of this chapter.

Student Advocacy in the Corporate University

As scholars like Lu and Horner have addressed the growing linguistic diversity of our campuses, others have confronted the material impact on our work of corporatization and fiscal austerity, often considering the implications of such trends for our most vulnerable students. Much of this research has come from writing center and basic writing studies, unsurprising given

the routine struggle of scholars in those areas for institutional recognition and resources. For instance, Steve Lamos and Sara Webb-Sunderhaus have both chronicled a resurgence of cost-motivated attacks on basic writing, which often claim that such programs waste institutional resources by reteaching high school-level material (Lamos, *Interests* 153; Webb-Sunderhaus 97). A recent essay by Rebecca Dingo, Rachel Riedner, and Jennifer Wingard captures the similar impact of campus fiscal uncertainty on writing centers: They recount the decision by a University of Houston business instructor to sever her relationship with the writing center and outsource student feedback to EduMetry, whose readers live in Bangladesh, Malaysia, and India (265-6). Importantly, such concerns have become increasingly present in mainstream composition research as scholars and instructors confront a range of issues related to our institutions' fiscal health, including international enrollment, access for domestic minorities, working conditions for contingent faculty, and class sizes (see Scott and Welch 9).

This section focuses on how this research similarly places traditional images of the basic writer at its center, even as it chronicles how corporatization is more broadly transforming our institutions, our students, and the terms of our work. I do so to again register my concern that, as the institutional contexts for writing instruction continue to shift, we routinely draw on a vocabulary of advocacy that can only partially explain the discrimination our students face. More troublingly, as the case studies I later turn to make clear, continuing to rely on such models of advocacy can marginalize students in unforeseen ways. In organizing around the basic writing figure, then, such research may not be able to fully confront the root causes of and may even exacerbate conditions of segregation like that my Chinese research participants described. I focus in the rest of this section on one book-length study of corporatization's impact on the work of composition studies: Tony Scott's *Dangerous Writing: Understanding the Political Economy of*

Composition, a project motivated by his concern that "many institutions of higher education have begun to adopt service-economy characteristics" (4). Throughout *Dangerous Writing*, Scott is concerned that corporatization weakens the progressive aims of many composition pedagogies, ones historically thought to benefit disadvantaged basic and multilingual writers. Moreover, because Scott's study brings together many of the challenges corporatization poses to our work, *Dangerous Writing* offers a glimpse of how the basic writing figure can impede our wider efforts to advocate for students amidst challenging institutional conditions.

Downward Mobility in the Corporate University

In *Dangerous Writing*, Scott outlines the many obstacles writing programs face as universities remake themselves in the image of corporations, and, unsurprisingly, the theme of academic labor emerges repeatedly. Scott takes as his starting point arguments like Marc Bousquet's and Donna Strickland's that the post-1970s growth of composition studies was driven by colleges' and universities' need for managers of contingent labor (Bousquet 232, Strickland 7). Also like Bousquet and Strickland, Scott is disturbed that composition scholars have historically not acknowledged such conditions, largely due to graduate training that teaches them to compartmentalize their scholarly and administrative work (38). Importantly, though, Scott extends Bousquet and Strickland's research by considering how the precarious institutional positions of most writing instructors shape classroom learning (7). For him, the division of labor between those who produce composition scholarship and those who teach writing inhibits the progressive pedagogical goals popular in the field since the 1970s (8). For instance, because most writing instructors' scholarly expertise lies in other fields—and because they often don't have institutional support for professional development—their pedagogy is shaped largely by

textbooks, which offer reductive portraits of writing processes and rhetorical situations (106). More troublingly, Scott charges that composition studies has no vocabulary to confront such realities: Histories of the field, he argues, have attributed the exploitation of writing instructors to English departments that devalue composition, rather than higher education's more general corporate turn (9).

Scott worries in particular about the impact of such conditions on our students, who he describes in terms that evoke the basic writer image. Our students, he argues, are older than ever before and "[spend] much of each week in the alienating world of low-end service economy work" (4).[15] Moreover, most attend what he describes as "second-tier" or "working class" institutions, despite that the field's "pedagogical models […] continue to assume 'elite' universities, and the largely privileged students who populate them, as the norm" (5). Indeed, Scott opens *Dangerous Writing* with vignettes from his students about their work at the bottom of the service economy. Our students and their instructors, in other words, are downwardly mobile, and Scott warns that even the most progressive of composition's critical pedagogies are powerless in such conditions. For him, these challenges are rooted in composition's "social turn" during the 1990s, which "moved the focus of the field away from isolated texts, standard academic textual forms, and solitary authority and toward a view of writing as situated social action" (23). However, he charges that such insights have been lost in practice, reduced to lessons on how students can "adapt to given rhetorical situations in ways that meet [their] own rationally (and privately) conceived ends" (26). Most significantly, such approaches frame markers of difference—like race, class, or gender—as stable identity categories, overlooking the realities of "labor, class, and the daily lives of most students in higher education" (9).

[15] Drawing on figures from the National Center for Education Statistics, Scott argues that 73 percent of all US college students are "non-traditional," or older than the traditional 18-22 demographic, and concentrated at less prestigious universities (4).

Scott claims that critical pedagogy in the corporate university must make visible and confront how students, teachers, and writing programs are shaped by the terms of fast capitalism (190). Only when our classrooms and writing programs identify and resist the terms of labor set by the new economy, he argues, can we begin to achieve the progressive aims at the center of composition research. Scott warns that such work can be difficult: For instance, students may not want to confront the reality that higher education may not provide the economic security they desire, preferring instead comfortable narratives about social mobility through education (13-4). Likewise, writing program administrators must contest the corporate and managerial logics that have come to define their programs, perhaps shortening course sequences as a means to "reduce or eliminate reliance on contingent labor" (35). Scott believes that such moves are difficult but necessary if we wish to enact composition's history of student advocacy in the present, claiming that "pedagogies that come from the assumption that writing is a powerful social practice cannot be enacted where labor is not even afforded the dignity of a truly professional status" (35). As he concludes, Scott reiterates the importance of such classroom and programmatic efforts. Given the interconnectedness of language, consciousness, and social practice, he writes, writing classrooms and programs are well positioned to become sites of institutional change, especially considering the large numbers of students who enroll in writing courses yearly (189-90).

Again, as I argue that *Dangerous Writing* evokes familiar images of socioeconomically disempowered basic writers, I don't intend to minimize Scott's arguments. As he makes clear in his introduction, the students who inspired his research—those who work in the "insecure bottom of the service economy" for corporations like Target, UPS, Wal-Mart, and Office Depot—are now the demographic majority in US colleges and universities (4). Given these realities, it is unsurprising that Scott aligns his work with composition's longer history of advocacy for the

socioeconomically at-risk. Yet, in doing so, the story *Dangerous Writing* tells about US higher education is partial. Scott's focus on the downward mobility of most US students and their universities—as well as the opposition he evokes between elite and working-class institutions—obscures the many ways that most US colleges and universities increasingly operate according to similar logics. That is, as Scott contrasts second-tier institutions against universities with more privileged students, he overlooks how less elite colleges and universities conform to trends set by their more prestigious counterparts (see Tuchman 54-6), a reality especially clear as colleges and universities of all types emphasize global engagement as part of their missions (see Altbach 39). While more prestigious research universities have typically attracted large international student populations, community colleges and "working-class" universities are also entering the global higher education market: they recruit international students, establish intensive English programs, and form student exchange partnerships with East Asian universities.[16]

Institutional contexts like those informing my research participants' campus lives are thus increasingly common at universities throughout the US. Yet, *Dangerous Writing* largely overlooks such shifts, relying instead on images of downwardly mobile students that obscure growing economic disparity on our campuses. More troublingly, Scott's focus on the economic uncertainty our students face can overlook the tensions and conflict that emerge in such conditions. As I later argue in chapter three, economic disparity has easily congealed into racial conflict at Illinois, clear as the presence of wealthy Chinese students incited widespread anxiety among whites about access to the university. Indeed, critics of international education throughout the US have stirred racial resentment by claiming that colleges and universities are withholding

[16] Revenue-generating international initiatives have become increasingly common at US colleges and universities of all types: Even community colleges have sought to enter the global higher education market, often with economic motivations (see Redden, "A Community College"), and Intensive English Institutes have also become seen as a way to attract international students who may not have any other way to enter a US university (see Redden, "Going It").

admission from domestic students in favor of revenue-generating international students (see Altbach 13).[17] As Scott focuses on the economic uncertainty many of our students face, he leaves unexamined how students negotiate such uncertainty in contexts of racial hostility, where domestic students see their own opportunities diminishing at the same time that universities open their doors to globally-mobile international students. In other words, as Scott challenges students to contest the terms of their economic lives, he leaves unexplored the racial hostilities that can too often accompany their class anxieties.

Researching Chinese Undergraduates

Like my research participants' writing classrooms, research like Lu and Horner's and Scott's is influenced by composition's history of advocacy for domestic working class and non-white students. Importantly, the case studies that follow highlight the troubling implications of research and pedagogy centered on the basic writing figure for our work on global and corporate campuses, given that classrooms informed by such traditions often deferred my research participants' educational investments and exacerbated their campus segregation. The case studies at the core of "Dreams and Disappointments" thus uncover how and why pedagogical practices long thought to empower students of color falter for this specific demographic, and chapter five in particular imagines how writing instructors and scholarship like that sketched above can adapt the field's activist agenda to our current institutional realities. To do so, this dissertation draws on a qualitative study of Chinese undergraduates at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign during the 2014-15 academic year. The majority of this dissertation centers on case studies selected from 28 literacy life history interviews (see Brandt 9-11). In these interviews, participants reflected on their general attitudes toward reading and writing, their experiences

[17] The racial conflicts that have emerged on internationalizing campuses have been documented in a variety of US media sources (see Belkin and Jordan; Redden, "Tensions").

learning English in China prior to study abroad, and their experiences in US writing classrooms. Participants in these interviews were recruited mainly through the assistance of writing center tutors and first-year writing instructors at Illinois, who shared information about my project with tutees and former students. In addition to interviewing, I observed two separate sections of Illinois's first-year writing course in fall 2014, and observations from one of those classrooms over the course two months form the basis for chapter three. Finally, I also observed two writing groups at the campus writing center for international undergraduates, which sought to support students as many of them for the first time undertook extended research and writing projects in English.

Importantly, I limited my participants to students enrolled in science, technology, engineering, and business fields. Chinese undergraduates tend to be overrepresented in such disciplines at US universities, with 69 percent studying in business and management, engineering, math or computer science, and the life sciences (Desilver). As Vanessa Fong notes, Chinese students often choose these majors because they feel better prepared to study in such fields by their Chinese high schools or because they worry that they lack the linguistic fluency to major in a social science or humanities discipline (112). Moreover, many Chinese students are attracted to such disciplines by the cultural cachet attached to them in China, and my research participants in particular believed that a degree from Illinois's highly-ranked Colleges of Business or Engineering would later given them an advantage on the job market (see also Redden, "At U of Illinois"). Most importantly, by interviewing only students in these disciplines, I aimed to cultivate a participant pool reflective of the Chinese international cohorts enrolling at colleges and universities across the US, enabling "Dreams and Disappointments" to speak to the experiences of Chinese undergraduates and their writing instructors at other institutions.

Given my own professional identity as a composition researcher and instructor, it is perhaps unsurprising that I further limited my participant pool to Chinese undergraduates who had chosen to complete the university's Composition I general education requirement in Rhetoric 105, a course offered by the English department. Yet, focusing only on those students who enrolled in Rhetoric 105, whether by choice or by the recommendation of an advisor, also enabled me to understand the impact of writing instruction on Chinese undergraduates' US experiences, given that such classrooms are often informed by a tradition of research concerned that writing instructors and programs maintain the racial status quo of our campuses (e.g. Horner, "Discoursing;" Lamos, "Basic; Lu, "Redefining"). Moreover, although students can complete the university Composition I requirement in the English (i.e. "Rhetoric" courses), Communications, or Linguistics departments, Chinese undergraduates who complete Rhetoric often do so because of the opportunities for cross-cultural communication they believe that course will offer.[18] During my time as a tutor at the campus writing center, Chinese international students routinely told me that linguistics courses, which solely enroll ESL writers, are too segregated—and that the only students who take ESL were those who are forced to because of low SAT or TOEFL scores or who believe it would be easier than Rhetoric 105 or a course in communications. My research participants had similar motives for enrolling in Rhetoric 105, and, even when they had registered for the course without fully grasping the range of their options, they often were content with their decision, relieved in particular that the course offered more opportunities to interact with domestic peers than ESL courses in the linguistics department. Additionally, others

[18] International students scoring over 103 on TOEFL can enroll in Rhetoric 105 or a Composition I course in communications but still may enroll in ESL courses if they choose. International students scoring under 103 on TOEFL must take an English Placement Test overseen by the university's Linguistics departments and will be placed into an ESL course depending on their score ("Division"). Given that applied linguists have criticized as colonialist the formalist writing instruction often occurring in ESL courses (e.g. Kumaravadivelu)—and given that writing courses in English departments have generally moved away from such pedagogies—I focused on writing courses in the English department to study the political work of supposedly "progressive" pedagogies in a moment of institutional change.

chose Rhetoric because they feared the public speaking option to fulfill the Composition I requirement offered in the university's communications department. Given my desire to understand the place of writing classrooms in Chinese students' US transitions, I thus chose Rhetoric because many students in those courses were interested in cultural exposure—and because Rhetoric courses at Illinois have been informed by pedagogies cognizant of the cultural demands literacy instruction places on students, the focus of chapter three.

To represent my research participants' experiences, I have chosen to organize "Dreams and Disappointments" around case studies that represent recurring themes that emerged in interviews and observations. In doing so, I take a similar approach to other composition scholars who have studied the literacy-learning experiences of basic and multilingual writers, including Christine Tardy, Ruth Spack, Mike Rose, Marilyn Sternglass, and Valerie Balester. Such an approach, I believe, allows for closer attention to the contexts and histories that shaped my research participants' college writing experiences. Moreover, given that my interviews took place in English—the second or third language for many of my research participants—a case study approach avoids possible difficulties that can arise when coding qualitative data. As developmental psychologist Martin Packer argues, coding risks abstracting interview data from its original context (59), contradictorily erasing the very voices that qualitative researchers seek to capture (65). Such risks are especially significant given my participants' language backgrounds, many of whom referenced translators and dictionaries when they struggled to marshal the English vocabulary for a concept. I worried that coding would obscure some of the insights shared in interviews, especially given the difficult task of abstracting common words and phrases from interview data (see Packer 69) that often included long and detailed descriptions of concepts for which participants did not have accessible vocabulary.

Similarly, a case study approach also enabled me to address two other concerns that arose as I interviewed students and later wrote about their experiences: the tendency in composition scholarship to speak for researched populations (see Royster 30) and the dangers in ethnographic research of isolating significant moments of students' experiences from their social worlds (see Trainor 30-1). By narrating my participants' stories through case studies, I work to offer readers detailed portraits of how specific Chinese undergraduates navigate US campuses and writing classrooms. Perhaps most importantly, the case studies at the core of the next three chapters provide accounts of how classroom practices assumed by composition scholars to empower basic and multilingual writers can fail Chinese undergraduates. Moreover, these case studies offer insight more generally to the shifting racial contexts in which composition's student advocacy intervenes. Specifically, the case studies that follow suggest that student segregation on our corporate campuses can indicate the presence of a faltering educational investment, an especially important insight as the rising cost of tuition forces students of all backgrounds to view college as an investment with stable career and economic outcomes (Wellen 25). The subsequent case studies not only uncover local pedagogical failures but also reveal an investment logic that is transforming our students' educational motivations, what student groups gain access to higher education, and how our institutions manage the returns on such investments in ways that protect white economic and political interests without disaffecting wealthy students of color. Such realities, I argue, compel composition scholars and instructors to imagine how we can ethically advocate for students in institutions where inclusion is viewed as a portal to the global, capitalist workforce.

Chapter Outline

The chapters that follow each offer case studies that outline how the institutional spaces Chinese undergraduates occupy on our corporate campuses diverge from those composition scholars typically imagine for multilingual writers, often with troubling consequences. In chapter two, I outline the specific institutional positions inhabited by Chinese undergraduates and how they find their educational goals out of reach in classrooms that work to affirm student diversity. I detail how Ruby and Yusheng, whose case studies are at that chapter's core, alter their social and academic expectations as they become persuaded in their writing classrooms that they cannot access the linguistic and cultural knowledge necessary to participate in campus life. By examining how the writing classroom deferred the returns Ruby and Yusheng expected from their educational investments, this chapter argues that Chinese undergraduates' institutional positions diverge from those of domestic minorities with less economic power. More importantly, I begin to outline in this chapter how pedagogy aiming to minimize the stigma attached to language difference can reinforce students' racial marginalization by not carefully considering their lived campus experiences.

Chapter three draws on observations in one Illinois first-year writing classroom, highlighting how pedagogies that place student difference at their core (e.g. Barlow; Bartholomae, "The Tidy"; Brodkey; Lu, "Professing") can falter in our changing institutional contexts. Specifically, I argue that the tense campus climate wrought by internationalization and corporatization disrupted the possibility of shared cultural understanding necessary for such pedagogies to succeed. I focus in particular on the classroom's "rhetorical retreats," when instructors and students would acknowledge but fail to engage cultural difference and conflict. Troublingly, as these students downplayed difference, I argue that they simultaneously

delegitimized the experiences of marginalization voiced in the course by Chinese students. In the process, they also unwittingly buttressed institutional diversity narratives that portray the global university as a conflict-free space where students learn from each other's differences.

Chapter four begins to imagine solutions to some of the classroom challenges studied in chapter three, arguing that the experiences of Chinese undergraduates provide a vantage point from which to revise composition's language advocacy more generally. There, I focus on a Chinese undergraduate named Jingfei, whose reflections about her language learning in and outside of the writing classroom remind composition scholars and instructors that language remains a powerful site of cultural contact. I contend that careful attention to language as a site of conflict in the writing classroom can provide Chinese students access to the linguistic and cultural knowledge necessary for achieving their educational goals. More than simply facilitating entry to the campus mainstream, though, I draw on Jingfei's interview to outline how such an approach can create rhetorical borderlands (e.g. Mao) from which students make visible and contest the ideologies of difference and diversity that marginalize them and others in a changing higher education context.

"Dreams and Disappointments" concludes by sketching a "translocal" approach to composition research and teaching that attunes scholars and instructors to the always-shifting institutional grounds in which we now work. I argue in particular that a translocal approach can prepare us to see when and how our efforts to empower students instead compound the marginalization they experience on campus. Such an approach draws attention in particular to how our classrooms are increasingly impacted by political and economic forces far and near as our institutions are increasingly embedded in the uncertainties of the global economy. Through

such an approach, I hope, writing instructors will be prepared to grapple with demographic flux as well as the financial challenges increasingly common at many institutions.

Chapter Two

Educational Dreams and Faltering Investments: Chinese Undergraduates in the post-Civil Rights Composition Classroom

At the beginning of chapter one, I introduced Wen, who chose to study at Illinois because of the university's strong chemistry program and because of the social capital he associated with a US degree. For Wen, attending Illinois would increase his chances of later being accepted to a US medical school and would provide opportunities for cultural growth unavailable at a Chinese university. Yet, Wen quickly became convinced that he would not be able to forge the relationships with domestic peers he desired, and his writing classroom reinforced his belief that his linguistic and cultural differences were responsible for his campus segregation. Disappointments like Wen's are at the core of this chapter, where I examine the role of writing classrooms in frustrating his and other Chinese undergraduates' educational investments. Writing classrooms, as Jennifer Trainor reminds us, play an important role in our students' "construction of consciousness" (141), sending powerful messages about their academic capabilities and potential as productive citizens (see also Shor 92; Wan, *Producing* 146-7). For Chinese undergraduates like Wen, the writing classroom's role as a shaper of consciousness is amplified by the reality that these students have few opportunities for sustained communication in English outside their courses. As one research participant emphasized, the writing course provides one of the few sites where Chinese undergraduates can use English beyond the technical vocabulary of their disciplines. Importantly, as Wen's experiences demonstrate, despite the field's history of advocacy for language minorities (e.g. Kinloch 85-88), the writing classroom can call into question Chinese undergraduates' ability to become members of the campus community and pursue their broader educational goals.

For Wen, the writing classroom confirmed his belief that he lacked the linguistic and cultural knowledge to connect with domestic peers, even though his instructors and classmates never emphasized his language differences. "The most frustrating part is not about writing an essay," he explained. "It's more about knowing different definitions of stuff, like vocab, like ethos and pathos and analyze them in context." Wen likewise felt unprepared to negotiate peer review, feeling that he knew too little about US academic writing, his instructor's expectations, or the purpose of the US writing classroom to trust his classmates' advice or respond to their work. Rather than empowering Wen to challenge academic writing norms or confront his segregation, then, his classroom reinforced his marginalization, often through its assumption of a shared rhetorical language and culture of collaboration. Significantly, as I argue throughout this chapter, such moments where writing classrooms distance Chinese undergraduates from desired cultural capital help to maintain white control of our campuses, even amidst the growth of this economically-privileged student group.

In the rest of this chapter, I examine the faltering educational investments of two of my research participants, Ruby and Yusheng. In particular, I chronicle how disciplinary writing and their composition classrooms frustrated and altered their educational goals. Both Ruby and Yusheng migrated to the US in pursuit of a stronger education and opportunities to expand their cultural horizons. However, in addition to these commonplace goals (see Abelmann, *Intimate* 6; Fong 11), they in many ways approached their educations as an investment: Each expected specific outcomes from their time in the US in exchange for their tuition dollars, which universities have come to rely on in a time of financial instability (see Abelmann and Kang 2). For Ruby, the writing classroom and her collaborative writing with peers persuaded her that, as a non-native-speaking international student, she could not possess the linguistic and cultural

knowledge necessary to achieve her educational goals. Yusheng's writing course, on the other hand, helped to sustain his pursuit of integration on campus, even as he was constantly reminded of his felt inability to participate in campus life. For both, the writing classroom called into question their capacity to access the linguistic and cultural capital necessary for achieving their educational goals, positing their differences as the cause of their diminishing returns. More importantly, by rooting these students' faltering educational investments in their cultural differences, the writing classroom prevented these students—part of an economically powerful but racialized student group—from becoming members of the university's social and academic worlds.

By studying how Ruby's and Yusheng's writing courses helped to undermine their goals for studying in the US, I contribute to work that has examined how writing classrooms exclude racial and language minorities from "academic citizenship" (Horner and Trimbur 620), maintaining white ownership of US higher education in the process (Lamos, "Basic Writing" 30). Where such work has argued that writing classrooms have historically protected white educational privileges from the rights claims of minority groups (Horner, "Students'" 755; Lamos, *Interests* 27), Ruby and Yusheng demonstrate that composition courses also "[hold] in place" (Lorimer Leonard 30) the unprecedented numbers of non-white, international students who claim institutional resources and belonging as clients of US higher education. I borrow the phrase "held in place" from Rebecca Lorimer Leonard's study of the devalued literacy practices of multilingual writers following their migration to the US, drawing on that phrase to emphasize how writing instruction can halt Chinese undergraduates' educational pursuits. These students' experiences thus present a challenge to composition's tradition of advocacy for students' civil, political, and language rights: While composition scholars and instructors have often understood

the exclusion of non-white students from the university as a violation of their civil rights (see Bruch and Marback 60), Ruby and Yusheng describe their marginalization primarily as a faltering investment. Their experiences thus reveal the need for writing instructors and scholars to confront how our classrooms can deny along racial lines the educational outcomes promised to students whose consumer power threatens white ownership of the university.

This chapter proceeds by first outlining how Chinese undergraduates disrupt composition's narratives about the rights claims underrepresented students make on our institutions. In the rest of the chapter, I examine how the writing classroom similarly frustrates Ruby's and Yusheng's educational investments, often in ways that insulate the white campus mainstream from their claims to institutional belonging as consumers of US education. Finally, in the conclusion, I consider the implications of this shifting campus environment for writing instructors and program administrators: What, for instance, are composition instructors' ethical responsibilities to students who experience segregation even as they sometimes reduce teaching and learning to a consumer transaction (see Sanders 63-4)? How do we reconcile our struggle for students' civil and political rights with growing populations of students who make institutional claims based on their status as economically-powerful investors? There, I begin to outline how the civil rights orientation historically guiding composition's language advocacy must confront US universities' entry into a global higher education market, which places our classrooms at risk of withholding students' civil rights *and* their educational investments—all while raising the possibility that our language advocacy can support students' consumer approach to higher education.

Language Rights and the Student-Consumer

Before turning to my interviews with Ruby and Yusheng, I first broadly outline how their investment logic complicates assumptions about the role of writing classrooms in maintaining our campuses' racial stratification.[19] As Scott Wible and Geneva Smitherman have both noted, composition scholars have since the 1950s challenged the exclusion of ethnic, racial, and linguistic minorities from higher education (Smitherman 354; Wible, *Shaping* 9). Such advocacy has ranged from efforts to demonstrate the logic of non-prestige dialects (e.g. Shaughnessy) to race-conscious pedagogy that exposes how mainstream language norms are "racist attempts to affirm white mainstream power and privileges" (Lamos, *Interests* 61). Patrick Bruch and Richard Marback have argued that these and similar efforts understand linguistic and racial discrimination as an affront to students' civil rights. Specifically, composition scholars have routinely seen efforts to exclude students of color from higher education as a means to maintain white control of educational resources (e.g. Prendergast, *Literacy* 19-20) and withhold citizenship from minorities and immigrants (e.g. Wan, *Producing* 12-3). In response, the field has framed educational access as a civic good, shaping what Bruch and Marback describe as composition's "enduring commitment to the universal rights of persons to be recognized as

[19] I want to clarify that my intent in focusing on these students' consumer relationship to the university is not to question the legitimacy of the claims they make on the university—or their presence at Illinois and other institutions. Nor do I intend to suggest that Chinese undergraduates navigate the US university only as consumers, as is later clear in my discussion of Ruby's and Yusheng's multiple educational goals. While the consumer relationship these students forge to the university poses a challenge to civic and liberal public imaginaries of higher education (see Abelmann, *Intimate* 6; Wan, *Producing* 14)—themselves not without problems—my research participants often emphasized their status as consumers in response to the pressures and uncertainties of their college lives, including concerns about the financial and emotional tolls of their education on themselves and their families, their segregation, and concerns about their post-graduation career prospects. In other words, though the Chinese international students I interviewed and whose writing I collected saw their US educations as an investment, they emphasized that position most often as a result of the material and emotional burdens of their post-secondary educations. My aim in focusing on these students' consumer relationship to the university—and how the writing classroom places out of reach the returns they desire from their educational investments—is thus not to offer further evidence of the pitfalls of higher education's commercialization (see Sanders, Tuchman). Instead, I aim in this chapter to begin outlining how Chinese undergraduates' investment logic forces composition scholars to begin rethinking their advocacy efforts for students on the linguistic margins of our campuses.

citizens and humans" (667). While Bruch and Marback raise concerns about such approaches—worrying that the language of rights has been neutralized by post-civil rights conservative backlash (667)—they emphasize the continued potential of rights rhetoric: Engaging in "a constant process of struggle over rights and over the meanings of justice and equality" (660), they argue, can enable composition scholars to foster classrooms that dislodge white racial privilege and move beyond pedagogy that demands that students of color assimilate to the linguistic mainstream.

Such continued concern about students' civil rights is evident in a variety of recent scholarship about linguistic diversity, as I argued in chapter one. For instance, Min-Zhan Lu and Bruce Horner have argued that a translingual approach to language difference can dislodge monolingual orientations that minimize students' language rights and reaffirm the value of prestige dialects (597-8; see also Horner et. al. 309). Similarly, Steve Lamos has argued that our student advocacy only succeeds in moments when recognizing the rights of non-white students can benefit the white campus mainstream (*Interests* 13). Where such work reveals how writing classrooms can undermine the rights of students of color, the experiences of Chinese undergraduates demonstrate how writing instruction can similarly frustrate the educational goals of economically privileged but racially marginalized students, ones who frame their segregation not as an affront on their rights but as a faltering investment. Importantly, as these students navigate the US university as investors, they complicate rights-based models of language advocacy and the power relationships between student and institution they assume: Where composition scholars and instructors tend to imagine disempowered domestic minorities and immigrants as subject to linguistic and racial discrimination (see Ritter 9-10), Chinese undergraduates are often recruited to and enrolled at US universities for the financial resources

they bring to campuses during a time of financial instability.[20] Moreover, as Ruby's and Yusheng's narratives will make clear, Chinese undergraduates themselves routinely approach their education as an expensive investment, striving to access areas of campus life historically out of reach for non-whites in an attempt to secure returns on that investment

I turn to Ruby's and Yusheng's experiences in this chapter to begin considering what is at stake for composition's student advocacy as the multilingual population growing most quickly on US campuses is one that experiences the university as consumers of linguistic, cultural, and professional capital. In the rest of this chapter, I examine Ruby's and Yusheng's difficulties achieving the outcomes they had hoped to derive from studying in the US, which raise a number of concerns for composition scholars who advocate for students' civil rights. In particular, these students' consumer approach to higher education amidst conditions of segregation presents a challenge for scholars and instructors who wish to contest campus racism and our institutions' increasing corporatization. In particular, their experiences raise the following important question: How can writing instructors confront these students' investment approach to higher education without disrupting their educational goals and reinforcing their racial marginalization? This question is especially important given the proximity of Chinese undergraduates' educational ideologies to what Randy Martin describes as financialization, the application of investment logics to arenas outside of business (8). For Martin, financialization frames education as an investment through which students develop the skills necessary to participate in a global economy dominated by finance—and, more significantly, he argues that this social logic devalues those unable to invest in or attain those skills (107). How do we confront educational attitudes that align with financialization, which distributes political and economic capital

[20] Chinese students are part of an international student population that in 2013-14 contributed $166 million to the Urbana-Champaign campus budget during a time of declining state support (Cohen, "U of I Reaches").

unevenly to those who conform to the imperatives of a finance economy, without withholding educational resources in ways that reproduce patterns of racial marginalization? I turn to these questions more fully in the conclusion, after examining the specific ways that Ruby's and Yusheng's writing classrooms undermined their educational goals and reinforced their segregation.

"They have the language": Writing and Altered Professional Futures

When I met Ruby, she was a junior majoring in accounting, though not because she had any interest in or desire to work in that field. Instead, Ruby chose accounting when, during her first year at Illinois, she became convinced that she lacked the linguistic and cultural knowledge to successfully complete a marketing major and secure a job in that field. At the same time as Ruby was reassessing her academic and professional aspirations, she also began to reconsider her place in the campus community. Ruby had come to the US expecting "to be more like active and involved in the campus," but she had quickly discovered that she would have few interactions outside her Chinese peer group. In this section, I describe how Ruby came to see the academic and cultural growth that she hoped to pursue in the US as out of reach, leading her to alter her career path so that she could gain at least some returns from her educational investment. Importantly, Ruby demonstrates the central role of writing and the writing classroom in undermining the educational goals of Chinese undergraduates and the claims they make on the university. Even as Ruby described a writing classroom that minimized her anxiety about language—one that appeared to create space for language difference by focusing on student-driven research and rhetorical knowledge—her course still persuaded her that her career goals were untenable. Specifically, through her course and her collaborative writing with peers, Ruby began to see her linguistic and cultural differences as impenetrable, revealing how the ideologies

of language that circulate in our classrooms can neutralize the educational and career aspirations of a student group whose consumer power threatens white ownership of US higher education. By focusing on how Ruby's writing classroom narrowed the future she imagined for herself, I begin to outline how these students see their marginalization as a faltering educational investment, complicating language advocacy in composition studies that has emphasized students' civil rights.

"What I can do is maintain my academic performance"

The role of Ruby's writing classroom in altering her educational path emerged early in her interview, though its far-reaching impact only became visible later. Compared with many of her Chinese peers, Ruby decided to pursue US higher education late in high school. Where many Chinese students begin preparing for education abroad in primary school, enrolling in private English schools[21] and vying for seats at prestigious secondary schools, Ruby began to study for the TOEFL and SAT only in the summer prior to her final year in high school. At that time, one of her friends, who now attends UCLA, urged Ruby to attend a US university. Ruby had already been aware of the prestige attached to a US degree and, with her friend's encouragement, began preparing to go abroad. "Almost everyone in China knows how much better the education here is than China," she said, explaining her decision. "You know more people, and expand your social circle." In contrast, Ruby claimed that Chinese universities offered little to the vast majority of the country's students. Only a privileged few, she said, were accepted to the country's best universities, and, like the majority of her Chinese conationals, she believed that China's other

[21] Not only are private English language schools becoming increasingly common in China (see Thorniley), some Chinese children and adults undergo tongue surgery to be able to speak less accented English (see Lu, "Living-English" 605-7).

colleges and universities were academically subpar.[22] Moreover, she believed that the quality of students remaining in China was poorer and that many of her Chinese peers were exhausted by the time they enrolled in college. Many students, she said, attended "cram schools" in preparation for the infamous gaokao, the country's standardized and hypercompetitive university entrance exam. "The last year of high school is like hell," she said. "They get up at five and start studying to like ten o'clock at night." She also claimed that China's regimented high schools left her peers unequipped to manage the relaxed atmosphere of the country's universities. This coupling of academic fatigue and newfound independence, she said, produced an unsuitable campus environment at China's universities. "It's the atmosphere in college. Most students, they don't work, they don't study. They just skipping classes and just show up on exams. Actually, lots of college students cheat during their exams."

Where Ruby described Chinese higher education in mostly negative terms, she saw attending Illinois as an opportunity to gain professional and cultural capital, even though attending a US university demanded significant emotional and financial investments on behalf of her family. In her estimation, the strengths of US universities were unparalleled by any other country, commenting, "Everyone knows the education in the US is best in the world," and she planned to take full advantage of the opportunities she believed available at Illinois: In addition to majoring in advertising or marketing, she imagined that she would be involved in campus life and would form friendships with domestic students. She was also open to the possibility of moving to the US permanently after graduation. During the course of her first two years at the university, however, Ruby altered her academic path significantly. For instance, Ruby decided to major in accounting after becoming convinced that she could not compete with domestic peers as

[22] Relatively few of China's universities are considered worth attending by Chinese undergraduates, and the intensity of the college admissions processes makes prestigious institutions like Peking University or Tsing Hua out of reach for the majority of Chinese students (see Wong).

an advertising or marketing major, saying that she lacked the language skills and cultural knowledge necessary for success in those fields. "I gave up the advertising or marketing because they must involve lots of writing. So that's why I chose accounting." Ruby had settled on accounting only because she felt compelled to take advantage of the university's highly-regarded engineering and business colleges. "I don't have any particular interest in any major," she explained. "I'm not the engineering kind," she laughed, adding, "I met some friends after I came here and they all said I don't look like accounting person. They think I should go into advertising. I don't know why but they all said that." Moreover, Ruby had few domestic student friends, saying that she rarely conversed socially in English. "I'm not so involved. I don't attend many activities and most of my friends are Chinese students."

Ruby's altered educational path—rooted in her concern that the returns she hoped to gain by studying in the US were unattainable—reveals how she approached her US education as a consumer seeking to secure benefits from an investment that had quickly become uncertain. For Ruby and her family, studying in the US required significant financial and emotional investments. Although her family was economically comfortable—her father worked in China's booming construction industry[23] and her mother owned a spa—she was cognizant of their economic sacrifices. Ruby was likewise concerned by the emotional toll her US education had taken on her mother. "She relies on me a lot. She keeps saying she misses me and she want me to be with her and things like that." Overall, though, she said that her parents were supportive of her decision and that she tried as best she could "to pay back them" for their support by doing well in her courses. "What I can do," she said, "is maintain my academic performance. I work hard for getting A in the class." Ruby's shifting university path, then, reflected her felt necessity to gain

[23] China's rapid urban expansion—coupled with the relaxation of the country's land leasing regulations—has led to an explosive and profitable construction industry (see Hsing).

some returns on what she saw as a significant familial investment, especially as the academic and professional goals that brought her to Illinois faded out of reach. As I next chronicle, Ruby's composition course and her experiences writing with peers helped persuade her to change her major and reenvision her campus life, exposing her to language ideologies that made the inclusion she desired appear impossibly out of reach.

"Otherwise my experience here would be kind of wasted"

While Ruby hinted early in the interview that her writing course had made her doubt her academic goals, her discussion of her experiences in the course and her collaborative writing with peers revealed how she gradually adopted a monolingual orientation to language that conflates linguistic and cultural identity (see Horner, "Students'" 743), calling into question her ability to attain the cultural capital she desired. During her interview, Ruby laughed at the irony that, in her junior year, she was majoring in accounting and had relatively few social contacts outside her Chinese peer group. In her first-year writing course, she and another Chinese student had co-written a research paper urging their Chinese peers to be socially and academically proactive. "We suggest how to be academically successful, like you might sit in the first row and talk to your professor, go to the office hours or something like that. And for socially, like, you attend activities, pick an organization you like." Despite having written an essay that offered strategies for Chinese students to get the most from their time in the US, Ruby said she had largely ignored their suggestions. "I don't speak too much in my classes. Unless there are some participation requirement that you have to speak to reach the points. Unless they have that requirement, I won't speak." Moreover, Ruby interacted with domestic students only in class and therefore had few opportunities to practice her English in a social environment. As Ruby

described it, her first-year writing course was influential in the disparity between her expectations for studying in the US and the realities of campus life: Not only did her writing course persuade her that the academic path she desired was out of reach, but it was through writing that she began to see her linguistic and cultural differences as insurmountable barriers to the returns she expected from her education.

Ruby's first-year writing course was more difficult than any other course she enrolled in her first semester, requiring her to write longer and more complex texts in English than she had in her Chinese high school or as she prepared for the SAT and TOEFL. She was also struck by the unequal time that she invested in her first-year writing course compared to her domestic counterparts. "A native student may take like thirty minutes in writing this, and I may take two hours or even more in writing the same thing. I don't know, writing is not my thing." Although Ruby had expected that her writing course would be a challenge, she was surprised to find the course so difficult that it played a formative role in her decision to change her major. "Before I came to college, I was deciding if I should go to study advertising or marketing. The first year, I took Rhetoric 105 and I find myself, Oh my God! I don't like writing. So I give up the advertising or marketing because they must involve lots of writing." Ruby's first-year writing course encouraged students to engage in semester-long research of campus issues, culminating in a final essay that imagined as its audience some campus stakeholders. This curricula, as Ruby described it, had fostered her rhetorical knowledge but, in the process, persuaded her that she did not possess the audience and cultural awareness required to work in advertising or marketing. She contrasted the writing and creative work she would have had to undertake in those majors with her writing in accounting courses. Where the memos she wrote in accounting were a formulaic presentation of financial data, she said that marketing and advertising would have

required her to "know what people here are thinking about, and know more about their culture and their preferences. So, I don't think I can do well in advertising." In this way, a classroom that emphasized student-centered research and rhetorical knowledge counterintuitively limited the educational possibilities Ruby imagined, even as such classrooms have emerged largely in response to pedagogies narrowly concerned with correctness (see Covino 37).

As Ruby reconsidered her major, she likewise found the social life she imagined for herself out of reach. Like nearly all the Chinese students I interviewed, Ruby described cultural and language differences that prevented her from connecting with students of different backgrounds.[24] "I think language is actually not the biggest problem in some ways, like the cultural differences," she explained. "If you have a particular topic you can talk for awhile with them, but it's hard for you to go further and talk with. Because you share different maybe values and backgrounds, it just sometimes hard to make our conversation interesting." Any contact Ruby had with domestic students was because of her courses, and the logic of investment that partially governed Ruby's US education emerged as she shared her anxieties that her lack of involvement on campus would reflect poorly when she began looking for jobs. "I've been disappointed because you have to write something on your resume, but I don't really have many experiences to write about. That was the biggest stress of my college life." While Ruby was convinced that she could not secure any certain returns from the educational path she imagined, she believed that her major in accountancy would yield more certain outcomes, clear as she discussed her desire to pursue a US graduate degree and her subsequent career plans. "Now I plan to finish the masters degree here so I can like take the CPA exam," she said. "But I think if I get the CPA certificate, I think I have to at least work here for one or two years so that it doesn't

[24] In addition to emerging in nearly all of the 28 interviews I conducted, concerns about cultural and linguistic barriers also appeared in much of the student writing I collected.

waste my certificate." Ruby's concerns about failing to properly capitalize on her US degree were also evident as she discussed her plans to eventually return to China. Though she planned to at first work in a public firm—she believed that most people returning to China began their careers in one of the nation's government-operated industries—she eventually hoped to join a multinational corporation, where she could use her English skills. "If I'm going back to China, I think I expect my work to involve lots of English in my job, because otherwise my experience here would be kind of wasted." In these moments, Ruby reveals that her shifting educational goals were rooted in her felt necessity to secure certain returns on her educational investment.

Ruby transformed her educational trajectory as a result of her experiences in a variety of campus locations: Her writing classroom, her halting interactions with peers, and in other courses where she felt incapable of participating. Yet, through her composition classroom and the collaborative writing required in her accounting courses, Ruby became convinced that her linguistic and cultural differences were insurmountable and a reflection of her personal and cultural deficiencies. More specifically, through her collaborative writing and her composition classroom, Ruby encountered monolingual ideologies that offered convincing explanations for her campus marginalization and inability to pursue marketing and advertising. Surprisingly, Ruby encountered such ideologies in a classroom that on the surface seemed accommodating of her language differences. Ruby described positive interactions with peers and maintained a relationship with her instructor beyond her course, telling me that her instructor wrote a recommendation letter for Ruby's semester abroad in Singapore. However, Ruby's writing experiences not only reinforced the messages she received elsewhere on campus about her differences but persuaded her that those differences were impenetrable: Ruby's writing classroom and her work with peers not only made visible her differences but located them in her

inability to traverse cultural and linguistic boundaries, encouraging her investment in monolingual language ideologies that equate language with cultural identity (see Horner, "Students' Right" 746). In promoting such a monolingual orientation, Ruby's writing classroom and her collaborations with peers convinced her that she did not and could not access the cultural and linguistic capital that she saw as a prerequisite for meaningful participation in campus life.

Perhaps most surprising is that such an approach to language was affirmed even as Ruby's instructor minimized her anxiety about writing, focusing her feedback and their conversations on Ruby's ideas and arguments. Yet, the course convinced Ruby that the language necessary for an advertising or marketing major belonged to her white classmates, and, after her writing class, she believed herself incapable of competing with her domestic peers in that area of study. "I don't think I can do well with advertising because you have to compete with the native student. They have the language. I don't think I can catch up things in like, under five or ten years." While Ruby believed that the language that her white domestic peers could marshal was valued academically, she believed that her own language and that of her Chinese peers carried less currency. For instance, she believed that peer review in her first-year writing and communication courses was less useful when she worked with other international students. More significant was her preference to collaborate with domestic students in accounting courses, which routinely required her to write with classmates. Ruby had recently worked in a group comprised of Chinese students, and although she appreciated that they could speak Chinese together, she believed that the work they produced was of a poorer quality than when she worked with domestic peers. "Some of my group members were just not so responsible," she explained. "So they don't really took their duties. But the domestic students, they all responsible and active,

and we can always finish our group project together, and like earlier before the due date, so I feel quite good working with them."

Ruby described first-year writing classrooms and experiences writing across the curriculum that counter common narratives in composition studies about the hostility language learners encounter in their classrooms and in their everyday language use. In both her writing course and disciplinary writing, Ruby said that her instructors and peers were interested in her ideas when they responded to her writing and were supportive and helpful. She was especially relieved that her course avoided a narrowly-focused language pedagogy, commenting, "Back in China we, our education on English, they focus a lot on grammar things. Here, they pay more attention to the concepts. That's exactly what I want, because it help me in the most beneficial way." Despite that Ruby described interactions with peers and instructors that reflect a movement from formalist pedagogies that have historically promoted monolingual orientations (see Peck MacDonald 599-600), these experiences still gave force to the exclusionary ideologies of difference she encountered throughout the university.

Where Ruby's halted interactions with domestic peers had initially troubled her, then, they became coupled with an ideology of ownership in the writing classroom and as she wrote with peers. This was especially clear as she described her recent collaborations with a peer from Singapore who understood but could not speak Chinese. The two negotiated across languages often, and their conversations resembled the sort of cross-language work that many composition scholars have promoted as a way to counter monolingual orientations (e.g. Wetzl 205). As she discussed their conversations, she laughed, commenting, "When I was making a phone call with my Singapore group member yesterday because we have to work on that case study, I was speaking in Chinese because he can understand that, but he was, he replied to me in English."

Yet, for their writing projects, he often took the lead while Ruby prepared their calculations. “We work on the project and we wrote the memo together, and he took the most part of the memo because he said he can’t understand me. Because, if they make him write in Chinese, he will struggle.” Although the two negotiated across languages in their everyday communication, they conflated linguistic and cultural identity, reinforcing Ruby’s growing belief that she did not possess the linguistic and cultural capital to fully participate in the academic and social worlds of the university.

“I don’t think we should use other language to express ourself here”

Ruby repeated throughout her interview that she was relieved that her instructor deemphasized grammar in the writing classroom, a welcome change from her English education in China. She also appreciated that her instructors and peers seemed unconcerned about her language differences in their daily interactions, commenting, “Before I come to the US, I was really concerned a lot on the accents. But after I come here, I find like these are people having different accents everywhere, so I think that’s fine. As long as you can communicate with others, I don’t think accent matters.” Where Ruby in many moments described a campus open to her differences, she also recognized the limits to such openness and believed that she had to conform to the campus’s linguistic mainstream, commenting, “I don’t think we should use other language to express ourself here.” Ruby’s writing classroom in many ways reinforced these attitudes about language, persuading her that certain linguistic and cultural knowledge was required to participate in the university’s academic and social worlds, even if peers seemed willing to communicate with her across difference. Ruby’s first-year writing classroom and collaborative writing thus provided her a powerful explanation for why her educational goals remained out of

reach: There, she encountered monolingual orientations that equate language with cultural identity and placed her educational desires out of reach by virtue of her ethnic and linguistic differences. The extent that Ruby's experiences with language transformed her educational goals demonstrates how the writing classroom limits claims to educational resources and institutional belonging by students who navigate the university partly as clients. Where Ruby reveals how writing classrooms can shut down the educational and career futures of Chinese undergraduates, Yusheng's experiences, which I turn to next, reveal how the writing classroom can hold students in place even as it reaffirms their desired educational paths.

"You can get an A if you try": Frustrated Pursuits of Cultural Capital

"Chinese student in this school is pretty rich," Yusheng interjected when I asked if his parents had supported his decision to study in the US. "But not me! They drive some sports cars." He laughed, continuing, "Oh my God! When they first come to America, they just immediately buy a BMW. Like fifty-thousand dollars! So that's amazing." Moments like this—where Yusheng distinguished himself from Chinese peers who he described as culturally insular and consumers of luxury commodities—emerged repeatedly in his interview, even as Yusheng was in many ways like his Chinese conationals: He had traveled extensively in China and to Alaska, his father worked in China's booming construction industry (though Yusheng emphasized his parents' humble origins), his family had paid expensive fines to circumvent China's one-child policy, and his efforts to cultivate a multiethnic peer group at Illinois had largely failed. Yusheng also strove to distinguish his goals for studying in the US from those of his Chinese peers, though he also shared many of their motivations. Like Ruby, Yusheng believed that US universities offer superior academics and exposure to western culture, but he was also attracted to US political ideals and was seriously considering remaining in the US

following graduation. “Freedom is America,” he explained. “So that’s why I come to America. Also, I think the culture is attractive in America.”

Yusheng’s experience of the US university reveals in ways similar to Ruby how the writing classroom can call into question both the claims Chinese students make on the university and their broader goals for studying abroad. Yet, while Ruby makes clear how the writing classroom can incite Chinese undergraduates to reenvision their educational path, Yusheng demonstrates that our classrooms can hold in place Chinese undergraduates by persuading them that their educational goals are viable, even while calling into question their capacity to access the linguistic and cultural capital necessary for such pursuits. More specifically, Yusheng experienced immobility as his writing classroom reinforced his belief that his educational goals could be achieved through persistence and hard work, encouraging his pursuit of the language and cultural knowledge necessary for participation in campus life. His course thus supported what became for Yusheng fruitless attempts to achieve returns on his educational investment, in the process attributing his faltering educational goals to a litany of personal failures to overcome linguistic and cultural barriers.

“I have no idea how I can improve the native American’s essay”

Yusheng’s educational goals were similar in many ways to his Chinese peers, even as he worked to distinguish himself throughout the interview. He migrated to the US in search of educational opportunity and was, like most of the Chinese students I interviewed, well aware of the global academic hierarchy. “I tried to apply to several schools like UCLA, UC Davis, and [Illinois],” he explained. “I want to go to UCLA but unfortunately, you know, my SAT’s not good enough. And my TOEFL is terrible.” He also sought to develop a US cultural perspective

and strengthen his English skills, undeterred from these goals even as he, like Ruby, encountered segregation on campus. In his estimation, such linguistic and cultural knowledge would be beneficial whether he worked in the US or China following graduation. “You live in America, you gotta learn English,” he said, adding, “China is becoming a global country. So English is necessary in China in the future, too.” Despite these seemingly commonplace motives for studying in the US, Yusheng took care to set himself apart from his Chinese peers, emphasizing that studying in the US had political meaning for him. Yusheng contrasted the US university with what he saw as academically inflexible and politically narrow Chinese universities, claiming, “In China, when you go to university, you have to learn some thing that you really don’t want. It’s required, like some political things. It’s really stupid. I want to study what I want and become what I want. So that’s why I come to America.” Yusheng believed that he could pursue such self-development through friendships with domestic peers, his coursework, and his extra-curricular reading.

However, Yusheng encountered difficulty pursuing these goals. Like Ruby, Yusheng was aware that his family had invested much in his education. “It’s really pricey, like $50,000 a year. I think the education is probably important, so it’s worth it,” he said, but Yusheng was understandably frustrated that he was not securing the returns he expected from studying in the US. While Yusheng did not encounter the same difficulty as Ruby did in his intended majors—he was studying economics and hoped to double-major in actuarial sciences—he was concerned that the sheer volume of Chinese students on campus undermined his pursuit of social and cultural development. “When everywhere is your fellow Chinese student, you don’t want to stay with American. It’s easier just to stay with your fellow Chinese. But it’s not good, it’s not good,” he commented. Additionally, Yusheng worried that he would not be able to overcome the

linguistic and cultural differences that formed a powerful barrier between himself and his domestic peers, saying, "I want some American friends. I don't want to just get a degree and go back to China. I want to study the culture and their thoughts. But unfortunately my English is not good." He continued: "And you know, the cultural gap. I interested in what they are not interested in. They like drinking, but I don't. They like party, but I don't. I want to do some sports." Such realities conflicted with his expectations prior to attending Illinois, when he believed that studying in the US would allow him to form cross-cultural friendships and immerse himself in US culture. While Yusheng expressed frustration throughout his interview with the few returns he had secured from his US education, he did believe that his coursework in economics and East Asian Languages and Cultures provided at least some social and cultural knowledge. "East Asian Studies, econ help me to understand how the whole society works," he said.

Yusheng especially appreciated that his composition course gave him an opportunity to enhance his linguistic, cultural, and historical knowledge, especially through rhetorical analysis assignments that required him to study important historical texts like "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" by Martin Luther King, Jr.[25] "When I took that class, we talk about the segregation, like Martin Luther King. I learned something from that class, the black Americans and the civil war, the history stuff. We know more about America. It's not only just a writing class." Yusheng also spoke positively about the course's open-topic final research paper, which allowed him to study *The Great Gatsby*. Yusheng had admired the novel since high school, and his interpretation of the text reflected in many ways his refusal to revise his educational goals even as they appeared repeatedly out of reach. "I love that book," he shared. "[Gatsby's] hope, his American dream. It's

[25] Ruby and Yusheng were enrolled in different courses with similar curricula, though Yusheng's instructor gave more attention to language in the course and in her feedback.

pretty, cheer me up." In addition to providing Yusheng some of the cultural knowledge withheld in the rest of his university experience, the class also bolstered his academic confidence. "That class was really hard for me, but fortunately I got an A. It's amazing because I never thought I could get an A. It's hard but you can get an A if you want and try hard." However, despite his overall positive assessment, Yusheng also described the subtle ways that his writing course questioned his capacities as a language learner.

Specifically, even as Yusheng's course affirmed his academic capabilities, his experiences in the class reinforced that he could not access the linguistic knowledge necessary for participation in campus life in the few short years he would be at Illinois. Yusheng's writing classroom, that is, promoted monolingual ideologies that, like those Ruby encountered, conflated linguistic and cultural identity. As a whole, then, Yusheng's course counterintuitively assured Yusheng that he could attain through his own individual effort the linguistic capital he believed necessary for participation in campus life, even as such linguistic capital was equated with a cultural position he could never inhabit. This occurred largely through Yusheng's relationship with his instructors and peers, which reinforced that he did not possess the linguistic knowledge necessary for securing cultural knowledge. On one of his early assignments in the class, for instance, his instructor corrected each error in his writing. "She wrote as much as I did," he recalled. Moreover, Yusheng recounted a peer review session when none of his native-English-speaking peers wanted to work with him. As one of the only Chinese students in the course, Yusheng had already found peer review intimidating—reading a peer's essay in under five minutes and responding seemed impossible to him—and the experience made him consider dropping the class. Reflecting on his peers' reluctance to work with him, he commented, "They

are American. Their writing is much better than me. I have no idea how I can improve the native American's essay."

Despite such discouraging experiences, Yusheng still looked on his first-year writing experience positively, primarily because of his instructor's optimism. He credited her thorough feedback with enabling him to write clearer and longer essays with fewer grammatical errors. Yusheng was especially grateful that his instructor convinced him not to drop the course when he was embarrassed that none of his domestic classmates wanted to work with him during peer review. "[My instructor] cheer me up and encouraged me. So I stay and get an A. That's amazing. Amazing experience," he recalled. Moreover, he was especially proud to have competed successfully against domestic students in a course that he said was often challenging for his Chinese peers, many of whom enrolled in ESL courses because they believed that their GPA would suffer by taking Rhetoric 105. "I guess not all of them get A," he said about his domestic peers. "That makes me feel better." Yusheng's writing course thus in many ways offered him an impossible proposition: By working hard, Chinese students like him could succeed academically and socially, evident as he overcame difficulties and discouragement in the course. Yet, the course likewise reinforced his belief that the linguistic knowledge necessary to achieve his goals was beyond his reach, clear as he discussed his troubled interactions with peers in the course and his felt incapacity to offer them feedback. He also commented that his writing classroom had made him feel as though the language he needed to interact with peers and participate in campus life was out of his reach because he had not attended a US high school, as Chinese students planning to attend a US university increasingly do (see Chen). "If I come here in high school," he said, "it would be better because you know more people and your language improve faster. I think come earlier would be better."

The belief promoted in Yusheng's writing classroom that he could secure the returns he desired from his educational investment permeated his experience of the university, in many ways setting him apart from Ruby. Where Ruby had replaced her goals with ones that seemed more feasible, Yusheng continued to believe that he could, if he persisted, achieve the educational outcomes that brought him to the US. For instance, Yusheng consciously avoided forming a peer group comprised solely of Chinese students, explaining, "I deliberately stay alone. I don't want to just always stay with my fellow Chinese. I can't do that because I need to, you know, learn the American culture. It's what I want. So I do not have a lot of friends here." Yusheng also tried to overcome his isolation from domestic peers by living with a domestic student, but that strategy had also failed. "The saddest part is that we do not hang out together because we have no common points," he explained about their relationship. "The culture gap block us, even though we live in the same room. It's really upset." Yusheng, then, repositioned himself not by altering his overall educational path but by revising his strategies to achieve his goals, reflecting the messages he encountered in his first-year writing course: Yusheng continually worked to become culturally integrated into the campus community, believing as he had in first-year writing that his goals were achievable if he persisted after them. Yet, his efforts to enhance his English skills and form cross-cultural relationships were frustrated by what he saw as intractable cultural differences.

Whether or not Yusheng's approach to his education had originated in his writing classroom, that course offered a model for navigating the US university with troubling outcomes. Yusheng's course encouraged him to pursue his educational goals, even as it persuaded him that he did not possess the same linguistic and cultural capital as domestic peers and international students who attended a US high school. As a result, his course endorsed an approach to

Yusheng's US education that left him frustrated, marginalized, and isolated. Like Ruby, Yusheng reveals how the writing classroom holds in place Chinese undergraduates, undermining their investments in US higher education and in the process enabling the university to remain a space that largely serves the educational interests of whites. Significantly, both demonstrate the need for student advocacy that recognizes how our classrooms can become sites that negate the claims for institutional belonging and resources of students who enter our institutions as investors, all while continuing to advocate for the civil rights of domestic minorities. I next turn in the chapter's conclusion to how composition scholars and instructors might pursue advocacy and pedagogy that acknowledges how students on globalizing campuses claim institutional visibility and belonging, considering especially our obligations to students whose consumer attitudes can seem an affront to the ideals that have guided many scholars' and instructors' work.

Responsible Language Advocacy

Ruby and Yusheng each responded differently to the messages they encountered in their writing courses about their abilities to achieve their academic and cultural goals. Ruby's writing course incited a process of repositioning, persuading her that, because of her cultural differences, the motives that brought her to the US were unattainable. Yusheng's writing course, on the other hand, in many ways motivated him to continue pursuing his educational goals, even as those goals seemed always out of reach. That these students' writing courses disrupted their educational pursuits—pursuits that included their desire to participate in the academic and social worlds of their university—reveals how writing instruction can allow our campuses to remain spaces of whiteness. In other words, the writing classroom withholds these students' access to the campus mainstream, fulfilling a role many composition scholars and instructors have actively resisted: that of a gatekeeper that guarantees that universities continue to serve white political

and economic interests (see Prendergast, *Literacy* 97). Ruby's and Yusheng's faltering educational investments thus reveal how writing instruction marginalizes even non-white students who claim institutional belonging and resources based on the benefits they believe they deserve as investors and powerful economic agents.

The writing classroom's role in frustrating the returns Chinese undergraduates seek from their US educations raises a number of concerns for composition scholars who strive to create space for non-white, linguistically-different students. Namely, they reveal that those undertaking composition's language advocacy work—motivated often by colleges' and universities' persistent denial of students' civil rights—must consider how to advocate responsibly for students with different relationships to the university than the domestic minorities and immigrants often imagined as the beneficiaries of such efforts. Considering such issues is important, given that the presence of international students on US campuses has increased 72 percent since 2000 ("Fast Facts"). Moreover, on many four-year campuses, the student groups typically targeted by composition's language advocacy work, African Americans and other students of color, are diminishing in numbers as universities implement admissions criteria that aim to increase institutional prestige (see Lamos, *Interests* 152; Webb-Sunderhaus 97-8). The growth of international student populations and the continued exclusion of domestic minorities make clear the need for composition scholars to consider their role in making available or withholding institutional belonging and resources from students who enroll as consumers of US education: If composition scholars wish to continue advocating for students on the linguistic margins, they must confront how our classrooms can undermine both the rights claims and educational investments of non-white students, given that the educational trajectories of both

domestic minorities and international students are influenced by universities' unstable financial situations and their felt need to align with the imperatives of globalization.

Seeing the institutional positions of all of our students—and the absence of others—as shaped by universities' increasing corporatization and efforts to enter a global higher education market complicates our language advocacy work, raising the possibility that our support for non-white students can simultaneously sustain trends in higher education that differentially value student difference. For instance, if writing instructors work to eliminate the barriers their classrooms pose to Ruby and Yusheng, they risk affirming educational approaches that uneasily align with a neoliberal investment logic that devalues those unable to participate in the new economic world of finance (Martin 107, Melamed 2). Additionally, contesting these students' racial segregation likewise raises the prospect that, despite our anti-racist motives, we leave unchecked Chinese undergraduates' equation of US cultural capital with the white mainstream of our campuses. The complicated institutional positions of students like Ruby and Yusheng thus raise the possibility that instructors can, by making space in our classrooms for the linguistically marginalized, promote troubling educational ideologies—or, by working to transform students' educational desires, compound their racial marginalization.

Ruby's and Yusheng's experiences demonstrate the formative role that the writing classroom can play in our students' broader educational trajectories. As a result, composition instructors and scholars continuing the field's tradition of language advocacy must be aware of how the linguistically different students populating their classrooms experience campus life, what those students' educational goals and attitudes are, and how our daily work as writing instructors enables or suppresses those goals. Such realities require that writing instructors work to build knowledge of the local contexts of their instruction (see Ritter 139-40), designing

classrooms that can contest student segregation without fostering consumer educational goals that support universities' embrace of "profit-driven, corporate ends" (Sanders 55). To reframe our responsibilities to students in light of their increased positioning as consumers, I argue that we must extend John Duffy's reflections on writers' ethical responsibilities to our language advocacy work: Not only must we help students see that "when we write for an audience […] we propose a relationship with other human beings" (218), one that forces us to ask "What kind of writer do I wish to be? What are my obligations to my readers? What effects will my words have on others, upon my community?" (228). We must also, that is, ask students to apply similar questions to their goals for the writing classroom and for higher education, inviting them to consider how their educational goals impact other students—including those increasingly excluded from four-year institutions—and what their obligations are to their institutions and classmates. Moreover, we must also ask these same questions of our teaching.

What I am proposing, in other words, are writing classrooms self-conscious of their impact on students, ones in which instructors attend to their shifting ethical obligations as our institutions partially include some non-white students and wholly exclude others. Additionally, I suggest that the writing classroom become a site in which students and their instructors struggle to understand the wider institutional ramifications of any one student or any individual student's goals. Such efforts can occur through course readings and discussion centered on our changing institutional climates, student reflection, or student research that examines higher education's commercialization and internationalization. Moreover, questions like those Duffy invites students to ask as they write can lead to such reflections in common first-year writing assignments, like rhetorical analyses and research essays. We can invite students to consider more carefully who the audiences of such writing are, who is excluded from those audiences, and

how even such a localized writing assignment plays some role in each student's broader educational journey. In the chapters that follow, I continue to examine how our classrooms withhold the cultural and academic capital that compels Chinese undergraduates to attend US universities. I next focus on how writing instruction can minimize campus conflicts that have emerged in light of changing demographics, instead promoting institutional diversity discourses (see Ahmed) that make students responsible for their marginalization.

Chapter Three

"We should serve our own students first": Conflict and Rhetorical Retreat on Shifting Institutional Grounds

In a 2012 *Chicago Tribune* article, suburban Chicago parent Tom Slivovsky complained about the staggering growth of Chinese students at the University of Illinois's flagship Urbana campus. "We should serve our own students first," he argued, continuing, "It is unfortunate that because of the state of Illinois' finances, University of Illinois' admissions office may need to consider international students and their fees in their place" (Cohen and Richards).[26] Slivovsky's comments reflect an enduring struggle over who should have access to US higher education, one that composition scholar Steve Lamos reminds us has historically worked to "preserve and protect the existing social and educational status quo" against domestic minorities' demands for access (*Interests* 5). Yet, comments like Slivovsky's also suggest that, as US universities enroll larger numbers of international students than ever before, the racial lines Lamos describes are being redrawn. Specifically, the influx of international students, some wealthy, has induced anxiety among the white middle and upper classes whose interests have been typically served by higher education, clear in the media response to Chinese enrollment at Illinois. Articles in *Inside Higher Ed*, the *Chicago Tribune*, and the *Wall Street Journal* have routinely given voice to critiques like Slivovsky's, speculating that the university has reallocated admission spots to wealthy Chinese students in the face of an ongoing state budgetary crisis (see Belkin and Jordan; Cohen, "U of I Reaches"; Redden, "At U of Illinois"). That the luxury automobiles owned by wealthy Chinese students at Illinois—including Maseratis and Ferraris—have attracted national

[26] By 2010, when the *Chicago Tribune* published Slivovsky's comments, the University of Illinois system had experienced ten years of financial turmoil. Between 2002 and 2005, the amount of state funding in the overall university budget declined sixteen percent. A series of budget reductions between 2010 and 2015—including the expiration of federal stimulus funding—totaled 113 million dollars in that five-year span (FY 2017 Budget Request).

media attention has only reinforced such narratives,[27] clear in one reader's comment on an online *Chicago Tribune* article that reported the increase of import cars on the that campus: "Apparently U of I wants to get into the foreign business in a big way […] Maybe IL should stop funding as it [is] not serving the interest of IL taxpayers" (Cohen, "U of I evolves").

If comments from Slivovsky and others capture widespread anxiety in Illinois about access to the state's flagship university, a January 2015 *Inside Higher Ed* interview with University of Illinois Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education and Innovation Charles Tucker betrays a shift in institutional mission that encourages such apprehension. When asked about the campus's declining African American presence, Tucker stated that he and other administrators were "very disappointed" but went on to emphasize the campus's internationalization as evidence of its diversity, saying,

> There are a lot of dimensions to diversity on campus […] One of the really important experiences that our students have when they come to a residential campus like this for a bachelor's degree is they get to spend time working with, studying with, playing with people who are different from them. That's true whether you came from Shanghai or Naperville. (qtd. in Redden, "At U of Illinois")

Most telling are the two cities Tucker references: Shanghai, China's economic hub and home to a University of Illinois office that networks with Chinese alum and businesses (Helenthal and Vanderzalm), and Naperville, a Chicago suburb ranked second for quality of life in the US by *Money* magazine in 2006 and wealthiest Midwest city in 2016 (Bookwalter). That students from

[27] The presence of luxury cars at Illinois and similar institutions has been noted by national media outlets (see Belkin and Jordan; Cohen, "U of I Evolves"). For instance, in a January 2015 *Inside Higher Ed* article about Illinois, Elizabeth Redden compared the cars driven by faculty and those owned by international students on the campus: "At Illinois," she wrote, "one joke I heard is that during the day the engineering parking lot is a sea of Hondas and Subarus—faculty members' cars—while at night it fills up with the BMWs and Mercedes driven by Chinese undergraduates" ("At U of Illinois").

Shanghai and Naperville are for Tucker gauges of campus diversity incites the suspicion of parents like Slivovsky that the university has abdicated its civic mission, one that has historically protected the interests of the white middle class (Wan, *Producing* 114).[28] Instead, access to the University of Illinois is in Tucker's vision of diversity determined by familial wealth, a demographic reality at Illinois and other flagship campuses that enroll fewer low-income and minority students as out-of-state enrollment rises (see Jaquette et. al. 29-30).[29] Unsurprisingly, such anxieties have fomented a number of racist incidents against East Asian international students and Asian Americans at Illinois, including an outburst of racist Tweets that targeted the campus's Chinese American chancellor and attracted national media attention (see Jaschik).[30]

As I argued in my first chapter, while the 480 percent increase of Chinese students at Illinois since 2005 is exceptional, the university's turn to international enrollment in a moment of fiscal uncertainty is not. Again, the presence of Chinese students on US campuses has increased 386 percent since 2005, and journalists and scholars alike have linked such growth to the financial instability of US colleges and universities (see Abelmann, "American University").[31] As a result, conflicts of ownership like that at Illinois increasingly inform the campus experiences of both international and domestic students who enter first-year writing classrooms nationally. Such tensions came to a head at Michigan State University in 2012, for instance, when a Chinese student found the words "Go back home" spray painted on his car during the

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[28] Scholars both in and outside of composition studies have studied how US colleges and universities have protected middle- and upper-class economic interests and values by demanding assimilation (e.g. Bloom, Horner and Trimbur) and by excluding students of color (e.g. Abelmann, *Intimate* 66-7; Lamos, "Basic").

[29] By 2015, the number of African American students on the Illinois campus had fallen nine percent, while the number of international students had risen 116 percent. While the international population has increased largely due to state budget pressures, the declining African American presence on campuses like Illinois has been attributed to shifting financial aid priorities, which now increasingly work to alleviate college costs for the middle class rather than increasing access for low-income students (see Long and Riley).

[30] Other incidents at Illinois have targeted the campus's Korean population (see Kang 86).

[31] In 2005, there were 866 Chinese students on the Illinois campus, a number that rose to 5,016 by 2016. In the entire US, 62,523 Chinese students enrolled at US colleges and universities in 2005, a number that has since risen to 304,040 (Fast Facts).

same month that administrators discovered a Twitter account called "MSU's Token Asian," which published Tweets like "I feel angry of depression, when does math start again?" and "[W]hy no [A]mericans like when I drive my Lamborghini? I though it cool?" (Redden, "Tensions").[32] Moreover, amidst such conflicts, university leaders have routinely appealed to notions of diversity like that evoked by Tucker, ones that aim to smooth over racial tensions in order to maintain an image of a harmonious campus community (see Ahmed 144-5). Importantly, because composition programs are frequently "the university site where demographic, cultural, economic and political shifts in the United States have hit first and hardest" (Prendergast, "Reinventing" 81), writing scholars and instructors have witnessed first-hand the impact of such tensions—and the demographic, fiscal, and political shifts that provoked them. Such shifts have been especially felt at colleges and universities that have turned to international enrollment as a source of revenue, where, as Paul Matsuda pointed out in a 2012 *WPA* article, "it is no longer unusual to find writing classes where second language writers constitute the majority" (142).

In this chapter, I study one first-year writing classroom at Illinois whose students' experiences of higher education have been shaped by the conflicts and demographic realities outlined above. The classroom at the heart of this chapter, taught by a literature graduate student named Alicia, offers both a typical representation of writing instruction in Illinois's English department and reflects the changing institutional conditions composition teachers face across the US. In her teaching, Alicia drew on common-sense classroom practices in both her program

[32] More explicitly linking the tensions international students face with anxieties about access to US higher education, a 2012 article from the campus newspaper at Kansas State University argued "that American tax dollars shouldn't be used to fund the education of Afghan, Chinese, Iranian, Iraqi, or Turkish students 'who could, in the near future become the enemy,'" a distortion of the reality that "international students typically pay full freight and their tuition dollars serve as an increasingly important source of revenue at U.S. colleges" (Redden, "Tensions").

and writing programs nationally, and she has likewise felt the impact of campus internationalization, given that four of the twelve students enrolled in her course were from mainland China. Drawing on observations and student interviews, I argue that Alicia's classrooms reveals how composition pedagogies that place cultural difference at the center of the curricula present unforeseen challenges in light of the demographic, fiscal, and political shifts occurring on US campuses. The first-year writing program in which Alicia taught is in many ways influenced by the efforts of scholars like Min-Zhan Lu, Linda Brodkey, and David Bartholomae to make cultural difference a topic of inquiry in writing classrooms, an approach that while widely contested in the 1980s and 90s has now become uncontroversial. However, in Alicia's classroom, the tense campus climate that Chinese undergraduates and their domestic peers negotiated disrupted the assumption of a shared cultural vocabulary necessary for the success of such pedagogies.

Most significantly, though, Alicia and her students routinely responded to cultural differences and campus tensions with what I describe in this chapter as "rhetorical retreat." In moments when the Chinese students enrolled in the course unsettled the classroom's invisible cultural expectations, Alicia and her students acknowledged but refused to engage such differences and tensions. Instead, they implied that cultural differences and experiences of racism were individually felt and quickly changed the direction of class discussion. Importantly, as rhetorical retreat became a common tactic for confronting difference for Alicia and her students, they obscured pedagogical exclusions and experiences of segregation, instead cultivating an image of the classroom in which students could, to borrow from Tucker, "spend time working with, studying with, playing with people who are different from them." By simultaneously acknowledging and denying institutional exclusions like those detailed by Ruby and Yusheng in

the previous chapter, Alicia's classroom demonstrates one of the unforeseen but troublesome outcomes of leaving unengaged the tensions that emerge in classroom discussions of difference: As they failed to confront such tensions and instead cast cultural difference as a personal hurdle to be overcome, Alicia and her students rendered invisible how their classroom placed linguistically and culturally-different students on its periphery while also downplaying institutional sources of marginalization.

As I argue in the next section of this chapter, Alicia's classroom functions as a sort of "canary in the mines" (see Prendergast, "Reinventing" 81) for the pedagogical and institutional challenges writing instructors increasingly face throughout the US: Her classroom has been shaped by demographic and other institutional shifts, reflects common approaches to writing instruction nationally, and even bears traces of sustained efforts by progressive composition scholars to advocate for students on the linguistic and racial margins of our campuses (see Smitherman; Wible, *Shaping*). Alicia and her students' retreats from cultural differences thus reveal how long-standing initiatives by writing instructors and scholars to incorporate difference into the writing classroom can counterintuitively perpetuate students' institutional exclusions. Troublingly, as I argue in this chapter's conclusion, evasion of difference like that in Alicia's classroom can support diversity discourses like those evoked by Tucker, ones that obscure—and in doing so reinforce (see Ahmed 145)—the institutional marginalization detailed by students like Ruby and Yusheng in chapter two. Overall, this chapter again relies on the unique positions of Chinese undergraduates within our changing institutions to uncover new complications for writing instructors. Where the case studies in the previous chapter unsettled deep-seated assumptions about the institutional positions occupied by second-language writers, though, this

chapter brings to the surface how classroom practices commonly tasked with student empowerment can marginalize on our increasingly international and corporate campuses.

Methods and Research Site: Writing Classrooms in the Corporate University

In this section, I situate Alicia's classroom within my larger qualitative study of Chinese undergraduates at Illinois, arguing that the pedagogical and institutional contexts informing her classroom allow the case study that follows to speak to wider concerns in composition studies. I observed Alicia's classroom and interviewed her students as part of the semester-long study of Chinese first-year writing students at the core of this dissertation. Again, my research was motivated by my experiences in the writing center and first-year writing classrooms at Illinois, where Chinese students routinely shared with me stories of their fraught campus transitions. Importantly, because these students are situated squarely within the transformations increasingly shaping US campus life, and because the University of Illinois has been at the forefront of US higher education's international and corporate turns, I look to their experiences to better understand the impact on writing instruction not only of demographic shifts but also wider contextual changes on our campuses. For this project, I interviewed 28 Chinese undergraduates who were enrolled in or had completed Rhetoric 105, a one-semester course offered by Illinois's English department to satisfy the university Composition I requirement.[33] Additionally, I collected student writing and observed two regularly-meeting writing groups for international students at the campus writing center. Because my study focuses on Chinese students enrolled in Illinois's Colleges of Engineering and Business—colleges in which Chinese undergraduates are

[33] As I outlined in chapter one of this dissertation, I limited my pool of potential research participants to students who had enrolled in Rhetoric 105 because, in my encounters with Chinese undergraduates as a writing center tutor, those who choose to fulfill their Composition I requirement in Rhetoric 105 often prefer the opportunities that class offers to interact with domestic students. By focusing on Rhetoric 105 students, I aimed to understand how the large writing programs common on many campuses withhold or make available the educational goals of students actively seeking exposure to English and US culture.

overrepresented at Illinois and at universities nationally[34]—I limited my pool of potential sections to observe only to those in which at least one-third of all students were Chinese undergraduates studying in engineering or business fields. From there, I contacted instructors individually, ultimately choosing to observe one section taught by a graduate assistant, Alicia, and another taught by an experienced non-tenure track faculty member, given that all first-year writing courses at Illinois are staffed by instructors from these demographics.

Of the two Rhetoric 105 sections I observed, I feature Alicia's classroom in this chapter for the portrait it offers of typical approaches to writing instruction at the University of Illinois and at universities nationally. Like most of her first-year writing colleagues at Illinois, Alicia encountered unprecedented numbers of international students in her classroom, all while drawing on a tradition of first-year writing instruction in the department that encouraged student research on campus issues using archival and ethnographic methods. Additionally, Alicia used the widely-popular textbook *They Say/I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*[35] and routinely referenced programmatic learning outcomes modeled after the WPA Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition,[36] aligning her class with a national professional organization that influences writing instruction across the US (see Scott 55-6). Perhaps most importantly, though,

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[34] As Vanessa Fong notes in her ethnographic study of a cohort of Chinese international students from Dalian, Chinese undergraduates often choose science and business fields because of the cultural cachet attached to them in China (112). However, Fong also points out that students interested in the social sciences and humanities often shy away from those fields because of the linguistic challenges they believe they will confront.

[35] In the preface to the third edition of their *They Say/I Say*, Graff and Birkenstein note that the textbook has sold over a million copies and is used in classrooms in half of all US colleges and universities (xiii). The text has also incited scholarly debate about the value of teaching writing templates to undergraduate students (see Lancaster).

[36] The learning outcomes for Rhetoric 105 at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign are as follows: "After completing **Rhetoric 105: Writing and Research**, students will be able to [1] Identify and explain the role rhetorical appeals and the rhetorical triangle can play in non-fiction print and/or multimodal texts, [2] Create and sustain across one or more pieces of writing a focused research question that responds to an exigent issue, problem, or debate, [3] Compose cogent, research-based arguments, in print-based and/or multimodal texts, for specialist and/or non-specialist audiences, [4] Locate, accurately cite (through summary, paraphrasing, and quoting) and critically evaluate primary and secondary sources, [and 5] Demonstrate knowledge of writing as a process, including consideration of peer and/or instructor feedback, in one or more pieces of writing from initial draft to final version" ("About").

because Alicia carefully incorporated composition "best-practices" into her teaching, I selected her classroom not only for its representativeness but for the occasion it offers readers to see in her pedagogy elements of their own. Alicia's teaching was shaped by pedagogical traditions common to US writing programs, and her classroom thus provides an opportunity to move beyond what Jennifer Trainor describes as an "easy pitfall in ethnographic writing about education," a pitfall that I have sought to resist as I observed and wrote about Alicia and her students: the tendency to attribute classroom missteps to an instructor's "misguided pedagogy" (103). Instead, I throughout this chapter encourage readers to reflect on how their classroom approaches may similarly falter in our increasingly complex and fraught institutions.

I want to emphasize again why Alicia's classroom and its institutional context afford an opportunity to understand the impact on writing classrooms of the demographic and political shifts transforming campus life at US institutions. The University of Illinois has been a leader in international enrollment over the past ten years, ranking since 2005 in the top six highest US enrollers of international students and most often holding the number two spot ("Fast Facts"). Campus officials have justified such enrollment increases by appealing to the instrumental benefits internationalization provides for domestic students who will enter careers in increasingly globalized fields. For instance, former university president Robert Easter has commented publicly that Chinese students bring necessary diversity to the campus, saying, "The University of Illinois has to be fully engaged with that nation in terms of preparing our students for futures that will undoubtedly involve interactions with China." However, Easter has also admitted the university's financial motives for international enrollment, commenting, "It brings dollars into the state. That can't be our primary objective, but it does contribute to the state's economy" (qtd. in Cohen, "U of I Reaches"). Internationalization is thus one of many efforts at Illinois to plug a

budgetary hole created by years of declining state support and a potential 29 percent decline in state funds for the 2017 fiscal year (Wurth). For instance, beyond international enrollment, the university has aggressively pursued revenue-generating research partnerships with controversial corporations like Dow Chemical, BP, and Abbott Labs. As Daniel Schugurensky notes, campus leaders at research-intensive institutions like Illinois increasingly tout such partnerships for their revenue-generating potential, even despite the potential for conflicts of interest that challenge the foundations of academic integrity (312). In short, Alicia's students learned and lived on a campus transformed by the international and corporate turns common at research universities across the country.

Because they teach and learn at the type of large, research-intensive institution that helps to set national trends in higher education (see Tuchman 36-7), then, Alicia and her students are able to speak to recent concerns in composition studies about demographic shifts and the move toward corporatization on our campuses. Composition scholars including Bruce Horner, Min-Zhan Lu, Paul Matsuda, Suresh Canagarajah, and others have argued that increasing linguistic diversity in our classrooms, driven partially by international enrollment, compels the field to take stock of its practical and theoretical approaches to language difference. As Jordan Jay argues, for instance, the increasing presence of both domestic and international students from diverse language communities "presents an opportunity to question and reorient fieldwide assessments of the relations among diverse English users and how those relations undergird standards by which successful communication is judged" (7). On the other hand, Chase Bollig and Tony Scott have both highlighted the limits placed on composition's "project of democratization and open access to education" (Scott 42) by the increasingly corporate character of higher education. For Bollig, the now-common reduction of higher education to a personal investment (151)

undermines the civic commitments historically informing writing instruction (162), while Scott questions the viability of progressive politics in writing programs staffed by contingent labor. I situate this chapter within both of these scholarly trajectories, given that the Chinese students in Alicia's class routinely described language needs like those that concern Matsuda ("Let's" 144-5) and were well aware that their presence on campus was partially motivated by the university's financial uncertainty. These students, in other words, were cognizant that their educational trajectories were bound up in the university's need to generate revenue, and their experiences can thus provide insight to how internationalization and corporatization are changing the terms of our work.

Specifically, I argue that situating Alicia's classroom within these larger institutional shifts reveals the unintended and counterintuitive consequences of one pedagogical commonplace that, while contested when it emerged in the 1980s and 90s, has now become an uncontroversial feature of many writing classrooms: the reading of "multicultural" texts and the analysis of student experiences of difference. Advocates of such multicultural approaches have touted both their political and instrumental benefits. For Min-Zhan Lu and Linda Brodkey, attention to difference in the writing classroom can help instructors resist their classrooms becoming sites where cultural and linguistic minorities are interpolated into the university's middle-class values (Brodkey 134; Lu, "Professing" 448). Aside from providing opportunities for students to negotiate pressures to academically assimilate, multicultural classroom content has also been advocated as a scaffold for practical skills like analysis and argumentation, given the complexity of sociopolitical struggles over difference. As Brodkey questions, "What could be more disturbed, troubled, ambiguous, confused, conflicted, or obscure than existential situations evoked by difference? It is inquiry, then, more than the acquisition of any content or skill, no

matter how valuable, that justifies" a turn toward politically-charged issues in the writing classroom (243). Arguments about the generative potential of such curricula continue to have currency, clear in Daniel Barlow's recent call in *CCC* for classrooms in which students read "particularly difficult, discordant cultural texts that engage race's controversies in ways that produce sufficient discomfort to compel students' careful and deliberative writing" (421). In other words, for Barlow, there are "ethical *and* educational opportunities afforded by inquiry about race" (415), inasmuch as addressing such fraught issues "bring[s] students into a writing context that demands self-reflection, incisive cultural analysis, and a capable lexical range" (433). Significantly, while multicultural writing pedagogy was the target of political backlash in the early 1990s—evident in resistance to Brodkey's "Writing about Difference" syllabus in media outlets like the *New York Times* and by her UT Austin colleague Maxine Hairston in the pages of *CCC*—Donna Strickland argues that such approaches became mainstream by the mid-90s (104), motivating Russel Durst's 1999 qualitative study of politically-charged composition classrooms (4).

In the rest of this chapter, I study how the cultural differences and tensions present on our international and corporate campuses disrupt the assumption of shared cultural knowledge embedded in pedagogies like those advocated by Lu, Brodkey, and, more recently, Barlow. Most significantly, though, I contend that Alicia and her students' failures to engage difference and conflict led to pedagogical outcomes at odds with those such classroom practices were devised to cultivate: As Alicia and her students framed students' cultural differences as personal obstacles to be overcome, they unwittingly delegitimized the very student perspectives that multicultural classrooms have aimed to affirm. Before turning to Alicia's classroom, though, I want to emphasize here that, even as this chapter situates the experiences of Chinese undergraduates in

some of the more disturbing trends in higher education, I am in no way aligning myself with comments like those from Illinois parent Tom Slivovsky that opened this chapter. Instead, because Chinese international students' experiences of the US university are so shaped by campus corporatization and internationalization—and the disinvestment of higher education that precipitated these turns—I look to these students' experiences for what they reveal about how shifting institutional priorities are transforming our classroom work. Moreover, as I argue in the final chapter, by understanding the specific institutional positions Chinese undergraduates occupy (the focus of chapter two) and how our classrooms can invisibly reinforce those positions (the focus of this chapter), we are better equipped advocate for them and other students on the linguistic and racial margins of our changing campuses.

Difference, Conflict, and Retreat in Alicia's Classroom

A quick look around the room during any of Alicia's class sessions made it immediately apparent that she and her students were teaching and learning in a changing institution. Four of Alicia's twelve students were from mainland China, and, though Alicia's class was uncharacteristically small, such proportions of Chinese undergraduates were common in many Rhetoric sections, unsurprising given that Asian students comprised about one-third of the 2,843 students enrolled in Rhetoric 105 during the 2014-15 academic year. Of the four Chinese undergraduates enrolled in Alicia's course, three agreed to be interviewed about their experiences in her class: Ling was a finance major from China's Hunan Province who participated and joked more in class than some of his domestic peers and who repeatedly contrasted his middle class background against his wealthier conationals during his interview. Despite Ling's apparent comfort participating in class, he found the conversational style of Alicia's writing classroom difficult. For him, the class's informal discussions—a common and

sometimes-evaluated feature of writing classrooms since the 1970s (see Lunsford and Ede 688-95)—required him to "speak something very rapidly, very intuitively. That will always be a challenge for me."

Another Chinese student, Mandy, was an accountancy major who, like Ling, contrasted her family's modest background against her peers' wealth. Her mother was an accountant who had worked for American companies like GE, but she had multiple times forgone promotions that would have moved them to the US or Shanghai so that the family could remain in Nantong, an expanding industrial city just north of Shanghai. Mandy chose to enroll at the University of Illinois after viewing a video titled "Champaign Welcomes You," produced by the campus's Chinese Students and Scholars Association. Commenting on the professional-quality video's portrayal of campus, Mandy said, "When I looked at the pictures, I feel like I want to come here. Kind of like belonging, I think." Finally, Trent was an engineering major from Qingdao, a coastal city between Beijing and Shanghai. During his interview, Trent referenced many times his academic indifference. Like many of his Chinese peers, Trent had left school during his senior year to prepare for the SAT and TOEFL but said that, during that time, "I didn't really work hard. Basically, just play a lot. So when I was doing the application I didn't really put much effort on it." For their research in Alicia's class, Ling, Mandy, and Trent all undertook qualitative studies of Chinese undergraduates on campus. Although each referenced their segregation as motivating their research, Trent admitted that he only chose the topic after realizing that Alicia had banned his original research topic—underage drinking—because the university Institutional Review Board prohibited research on illegal activity in first-year writing classrooms using ethnographic methods.

Alicia's domestic students also brought a range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds to the classroom. Two students, for instance, represented the ethnic and class diversity of the campus's Latino population: While a Mexican-American male named Joel had attended high school in a Chicago suburb popular among upwardly-mobile Latino immigrant families, Daniela had grown up in Chicago's Puerto Rican cultural hub, a lower to middle class neighborhood embroiled in conflicts over gentrification. Additionally, one female student was from the large Indian-American immigrant community of Chicago's western suburbs, while yet another hailed from one of the city's many Eastern European immigrant neighborhoods. The remaining four students in Alicia's class seemingly represented the largest undergraduate student group at Illinois: students from Chicago's middle-to-upper-class suburbs. Even though Alicia hadn't attended Illinois for her undergraduate degree, she was herself part of this demographic majority, having grown up in one of the many suburban school districts that are feeders for Illinois. Yet, one student's research, inspired by her experiences of anti-Semitism on campus, made clear the sometimes undetectable differences even within a campus majority that can seem monolithic.

Beyond registering demographic shifts, Alicia's classroom also bore signs of the university's precarious financial situation and the disinvestment in humanities disciplines occurring at universities nationally (see Washburn xv). For instance, while the three LCD screens in Alicia's classroom could be interpreted as evidence of institutional investment in writing instruction, the four classrooms equipped with such technology were instead part of a wider effort to generate revenue for the Rhetoric program: Under the direction of a previous administrator, the program had adopted an in-house-produced e-textbook, and the LCD screens supported that text's multimedia components as well as its technologically-driven peer review activities. By requiring that students of all first-time instructors purchase the e-text, the

classroom's sophisticated technology was part of a larger effort to generate otherwise unavailable funds for professional development activities, lectures by visiting scholars, and a yearly conference of first-year writers' research. The room's other physical characteristics also betrayed wider university funding inequalities that impacted the Rhetoric program. Even as construction on the 95 million dollar Electrical and Computer Engineering Building was taking place across campus ("ECE Building"), Alicia taught in a classroom where clanging radiators sometimes drowned out class discussions, where recently-purchased but cheaply-produced mobile tables and chairs were already in disrepair, and where the overhead projector screen had become detached from its mount near the ceiling and lay on the floor for weeks awaiting repair. Additionally, Alicia herself serves as a reminder of the fiscal marginalization of writing instruction and the humanities on many campuses: She is part of a population of non-tenured instructors that teach 93 percent of first-year writing courses nationally (Scott 5) and nearly 75 percent of all courses at US universities (Edmonds), representing colleges and universities' wider movement toward casualized, expendable, and cheap labor (Scott 4-5, 8-9).

In short, Alicia taught in a writing program that has experienced rapid demographic shifts in a moment of institutional fiscal uncertainty. To navigate such realities, Alicia skillfully drew on her training during a weeklong orientation for new instructors and in a required teaching seminar for all new graduate assistants. Alicia's classroom was process-driven and centered on student-driven ethnographic and qualitative research on sensitive issues like campus race politics, sexual harassment, and mental health support. More importantly, Alicia adopted a writing workshop approach, placing discussion of student research writing at the core of each lesson, and students in each class session appeared to be engaged and invested in their peers' writing. This is no easy feat: As Rebecca Moore Howard notes, students often resist such

collaboration, uncertain of their own capacity to provide feedback to their classmates and hesitant to incorporate their peers' suggestions into their own writing ("Collaborative" 64). Moreover, Alicia's students praised the casual but productive environment of the class, which Trent, one of the course's Chinese international students, appreciated. "I think Alicia actually did a pretty good job at, it's not that like serious an atmosphere," he shared during an interview after the course had ended. "We have like those domestic student, they are really good at talking and making fun and so, just making it easier." Indeed, as the fall semester neared an end, the energy in Alicia's classroom stood in contrast to the increasing cold and earlier sunsets, even as dusk came earlier and earlier in her late-afternoon class.

Alicia, it seemed to me during my time in her classroom, successfully drew on practices aligned with the rhetorical, collaborative, and process movements and their shared focus on student empowerment and participation (see Fleming, "Rhetoric" 33; Jackson and Clark 20). Yet, one particular class meeting revealed to me that I had fallen into one of the other common pitfalls in classroom research: the inclination to depict "a reassuring teacher-hero whose pedagogical moves successfully transformed her students and who provides us with a model to emulate in our classroom" (Trainor 103). Because I shared Alicia's desire to foster student engagement across linguistic and cultural differences, I had come to appreciate her many strategies for promoting classroom participation—and hoped to incorporate many of them into my own teaching in the next semester. During the final course meeting, though, I became aware that, even as Alicia's students seemed to routinely grapple with difference, they most often retreated from such encounters. On the surface, Alicia's students appeared engaged in the type of classroom work composition scholars have often elevated. They discussed fraught issues like racism and disability during each class session, for instance, without the overt resistance that has

concerned composition scholars like Virginia Anderson, Russel Durst, and Jennifer Trainor. Alicia's class even appeared integrated and harmonious: Where many of Alicia's first-year writing colleagues complained of Chinese undergraduates and students involved in Greek life who rarely interacted outside their in-groups, Alicia's students daily sat with peers from outside their own demographic in the classroom's circle of tables. Yet, one class session in particular attuned me to the reality that encounters with difference in Alicia's classroom were fleeting and, more troubling, served to delegitimize students' experiences of racism and segregation.

"It's still possible to make a lot of American friends"

During the last class meeting of the semester, Alicia's students presented their final projects for Rhetoric 105, a "Repurpose Your Research" assignment that required her students to reshape their major course research papers for non-academic readers. The atmosphere for this concluding class session was casual, and Alicia and some of her students had brought snacks to share, which covered an entire table at the front of the room. Alicia's class met in a modest classroom with beige walls in one of the campus administration buildings. The building's proximity to the neighboring English Building—as well as the trees lining the walkway between the two buildings—allowed little light into the room. Even though it was early winter and the sun was setting earlier, Alicia and her students opted to leave most of the class's harsh fluorescent lights off, leaving the classroom in a comfortable dim. One by one, students were coming to the front of the classroom to informally present their "Repurpose Your Research" projects, and after each student shared his or her project, Daniela, an outgoing student from Chicago's Puerto Rican community, urged her classmates to eat more food. "C'mon guys," she repeated. "I can't take all this food home!" The students politely clapped after each of their peers shared their work, but,

when Ling, one of the class's Chinese undergraduates, read his satire, he captured their interest from his first line. "Introducing the PIUC—Park of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign," he read, eliciting his peers' laughter. During their previous class session, Alicia had introduced the class to satire as part of a unit on public arguments, and that genre had inspired Ling's essay for this final assignment.

Ling was an outgoing finance major from China's Hunan Province, and, like Mandy and Trent, he had studied the first-year transitions of his Chinese conationals. In his satire, he critiqued notions of diversity often evoked at Illinois to describe the campus and its increasingly international student body. Through his own ethnographic study, Ling had become cynical about the university's motives for international enrollment, telling me in a later interview, "The school does not really care about international students […] The university, they just making profit in the guise of diversity." In his "Repurpose Your Research" project, he satirized the Illinois campus as a "world-class park" for Chinese tourists who avoided speaking English. Ling also parodied the campus diversity initiative's motto—One Campus, Many Voices—as he described the distance he perceived between his international peers and the university's domestic minority service workers. "Twenty-nine percent of our employees are African American, Asian American, Latino, multiracial, and Pacific Islander," he read, "which conveys our notion of 'One Park, Many Foreigners.'" He continued, "But don't worry, my dear Chinese friends. According to our privacy policy, they will not contact you, even if you leave your phone number or email address to them," a reference to the times he had been rebuffed by domestic classmates: In his interview, Ling discussed his multiple attempts to befriend domestic classmates who he worked on projects with or spoke to in class, only to have them ignore him in non-academic settings. Ling's satire next described "The Ghost Town Survival Game," holiday breaks when international students

remained on campus but dining halls and nearby stores closed. His Chinese peers in particular laughed as he rebranded the campus's Chinese Students and Scholars Association (CSSA) as Chinese Sightseeing and Shopping in America.

Ling's satire offered a disparaging assessment of Illinois during a moment of campus transformation. He described his wealthier Chinese peers primarily as tourists and consumers—and, in a later interview, he characterized these same students as "rich children" who lacked clear goals for their studies, contrasting his middle class background against peers who displayed their wealth through expensive clothing and cars. Ling also critiqued the language of diversity used by university administrators and in marketing materials to describe Illinois's increasingly international student body: He was aware of the class differences between Chinese students and domestic minority campus workers, and he also expressed concern that the university did not provide enough support to the international students it aggressively recruited and enrolled, describing his Chinese peers' segregation and campus breaks when international students remained on campus but all university services closed. Despite these critiques—including his claim that such experiences only served to "make you feel happier when you finish the journey and return to China"—Ling's comments after he read the satire attributed these disappointments not to the university but instead to his Chinese conationals. The purpose of his satire, he told his classmates casually as he was returning to his seat, was to "make fun" of his Chinese peers' difficulty navigating campus—and let them know that "it's still possible to make a lot of American friends during the four years of their campus life."

These off-the-cuff comments reversed the institutional critiques Ling offered in his satire. Where his satire humorously raised serious concerns about segregation, institutional support for international students, and the differential status afforded to racial minorities on campus, he

exonerated the university from involvement in such conditions as he returned to his seat. The problem, he suggested, was one his Chinese peers needed to resolve by overcoming their difficulties adjusting to life in the US. “There were a lot of Chinese students who don’t know what they’re doing in the universities in America,” he told his classmates about his motives for writing his satire. “You know, a lot of students feel difficult to get involved. I think there are a lot of opportunities for us to, you know, get contact with each other.” Ling’s sudden retreat from his institutional critique deflected attention from the campus tensions he identified in his satire, ones like those that opened this chapter: Ling’s satire demonstrates his awareness that diversity at Illinois privileges wealthier students, and, as his satire critiques diversity discourses like Tucker’s, it also speaks to the campus shifts that provoke anxieties like Slivovsky’s. Importantly, as Ling retreated from such critiques, he foreclosed the kind of strategic discomfort that Daniel Barlow argues is so valuable in classroom conversations over difference (421), ultimately removing an opportunity in the classroom for Alicia and his peers to grapple with the fraught campus context that informed their wider campus experiences and many of their research projects. More troublingly, such rhetorical retreats were common in Alicia’s classroom, and, like Ling’s, such retreats often cast difference as an individual deficit to be overcome, ultimately delegitimizing and leaving unexamined claims of institutional marginalization that students voiced in the classroom.

“I thought they were really selling gorillas”

Ling’s retreat from his satire provides one of the most visible examples of how Alicia and her students confronted difference in the classroom: In the face of potentially divisive topics or even mundane cultural misunderstandings, Alicia and her students quickly changed the subject.

Importantly, some rhetorical retreats were more troubling than others, such as when Alicia left students' racist commentary unengaged or underestimated the confusion her Chinese students felt during their transitions to the US university. Each rhetorical retreat, though, revealed that the mainstream composition pedagogies informing Alicia's teaching left her and her students ill equipped to confront the challenges and conflicts emerging in their changing institution. Significantly, this occurred because pedagogies that, like Alicia's, place student difference at the core of the writing classroom still presume that students have a shared vocabulary to navigate the discomfort and uncertainties of difference. Linda Brodkey and her colleagues' "Writing across Difference" syllabus, for instance, proposed that courses use "court opinions in antidiscrimination cases in education and employment to teach argumentation" (212). Similarly, Barlow's students read academic essays, congressional hearings, and pop-culture artifacts, and he discusses at length an assignment focused on "explicitly racialist song lyrics" by the "Black Power-inspired" group dead prez (425). Such pedagogies require a shared language and knowledge of the US's fraught racial past and present—and even US popular culture—a knowledge not all of Alicia's students possessed, as I make clear below. Moreover, Brodkey's and Barlow's pedagogies, given their focus on US racial history, cannot register the complexity of campus conflicts like those featured in this chapter's introduction, which reflect anxieties about access to US higher education in a moment of increased global economic competition. In general, then, the rhetorical retreats so common in Alicia's classroom betray a pedagogical incapacity to grapple with the proliferation of linguistic and cultural differences in US writing classrooms and on profoundly altered campuses.

One class session focused on satire near the semester's conclusion makes especially clear how writing classrooms that expect shared cultural knowledge can falter in such shifting

institutional contexts. As when Ling read his satire, Alicia and her students—domestic and international alike—retreated from moments that highlighted the cultural instability of their classroom and campus, moments that called into question the assumption that all students were equal participants in the culture of collaboration that so struck me in Alicia's classroom. In the final week of the fall semester, and having already submitted their major course research essays, Alicia shifted her student's attention from the academic genres they had studied and composed all semester and toward what she described as "public argument." While another class meeting during this unit focused on visual rhetoric, Alicia admitted to her students that she wanted to devote an entire class to satire because it was one of her favorite genres. Alicia and her students began class that day by viewing a video from the *Onion* titled "Are Tests Biased Against Students Who Don't Give a Shit?" Featuring a crew of faux-cable news pundits discussing research findings that standardized tests disadvantage unmotivated students, the video seemed to spoof studies that point to the discriminatory nature of standardized tests and the media response to such research. As Alicia introduced the video, she asked students what they knew about the *Onion*, and Ling responded, "It's a website, it's a media which provides a lot of funny news which is not real." Despite their laughter while viewing the video, Alicia's students had difficulty articulating the video's purpose and the specific critique it offered. For example, Mark, a domestic student from a western Chicago suburb, struggled to divorce the video's surface argument—that standardized tests are wrong for testing disinterested students on material they don't know—from whatever social critique it offered. "I don't even know," he said. "It's the complete opposite, what they're actually saying, like how we need to attend more to the people who don't even care about, but it's like no, people actually need to start caring. I don't know."

Moments like this emerged repeatedly during this class session as Alicia's students tried to tease out the critiques embedded in the satires they had read, which included an *Onion* piece titled "Gorilla Sales Skyrocket After Latest Gorilla Attack" and Swift's "A Modest Proposal." Importantly, comments like Mark's make clear how satire generates the same kinds of complexity that Barlow values in classroom conversations on race. However, the difficulty Alicia's students encountered as they discussed satire—and the rhetorical retreats that such difficulties precipitated—also demonstrate that classrooms focused on culturally-sensitive material can marginalize students, often by casting their differences as personal deficiencies. During their class discussion, Alicia shared multiple times that satire was one of her favorite genres, saying that she valued the genre for the process of "defamiliarization" it enacted on readers. "The term that could be used in relation to this is […] defamiliarization," Alicia said, standing at the center of the class's half circle of desks. "It takes something familiar and makes it unfamiliar, it strikes you in a new way […] I think that's a good term to keep in mind when you're thinking about satire." Moments of defamiliarization emerged repeatedly during this class meeting: Domestic and international students alike discussed how the day's readings unsettled common perspectives about the issues satirized in the *Onion* and Swift texts.

For instance, Alicia's domestic students spoke at length about how the *Onion* piece on gorilla attacks, through defamiliarization, tried to highlight the irrationality of the gun control debate. Mark, for example, pointed out how the article made laughable the common assertion that increasing gun ownership can stem gun violence, pointing to a quote from a gorilla owner in the article that read, "It just gives me peace of mind knowing that if I'm ever in that situation, I won't have to just watch helplessly as my torso is ripped in half and my face is chewed off. I'll be able to use my gorilla to defend myself." While students like Adam found the article

humorous, such politically-controversial and culturally-sensitive material provided grounds for conflict, confusion, and rhetorical retreat. For instance, Daniela, the Puerto Rican student from Chicago, reacted negatively to what she described as the article's trivialization of violence. "The gun issue is very serious in the US because there's lots of deaths from it. What are their solutions to it? I don't think it's something worth making fun of cause it's very serious," Daniela objected, almost sounding on the verge of tears. "There's always room for humor but what are the solutions to be dealt with that?" Alicia seemed uncertain how to address Daniela's remarks, saying, "We're going to talk about that a little more. Does anyone have an initial reaction?" Annie, a female domestic student from Chicago's suburbs, responded that she didn't believe the authors were trying to downplay the severity of US gun violence but were instead trying to underscore perspectives on gun rights that enabled such violence. Alicia added that one of the risks of satire was offending audiences by focusing on sensitive political issues, again deflecting Daniela's concerns by saying, "We'll get to that more in a little bit." Daniela again voiced her frustration, though: "It's like quit it, just cut the bullcrap and get to the point. I like the article. I was just getting off topic." Alicia responded, "We're gonna get there in just a bit." Both Alicia and Daniela ultimately retreated from Daniela's initial critique, Alicia saying three times they would address Daniela's concerns later and Daniela backing off from her original objection.

The conflicts accompanying defamiliarization occurred also, though, as the Chinese students enrolled in the course disrupted the assumption of shared cultural knowledge necessary for conversation about such a controversial political issue. Again, such moments of defamiliarization were elided during the discussion through rhetorical retreat, and, like Ling's tempered satire, such retreats placed the burden of cultural difference on Chinese undergraduates in ways that delegitimized their experiences of classroom exclusion. These moments of

classroom defamiliarization occurred most visibly as the class discussed the same *Onion* piece that drew Daniela's criticism. Throughout much of the conversation, Alicia's Chinese students were quiet, including Ling, who participated in class discussions more than his Chinese conationals and even some of his domestic counterparts. In response to a discussion question about the text's audience, though, Trent, a Chinese engineering major, shed light on both the article's purpose and the marginalizing potential of classrooms centered on such culturally-sensitive material. The audience, Trent said, was "any US citizen familiar with this topic, because it didn't occur to me about the gun control first time." A few moments later, Trent added the piece's audience "must know about the gun control debate beforehand." Trent's comments prompted two of his Chinese peers to share their initial confusion about the article, underscoring the shared cultural knowledge necessary for understanding satire. Mandy, whose major was accountancy, confessed to her classmates, "I thought they were really selling gorillas," while Lifen, another Chinese undergraduate, laughingly added, "I did think of the gun control debate but the first thought I had is, 'What, there are gorillas?'"

Following Lifen's comments, Tara, one of the domestic students, added that she had felt similar confusion reading "A Modest Proposal," prompting a brief discussion of the individual struggles of reading satire if one is not familiar with the issue being critiqued. Agreeing with Tara, Alicia shifted the conversation to Swift's "A Modest Proposal" and the personal challenges of reading satires from distant cultural and historical contexts. Like Ling's critique of the university, which placed the burden of international student integration on his Chinese peers, Tara and Alicia's shift to the personal sources of cultural misunderstandings located Trent's, Mandy's, and Lifen's difficulties in their own cultural differences—not the classroom's expectation of shared cultural knowledge. That the Chinese undergraduates enrolled in Alicia's

class found elements of the classroom to be culturally distant is itself unsurprising. After all, the 2009 "CCCC Statement on Second Language Writing and Writers" urges instructors to "avoid topics that require substantial background knowledge that is related to a specific culture or history that is not being covered by the course," noting the difficulties such assignments can pose for students from different language and cultural backgrounds (12). More concerning, though, is that Alicia and her students—including Ling and his Chinese conationals—framed such cultural unfamiliarity as a personal obstacle to be overcome in order to gain insight to the texts at the center of that day's discussion. Casting student difference as a personal challenge has a number of undesirable consequences, most troublingly evoking assimilationist models of writing instruction that see difference as deficit and urge students toward academic assimilation—even as Ruby's and Yusheng's stories in the previous chapter suggest the impossibility of such assimilation.

"There's like a lot of minorities and like Asian students and other nationalities"

Alicia and her students deemphasized conflict and difference in subtle ways during each class session, not only as they discussed culturally-charged genres like satire. For instance, during lessons on academic style in three separate class sessions, Alicia framed her international students' adjustments to US academic writing as inevitable in ways that obscured the conflicts accompanying such transitions (see Lu, "Professing" 449). During each of these conversations, Ling was quick to point out the differences between the writing styles valued in his Chinese secondary school and in Alicia's course, and, in one of the final course meetings, Ling was surprised to hear Alicia say that US teachers prefer active voice. "Actually, passive voice is highly recommended in China, cause it seems that all the teachers seem to be, just like I said,

more objective, and we take it as an advantage that we can, you know, avoid the subject of the action," he explained. Alicia paused, seeming as unprepared for Ling's comments as she had been for Daniela's objection to the *Onion* article on gun control. Again characterizing cultural dissonance as personal in nature, Alicia responded, "Was that kind of a difficult adjustment?" Ling paused, seeming surprised that Alicia did not engage his observations further. He stuttered a response—"I guess"—and Alicia quickly moved to the next activity. In this moment, Ling again introduces cultural differences unanticipated by Alicia and by courses in her first-year writing program more generally. And again, in this moment, Alicia retreats from those differences and instead frames such cultural dissonance as a personal hurdle during a process of adjustment to academic culture.

Rhetorical retreats were most visible in Alicia's classroom when her Chinese students were actively and visibly negotiating the tensions they experienced as outsiders to the US culture of schooling their classmates and Alicia were embedded in. Yet, as Daniela's criticisms made clear in the class's discussion about the *Onion* piece on gun control, such retreats emerged elsewhere in the class as a routine strategy for negotiating tension and difference. Most troubling was when such retreats occurred in response to students' implicit racism during discussions of their peers' research projects. Again, Alicia encouraged her students early in the term to focus their course research on visible issues at Illinois, and, as a result, many students chose research topics close to their own experiences of race and diversity on campus. Ling, Trent, and Mandy, for instance, all wrote about Chinese student segregation on campus. Mark, the domestic student from Chicago's western suburbs, wrote about the university's poor mental health support infrastructure after witnessing a peer struggle with mental illness throughout the semester, while another wrote about sexism in science disciplines on campus. In discussing such issues, Alicia's

students routinely skirted their peers' more explicit institutional critiques, again delegitimizing the experiences of difference that pedagogies like Brodkey's and Lu's set out to affirm.

For instance, during a class discussion of Annie's essay—a Jewish student whose research focused on anti-Semitism in the Greek system—her peers questioned the experiences of marginalization she detailed in her essay but then immediately retreated from their skepticism. As Alicia's students neared the deadline for their final essay, Alicia had shifted from the small peer review groups she had used all semester to a workshop approach. Prior to each class, students would read four of their peers' essays at home, write feedback, and discuss their peers' writing as an entire class. Annie's essay focused on the implicit expectation in fraternities and sororities that members are from Christian backgrounds and the sometimes-overt forms of exclusion Jewish pledges and members face. Much of the class's discussion during Annie's workshop focused on the technical dimensions of her essay, and, in the few moments that Annie's peers engaged her essay's content, they expressed disbelief about the extent of anti-Semitism on campus but quickly reverted the class's attention to more structural concerns. Two students, for instance, wondered whether Annie needed to provide more vivid proof of discrimination against Jewish students on campus. Kendra, a domestic student, praised the exigence of a topic like Annie's that focused on campus discrimination. Yet, she also marshaled the classroom's language of argumentation and evidence to question Annie's claims about the campus exclusion of Jewish students. "Your personal experiences really add to it," Kendra commented, "but one of the things I noted was that in the first paragraph you say that *many* students look at Jewish people differently. I think that's an overstatement. You should say *some*." Another peer, herself also involved in the campus's Greek system, suggested that Annie focus on more overt forms of discrimination or her essay would risk not appearing exigent. In

moments like this, rhetorical retreat helped Alicia's students to pivot from tense moments when they called into question peers' experiences of marginalization. More significantly, as Kendra and others in such moments questioned the realities of campus discrimination, they marginalized the very perspectives and experiences that classroom approaches like Alicia's were designed to include.

One moment in particular reveals the connection of the rhetorical retreats in Alicia's classroom to the altered institutional contexts that she and her students daily negotiated. During a full-class workshop of an essay by a domestic student named Tara—this one about the university's poor biking infrastructure—Alicia questioned Tara's assumption that non-native English speakers are too often unaware of the rules of the road. Many bicycling accidents on campus, Tara commented to her classmates during the workshop, were caused "cause there's like a lot of minorities and like Asian students and other nationalities" attending the university, uninformed drivers who she said create unsafe conditions for cyclists. Tara's comments here are uncannily similar to the racist commentary that often appears in threads on the campus Reddit page and other online forums. As one Reddit user stated on a thread about why so many domestic students disparage international students for owning luxury autos, "because they're foreign and used to living in large cities (Beijing) most of them can't drive for shit. Incorrect turn signals, no clue how crosswalks work, not using lights at night. I've seen all of it" ("Genuinely Curious"). In her response to Tara's similar comments, Alicia briefly discouraged such arguments for their logical leaps rather than for their racist assumptions. "It's not necessarily that they are just unaware," Alicia responded. "You don't know how many of these are like bilingual." In this moment, when Tara brought into the classroom racist stereotypes about Asian drivers, Alicia characteristically retreated. Moreover, as was the case in almost every other

rhetorical retreat in her classroom, Alicia in this moment framed hostility toward international students as an individual logical lapse rather than as evidence of unfolding tensions as more international students attend Illinois than ever before. Here and elsewhere, rhetorical retreat removed opportunities to grapple with the emerging tensions and differences present in Alicia's classroom, despite that composition scholars have routinely seen addressing such conflicts as an ethical imperative.[37] More troublingly, such retreats in many cases allowed some students to refuse engagement with emergent campus tensions while simultaneously demanding the assimilation of others, as when Ling placed the burden of Chinese segregation on Chinese students themselves or when Alicia and Tara framed the Chinese students' confusion during satire day as a common experience when reading that genre.

Conclusion: Rhetorical Retreat and Diversity in the International University

In Alicia's classroom, she and her students daily confronted their changing university. While they most obviously negotiated an altered demographic context, their classroom was likewise impacted by wider institutional shifts. For instance, the course's semester-long research project, which encouraged students to conduct their own archival and ethnographic studies of campus issues, often brought challenges emerging from wider changes on campus directly into the classroom, including tensions that have triggered hostility toward international students. Moreover, the very infrastructure of Alicia's classroom, as well as her own status as a graduate employee, signified both the university's ever-growing reliance on contingent labor and the marginal space afforded to humanities disciplines. That Alicia's class was peripheral on her

[37] Multicultural pedagogies like those advocated by scholars like Brodkey, Lu, and Barlow have generated a body of composition research that considers how to best confront the tensions that emerge in classrooms centered on difference. Virginia Anderson and Jennifer Trainor, for instance, have both framed student resistance and racism as rhetorical phenomena that require that instructors "think more carefully about audience, applying what both rhetorical and postmodern theory tell us about effective rhetorical choices" (Anderson 199). For Anderson and Trainor, instructors must cease casting students' troubling politics as logical and knowledge deficits and instead engage the unarticulated assumptions informing such perspectives (Anderson 210-11) and the ways that the institutional lives of our schools bolster racist logics (Trainor 3).

campus cannot be stressed enough: Humanities departments are funded less than their counterparts in the Colleges of Engineering and Business, with their corporate partnerships and more expensive tuition, and many faculty and students in STEM fields promote a hierarchy of disciplines on the campus. Saba Imran, a sophomore engineering student, captured such attitudes in her *Daily Illini* article about the value of humanities disciplines: "There's a thriving sense of superiority that pulses throughout our engineering department at the University, hinged on high salaries and large tech companies influencing the way we live today." Moreover, the campus infrastructure makes visible funding priorities at Illinois that disadvantage the humanities. Significantly, such changes and tensions are not unique to Illinois, clear in the proliferation of articles and books about the international and corporate shifts shaping campus life throughout the US (e.g. Altbach, Bok, Slaughter and Rhoads, Tuchman).

Alicia and her students thus negotiate challenges increasingly present in composition classrooms nationally, providing an opportunity to study not only the impact of growing multilingual populations on writing instruction but also the effect of universities' corporate turns. The rhetorical retreats common as Alicia and her students navigated even seemingly insignificant conflicts are particularly telling for composition scholars and instructors. In particular, these retreats in Alicia's classroom silenced difference, often in ways that framed difference as a personal barrier that needs to be overcome for fuller participation in the classroom and wider academic community. These retreats are especially troubling given that Alicia's classroom mirrored popular writing pedagogies both in and beyond her particular first-year writing program that tout classroom encounters with difference as generative for a number of reasons: Focusing on students' experiences of difference is thought to afford classroom space for identities and languages historically excluded from the academy (see Bartholomae, "The Tidy"; Lu,

"Professing"). Moreover, others have claimed that such classrooms can provide opportunities to grapple with complexity—an ability needed for academic inquiry across the disciplines—and perhaps help students develop more ethical stances toward cultural and racial others (e.g. Barlow, Brodkey). The retreats that occurred in each of Alicia's class meetings impeded such pedagogical goals, removing the very opportunities to grapple with difference such approaches are thought to promote. More troublingly, these rhetorical retreats often framed difference as a personally-felt barrier, one that students must overcome or negotiate on their own if they wish to be recognized by the campus community. For a student like Annie, this means shouldering the burden of proof of campus anti-Semitism in order for peers to legitimize her experiences, while Chinese undergraduates must shed their language and cultural differences if they wish to not occupy a marginal campus space.

In the rest of this chapter's conclusion, I want to consider how Alicia and her students' retreats from difference, in removing conflict from the classroom, can also support troubling institutional trends embodied in the quote from Illinois Vice Provost Charles Tucker. As I indicated above, the rhetorical retreats so routine in Alicia's class were, to me, imperceptible until Ling retreated from the critiques he made in his satire on the last day of class. After that, as I was transcribing previous class sessions and reviewing fieldnotes, I became attuned to the frequency with which Alicia and her students deemphasized and avoided conflict. That Alicia's classroom on the surface appeared collaborative and inclusive despite hers and her students' rhetorical retreats reveals the danger of importing pedagogical common sense into our rapidly changing classrooms. That is, even as Alicia's classroom was during my observations one I wanted to emulate in my own teaching—and even as Chinese undergraduates like Ling and Anita praised Alicia's teaching during interviews—she and her students evaded difference in

ways that framed student difference as deficit, distancing students from a campus mainstream that even whites like Slivovsky see as slipping out of reach. In this way, Alicia's class marginalized student difference in ways that maintained an increasingly tenuous white ownership of US higher education, all while cultivating an image of her classroom as inclusive and supportive. Significantly, this illusion of inclusivity was maintained in Alicia's classroom by peer review exercises that empowered Chinese undergraduates to participate and an approach to research that deemed experiences of difference worthy of serious study (see Kynard, "Getting" 136).

In doing so, Alicia's classroom—with its enviable levels of student participation and recurring conversations about campus exclusion—became not unlike the images of diversity that Tucker evokes in the comments that opened this chapter. As Prendergast and Abelmann have observed, higher education institutions increasingly cultivate images of a "familial, conflict-free university," one that "offers not only a secure, regulated environment but also a safely 'diverse' environment that will both enrich students' educational experiences and proffer advantage in the labor market" (41). As Alicia and her students minimized conflict, they sustained such images of collaboration and collegiality, even as they cast students' cultural and linguistic differences as deficits that students must overcome personally in order to attain "academic citizenship" (Horner and Trimbur 620). Importantly, such images of inclusion bolster diversity discourses like Tucker's, which favor the diversity of those with significant financial resources while excluding others and provoking anxieties like Slivovsky's. This privileging of commodifiable diversity is evident also as diversity has become a powerful marketing tool for universities, whose leaders tout experiences with diversity as one of the keys to "improved job prospects for students in the competitive international economy" (Berrey 587). For Nancy Leong, such evocations of

diversity—in which whites attempt to gain social capital from proximity to non-whites—reduces non-whiteness to a "prized commodity" (2155), one "still measured by its worth to white people and predominantly white institutions" (2156).

Most significantly, though, such diversity discourses have also been charged with deflecting charges that four-year institutions are increasingly out of reach for the working class and communities of color, concerns validated by comments like Tucker's and the current budget crisis in Illinois: No state funds for higher education have been released for the 2015-16 academic year due to a budget standoff between Democrat lawmakers and Republic governor Bruce Rauner, who in February 2016 called for a twenty percent reduction in funding to colleges and universities (Mercer). As a result, institutions have had to fund need-based grants themselves, warning that they likely would be unable to continue offering such financial assistance if the state does not release funds owed to its colleges and universities. This situation has again raised concerns about access for low-income students to the state's public universities in a moment when the number of African American students attending the University of Illinois has fallen beneath benchmarks set during the civil rights era (Des Garennes). Middle-class students, worried that the state will be unable to fund promised scholarships, are also becoming concerned that attending Illinois's colleges and universities will become financially untenable (see Mercer).

While Alicia and her students' rhetorical retreats deemphasized and dismissed the differences her students brought into the classroom, then, they also helped to support a broader institutional discourse, one that disproportionately impacts some of the most vulnerable students on our campuses. For Chinese students like Ling, Trent, and Mandy, the rhetorical retreats common in Alicia's classroom attributed the cultural tensions they experienced on campus to

personally-felt differences that must be overcome if they wish to participate more fully in the campus community. For them, these retreats uphold the assimilationist ideologies that have long animated US writing instruction, ideologies that Arabella Lyon has likened to cultural colonialism (W232, see also Horner and Trimbur 607, Vieira 51). As the stories told by Ruby and Yusheng in the last chapter make clear, though, these students, as desired contributors of financial capital to US universities, are often also granted institutional access and privileges not afforded to other students of color, a reality difficult to ignore on the Illinois campus: During a time of unprecedented international enrollment at Illinois, the university has followed national trends for flagship campuses, enrolling less low-income and minority students as the number of out-of-state students rises (see Jaquette et. al. 29-30). The rhetorical retreats of Alicia's classroom thus not only bar international students from fuller participation in campus life; they also cultivate images of diversity that, like Tucker's, obscure how our campuses and classrooms continue to police the racial lines that have historically determined access to higher education in the US.

While Ruby's and Yusheng's narratives in the previous chapter make clear how writing classrooms can withhold Chinese undergraduates' educational goals, Alicia's classroom reveals how such marginalization occurs invisibly even as instructors actively make space for difference, sustaining damaging diversity ideologies in the process. In the next chapter, I consider the pedagogical implications of the marginalization described by students like Ruby and Yusheng and the rhetorical retreats of Alicia's classroom. There, I focus on one of Alicia's students in another first-year writing course she taught the same semester as I observed her class with Trent, Anita, and Ling. That student—who had recently transferred from a prestigious Chinese university—offers reflections on writing in English in both her Chinese university and at Illinois

that can aid writing instructors as they adapt longstanding practices to changing institutional conditions. Most significantly, I not only draw on that student's reflections to sketch pedagogy more attuned to the realities of corporatization and internationalization but to also reimagine our responsibilities to students who navigate increasingly fraught institutional spaces. How, for instance, can writing instructors enact pedagogy that removes some of the barriers Chinese undergraduates encounter in our classrooms? Moreover, how do we ensure that, as we strive to create more inclusive classrooms for international students, we resist complacency with diversity discourses that value certain forms of student difference over others? Perhaps most significantly, how do we help Chinese students contest their segregation without pressuring them to assimilate, and how can we help them become skeptical of the demand they feel to assimilate without deferring their educational goals in ways that reinforce their marginalization?

Chapter Four

Student-Consumers and Language Pedagogies: The Partial Institutional Agency of Chinese Undergraduates

When Feng applied to universities as a high school senior, he hoped that a US degree would give him a competitive edge in the globalized computer science job market. By his sophomore year at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, however, Feng was frustrated with his educational investment. Feng had decided to study in the US during his second year of high school, attracted by the flexibility of the US curriculum and his desire to avoid the *gaokao*—China's hypercompetitive university admission exam. "Your major is determined by your college entrance test," he told me. "I don't think that's fair because your major will go with you the rest of your life." As Feng decided which universities to apply to and eventually attend, he weighed which would best help him develop the skills and "diverse background" that he believed would be valued by future employers. He applied only to well-regarded computer science programs, and even two years later, he could still recall the rankings of the different universities he considered attending.

Despite his care during the admissions process, Feng was quickly disappointed with Illinois. He was especially disturbed by the campus's segregation and hostility toward international students, though he gradually accepted that he would have minimal contact with domestic peers because they "have a different cultural background." Feng was likewise dissatisfied with his general education courses, which he believed should be more rigorous and include more reading. For instance, while he appreciated that his writing course expanded his critical thinking—and was relieved that his instructor seemed unconcerned about grammatical correctness—his self-sponsored reading of Thoreau's *Walden* and other difficult books as he prepared for the TOEFL and SAT had persuaded him that reading could provide valuable

linguistic and cultural knowledge. Yet, despite these disappointments—his concerns about segregation and the quality of his courses—Feng still praised his instructors and writing tutors, who he said were always readily available to assist with the challenges he encountered as a multilingual international student. "The people here are just nice," he said. "If in their inner part they don't like you, they act like they are friendly."

Throughout "Dreams and Disappointments," I have studied how Chinese undergraduates like Feng come to see their US educations as an investment with diminishing returns, often as they encounter messages in their writing classrooms about their cultural and linguistic differences. In this chapter, I study how, despite such challenges, Chinese undergraduates like Feng embrace their status as consumers of US higher education to secure what benefits they can from their educational investments, complicating narratives in composition studies about the institutional agency available to multilingual students. As Feng's narrative demonstrates, attending a US university forces Chinese undergraduates to become savvy consumers in a global higher education market, unsurprising given the high cost of a US degree for international students.[38] Feng's status as a client of US education is evident in his careful selection of what university to attend and his evaluation of whether the university has returned on his investment—and as he proactively seeks assistance from instructors and staff, who he describes in terms that evoke polite but potentially-begrudged customer service employees. As Feng and his Chinese conationals evoke a consumer ethos to pursue their educational goals, they secure institutional resources typically unavailable to basic and multilingual writers, even as they continue to experience segregation along familiar racial lines. I argue that these students reveal spaces of

[38] International students attending US universities pay higher tuition than their domestic, in-state counterparts, especially at public institutions. On the Illinois campus, for instance, international students' tuition can range anywhere from $10,000 to $17,000 more than tuition for an in-state student, not including additional international student fees ("2015-16").

exception (see Ong, *Neoliberalism* 6-7) from the deficit ideologies of language difference that have historically maintained white educational privileges (see Horner and Trimbur 608-10; Prendergast, *Literacy* 7-8). Troublingly, though, when considered in tension with the hostility that African Americans and other students of color continually face at predominantly-white institutions (Kynard, "Teaching" 3; Mangelsdorf 120-1), Chinese undergraduates make clear that non-white students are differentially valued at US universities—and that the student groups excepted from racial exclusion are those who contribute financial resources and diversity to our corporate and image-conscious institutions.[39]

By examining Chinese undergraduates' consumer relationship to campus resources, in this chapter I contribute to research that has studied how composition's tacit policy of "unidirectional monolingualism" (Horner and Trimbur 596-7) uses language "as a proxy to discriminate on the basis of race, citizenship status, and ethnicity" (Horner et. al. 309). Specifically, I contend that, as they secure campus resources historically out of reach for domestic minorities, Chinese undergraduates challenge the narratives of student disempowerment and invisibility composition scholars have forged about multilingual writers (see Lamos, "Minority" 4-6; Matsuda, "Myth" 638). As I have argued throughout this dissertation, if we do not attend to such shifts in how our students navigate our globalizing campuses, we risk creating classrooms that suppress student difference even as growing numbers of our students are multilingual. This is clear as Feng describes a writing classroom that appears sensitive to student difference but ultimately reinforces his isolation on campus and refuses the

[39] In making these arguments, my goal is not to imply that Chinese undergraduates only navigate our classrooms as consumers, and the case study I turn to later in this chapter makes especially clear the complex goals that these students bring to their learning. Moreover, I do not necessarily endorse these students' use of the language of the market to describe their relationship to the university, even as I draw on that language in this chapter because of its ubiquity in interviews with Chinese undergraduates. Yet, I do recognize that, for students like Feng, emphasizing their consumer agency can be a way to secure institutional recognition and resources amidst conditions of segregation, even as such language reduces teaching and learning to a "commercial transaction" (Naidoo and Jamieson 272).

"diverse background" he desires. In other words, the writing classroom enacts a "policy of linguistic containment" not by isolating multilingual writers in special writing courses (see Matsuda, "The Myth" 641-2) but by eliminating opportunities for students to productively struggle over cultural differences.

Most significantly, though, I contend in this chapter that, as students like Feng navigate campuses on which they are valued consumers and racially segregated, they offer a vantage point from which composition scholars and instructors can begin to imagine pedagogy that resists campus corporatization and student segregation. Specifically, I argue that, because they are positioned squarely within the rapid corporatization of our campuses and familiar US racial discourses, their stories of segregation reveal broader shifts in how institutional access and belonging are made available to students of color on our globalizing campuses. Consequently, their reflections enable composition scholars and instructors to envision pedagogical alternatives that not only contest these students' segregation but also trouble the continued hostility faced by domestic students of color. In particular, in this chapter I point to an often-neglected dimension of writing instruction—language use and vocabulary—as one way that instructors might foster the cultural and linguistic encounters that Chinese students routinely described as missing from their US educations, often in ways that they believed reinforced their campus segregation. Importantly, I argue that, by placing language at the center of our classrooms, we can not only better support these students but also begin to grapple with conflicts like those that emerged in Alicia's classroom.

To make these arguments, I first detail how Chinese undergraduates' positions within the corporate and international university enable us to imagine alternatives to classroom challenges like those Feng describes, given these students' status as racial intermediaries (see Koshy 155)

and that their educational trajectories are shaped perhaps more than any other group by forces transforming the campus experiences of all students. The rest of this chapter then examines how one of my research participants, Jingfei, claims consumer agency to access campus resources that enable her to secure at least partial returns on her educational investment. Importantly, Jingfei, who I met at the campus writing center, was enrolled in another section of first-year writing taught by Alicia during the same semester that I was observing her class. Jingfei's reflections on Alicia's classroom and her campus experiences more generally, I contend, begin to yield classroom strategies that address challenges like those I studied throughout "Dreams and Disappointments." Specifically, I call for renewed attention to language in writing classrooms that have been shaped by composition's post-1970s movement from language pedagogies, sketching an approach that neither reduces writing instruction to formalism nor overlooks language as a site where students can struggle over cultural difference.

Chinese Undergraduates and Language Advocacy in the International University

Before I examine how Jingfei adopts a consumer ethos to secure returns on her educational investment, I first discuss the central place of Chinese undergraduates within campus internationalization and corporatization—and their place within campus racial politics more generally. Again, described by Philip Altbach as an inevitable force with which higher education must "constructively cope" (7), internationalization has transformed the contexts in which college writing instruction occurs: Multilingual international students now enroll in US composition classrooms in greater numbers than ever before, and writing programs are increasingly connected to revenue-generating corporatization initiatives like the establishment of overseas branch campuses.[40] Chinese students at US universities have been positioned at the

[40] As Aihwa Ong notes, US universities have opened branch campuses in East Asia in response to the demand for western business and technical training by "overseas elites, who seek to accumulate world-class degrees that will

center of such institutional transformations. On the Illinois campus, for instance, they are part of an international student population that in 2013-14 contributed $166 million to the Urbana-Champaign campus budget during a time of declining state support.[41] It is no surprise, then, that the university has deliberately recruited and enrolled Chinese undergraduates: The Urbana-Champaign campus opened an office in Shanghai in 2013, hired the first-ever Director of International Student Integration in 2013, began holding orientations in three major Chinese cities in summer 2014, and now conducts a yearly "International Student Barometer Survey" to identify additional areas of student support. Importantly, the internationalization initiatives that have brought Chinese undergraduates to Illinois are not unique to research universities, clear as community colleges and liberal arts schools are also capitalizing on the Chinese demand for US higher education (Becker, Rubin).

Attractive as both agents of diversity and sources of revenue, Chinese undergraduates' educational trajectories are directly shaped by the US university's global and corporate turns, thus providing crucial insights for composition scholars and instructors striving to understand the impact of internationalization on their work. As Feng and his conationals make clear in interviews and in their course writing,[42] Chinese undergraduates are conscious that US

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open doors to international careers" (*Neoliberalism* 140). On campuses like New York University Shanghai, the desire to emulate the university's US curriculum has led to the development of a writing across the curriculum program that integrates writing into all general education courses ("Undergraduate" 76). Such programs raise the likelihood that some US composition scholars and instructors may find themselves teaching on foreign branch campuses, raising questions about the viability of composition's politically-inflected pedagogies in nations where such dialogue is typically suppressed.

[41] Between the 2002 and 2011 fiscal years, state support for the University of Illinois had fallen to $697 million from $804 million, and the state is regularly behind in its payments to the university. At the conclusion of the 2010 fiscal year, for instance, the state owed $500 million to the university (FY 2012 Budget Request). The dire financial situation of the university has only worsened under Illinois governor Bruce Rauner, who has proposed a $387 million funding reduction for higher education during the 2015-16 fiscal year (Public).

[42] In addition to collecting writing from the Chinese undergraduates I interviewed and who participated in the classrooms and writing groups I observed, I also collected student writing by Chinese undergraduates at Illinois available publicly on the Illinois Digital Environment for Access to Learning and Scholarship (IDEALS), a website on which Illinois faculty and students can upload their writing and research. In their class writing, Chinese undergraduates were routinely critical of the university's motives for increasing international student enrollment—

universities are motivated by their financial and competitive needs to meet the Chinese demand for western education. These students are also aware that their ability to access US higher education as contributors of valued tuition dollars stirs resentment among domestic students and state residents, who often evoke the University of Illinois's land-grant tradition to claim ownership to the state's educational resources (Abelmann, "The American").[43] Moreover, as part of an Asian racial group who has "been a critical conduit for and site of reconfiguration of racial identities" in the post-civil rights US (Koshy 155), their experiences reveal the complexities and contradictions of race and difference on campuses where student groups are increasingly valued for their financial power.[44] Because these students' educational trajectories are facilitated by and generative of campus internationalization, and because they are part of a population whose experiences reveal much about the reconfiguration of racial power more generally, they thus draw attention not only to the conflicted positions they inhabit on US campuses but also to how marginalized student groups more generally achieve or are distanced from institutional visibility and legitimacy.

As a group implicated in higher education's corporate turn and shifting campus race politics, then, these students' language-learning experiences are revealing as composition scholars continue a sixty-year tradition of advocacy for racial and linguistic minorities (see Wible, *Shaping* 9), complicating our accounts of how the unidirectional monolingualism of our

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and of the lack of support that the university offered to newly-arrived international students. As Alicia's student Ling commented in his research essay about campus orientations, such programs "are nothing more than some iconic events under the guise of diversity."

[43] In their analysis of press accounts of rising Chinese enrollment at US universities, Nancy Abelmann and Jiyeon Kang make clear that such concerns about the ownership of US educational resources and the academic capabilities of international students who consume such resources is not a unique phenomenon to Illinois (11-12).

[44] The Chinese international student populations now attending US universities undoubtedly have a different orientation to politics and citizenship than the Asian American groups at the center of Koshy's essay. Yet, as Asian American Studies scholars Claire Jean Kim and Yen Le Espiritu remind us, Asians of different nationalities, whether US citizens or not, are often viewed as a homogenous racial group (Espiritu 6, Kim 35). Despite the different experiences of international students and non-white domestic students, then, Chinese undergraduates often encounter similar racism on US campuses and thus can shed light on race and writing instruction in our corporate institutions.

classrooms "functions as a tool of racial exclusion" (Prendergast, *Literacy* 97). In particular, the consumer power of students like Jingfei suggests that the students composition scholars often imagine as the beneficiaries of their work can be in possession of more agency than we assume. For instance, international students are often portrayed in composition research as navigating US campuses where they are simultaneously exposed to US racism, marginalized by ideologies of language and literacy that elevate mainstream dialects, and trained to provide cheap labor for the global economy. Ruth Spack demonstrates this tendency in her call for writing instructors to remain vigilant against exacerbating discrimination along the lines of race, language, or immigration status in classrooms populated by foreign students (600; see also Kubota). Such assumptions about student difference also pervade basic writing research (e.g. Lamos, "Basic Writing" 37-40) and recent calls for a translingual paradigm (e.g. Canagarajah, *Translingual* 22; Horner et. al. 304; Lu and Horner 583). Of course, attention to linguistic minorities' disempowerment remains necessary, given the continued marginalization of students of color—and that international students have been historically present on US campuses as a result of efforts to secure US economic and political power (Kramer 781). Yet, the Chinese undergraduates I interviewed reveal the parallel dangers of ignoring students' privileges, no matter how partial. Specifically, Feng, Jingfei, and their Chinese conationals reveal that assuming student disempowerment can lead us to overlook the specific institutional spaces our students occupy, in the process creating classrooms that compound their marginalization. Moreover, though, as Jingfei's case study demonstrates, attention to these students' experiences—given their unique positions on our changing campuses and within US racial politics more generally—can enable us to generate pedagogy that contests the marginalization of language and racial minorities of varying backgrounds.

"I want to know how to express, I want to know how you say it"

My interview with Jingfei, a physics major who had recently transferred to Illinois from a prestigious Chinese university, reveals like Feng how Chinese undergraduates secure campus support as clients of US higher education. Like Feng and my other research participants, she also demonstrates that she is in many ways marginalized from her campus community. While Jingfei described experiences on campus similar to Feng and the other Chinese undergraduates I interviewed, she reflected at perhaps greater length than any other research participant on how her writing classroom reinforced her segregation. Her candidness as her interview unfolded was surprising, given that early in our conversation she seemed willing to talk only of her academic motivations for leaving one of China's most prestigious universities and her satisfaction with the academic opportunities available at Illinois. Although she discussed kind instructors and tutors and was relieved that her instructor did not penalize her grammar, she worried that she was not expanding her linguistic repertoire or developing knowledge of what vocabulary was appropriate for certain situations. "I want to know how to express, I want to know how you say it," she said, using as an example her uncertainty about the connotations of different words expressing anger. "We have not only dictionary but vocabulary books to tell you all these words express your anger. So, they are all the same meaning as angry, but to what extent? I want this class to teach me this." As Jingfei discussed such difficulties learning and using English—ones that she believed prevented her from forging stronger relationships with domestic peers—she pointed to the need for writing classrooms that foreground linguistic and cultural conflicts. More importantly, from her reflections emerge an agenda for writing instruction that I argue can help instructors more productively confront classroom contexts like those I studied in chapter three.

"Somewhere can make me grow"

As I noted above, Jingfei initially emphasized her professional and academic motives for pursuing a US degree, only gradually sharing her desire for personal growth. Prior to her transfer, Jingfei studied at a Chinese university considered to be competitive with US institutions, one that has an intensely selective acceptance rate of .01 to .5 percent (Wong).[45] In addition to attending such a highly regarded institution, Jingfei had also bypassed the infamous gaokao because she was a finalist in China's national high school physics competition. That Jingfei was offered a seat at one of China's most prestigious universities without sitting for the gaokao indicates her intelligence and talent. The test is for most students both unavoidable and competitive, blamed by many for increased student anxiety and even suicides (Roberts). Initially, when Jingfei disclosed that she had been exempted from the gaokao, I misunderstood and thought she was the highest-scoring participant in the physics contest nationally. Jingfei laughed, demonstrating her awareness of the US academic hierarchy: "If I am the first, I would be in MIT. No offense." Despite her academic achievements, she decided that she wanted to complete her undergraduate in the US and spent her second year at university preparing for the SAT and TOEFL. In her estimation, studying in the US would bring a variety of academic benefits. In particular, Jingfei disliked that she could not choose or change her major in China, and even though she had been enrolled in a closely related field, she wished to major in physics.

Perhaps most important, Jingfei believed that completing a US undergraduate degree would make her a stronger applicant when applying to US graduate programs, and she selected what US institution to attend with that goal in mind. During the admissions process, she paid

[45] As Edward Wong notes, China's prestigious universities do not release specific acceptance rates. Yet, the acceptance rates he offers in his *New York Times* article, and which I quote here, have circulated heavily in Chinese media. At any rate, the Chinese students I interviewed routinely discussed the competitiveness of China's prestigious universities, a phenomenon Nancy Ablemann has also observed in her ethnographic research of Chinese undergraduates studying at the University of Illinois.

close attention to universities' academic rankings and consulted with professors at her university, who she said were knowledgeable about different US institutions' strengths and weaknesses. When she began receiving acceptance letters, she said she had to "do all those work again to decide which one." As Jingfei discussed her goals for studying in the US and her experiences of the application process, she took care to emphasize her professional and academic motivations. Yet, the cultural benefits she associated with a US degree began to emerge, albeit slowly, as she discussed her investment in the US university's promise of personal development (see Abelmann, *The Intimate* 6). "This country is the superpower," she said. "I don't want to go somewhere that's really quiet, it's comfortable. I want somewhere can make me grow. It can move really fast so I can run there, but not a place so quiet everyone's enjoying their life but not moving forward." That Jingfei sought not only academic growth but also exposure to cultural difference was evident when she indicated that she didn't want to come to the US for the first time as a graduate student. The Chinese graduate students she knew "spend a lot of time in the research, but they didn't get a lot of connection to the US society," and Jingfei wished to "try to experience the American culture." This desire for personal, cultural, and intellectual growth became especially clear when she discussed the writing instruction she received at the university, documenting her course's usefulness but also gradually revealing her disappointments.

"As long as I ask, people like you just come to help me"

Where Jingfei's overall motivations for studying in the US reveal her desire for professional and cultural self-development, her experiences on campus, especially those related to language and literacy, reveal the competing and sometimes contradictory positions made available to her as she pursues those goals. Most significantly, Jingfei's story troubles narratives

within composition about the rhetorical spaces available in universities for linguistic and racial minorities, evident as she refuses the outsider status offered to Asian Americans (Abelmann, *The Intimate* 158-9; Hoang W403-5) and other non-whites. In particular, Jingfei claims institutional resources that universities have historically withheld from linguistic and racial minorities by emphasizing her position as a consumer of higher education. Jingfei's discussion and assessment of the various services available to her reveals that she navigates the university as a savvy consumer of institutional resources, a position that enables her to secure support but one that ultimately leaves many areas of campus life inaccessible: When coupled with Jingfei's marginalization on campus, which I detail in the next section, her ability to access various literacy resources suggests a university in which students are provided services to maintain their consumer satisfaction (see Tuchman 149), even as participation in wider campus life remains out of reach. Importantly, the link between Jingfei's resistance of deficit ideologies and her consumer positionality suggests that the work of composition instructors and scholars can maintain the illusion of a welcoming and diverse campus even as writing classrooms leave unchallenged rigid notions of difference that maintain student segregation.

In many ways, the attitudes toward language and the forms of support that Jingfei encountered at Illinois were surprising to her, conflicting with her expectations for writing instruction formed in China. Her English writing course in China, instructed by a native-English speaker from the US, led her to expect that her US composition course would focus on grammatical instruction, reflecting the worldwide spread of monolingual ideologies via the English-instruction industry (Canagarajah, *Resisting* 83; Lu, "An Essay" 20) and the tendency in China for English to be taught as "a neutral, objective technology governed by mechanical rule" (You 136). To Jingfei's surprise and relief, her writing course in the US focused little on

grammar. Instead, her instructor persuaded her that, “It’s not how I speak or how I put the language, put the words together matters, but how I think matters more.” Later, Jingfei added that she learned in her writing class, “I can use child English to write my essay, but I have to express my meaning clearly […] I think that the idea matters more than the language.” While Jingfei welcomed this deemphasis of language, she still maintained that language instruction had value, even if its place was not in the writing classroom. Instead, she sought language instruction through her visits to the writing center and her instructor’s office hours. Outside the classroom, Jingfei similarly reported encountering little concern about her language differences, finding that her domestic peers and instructors were willing to struggle over meaning with her. As she discussed her experiences communicating with native-English speakers, she laughed, saying, “It’s fine, I just. When I don’t understand, I just go, ‘What?’ again and again. ‘Pardon me?’ again and again.”

That Jingfei accessed language assistance as a client of US education became especially clear as she discussed her visits to the writing center and instructor office hours. Although Jingfei was relieved that her writing instructor did not assess grammar and vocabulary, she still desired and sought that kind of instruction, saying, “I thanked her a lot by not grading on my grammars. But I want to improve my grammar and vocabulary, so that’s what I do when I meet with her or with the [writing center]. I would require her or the [writing center] to help me correct the grammar and tell me the vocabulary is wrong.” Here, Jingfei exhibits control over her language learning both in and outside contexts of formal instruction, especially evident in her discussion of the specific writing center services she utilizes. Jingfei first became aware of the writing center at one of the many orientations she attended during her first semester, even though she said her Chinese peers often saw orientations as a “waste of time.” When Jingfei first learned

about the writing center, she thought, "The [writing center] is exactly what I need." By the middle of her first semester, Jingfei had used the center's tutorial services and had participated in its writing groups for international students, which were developed to accommodate the university's expanding multilingual student population and focused on conventions of US academic writing. For instance, Jingfei's writing group, which met over four weeks, began each session with a presentation on topics varying from organization and thesis statements to brevity. After the presentation, the participants were urged to work in pairs while the group leader circulated and answered questions, though they often ignored the leader's instructions to collaborate and worked alone instead. To Jingfei, the group provided a useful introduction to US academic writing, but she disliked that they had to compete for the leader's attention in the second half of each session. "I personally prefer the presentation, because that's why I come to the group instead of the one-to-one individual meeting. Every time we work on our own, I just think, 'Why don't I just have a one-to-one appointment? I want to learn something.'" Jingfei's work to claim institutional resources and recognition was not limited to official campus services, clear as she repeatedly referenced her comfort asking even passersby on the street for assistance: "I sometimes just randomly pick someone on the street and say, 'Sorry, I don't know about something. Can you help me?' 'Yes, I would love to!'"

As Jingfei narrates her experiences of the various resources available to her—chronicling her desire to take advantage of each orientation, her belief that the writing center and her instructor should help facilitate personal language goals, her evaluation of the various services she utilizes, and her willingness to ask strangers for assistance—she describes a university in which she can marshal institutional support for her language-learning and other needs. More specifically, Jingfei claims institutional resources and resists the deficit discourses that have

historically placed such resources out of reach for multilingual and non-white students, seeing her linguistic difference as a source not of disempowerment but as a means of recognition. For Jingfei, the university is receptive to such requests, coloring her overall evaluation of the campus: "That's the best part I love here," she said, "because everyone's just trying to be helpful. And as long as I ask, people like you just come to help me." Jingfei's use of and attitudes toward institutional resources reveal a shift in how students' racial and language differences function on campuses to determine institutional belonging. Despite the marginalization Jingfei feels from mainstream campus life, she claims resources and feels that the university is receptive of her demands. In doing so, she invites composition scholars to reconsider the narratives of marginalization they have typically forged about linguistically and racially different students: She describes not a hostile university but one that at least somewhat meets the educational goals of its international students.

In emphasizing Jingfei's ability to obtain institutional support, I do not intend to minimize the exclusion that Chinese students specifically and students of color more generally encounter daily on campuses, evident in widespread concerns about the language proficiency of both domestic minorities and international students (see Abelmann and Kang 2-3, Marback). In fact, I next examine Jingfei's segregation on campus, pointing to how the agency she wields exists on a campus that remains in many ways impenetrable for linguistic and racial minorities. Yet, I emphasize here Jingfei's ability to secure resources as a client of US education to draw attention to the impact of university internationalization on college writing instruction, which simultaneously welcomes student difference even as the university as a whole protects white economic and political privileges (see Prendergast and Abelmann 39). Moreover, because Jingfei is studying at a large research university—the type of institution that sets trends followed by

universities and colleges of all tiers (see Bok 14, Tuchman 54-6)—and because she is part of a student population increasingly recruited to US universities of all types, her experiences reveal shifting attitudes toward difference in higher education that are likely to become more common as institutions of all levels are compelled by corporatization and internationalization to enroll students from outside the US. Troublingly, as I argue in the next section, the composition classroom can support this uneven and partial distribution of campus resources and belonging, suppressing opportunities to grapple with and struggle over notions of cultural and linguistic difference that naturalize student segregation.

"I don't know if I'm writing English or real English"

Despite her satisfaction with the academic opportunities and institutional support available to her, Jingfei was uncertain about her place in the wider university community, and her experiences learning and using English reinforced the distance she felt from her domestic classmates. As Jingfei described her marginalization on campus—and how her writing instruction withheld linguistic and cultural knowledge that she felt could help her engage with domestic peers—the conflicted positionality made available to her by the internationalizing university came more squarely into view: Jingfei subscribed to a liberal imaginary of US education in which the university provides the keys to financial, intellectual, and social self-actualization. Jingfei also found that the university is generally accommodating of that pursuit, and she encountered levels of institutional support historically not available to linguistically different students. Yet, Jingfei still experienced marginalization, discovering that certain dimensions of campus life were out of reach despite the language resources she claimed and the institutional visibility she enjoyed. Jingfei's discussion of her felt incapacity to participate in

campus life and her difficulty forging connections with domestic students makes clear that the agency and institutional recognition she can claim is limited. Moreover, her discussion of her writing classroom reveals how composition instruction can withhold the cultural and linguistic knowledge necessary to critique and make visible such conditions.

Jingfei initially worked to restrict our conversation to her academic motives for studying in the US, refusing to disclose information about her hometown, her Beijing high school, her parents' feelings about her decision to leave China, and the cultural benefits she believed she could accrue by studying in the US. Yet, Jingfei hinted early in her interview at her wish to complete her undergraduate in the US because of her belief that international graduate students often spend most of their time studying and experience little of the US. Despite her initial guardedness, Jingfei eventually began to share more about her desire to participate in campus life, which she admitted was a source of disappointment. Like Feng, Jingfei reported positive interactions with her domestic peers, but she said that interactions outside the classroom were limited. For instance, she had gone to a party once with domestic students but said she "ran off." She wanted to see what one of their parties was like but ultimately felt uncomfortable. Jingfei had more success connecting with domestic students through her participation in the Dancing Illini, a ballroom dance group in which she met Korean, domestic, and other Chinese students. "I'm representing this school," she said as she discussed the group's volunteer work and performances at nearby schools. "And that makes me feel proud."

Despite these efforts to, as she put it, "feel like I'm part of the school," Jingfei still felt distant from her domestic peers and from campus life more generally, believing that her language and cultural differences were at the core of her difficulty connecting especially with students from the US. Near the end of her interview, Jingfei reflected at length on her language

experiences at the university and the difficulty she encountered when writing in English, ultimately concluding that her writing classroom's inattention to language was detrimental for her not only academically but also socially. Although she was grateful that her instructor expressed little concern about grammar and other language issues, she claimed that her difficulties grasping the subtle connotations of English vocabulary posed significant challenges for her, causing halting interactions with her domestic peers and leaving many aspects of campus life inaccessible. More specifically, Jingfei sensed a contradiction in her experience of first-year writing: Though she believed that close attention to language in her class would adversely impact her grade and was relieved that her instructor focused more on critical thinking and argumentation, she also believed that close and careful study of language could help her navigate both her writing in English and the university more generally. Of course, Jingfei recognized that she expanded her linguistic repertoire daily in spaces outside the classroom, saying, "I'm learning English everyday. How to talk with the bus driver and say, 'Have a good day!' How the professor would express the equations, the formulas in class." Yet, Jingfei worried that she was missing opportunities in her writing classroom to study English as it is used in situated contexts and therefore gain intimate knowledge of her campus community and culture.

In this way, writing instruction and culture were linked for Jingfei. For her, the US writing classroom was useful not only for its introduction to conventions of academic writing or as a potential site to acquire further command of standard English. She valued her US writing course also for the opportunity it offered to become familiar with US academic culture. Through the class, she said, "I learn how American students talk in class, how they express their idea. Like, they are really much more brave than we do in China." She had also discovered through the class what she described as a preference for brevity and directness in US academic

communication. “I’m not only learning how to write,” she continued. “I’m learning the culture.” Yet, she was worried that, by not attending closely to language outside of a few brief lessons on style, she was missing opportunities to learn about US culture through its language. In other words, even as Jingfei noted that she learned English daily as she moved through campus and was somewhat relieved to not focus on language in her writing class, and though she valued the opportunities offered in her course to become familiar with US academic culture, she still desired the opportunity to closely study language. “Language is a tool to express the mind,” she claimed, and without more familiarity with the English she encountered in and out of the classroom, she believed herself unable to fully forge any connection with her US peers.

Jingfei’s comments reveal how language continues to mediate institutional belonging for non-white students even as universities cultivate images of themselves as “diverse” and “international” (see Prendergast and Abelmann 50-1)—and even as she earlier praised the quality of instruction she received. In everyday interactions and in her writing, she said, her instructors and peers minimized attention to her language differences, evident especially as she described instructors and tutors more concerned with her ideas than her language. Yet, Jingfei’s narrative shows that, despite the accessibility of institutional resources and the presence of patient and interested interlocutors, the writing instruction she received withheld the development of a linguistic and cultural repertoire that would enable her to forge relationships across differences. In other words, Jingfei’s narrative reveals an instructional void, suggesting that writing classrooms can reinforce students’ marginalization when they do not provide spaces for struggles over language and cultural differences. For Jingfei, this void became especially clear through her research in first-year writing. Her instructor drew on a tradition of first-year writing instruction at Illinois that encourages students to critically examine the university and engage in semester-long

research of student organizations, curricula, institutional history, and other dimensions of campus life. When doing her research on Chinese undergraduates' transitions to US universities, Jingfei explained, "I always think what I want, what I need to help me be involved in this campus, to help me feel better." Much of what she needed, she believed, revolved around language. "I want this kind of class to teach me what should I say when I meet people. What's happening is 'What's up?' 'Nothing much' and 'thank you,' 'how's it going?'"

Jingfei's reflections about the role of language in sustaining her marginalization on campus suggest that, although composition scholars have critiqued language pedagogies that reproduce mainstream cultural values, we can still miss opportunities to struggle with language difference and help students develop the linguistic capital necessary to confront their segregation. Even as Jingfei claims the language resources available to her as a client of US higher education, those resources do little to help her contest her exclusion from wider campus life and pursue the institutional belonging she desires. More significant is that her marginalization is compounded even as she describes a classroom that reflects common approaches to language difference in composition studies: The instructors and tutors Jingfei described resisted deficit models of language difference by emphasizing rhetorical knowledge over linguistic conventions. Such an approach reflects the greater emphasis on rhetoric and argumentation in professional documents like the CCCC Statement on Second Language Writing and Writers and the WPA Outcomes Statement, which remain influential even as composition scholars increasingly call for greater attention to dialect and language difference (e.g. Lu and Horner). Yet, Jingfei's writing instruction reinforced her feelings of cultural difference, which she believes distance her from her peers. As Feng and Jingfei discuss classrooms that both acknowledge and suppress difference, they remind us that language is a site of cultural

transmission and that examining language can provide opportunities for students to struggle productively with difference. As I conclude this chapter in the next section, I consider how attention to language and cultural differences in the writing classroom can help students both attain their educational goals and critique how our institutions marginalize students to protect white educational interests.

"Who say that? No one is saying that"

A few weeks prior to my interview with Jingfei, she attended an orientation program for international students, and one of the sessions focused on common US idioms. When Jingfei left the session, she felt no more prepared to communicate in English than she had before. "We have learned some basic proverbs like, 'It's raining cats and dogs.' But it's not useful." She continued, "Who say that? No one is saying that. If I say that, it's much more embarrassing than if I don't say it." Jingfei's comments reflect her desire for instruction that both expands her linguistic repertoire and allows her to communicate across cultural differences, a kind of knowledge she believes is withheld by her writing classroom and the other language resources she uses. As both Feng and Jingfei detailed how their writing classrooms sustained their segregation, they repeatedly forced me to confront how my own work as a writing instructor suppresses difference, denying my students opportunities to develop rhetorical borderlands from which they can identify and contest the causes of their marginalization. In other words, Feng, Jingfei, and the other Chinese undergraduates I interviewed "[broke] down the distinction between the observed and the observer" (Trainor 103), bringing to light how my work facilitating orientation sessions like the one Jingfei describes above, training instructors to work with international students, and teaching courses where one-fourth to one-third of my students are Chinese can compound students' marginalization even as I attempt to address their needs. These personal concerns likely

resonate with other instructors and scholars, given how the classrooms Feng and Jingfei describe reflect common approaches to writing instruction throughout the US: Both students, for instance, were enrolled in courses that culminated in a researched argument, an assignment ubiquitous in writing programs nationally (Hood), and they also described instructors concerned less with language than argument and critical thinking, reflecting the general movement from language instruction in composition since the 1970s (see Connors 96-7, Myers 611-2, Peck MacDonald 585-7).

These students' narratives thus reveal much about writing instruction amidst US higher education's global turn, demonstrating the challenges faced by those who aim to disrupt the marginalization of linguistic and racial minorities. In particular, Feng and Jingfei demonstrate that, even as multilingual writers can secure agency and resources as campuses pursue internationalization, writing classrooms continue to place out of reach linguistic and cultural capital that can enable them to contest their marginalization. Their experiences especially make clear the need for classrooms that bring ours and our students' attention to an area often deemphasized by composition's post-1970s movement from current traditional to rhetorical pedagogies: language (see Peck MacDonald 599-600). In making such a claim, I am in no way advocating the return of classrooms focused narrowly on correctness and convention in ways that limit students' rhetorical creativity. Instead, I believe that these students' experiences add exigence to efforts underway by scholars like Canagarajah, Horner and Lu, Wetzl, and others to attend seriously to language difference in the writing classroom. These scholars have emphasized the need for students and instructors to confront the presence of different linguistic and semiotic codes in all communication, which they contend exposes oppressive communicative norms and empowers students to contest them. As Canagarajah notes, such an approach "demands more, not

less, from minority students" ("The Place" 598), enabling writers like Feng and Jingfei to not only gain the linguistic knowledge they desire but also resist the marginal position offered them within the university.

While Jingfei's narrative creates an imperative for such pedagogy, however, she also demonstrates the continued challenges posed by internationalization and the consumer attitudes it promotes for those who advocate for marginalized student groups. For instance, Jingfei's goals for engaging with language difference are markedly different from composition scholars who have envisioned classrooms that contest exclusionary language ideologies: She desires not to combat her campus's devaluation of difference but instead pursues a cultural experience that she believes would be unavailable to her as a graduate student. Experiences like Jingfei's thus remind us that the language work envisioned by Canagarajah and others must be persuasive, taking place as it does in contexts where even those students who stand to benefit from such approaches may be unconvinced of their necessity. To engage students in a process of contesting their campus's language norms, I argue that we must foreground the cultural and linguistic conflicts students experience as they transition to college life and academic writing norms, creating rhetorical borderlands from which they grapple with the "conflicts, contradictions, and ambiguities" present in their writing, course readings, and everyday encounters on campus (Mao 3). Doing so emphasizes language as a site of conflict where students negotiate the demands made on them by the university (see Lu, "Conflict" 888), revealing to them how they are advantaged or disadvantaged by their campus's language norms and potentially persuading them to disrupt them. Importantly, this approach has implications for the Chinese undergraduates who feature in my study, other linguistic and racial minorities, and their white peers: When we emphasize in our classrooms the competing claims made on students by the languages they

encounter on our campuses—and when we foreground also the claims they make on each other as they read and respond to their classmates' writing—we invite them to make visible and critiques the conditions of their belonging, important given that language continues to be a critical site for students to negotiate their places in the university. Such classrooms diverge from those described by Feng and Jingfei, which they believed did not address their basic language needs and restricted opportunities to grapple with language in its social and political complexity.

In other words, classrooms that foreground language difference and the conflicts that students experience as they negotiate such differences can enable students to articulate and contest their positions within universities that provide narrow spaces for difference, empowering them to contribute to projects that transform academic discourse. For a student like Jingfei, cultivating rhetorical borderlands in our classrooms could urge her beyond a transactional, consumer approach to writing instruction, bringing to her attention how the language she uses and desires forces her to adopt and deny certain identities. Such pedagogy could incite her to not seek assimilation but to critique the campus mainstream's demand that she speak a certain language and possess certain cultural knowledge, perhaps even leading her to question her own desire for relationships with white domestic students over other international students or domestic minorities. For white, native-English-speaking students, such an approach could make visible how they benefit from the language preferences of the academic community, exposing for them the unethical demands they make on their multilingual peers as they begin to explore the productive rhetorical work of alternate language constructs (see Lu, "Professing").

Importantly, a classroom with such goals does not require that we radically revise our curricula: We can reshape the literacy narrative assignments common in many first-year writing courses so that students probe their educational and language learning goals, inviting them to

examine the origins of those goals and what they gain and lose in their pursuit. Or, we can transform literacy narratives into literacy profiles, which require students to interview and write about their classmates' literacy backgrounds. Doing so can allow domestic and international students alike to begin exploring how their English education and expectations for the writing classroom have been impacted by increasing standardization, given the ubiquity of China's emerging English-language industry and the increasing presence of high-stakes testing in US classrooms. Moreover, research essays can be reenvisioned as ethnographies of language negotiations across difference on our campuses, and we can also shape peer review so that students focus less on what their peers can do better and more on how local instances of language use in an essay productively support peers' rhetorical goals. Instructors can also schedule meetings with students early in the term to discuss their English preparation and goals for the course, allowing for more strategic interventions. Of course, such approaches require that we as instructors become ethnographers of our own classrooms, actively working to understand the complex positions our students occupy on our campuses—and how our pedagogies might restrict students' educational goals in institutional contexts far different from those that have historically shaped our work.

Chapter Five

Translocal Research and Teaching: Reimagining Student Advocacy for the Corporate and Global Present

Each of the case studies featured in "Dreams and Disappointments" points to the shifting institutional grounds writing instructors and their students negotiate amidst higher education's global and corporate turns. As Ruby's and Yusheng's stories suggest, Chinese undergraduates become persuaded in their writing classrooms that their cultural differences are intractable and their educational goals unattainable, even as their instructors draw on pedagogical traditions thought to foster inclusivity. In Alicia's classroom, pedagogies that aim to recognize and affirm students' languages and cultures similarly faltered, clear in rhetorical retreats that left student differences unengaged and delegitimized students' experiences of segregation. Finally, Jingfei's reflections suggest that careful attention to language in our classrooms can allow students to confront difference and conflict in productive ways, even as language pedagogies have been criticized in the field as monolingual and formalist. Together, each of these chapters unearths how, in the face of unprecedented international enrollment, pedagogies long associated with composition's student advocacy can fail, often in ways that reinforce students' marginalization along familiar racial lines.

In this final chapter, I consider the preceding case studies' wider implications for composition scholars and instructors. As I noted in chapter one, the campus transformations that I detail throughout "Dreams and Disappointments" have not gone unnoticed by composition scholars, unsurprising given that writing programs acutely feel any demographic or budgetary shift on our campuses (see Prendergast, "Reinventing" 81). For instance, as the number of multilingual writers in our classrooms has grown, attention to language difference at conferences

and in the field's flagship journals has also increased (see Lu and Horner 601),[46] reversing the historic relegation of basic writing and second-language research to the field's margins (see Matsuda, "Composition" 700-1). Meanwhile, composition scholars have also recognized that our classrooms' shifting demographics are rooted in the financial uncertainty common on US campuses, private and public alike (see Kang 91; Matsuda, "Let's" 142). Whether the result of shrinking endowments following the 2008 financial crisis (Stripling) or declining state support, US colleges and universities have increasingly enrolled international students who pay full-price tuition and additional fees, another of the many revenue-generating strategies adopted in our increasingly corporate institutions (see Welch and Scott 5).

These and similar responses to higher education's international and corporate turns, which I introduced in chapter one, provide a starting point for my efforts in this chapter to reimagine student advocacy amidst institutional transformation. In particular, I return to and begin to reconsider some of the assumptions underlying two recent and influential trajectories of research: work advocating a *translingual* approach to language difference (e.g. Canagarajah, *Translingual*; Horner et. al.; Lu and Horner) and work that studies the impact of corporatization on our writing programs (e.g. Bousquet, Dingo et. al., Scott, Welch and Scott). Concerned that our progressive pedagogical traditions may not be equipped to confront new institutional realities, such research has reconsidered composition's tradition of student advocacy, either by reorienting the field's language ideologies or exposing the encroachment of market logics on writing instruction. As I argued in the introduction, though, even as this work has responded to major shifts in US higher education, it often mobilizes around narrow images of basic or

[46] In "Translingual Literacy and Matters of Agency," Lu and Horner point to publications and conference themes in the ten years preceding that article's 2013 publication as evidence of growing concern about linguistic diversity in the field (582). Such trends have continued, clear in a recent *College English* special issue on translingualism, a 2015 issue of *Literacy in Composition Studies* focusing on transnational literacy, and a forthcoming *Composition Studies* on internationalization.

multilingual writers disempowered because of their language differences, images to which many of our multilingual writers no longer conform. For instance, even as Chinese undergraduates experience segregation on US campuses, they are nevertheless a coveted demographic, clear as public universities have opened recruitment offices in Chinese cities to capitalize on demand for western education.[47] In other words, even as universities have experienced a large influx of socioeconomically privileged multilingual writers, composition scholars continue to equate linguistic difference with disempowerment, obscuring the complexity of our students' institutional lives and impeding efforts to adapt our student advocacy to the present.

In response, I offer in this chapter a *translocal* approach to research, teaching, and administrative work, one that attends to the diversity of students' socioeconomic backgrounds on our international and corporate campuses. Such an approach, I argue, can help mitigate the potential for our student advocacy to sustain the very forces we wish to resist, a danger especially as we continue to rely on familiar models of student advocacy. Before outlining this translocal perspective, the first section of this chapter briefly revisits the research I introduced in chapter one, which I argue continues to rely on familiar images of the basic writer and the narratives of racial disempowerment undergirding them—even amidst our changing institutional contexts. Again, the stories of Ruby, Yusheng, and Jingfei in previous chapters suggest that classrooms organized around such images can marginalize new international cohorts, revealing the need for approaches to student advocacy more responsive to current institutional realities. More importantly, though, the bulk of this chapter outlines how a translocal approach can attune us to the forces near and far that most shape our writing classrooms, important as our universities become increasingly enmeshed in the turbulent global economy and as we encounter students

[47] Public universities, including the University of Illinois and University of Minnesota, have opened offices in major Chinese cities to help recruit new students and cultivate ties with alumni and businesses (Farhang and Aker, Odisho), while others send recruiters on multiple trips each year to visit Chinese high schools (O'Dowd).

educated in distant national contexts. A translocal perspective, I argue, prepares us to better understand the institutional spaces our students occupy in our corporate and international universities—and enables us to answer some of the questions that have emerged throughout "Dreams and Disappointments:" How must our advocacy for Chinese international students differ from our work with underrepresented domestic populations? How do we balance our distrust of some Chinese undergraduates' instrumental educational goals—as well as logic of investment they marshal to evaluate their time in the US—with the reality that deferring their goals places us at risk of reinscribing campus racial divisions? Finally, how can composition scholars and instructors be sensitive to the flux of teaching and learning on corporate and international campuses, especially as our institutions become increasingly implicated in the tumultuous global economy?

Before proceeding, I want to stress again that I do not intend to undercut the important contributions of work on translingualism or higher education's corporate turn. Such research highlights how writing instruction has and continues to exclude students of color and multilingual writers from "academic citizenship" (Horner and Trimbur 620), often in ways that buttress white social and economic power (see Lamos, "Basic" 28). In imagining a translocal orientation to student advocacy, then, I do not mean to suggest that composition scholars remove the basic writing figure from our language of advocacy, especially as many minority and working class students find four-year institutions increasingly out of reach (see Lamos, *Interests* 151-4). Instead, I argue that we must attend more fully to our students' changing educational experiences as our campuses become more international and corporate, learning when to draw on and when to adapt our tradition of advocacy. As I have argued throughout this dissertation, attending to the unique experiences of Chinese undergraduates equips us to not only prevent our

classrooms from reinscribing their marginalization; focusing on this population also provides a glimpse into how different student groups are granted institutional privileges on our international and corporate campuses. These students' experiences thus again make clear how the civil rights lens that has long informed our work can limit our advocacy for a range of student groups in a moment of institutional flux.

Basic Writers and the Struggle for Students' Language Rights

As I argued in the first chapter, composition scholars routinely organize their student advocacy around enduring but reductive images of basic writers, describing students in terms reminiscent of the working class and minority students who entered higher education due to civil rights-era access initiatives (see also Ritter, *Before* 29-30; Lamos, "Basic" 30). For instance, as I argued in chapter one, translingual scholarship and research on campus corporatization continue to rely on images of socioeconomically disadvantaged students. Yet, narratives from students like Ruby and Yusheng suggest that the international cohorts who increasingly populate our classrooms elude such paradigms for linguistic difference. Chinese undergraduates come to our campuses not because of initiatives that seek to redress past injustices but rather as part of a largely instrumental and economic exchange. While they are attracted by the cultural cache of a US degree, universities value these students for their tuition revenue, even as they publically tout the benefits of an internationally diverse student body (see Abelmann and Kang 3; Abelmann, "The American"). Moreover, as Ruby's and Yusheng's case studies made clear, these students often described their seemingly-familiar stories of segregation not as an affront on their civil rights but as a failed investment. Seeing their time at a US university as a way to develop valuable cultural capital—and thus as a portal into the global capitalist workforce—they

described their exclusion from the white campus mainstream as a diminishing return on their expensive tuition and fees.

Not only did my research participants describe their marginalization in terms at odds with composition's rights-based student advocacy, though; they also learned in writing classrooms where pedagogies long thought to affirm students' languages and cultures failed them. Students like Ruby, Yusheng, and Jingfei described collaborative classrooms that supported student-driven research and argumentation, and Alicia similarly drew on process, rhetorical, and collaborative pedagogies thought to create space for student difference (see Fleming, "Rhetoric" 33; Jackson and Clark 20). Moreover, these students described supportive instructors who, to their relief, deemphasized grammar and vocabulary, a welcome change given the formalist nature of English instruction in China (see You 136). Yet, their writing classrooms still reinforced the segregation they experienced elsewhere on campus. Ruby, for instance, marshaled the rhetorical language she developed in her writing classroom to explain her difficulties connecting with domestic peers, coming to believe that her inability to write to a US audience was linked to her felt incapacity to form meaningful relationships outside her Chinese peer group. Moreover, in Alicia's classroom, assignments that invited students to write about their cultures, often seen as a way to include perspectives historically marginalized in the academy (see Kynard, "Getting" 136), instead marginalized student difference: Alicia and her students regularly retreated from difference and conflict, closing the classroom space necessary to grapple with and affirm students' experiences.

The case studies at the core of "Dreams and Disappointments" thus expose some of the limits of composition's rights-based student advocacy in our global and corporate present. Yet, composition research that has responded to such changing institutional conditions continues to

center on images of the basic writer and pursue rights-based aims of access and inclusion. For instance, Lu, Horner, Trimbur, and others explicitly root their research on translingualism in "Students' Right to Their Own Language," and Trimbur sees the antecedents for composition's translingual turn in Lu and Horner's 1990s basic writing research and even in Mina Shaughnessy's field-defining *Errors and Expectations* (Horner et. al. 304, Trimbur 220). Similarly, Tony Scott touts the benefits to working-class students of his anti-corporate agenda for writing classrooms and programs. Like Donna Strickland and Marc Bousquet, he is skeptical about the viability of critical pedagogy in programs staffed by contingent faculty, arguing in particular that the prepackaged curricula common in classrooms staffed by graduate students and adjuncts subvert progressive pedagogies (8). In response, Scott advocates that administrators improve the working conditions of their instructors—and argues that students should read and research about labor and work—arguing that both can mobilize instructors and students who are caught in the downward mobility of fast capitalism.

The case studies in "Dreams and Disappointments" thus speak to how still-powerful assumptions about our students can obscure new realities in our moment of institutional flux. As a result, the classroom challenges at the center of the previous chapters are much more than isolated pedagogical failures or further evidence that we have yet to align our practices with our theoretical commitments (e.g. Lovejoy et. al. 261; see also Wible, "Pedagogies" 444). Instead, the marginalization of Chinese undergraduates in their first-year writing classrooms makes visible how our pedagogy *and* scholarship routinely overlook key aspects of our students' campus experiences, weakening our advocacy efforts and leaving us complicit in the institutional forces our field has historically struggled against. Yet, even as composition's tradition of student advocacy has been ill-equipped to confront recent campus transformations, our impulse to

resist—and to train our students to resist—ideologies of language and difference that marginalize students on and beyond our campuses can and should be adapted to our current institutional realities. Importantly, in the next section, I consider more specifically how we can channel composition's tradition of advocacy for students on the linguistic and racial margins of our campuses as we negotiate shifting institutional contexts. In particular, I work to adapt the commitment to ethical writing instruction that has animated basic writing, multilingual, and critical pedagogies to a present when the student identity categories undergirding such approaches are increasingly tenuous.

Beyond the Basic Writer

At the conclusion of the previous chapter, I offered classroom strategies that bring to the surface the conflicts our students negotiate in our changing institutions. Importantly, those strategies—such as literacy profiles of classmates and student-driven ethnographic research—aim to foster the cultural and linguistic exchanges that my research participants described as absent from their coursework at Illinois, all while trying to prevent the classroom from becoming a site where students uncritically assimilate into the white campus mainstream. While those practices can help writing instructors grapple with shifting demographic and institutional realities, the final sections of this chapter outline the broader shift in perspective that must accompany any effort to adapt composition's history of student advocacy to our changed institutions. As I argued in the previous section, composition's field-defining encounters with basic writers in the 1960s and 70s have largely shaped our response to the international and corporate turns of US higher education. Yet, experiences like Ruby's and Jingfei's trouble our continued reliance on these familiar images of basic writers: Their stories register how access and institutional support, both longstanding concerns for composition scholars, are increasingly

dependent on a student's economic value to the institution. Unsurprisingly, such shifts disproportionately impact those at the bottom of the US racial hierarchy, a reality not lost on the African American students whose numbers are shrinking at Illinois (Des Garennes)—and on other minority students who, despite modest gains in representation, are less likely to graduate than their white peers ("Report"). As I've argued throughout this dissertation, failing to address such shifts places us at risk of reinforcing conditions of differential access and segregation, which impact the campus lives not only of the Chinese undergraduates at the center of my study but of students of color more generally.

As we confront these altered institutional circumstances, however, we need not discard our tradition of advocacy or the basic writer figure at the center of the translingual movement and composition's response to corporatization. Instead, I urge composition scholars and instructors to adopt a *translocal* perspective through which we examine and identify the political, economic, and social shifts—both near and far—that shape our students' educational goals and campus lives. Such a perspective, I argue, would enable us to better see when and how to revise our history of advocacy to better confront the realities of corporatization and internationalization. I borrow the term *translocal* from Canagarajah's "Negotiating Translingual Literacy: An Enactment," where he argues that literacy scholars too narrowly define context in studies of immigrants' and migrants' writing. Rather than "recontextualizing texts in the new settings in which the texts have arrived," Canagarajah urges us to "situate mobile texts in contact zones," enabling us to see how "these texts are informed by different practices of production and adopt more open strategies of reception" (43). Although Canagarajah is concerned with textual reception, I borrow the term *translocal* for its reminder that seemingly familiar phenomena—whether written artifacts, the segregation our students daily encounter, or their educational

aspirations—are shaped by pressures near and far. A translocal perspective, I argue, can attune us to how distant forces shape our classrooms and the problems of segregation that have long concerned composition scholars. In the rest of this section, I outline how a translocal perspective can better equip composition scholars and instructors to advocate for students on our changing campuses, outlining also how instructors and writing program administrators can shape classrooms that attune us to the political and economic factors shaping students' campus lives.

Translocal Student Advocacy

To begin developing a translocal orientation to student advocacy, composition instructors and scholars must more fully understand our students' educational and economic goals, considering how their language and educational ideologies may align with or diverge from ours—and how their social and economic backgrounds may defy the categories basic writing and second language scholarship provide for them. Importantly, a translocal perspective requires that we contextualize students' educational motivations and socioeconomic positions not only in our familiar institutional backdrops but also in the global economic trends that compel international students to travel to the US for college—trends that also shape the career and economic aspirations of our domestic students. For instance, such a perspective requires that we root demographic change and its accompanying tensions in the economic shifts that enable Chinese undergraduates to attend US institutions, the fiscal uncertainty that compels universities to enroll them, and the sense of downward mobility among white students that incites hostility toward international students. Importantly, we must also strive to understand the expectations new international cohorts bring to our classrooms, heeding calls by scholars like Christiane Donahue, Bruce Horner, and Xiaoye You to "[look] beyond national borders to understand writing and its

teaching," a shift in perspective that can help us better appreciate our students' language ideologies and goals (Horner, "Moving"; see also Donahue 214, You xi). Attention to such global developments equips us to see in seemingly local campus phenomena traces of larger, global issues, especially important as universities jostle for visibility in an increasingly competitive and international higher education market. Moreover, a translocal perspective requires that we become ethnographers of our own classrooms and campuses, as I suggested at the conclusion of the previous chapter: We must remain open to the possibility that even seemingly insignificant demographic shifts in our classrooms are rooted in higher education's corporate and international turns. Doing so can enable us to see how linguistic discrimination and campus segregation are shaped not only by familiar forms of US racism but also tensions related to higher education's entry into the global economy.

Importantly, a translocal perspective yields a more complex story of the marginalization experienced by students like Ruby, Yusheng, and Jingfei. Where composition scholars have tended to view racial and linguistic discrimination as an affront on students' civil rights, Chinese undergraduates frame their marginalization instead as an investment with diminishing returns. Compelled abroad by a confluence of economic and social factors—ranging from China's rise in the global economy to the educational pressure placed on the one-child generation—most Chinese undergraduates attend a US university hoping to develop social and professional capital they can leverage in an increasingly globalized job market (see Fong 5). Yet, upon arriving, they see such goals fade out of reach, troubled less at the ethical implications of their campus exclusion than by what they describe as diminishing returns on their families' educational investments. For composition scholars, such experiences are often framed as a challenge to students' rights, requiring that we contest and transform the forces that exclude students of color

on our campuses. However, the outcomes of such advocacy can be troubling on our corporate and international campuses. Given that many of my research participants described campus inclusion as part of their larger pursuit of social capital valued in corporate workplaces, we risk affirming the values of global capitalism when we simply advocate for the inclusion of Chinese undergraduates. Yet, as stories like Ruby's and Jingfei's demonstrate, we likewise can reinscribe our students' racial segregation when we confirm messages about their cultural and linguistic differences that they encounter elsewhere on campus. A translocal perspective is sensitive to such realities, equipping us to sense such tensions and challenges. As I argued in the conclusion of my previous chapter, we must craft assignments and classroom activities that force students to situate their educational goals and ideologies in the broader contexts that shape them. Doing so can enable us to do the delicate work of troubling our students' goals and attitudes without reinforcing patterns of segregation that buttress white ownership of our institutions.

More than addressing the challenges facing Chinese undergraduates, though, a translocal approach also enables us to advocate for domestic students of color. If Chinese international students signal a shift in how racial difference is valued on our campuses (see chapter four), we need to understand how such shifts impact the working class and domestic minority students historically at the center of composition's advocacy work. In particular, a translocal approach brings into view how the shrinking proportion of minority students on many four-year campuses—and the continued hostility students of color face—are the result both of longer histories of racism *and* new anxieties. As I argued in chapter three, many of the tensions informing Alicia's classroom were fueled by a growing concern that the university has pivoted away from its civic mission in a moment of growing international enrollment. More simply, many of the tensions present on a campus like Illinois are rooted in an anxiety that, as institutions

become actors in the global higher education marketplace, universities no longer serve white political and economic interests. Situating the campus experiences of both Chinese undergraduates and domestic students of color in such racial anxiety necessarily alters the questions that motivate our student advocacy: How do we promote access and inclusion for domestic students excluded from higher education because they are deemed not worth the investment in our moment of fiscal uncertainty? Where composition scholars have in the past emphasized the intellect of underrepresented students as grounds for inclusion (e.g. Bartholomae, Rose, Shaughnessy)—and framed access as at least a partial restitution for the US's long history of racial injustice (e.g. Prendergast, *Literacy* 176-8)—how do we justify expanding access in institutions that above all else value the financial resources students can contribute?

How we answer these questions is dependent largely on the realities of our specific institutions. The international and corporate turns of US higher education manifest differently on different campuses. Where some institutions enroll large international student populations, others form corporate partnerships, cut funding for economically disadvantaged students, or funnel funding to more profitable disciplines. Across the US, though, students of color have been disproportionately impacted by such shifts, clear as my Chinese research participants negotiated a tense and exclusionary campus climate and as domestic minorities see many four-year institutions beyond their reach. A translocal perspective enables us to understand the sources of such tensions and adapt our history of student advocacy to this moment when institutional access is seen as an investment—whether by international students investing in a US education, domestic students who on average graduate with $35,000 in student load debt (Kachmar), and universities who disinvest in domestic minority populations. We need to reframe our civil rights language of inclusion to expose how educational opportunity and access are increasingly

dependent on an institution's immediate financial needs, an important move for those of us who teach at public institutions historically charged with advancing local civic and economic interests. Importantly, though, we need to draw attention both in and outside our classrooms to how the educational prospects of all students are contingent on the same forces that shape the campus experiences of Chinese undergraduates and domestic students of color. Doing so can foster critical conversations in our classrooms about how our students' lives are similarly shaped by the logics of global capitalism—and how students of varying backgrounds find their educational goals deferred in the corporate university.

The first-year writing requirement is often the largest humanities instructional program on US campuses. As a result, composition scholars and instructors have keenly felt the impacts of corporatization and internationalization. Yet, as writing instructors encounter demographic flux and its accompanying tensions, we are also provided a vantage point from which we can envision a path beyond the ethically-suspect logic of investment now defining higher education, especially given the knowledge we gain about institutional life from our close work with students. Our classrooms thus provide opportunities to confront and critique the narrow educational goals of Chinese undergraduates as well as the logic of institutional ownership that fuels white resentment toward international students. Additionally, beyond the classroom, a translocal perspective can equip us to carry out what Linda Adler-Kassner and Steve Lamos describe as story-changing work, through which we challenge and transform common public narratives about access to higher education (Lamos, *Interests* 163). Rather than solely relying on the language of civil rights to contest minority exclusion from our institutions, we can publicly expose the investment logic that places higher education out of reach for the working class and students of color—and also the downwardly-mobile middle class. More specifically, we can

marshal the economic anxieties of the middle class—playing out currently in the 2016 presidential primaries—to make a case for wider access, an important rhetorical move given the unfortunate reality that universities have historically opened their doors to students of color only when such policies benefit whites (see Lamos, *Interests* 13-4). We can also publicly confront the hostility international students face, countering the media's tendency to criticize Chinese undergraduates' conspicuous consumption and instead emphasize the socioeconomic diversity and fraught campus experiences of this cohort. Doing so may lead to more careful deliberation about our institutions' responsibilities to these students, whose tuition dollars help to mitigate some of the harmful results of state disinvestment in higher education.

Translocal Writing Programs and Classrooms

Beyond unsettling the frames through which we have understood students' institutional positions and language needs, a translocal approach most importantly demands that we design writing programs and classrooms flexible enough to respond to the demographic flux now common at many US institutions. The decision to increase international enrollment can, on many campuses, come with little advance warning to writing program administrators and other campus stakeholders (see Kang 91-2). Moreover, as I discuss in the next and final section of this chapter, economists and higher education scholars predict that, as China's economy slows, US universities may turn to other sources of international enrollment. Such realities mean that writing program administrators (WPAs) must often navigate unpredictable institutional contexts. Reflecting on his own writing program's collaborations with campus internationalization initiatives, David Martins remarks, "I was clearly working in conditions not of my own making, conditions which seemed increasingly influenced more by economic interests […] than

educational ones" (2). A translocal orientation can enable writing program administrators to begin understanding how the local pressures they face as administrators—ones seemingly "not of [their] own making"—are themselves embroiled in the corporate university's global aspirations. More importantly, adopting such a perspective can empower administrators to design curricula that supports students' language development, a desire of students like Jingfei and Ruby, and channels the ethical concerns animating composition's history of student advocacy—all while recognizing that the demographic conditions and challenges we face at any moment can quickly change.

One way through which WPAs can confront the challenges of internationalization is through supporting institutional research about the students we serve and their educational aspirations. As with the classroom approaches I suggested at the conclusion of chapter four, such institutional research does not necessarily entail an overhaul of our programs or require that we launch major research initiatives. As Muriel Harris notes, WPAs routinely engage in research as they work to best serve their local institutions, asking questions about how our programs support wider campus missions as well as the needs of specific student groups (76-7). A translocal orientation to such institutional research would require looking beyond the demographic flux that increasingly concerns many WPAs and instructors (see Matsuda, "Let's" 142), instead generating more specific and contextualized knowledge about the language and social support our students need. Doing so would enable WPAs to extend instructor training beyond generalizable formulas about working with multilingual writers that, while useful, may obscure the particularities of the student groups we serve. For instance, the classroom strategies Paul Matsuda offers in his invited article for *WPA: Writing Program Administration*, while providing accessible classroom and assessment practices, may not address the social needs of students like

Ruby, Yusheng, or Jingfei. Matsuda, that is, offers strategies like instructional alignment that can help writing instructors ethically assess multilingual students' writing,[48] but such recommendations do not equip instructors to address how our classrooms can marginalize students by failing to provide the cultural knowledge they desire.

Importantly, WPAs can begin to develop such insight about the students who enroll in their programs by turning to familiar sources and programmatic practices. In writing programs that conduct yearly assessments, WPAs may have a ready archive of student essays they can study to learn more about students' language patterns. Such student writing, especially literacy narratives or self-directed research, can also offer insight to students' economic backgrounds and educational experiences on our campuses and beyond. Additionally, designing prompts for placement and diagnostic essays that invite students to reflect on their writing experiences, language backgrounds, educational expectations, and career goals can help instructors and administrators to situate our students in and beyond our local institutions—and prepare curricula that can help instructors support students' aspirations and, when necessary, problematize their damaging language and educational ideologies. Writing centers can also play an important role in developing more nuanced narratives about our students' backgrounds and needs. Writing consultants on many campuses fill out reports after each tutorial, and, when trained to carefully recount the details of their sessions, such descriptions can yield a more thorough understanding of students' motives for visiting the writing center, their reactions to certain tutoring practices, and their language-learning goals. Finally, at institutions with tutor-training courses, teaching seminars for graduate assistants, or graduate students in rhetoric in composition, faculty can design course projects requiring students to study multilingual populations on campus. The

[48] As Matsuda describes it, the principle of instructional alignment requires that instructors only assess students on material they have explicitly taught in a course ("Let's," 143-4). For multilingual writers, this would mean that we only assess grammar and language if we have explicitly taught grammar and language in our courses.

knowledge generated through such local research can shape the training provided for instructors in our programs as well as ongoing professional development. By providing instructors with more than general knowledge about multilingual writers' language needs, such training can prepare instructors to themselves see the complex local and global forces unfolding in their own classrooms, equipping them especially to address the full range of extra-linguistic issues that multilingual writers negotiate in our classrooms.

In yielding more textured accounts of our students' backgrounds, a translocal approach may at some institutions inspire WPAs and other stakeholders to reconsider the courses they offer and how students are placed in those courses. For instance, on the Illinois campus, undergraduates can fulfill the first-year writing requirement by enrolling in Rhetoric 105, a one-semester course offered by the English department, or by enrolling in two-semester course sequences in the Communications and Linguistics departments. Given Jingfei's desire for writing classrooms that attend more carefully to the social contexts of language use, Chinese undergraduates may not find such placement options desirable. As Steve Fraiberg notes, applied linguistics continues to elevate product at the expense of focusing on the writing process and the social contexts in which students write (103), clear especially in the ESL courses offered in Illinois's linguistics department: ESL 111 and 112 take a formalist approach to writing instruction, working to ensure that students master paragraph development, essay-writing strategies like narrative and exposition, and organizational strategies for research writing ("English as a Second Language"). The communications courses at Illinois that fulfill the composition requirement take a similar approach, using a common workbook that requires that students' research-based class presentations adhere to a pre-determined outline. If students like Ruby and Jingfei felt that their writing classrooms housed in the English department, centered as

they often are around student-driven research of familiar topics, provided few opportunities to develop cultural awareness, the formalist approaches predominating in other departments where writing and rhetoric are taught are also likely to disappoint these students.

Given my research participants' desires for socially-situated language instruction—and the reality that language acquisition is best fostered when students engage in realistic rhetorical situations (see Spack, "The Acquisition" 47)—we may need to advocate in and beyond our programs for wider pedagogical change. As Paul Matsuda notes, sheltered ESL courses often provide needed language support for students ("Myth" 642), but courses that teach genres or modes apart from the social contexts in which they are used offer few opportunities for language acquisition or the development of cultural knowledge. To provide students meaningful writing opportunities in and beyond our first-year writing programs, we might more deliberately collaborate with our colleagues in linguistics and communications, working with them to devise writing and research assignments that engage students in real rhetorical situations. Our programs could collaborate to host undergraduate research conferences that provide a venue for students to share their semester-long research, and first-year writing courses housed in English could also form research partnerships with ESL courses, requiring that students interview each other for mini-ethnographic class projects about campus life. On some campuses, linguistics and English departments could even collaborate to offer cross-cultural composition courses, "an ESL-friendly learning environment both because ESL students are no longer minorities in the classroom and because the teacher is prepared to work with both NES and ESL writers" (Matsuda and Silva 18). Such classrooms, Matsuda and Silva argue, can help multilingual writers overcome their hesitancy to participate in class, simply by balancing classroom demographics and offering additional instructor training. Moreover, cross-cultural courses could on some campuses become

a program-wide norm, given that international students can at universities like Illinois constitute one-third or more of a writing course's total enrollment.

As we reconsider the content of the various courses in which students complete their composition requirement, we must also revisit the language we use to describe those courses and how we place students into them. Often, our course titles and placement mechanisms fail to reflect how our students identify and label themselves, often with troubling results. Linda Harklau's study of three multilingual writers who attended US higher schools but were placed into college ESL courses demonstrates particularly well the damaging potential of our labels. Disaffected by the linguistic and cultural remediation occurring in their classroom, Harklau's research participants gradually became resistant, doing other homework in class and even openly challenging their instructors (58). In a similar study, Costino and Hyon found that students were unfamiliar with the labels we use—and that students' language backgrounds and residency status could not predict what courses they feel best fit their language needs (68-9). While Costino and Hyon propose combined directed-self placement and one-on-one advising to address students' confusion about labels like ESL or multilingual (78), their solution leaves unchanged the reality that we continue to label students in terms that do not align with their self-described linguistic and cultural identities. A translocal perspective, on the other hand, invites us to inform decisions about course offerings and placement with the knowledge we can glean as instructors and administrators about students' language backgrounds, educational goals, and the impact our labels can have on their confidence as writers and their wider campus experiences. Rather than placing students based on our own preconceived ideas about students' language backgrounds, we can create cross-cultural composition courses in which students negotiate and study such labels, or we can use the language used by our students to label sections specifically for multilingual

writers. Given my research participants concerns about segregation and socially detached language instruction, though, writing program administrators should consider whether sheltered classrooms best serve our students' long-term language acquisition and educational goals, perhaps placing multilingual writers into mainstream courses with writing tutorials or conversation groups attached to them.

While opening up new possibilities for course offerings and placement, a translocal approach to administration and institutional research also transforms our classrooms. As I argued in the conclusion of chapter four, our changing institutional contexts demand that instructors create opportunities to learn about their students' backgrounds and goals, whether through individual meetings or assignments that explore their educational goals and university experiences. Doing so can help make visible the unacknowledged conflicts in a classroom like Alicia's, while also attuning us to the fraught campus experiences of students like Ruby, Yusheng, and Jingfei. Perhaps most importantly, placing students' campus experiences, career goals, and language ideologies at the center of the course can provide instructors opportunities for intervention: We can be better equipped to alter classroom conditions that exacerbate our students' marginalization on predominantly-white campuses, and we can also help students to develop a more critical attitude toward their educational and career goals. While we may not in one semester see the fruits of such work, James Berlin reminds us that, "by evaluating students and influencing them to be particular kinds of readers and writers, we finally perform the job of […] consciousness formation" (192), a reality echoed by Jennifer Trainor in her conclusion to *Rethinking Racism* (141). Our classrooms thus play important roles in how students see themselves as literate and rhetorical actors, clear when Christine Tardy's research participants years later marshaled rhetorical strategies they learned in their writing classrooms (267-8) and in

John Duffy's recent contentions that writing instructors can and should leverage their influence to create a more ethical US political discourse (211).

Finally, as John Duffy's arguments suggest, our classrooms can have an impact that reaches beyond the individual educational and ethical lives of our students, a position buttressed by Anna Tsing and Aihwa Ong's ethnographic work. Both argue that local social phenomena—like Chinese investment in English and education abroad—are where the seemingly distant forces of globalization emerge, gain traction, and are sustained (Ong, *Flexible* 11; Tsing 3). Our classrooms thus play a role, however minor, in shaping or displacing larger forces that writing programs often seem at the mercy of, and a translocal orientation can enable us to understand both how our programs are impacted by such forces and how we can best respond to them. In the midst of institutional change, writing instructors must create classrooms that displace students' damaging educational ideologies without simultaneously marginalizing them. As I've argued throughout "Dreams and Disappointments," doing so requires that we reshape our civil rights language of advocacy so that we can better intervene in campus and political climates where rights-based arguments may no longer gain traction. In doing so, we can become more ethical actors on our globalizing campuses than the paradigms we have inherited have prepared us to be—and we can begin to develop a scholarly language that moves us beyond rights versus needs arguments (e.g. Atkinson et. al.; Matsuda, "The Lure"), inviting us to consider more broadly the impact of our pedagogies on our students' lives and beyond.

The Future of the Global University

In November 2012, David Harvey gave a lecture on the University of Illinois campus based partially on his then-recently-published *Rebel Cities.* A portion of Harvey's talk focused on China's rapid urbanization, fueled by the privatization of the country's housing market in

1998. In cities like Beijing and Shanghai, housing prices have risen 800 percent since 2007, displacing China's urban poor and fueling political unrest. Developers have also built *entire* new cities—still without residents—in the country's interior (59-60). Development in the coal town of Luliang, which has attracted national media attention in the US, offers a clear example of such rapid urbanization. Using revenue from the city's robust coal industry, Luliang's officials launched a series of infrastructure projects, including road and sewer construction for a planned business district. However, plummeting coal prices have decreased demand for office space and housing in Luliang, leaving most of the city's new construction empty. Only three to five flights land per day at the city's new 60 million dollar airport, and not one apartment in a new complex of more than 800 units has sold. Moreover, the city displaced thousands of farmers and dried up irrigation ditches to make room for its new financial district, which remains empty except for roads and sewers (Langfitt). Harvey warns that such rapid urbanization in China, which yearly consumes about half of the world's production of cement, steel, and coal (60), has compressed into only a few years the housing boom of the post-war US, a reality with potentially dire consequences. When China's unsustainable economic growth slows, countries like Australia and Chile, who have provided much of the raw materials for China's construction industry, will find their own economies imperiled (59). During Harvey's talk at Illinois, he also glibly wondered what impact a Chinese economic slowdown would have on US higher education, which has become increasingly dependent on income from international enrollment and partnerships with China's universities.

In 2015, Harvey's warnings seemingly began to come to fruition. Articles in *International Business Times*, *Bloomberg,* and *Fortune*—including one titled "Will the crisis in China sink the US economy?" (Matthews)—worried over a slowdown in Chinese manufacturing

and expressed skepticism about the viability of China's plans to recover by growing the technology and service sectors (Hewitt). Unsurprisingly, China's increasingly volatile economic situation has attracted the attention of administrators at US colleges and universities, clear in a September 2015 *Boston Globe* article that featured interviews with Chinese undergraduates and officials at Boston's colleges and universities. Chinese undergraduates, including one whose "father started screaming when the market crashed in August," expressed relief that they had prepaid the year's tuition before the recent crash, but they remained concerned that they may not be able to finish their educations should China's economic situation worsen. While some experts consulted for the article believe a US education will remain attractive to wealthy Chinese looking to move assets out of the country, others worry that a US degree will become out of reach for China's middle class. For instance, Fanta Aw, president of NAFSA: Association of International Educators, comments in the article, "it's one of those wells that will dry up earlier than people anticipate" (Krantz and Tempera).

Even as experts recommend that colleges and universities diversify their international populations in light of China's economic situation, most institutions continue to look to China to mollify their economic woes (see Redden, "All Eyes"). At the University of Illinois, for example, the College of Engineering recently partnered with Zhejiang University to found a joint engineering institute in Haining, China. While students in the institute will receive a degree from Zhejiang University during the partnership's first few years, the universities plan to eventually offer dual-degree undergraduate and graduate programs, and Illinois has touted the initiative as "larger than any current educational partnership with China for any U.S. institution" ("Engineering at Illinois and Zhejiang"). Similar partnerships exist already between Chinese universities and US institutions like NYU and Duke, and even small liberal arts institutions like

New York's Keuka College have developed such relationships, with sometimes-troubling results (see Redden, "In Over").[49] If the curricula of NYU's Chinese dual-degree programs are any indicator,[50] writing program administrators and instructors will find themselves increasingly involved with such initiatives, often in ways that challenge their own beliefs about and approaches to writing instruction: Writing program administrators and instructors may find themselves teaching on Chinese campuses where the kinds of personal and political writing encouraged in US composition courses are unfamiliar to students and, at worst, dangerous. Meanwhile, as economists and higher education scholars continue to debate the future of the Chinese-US educational exchange, Chinese students continue to stream into the US, changing the demographics of writing classrooms even at small liberal arts institutions and community colleges.

Moreover, amidst uncertainty about Chinese international enrollment, other international student groups on US campuses are similarly experiencing demographic flux. The number of students from India studying at US universities has been quietly rising even as many universities have seen their Saudi populations entirely disappear, due to a change in a Saudi scholarship program that now only allows recipients to attend certain institutions (Crotzer). Though Chinese students remain the largest international cohort at most institutions, the number of Indian students rose 29.4 percent between the 2013-14 and 2014-15 academic years ("IIE Releases"), driven by the rupee's recovery against the US dollar (Bothwell). While such growth has been largest at the graduate level, Indian undergraduates are expected to become a more sizeable

[49] Keuka's venture into international education attracted national attention in higher education circles when one of its instructors completed a dissertation that questioned the initiative's motives, raising concerns about admissions practices and rampant academic dishonesty at the China campus (Redden, "In Over").

[50] The academic bulletin at NYU Shanghai describes a writing-in-the-disciplines approach that integrates writing into almost all courses during students' first two years on the campus, with an accompanying tutoring program ("Undergraduate" 76).

international cohort on US campuses. The number of college-aged Indians surpassed China's college-aged population in 2015, and education abroad is expected to become a popular option for the children of Indian tech workers (Choudaha). Such predictions have already motivated the University of Colorado Boulder to begin sending recruiters to Indian high schools (Kuta).

International education scholar Phillip Altbach warns that tethering the financial viability of our institutions to the global higher education market can be risky. "At some institutions," he writes, "international students now represent the difference between enrollment shortfalls and survival," raising the concern that shifting student migration patterns could mean financial ruin for some universities (54). Moreover, he worries that overseas branch campuses are too often at the mercy of foreign governments, a reality for US universities that were caught in the political turmoil of the Asian Spring (105-6) and for those that have seen academic freedom curtailed on their Chinese campuses. For example, recent efforts by the administration of Chinese president Xi Jinping to suppress western values in Chinese universities have raised concerns about academic freedom and the safety of US faculty working at their institutions' branch campuses (see Sleeper). These political and economic uncertainties make a translocal perspective all the more necessary. As our universities increasingly enter the volatile and uncertain international higher education market, seemingly far-away economic and political shifts can transform our classrooms. Moreover, as more universities open branch campuses abroad, first-year writing instructors may even find themselves teaching in classrooms where the academic and political freedoms taken for granted in the US are suddenly unavailable. A translocal approach reminds composition scholars that such flux is the norm, and that all of our efforts to advocate for marginalized student groups on our campuses must consider how our local conditions are shaped by forces near and far. If not, we risk reinforcing the segregation described by students like

Ruby, Yusheng, and Jingfei—or supporting their beliefs that participation in the white campus mainstream will allow them to later reap social and economic benefits.

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