

10-10-2012

'As a Gay Man, I': How One Literacy Worker's Coming Out Changed a Campus Community

Clifton R. Justice

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Follow this and additional works at: <http://knowledge.library.iup.edu/etd>

Recommended Citation

Justice, Clifton R., "As a Gay Man, I': How One Literacy Worker's Coming Out Changed a Campus Community" (2012). *Theses and Dissertations (All)*. 130.

<http://knowledge.library.iup.edu/etd/130>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by Knowledge Repository @ IUP. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations (All) by an authorized administrator of Knowledge Repository @ IUP. For more information, please contact cclouser@iup.edu, sara.parme@iup.edu.

‘AS A GAY MAN, I’: HOW ONE LITERACY WORKER’S COMING OUT
CHANGED A CAMPUS COMMUNITY

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

Clifton R. Justice

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

August 2012

Indiana University of Pennsylvania
School of Graduate Studies and Research
Department of English

We hereby approve the dissertation of

Clifton R. Justice

Candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Ben Rafoth, Ed.D.
University Professor and
Professor of English, Advisor

Lynne Alvine, Ed.D.
Professor of English

Jean Nienkamp, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of English

ACCEPTED

Timothy P. Mack, Ph.D.
Dean
School of Graduate Studies and Research

Title: 'As a Gay Man, I': How One Literacy Worker's Coming Out Changed a Campus Community

Author: Clifton R. Justice

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Ben Rafoth

Dissertation Committee Members: Dr. Lynne Alvine
Dr. Jean Nienkamp

This dissertation investigates how a gay literacy worker's coming out helped change the campus discourse surrounding sexuality. Through an ethnographic examination of this English instructor and the community college where he taught composition and literature for nearly thirty years, the study illustrates a rhetorical situation where a gap in understanding about homosexuality existed. In this rhetorical situation, discourses of homophobia and heterosexism contest against an instructor's pro-gay discourse for rhetorical territory. As the instructor makes gains in rhetorical territory, change occurs in thinking about homosexuality across the campus.

The study's focal participant belongs to the first generation of college instructors to come out as gay to their students, colleagues, and administrators. The study looks at the ways in which the campus responded to his disclosure and how those responses changed over time. Additionally, the study chronicles the changes the instructor went through as his disclosure evolved in response to changing campus conditions. Data was collected through observations, interviews, archival material, and institutional documents.

The research makes clear the importance of coming out by instructors as a means for change. The research suggests that an instructor who associates coming out with teaching pedagogy will have greater rhetorical success influencing the campus discourse. Similarly, an instructor who is highly social, devotes himself to the campus and to his

teaching, and presents himself in a conservative manner has greater likelihood of being successful. At the same time, the research illustrates the importance of the campus discursive history in fostering success, as well as the presence of other openly gay and lesbian faculty members as a support system. Heterosexual allies are necessary for success, too. National controversies over gay and lesbian issues contribute to the local discourse and assist in changing thinking at the local level. Taken together, all of these factors create a rhetorical situation where a gay faculty member was able to thrive and bring about change.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As with any project of this scope, there are many individuals and institutions involved. Without their assistance, I would have been unable to complete the research and the writing of this dissertation.

I want to begin by acknowledging the role of my participants in the study. Each took valuable time out of their day, and in some cases more than one day, to sit down with me and recollect their past. Sometimes, I asked them to discuss moments that were not the most pleasant to recall. None complained and all were generous with me to a fault, even though many felt they had nothing to tell me. Those who felt that way were most certainly wrong. The results of what they told me are what make these pages come alive with story.

My dissertation director, Dr. Ben Rafoth, showed a strong belief in the project from our first conversation about it. Despite his unfamiliarity with the topic, he was willing to take it and me on. His support never wavered. His confidence buoyed me when I had my own doubts about my abilities. Committee members, Dr. Lynne Alvine and Dr. Jean Nienkamp, offered valuable feedback throughout the process of collecting data and writing up the study. I also want to acknowledge IUP English Composition faculty and staff who played important roles in preparing me for the work and assisting me in staying on track.

I would have never found myself in the doctoral program at IUP if it had not been for my work at California State University, Northridge. In particular, I want to single out Dr. Irene Clark who is most responsible for showing me the possibilities within the field of Composition. During the research and writing of the dissertation, I received important

support from California State University, Channel Islands, where I teach Composition. Program chairs Jacqueline Kilpatrick and Brad Momsa provided me with financial support that allowed me to attend conferences and present some of my findings. Bob Mayberry, my immediate supervisor, was continually supportive and a great cheerleader throughout the process.

I would also like to express my gratitude for the financial support I received from the Chancellor's Doctoral Incentive Program from the California State University Chancellor's Office. Their investment in me during the last three years of the project helped me to complete the writing of the dissertation.

I want to make note of a group of fellow IUP dissertation students who provided me with a community for this challenging project. John Guelcher, Kathleen Klompfen, and Nicole Warwick read and discussed my work with me and encouraged me when I was unsure. Jennifer Johnson, who is in many ways most responsible for getting me to IUP in the first place, played a central role in keeping our community together, as well as urging me on. Through long phone calls, late-night dinners, and week long writing retreats in Cambria, CA, I made sense out of my dissertation in the company of these fellow "dissertaters." I will always treasure their support.

I want to finally thank both my families, one in Tulsa, OK and the other in Los Angeles, CA. In particular, Sylvia Little who had to hear all about the project for years and then had to spend time reading every word I wrote, often more than once, and Dr. Joshua Ramirez, who entered my life just when I needed him to do so and was always so encouraging.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
ONE	CHANGE COMES	1
	1. Difficult Times to Disclose	1
	2. Shifting Attitudes	2
	3. The Evolution of the Research Questions	5
	4. Theoretical Frameworks	8
	a. The Rhetorical Situation: Contested Battles Over Territory	8
	b. Queer Theory, Judith Butler, and Heteronormativity	13
	5. Method of Study	15
	6. Significance to the Field	19
	7. Chapter Overviews	22
TWO	COMING OUT	27
	1. An Understanding of Coming Out	28
	2. Higher Education Faculty and Coming Out: Privileging Disclosure	35
	3. Gay and Lesbian Research in Composition Studies: Three Examples	41
	4. Identity and Poststructural Theory	47
	5. Reconciling Coming Out and Poststructural Theory	54
THREE	RHETORICAL CONTESTS	62
	1. Rhetorical Situation, Rhetorical Contests, and Lineage	62
	2. The Discourses of Science: Trying to Solve the Problem	67
	3. The Discourses of Protest and Resistance: New Ways of Thinking	77
	4. The Discourses of Pluralism: Internal Fractures Change Understandings ...	86
FOUR	RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS	97
	1. Type of Design	97
	2. Site Selection	99
	3. Data Sources	104
	a. Participants	104
	b. Documents	107
	4. Data Collection Techniques	109
	5. Data Analysis Procedures	112
	6. Methods for Verification and Trustworthiness	114
	7. Limitations	115
FIVE	THE LITERACY WORKER	117
	1. Speaking Out While Teaching	120
	a. Deciding to Speak Out	121

b.	The Evolution of His Disclosure	123
c.	Negative Student Responses to His Disclosure	125
d.	Speaking Out Across Campus	128
2.	Teaching Students in an Atmosphere of Disclosure	130
a.	Language and Its Meanings	131
b.	Disclosure as a Means to Learning	135
3.	<i>The Best Little Boy in the World</i> : Exemplary Teaching, Service, and Research	138
a.	Teacher Awards and Evaluations	140
b.	Serving the Campus	143
c.	Research and Scholarship as a Means for Speaking Out	147
4.	Accommodating Others: Negotiating Discourses with Colleagues and Administrators	151
a.	Appearing Conservative	151
b.	Knowing Someone	154
c.	Using Humor	155
d.	Building Solidarity	158
e.	Challenging Homophobia and Heterosexism	161
SIX	THE CAMPUS	169
1.	A Legacy of Being Outspoken	172
2.	Hiring Their First Openly Gay Faculty Member	175
3.	“I Am Not the Only One”: Other Staff and Faculty Who Disclosed	179
4.	Allies	182
5.	The Gay and Lesbian Club for Students	187
6.	Moments in History: The Discourse Beyond the Campus Mattered	194
a.	AIDS	189
b.	“Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell”	201
c.	Same-Sex Marriage	207
SEVEN	THE WORLD TURNED	214
1.	A Return to the Research Questions	216
a.	Constraints and Change	217
b.	Fitting Responses and Change	221
c.	The Coming Out Performance and Change	224
d.	A Coming Out Creates Change	228
2.	The Importance of Error in Furthering Knowledge	231
3.	Implications for Future Research	232
4.	Researcher’s Reflection	235
WORKS CITED	238

APPENDICES	250
Appendix 1: Informed Consent Form (Participants)	250
Appendix 2: Informed Consent Form (Focal Participant)	252
Appendix 3: Sample Interview Questions for Administrators, Faculty, and Students.....	254
Appendix 4: Sample Interview Questions for Focal Participant	256

CHAPTER ONE
CHANGE COMES

1. Difficult Times to Disclose

One thing we have to say directly to the gay teachers in our audience is rather painful.

Coming out is not strictly a matter of conscience: it is an academic responsibility.

Louie Crew, Rictor Norton. November 1974

In the years since *College English* published Crew and Norton's editorial, gay English faculty have indeed heeded the call of the authors to be responsible. Gay English faculty disclosed their sexuality to their students, colleagues, and administrative supervisors. They spoke and wrote about themselves as gay academics. They referenced their sexuality in their teaching, research, and service to the university, as well as in their service to the field at large. In the varied professional environments they encountered, these men and women foregrounded their alternative sexuality; they lived the life. Yet, they carried out this responsibility in the midst of wide-spread homophobia, a term that Byrne Fone dates back to the 1960s (5), and which George Weinberg defined as, "the dread of being in close quarters with homosexuals," (4) or as Mark Freedman wrote, an "extreme rage and fear reaction to homosexuals" (19). English faculty who came out willingly placed themselves in the midst of this maelstrom.

English departments could be whirlpools of homophobia, too, as a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) subcommittee's report on discrimination, published in 1981 and written by Crew and Karen Keener, made clear. In fact, being responsible and disclosing could result in disaster, they found. The narratives, written by faculty in response to the Executive Board's questionnaire on discrimination, document

horrible outcomes for faculty when they disclosed: “people [were] fired, talent wasted, citizens driven in disgrace from their jobs, their communities, even from their families” (683). All this because their sexual orientation became public. Even those who chose not to disclose were at risk if they were suspected, the report concluded: “Gay and lesbian teachers are in professional peril even when they do not publicly profess or discuss homosexuality” (684). So, remaining *in the closet*, hiding one’s identity, did not keep one safe; it seemed a homosexual teacher was between a rock and a hard place, with neither sharing nor secrecy a good option. These are the conditions in which Crew and Norton’s call for “academic responsibility” occurred.

2. Shifting Attitudes

Although these were the conditions at the time of NCTE’s 1981 study, the past three decades have seen a great shift in attitudes on the subject of homosexuality. The Gallup polling organization has been gathering public opinion data on these attitudes since 1978. Their polling suggests tremendous movement by the public toward acceptance of gays and lesbians. Data from 1978 through 2010 in response to the question, “Do you think gay and lesbian relations between consenting adults should or should not be legal?” shows a 21% change in attitude toward acceptance. In 1978, only 43% of respondents thought gay and lesbian relationships should be legal, while 64% believe they should be in 2010 (Saad).

Beyond polling, there has been a change in the legal status of gays and lesbians, as onerous laws have been struck down by courts and legislatures at local, state, and federal levels. Perhaps the most important victory was the 2003 US Supreme Court decision in *Lawrence v. Texas*, which struck down anti-sodomy laws in all fifty states.

Further, as gays and lesbians have continued to come out of the closet and acknowledge their sexuality, their visibility has increased in the media. There are gay and lesbian talk show hosts, athletes, legislators, and mayors, as well as fictional gay and lesbian characters in books, television programs, and films. The visibility of gays and lesbians has increased exponentially in the past three decades.

An even more significant factor than judicial victories and cultural visibility in shifting attitudes about homosexuality is the numbers of men and women who have told their friends and families that they are a gay or lesbian. As gays and lesbians come out, family members come in direct contact with the issue. Instead of homosexuality being an abstract concept, it becomes a person, a member of a family, a son, daughter, sister, or brother. Subsequently, the individual becomes an uncle, aunt, father, or mother as time continues on. Many young people today have grown up with the knowledge of a gay or lesbian family member; they have never not known a gay or lesbian person. Having someone in the family who is gay or lesbian has become less and less startling, unusual, or uncommon. What was once so remarkable, has for some become ordinary. The commonplace of homosexuality within the family has contributed to the changing attitude.

In my lifetime, I have seen this transformation in attitudes take place, most noticeably in the college classroom. In 1978, as a young, gay, college student in Oklahoma, I learned of the Helms Amendment. Oklahoma state senator Mary Helms sponsored legislation modeled after California's Proposition Six, the Briggs Amendment. This legislation, if passed, would permit the dismissal of teachers who engaged in "public homosexual conduct." This conduct, according to the proposed Statute, was defined as

“advocating, soliciting, imposing, encouraging or promoting public or private homosexual activity in a manner that creates a substantial risk that such conduct will come to the attention of school children or school employees.” In other words, if a gay or lesbian spoke openly about his or her sexuality or participated in any activities that might reveal his or her homosexuality, such as going to a bar or club, attending a gay pride parade, or participating in a gay-themed book club, the man or woman could be fired. The legislation, designed to reinforce heterosexism as the only suitable expression of sexual desire, encouraged homophobic speech as acceptable educational policy. The legislation’s goal was to deny teachers First Amendment guarantees along with their privileges of academic freedom. The legislation decided for educators that there could be no conceivable reason for discussing homosexuality in a classroom at any level, elementary through graduate school. While California voters defeated Proposition Six, the legislators in the Oklahoma House and Senate gave overwhelming approval to Helms’ bill. Despite the clear constitutional violations, the damaging Helms’ legislation remained on the books in Oklahoma from 1978 through 1985. It remained the law because of threats by the Ku Klux Klan, the bullying of litigants by educational and governmental authorities, and inaction by the courts, including the US Supreme Court, according to Karen Harbeck (*Gay and Lesbian Educators* 85 – 95). Just as the NCTE study reported, speaking out could bring great trouble. I saw first hand how important it was to keep silent about being gay if one wanted to teach.

As an older, openly gay, college student, I returned in 1999 to the academic world at one of southern California’s community colleges, CC. Following more than twenty years away from higher education, I quickly noticed the changes in the student body

population. There were now more female students, more students of color, and, like me, more older students. Computers had replaced IBM Selectrics, class sizes had grown larger, and courses, such as Women's History, fulfilled general education requirements. Instructors looked and sounded different as well, with many more women and people of color as part of the faculty. However, what was most astonishing to me was to encounter an openly gay instructor and see little response to his disclosure. When I met my English survey course for the first time, my instructor, LW, casually mentioned his homosexuality during the opening discussion. LW talked about how his sexual orientation played a role in the way he read the literature that we would be reading and writing about that semester. At the time, he said little more about the matter and moved on to a discussion of the class assignments. Following the disclosure, there seemed to be no reaction from the group of thirty-plus students. LW's disclosure could almost be called a non-event. Even as the class continued into the semester, there was little negative response to the fact that the instructor was gay. If this class was any indication, being a gay professor seemed to be a problem no longer. I was amazed that acceptance of gays and lesbians had traveled so far in my lifetime. What is more, I could not imagine the future and the increasing gains in social acceptance that gays and lesbians would make over the coming decade.

3. The Evolution of the Research Questions

In many ways, this study began informally when I learned I needed to stay silent about my sexuality if I wanted to be a teacher. My own interests in trying to understand why this was were furthered when I entered that English survey class at CC in 1999. I was taken with this idea of how attitudes had changed regarding gay instructors. How had

this happened? How had this community reached a point where this instructor's coming out had such a minimal response? The questions began to turn in my mind as I continued to compare my 1978 experience with my 1999 one. My curiosity was aroused. As I got to know more about this particular situation, I learned of how successful and respected LW was across the CC campus. He was integrated into every aspect of CC life and had deep, meaningful relationships with his students, colleagues, and administrative supervisors. All of this while he spoke openly about being a gay man. I began to wonder if LW's situation was typical in higher education.

I found the answer to that question quickly. His situation was not typical, I came to understand, as I continued my undergraduate education and began graduate work in English and composition. In addition to learning of Crew and Keener's 1981 NCTE study of gay faculty discussed previously, I discovered English professor Toni McNaron's 1994 nation-wide study, *Poisoned Ivy*. McNaron's study of gay faculty conditions revealed, "in far too many cases, faculty, staff, and students continue to experience hostility, ignorance, trivialization, and hateful prejudice, all of which reinforce an atmosphere of fear in which the need for invisibility lingers like fog" (190). Conditions were still difficult for many gay and lesbian faculty and the difficulty of those conditions continued to encourage silence. In keeping with her conclusion regarding faculty conditions, McNaron found that only 37% of her 304 respondents disclosed their sexuality to students. Even though "the vocal and visible presence of out faculty on campus" (19) was identified as the single, pivotal factor in bringing about change, McNaron found few faculty members who would speak out. Perhaps the negative conditions documented in Crew and Keener's earlier NCTE study still existed on some campuses, encouraging

faculty silence. This silence meant that many campuses had no faculty members speaking up about their homosexuality.

However, at CC, there was a vocal and visible faculty member, LW, who did come out. LW began working at CC in 1984, just a few short years after Crew and Keener's NCTE study was published; also, he was working at CC in 1994 at the time of McNaron's study. His tenure at CC was during the research study period of the two previous studies, which both documented the challenges of disclosing on campus. In addition, LW was one of the men who had fulfilled his "academic responsibility," as Crew and Norton advocated in their *College English* editorial from 1974; he had come out across the campus over the course of his career. Moreover, he had not suffered the negative repercussions so many others experienced. Given the findings of the NCTE study, as well as McNaron's research, why was LW's experience different? Further, had LW's coming out helped to shift attitudes at this particular campus? The NCTE and McNaron studies argued that coming out makes a difference in the higher education sector. This instructor and campus seemed a model site to study that claim, as there seemed to be minimum evidence of hostility towards LW's coming out and, instead, a great amount of acceptance. At this point, I made the decision to explore LW and CC for my research project, and additional research questions developed: How was LW's coming out received and responded to by his students, colleagues, and administrators? How did those responses change over time? What factors were behind the changes? How did the responses that LW received cause him to change and adapt his coming out? What role did the changes play in his success? My search to answer these questions would lead

me to create a study where I explored how a college English teacher's coming out as a gay man mattered to his campus.

4. Theoretical Frameworks

Because this study looks closely at the rhetorical activity of coming out in a particular context, I was drawn to both rhetorical and queer theory for the study's theoretical frameworks. Making use of ideas from rhetorical theory allowed me to explore the ways in which LW's coming out was persuasive to his audience at CC, a specific rhetorical situation. Queer theory provided me with a means to examine the performances that took place around LW's disclosure, both his individual performance as well as the performances of CC community members. In bringing together these two traditions, both fields of study are deepened. While there existed an important intersection between rhetoric and queer theory, the concept of discourse, this study reveals new ways to study discourse from the blending of the two traditions. Ideas from rhetorical and queer theory assisted me in the early stages of conceptualizing and designing this study. In addition, each contributed a unique analytical style useful to interpreting the collected research data once the study was underway. These two theoretical constructs provide the metaphors and the lens through which I have come to understand this research study.

a. The Rhetorical Situation: Contested Battles Over Territory

In 1968, rhetorician Lloyd Bitzer attempted to revive the notion of a rhetorical situation by providing an outline of the concept and, then, arguing for its establishment as a controlling and fundamental concern of rhetorical theory (2, 3). Bitzer began his

defense of the rhetorical situation by first defining rhetoric, attempting to gain control over this term and notion that can become so all encompassing and unwieldy:

We should acknowledge a viewpoint that is commonplace but fundamental: a work of rhetoric is pragmatic, it comes into existence for the sake of something beyond itself; it functions ultimately to produce action or change in the world; it performs some task [. . .] rhetoric is a mode of altering reality [. . .] by the creation of discourse which changes reality through the mediation of thought and action. (3, 4)

Bitzer defined rhetoric in a way that allowed him to exploit the idea of rhetoric as something that took place in a given time and space with the purpose of bringing about change. His definition of rhetoric elevated the rhetorical situation where rhetoric occurred. In defining rhetoric in this way, Bitzer advanced the idea of studying the rhetorical situation as a means to better understand the persuasion and influence of rhetoric.

Accepting Bitzer's definition of rhetoric, coming out can be seen as a rhetorical activity. It is pragmatic, as it communicates information about the individual, but also, it attempts to persuade others to accept the individual's claims or ideas. Furthermore, it means to produce action or change, not just toward the individual offering the disclosure, but also, for all gay and lesbian individuals. The Crew and Keener and McNaron studies argued that a faculty member's coming out creates a change in attitude regarding all gays and lesbians across a college campus. This seems to suggest coming out creates a change in the world when it shifts attitudes at college campuses. Indeed, one's coming out alters the thinking of others, as well as the thinking of the one coming out. Coming out does

this through an individual's speaking and presentation, through one's discourse. Clearly, the activity of coming out fulfills all of Bitzer's requirements and should be considered a rhetorical activity.

From his definition of rhetoric, Bitzer moves on to define the rhetorical situation:

Rhetorical situation may be defined as a complex of persons, events, objects, and relations presenting an actual or potential exigence which can be completely or partially removed if discourse, introduced into the situation, can so constrain human decision or action as to bring about the significant modification of the exigence. (6)

The term, "exigence," can be explained as a gap, or as Bitzer later refers to it, "an imperfection," (6) which needs to be corrected through the use of rhetoric. Bitzer continues on, defining the term as "something waiting to be done," (6) which provides the most appropriate metaphoric definition of exigence for this study. The need for a shift in attitudes about gays and lesbians was the "something waiting to be done" at the middle of the twentieth century and beyond. Considered social pariahs and criminal deviants, gays and lesbians in cities such as Los Angeles were forbidden from holding open meetings to plan resistance strategies against the negative homophobic rhetoric that surrounded them. The police and local statutes saw gays and lesbians in only one way, as criminals, and any public gathering of this group of outlaws was prohibited. Their constitutional right to peaceably assemble was denied. For some time, homosexuals accepted this injustice and were unwilling to challenge this perception of themselves directly. However, as the civil rights movement of the 1960s brought changes in attitudes

and laws toward African-Americans, Latinos, and women, gays and lesbians were emboldened. Coming out burgeoned during the 1970s in greater numbers than before. As gays and lesbians refused to stay silent, their coming out became the means to begin to fill the exigence, the “something waiting to be done,” referred to earlier in Bitzer’s definition. In the case of this study, a college English teacher’s coming out was the discourse that was introduced to the campus and which began to fill the exigence of the situation. As the exigence evolved and was continuously filled throughout LW’s tenure, this study finds a shift in attitude toward homosexuals takes place.

CC, where I returned to school, and its administrators, faculty, staff, and students, as well as LW, are, therefore, in the midst of an evolving rhetorical situation. Bitzer’s theory of the rhetorical situation provided this study with both an ideological and analytical framework. His concept of the rhetorical situation further established the notion that coming out is indeed a rhetorical activity that can be analyzed. This rhetorical situation is something that has a history, a life span, a structure, which are all observable and describable. Thus, this study is a detailed examination of a rhetorical situation and the changes the situation experienced, as well as how one individual, LW, responded to those changes. Additionally, the theory of the rhetorical situation becomes a means for interpreting the collected data. As the data was gathered and analyzed, Bitzer’s theory was used to understand what had occurred at CC over a nearly thirty year period. My understandings of the data led me to see the organic nature of the rhetorical situation as it ebbed and flowed.

In addition to Bitzer, the theories of Davin Grindstaff and Nevin K. Laib, whose ideas expand understandings of the rhetorical situation, influence my thinking and are

significant to the interpretation of data in this study. Grindstaff's work in rhetorical theory puts forward the idea that "sexual identity . . . is created through rhetorical contests over its meanings in public discourse" (1). He argues that "gay male identity . . . is essentially public, essentially a product of rhetorical invention, and essentially the residue of social-political contests" (3). The homosexual identity is a result of a collective consciousness. This collective consciousness is born from many elements including public activities and public documents. Both the one coming out and the ones hearing the disclosure are colored by this collective consciousness: For the individual, to come out requires some sort of understanding of what one is saying when he or she discloses and that understanding of what it means to be gay is drawn from discourses that are public. For the ones hearing the disclosure, they understand one's coming out through public discourses about gays previously encountered. These discourses, drawn from personal experiences as well as media portrayals, are very much a part of national social-political contests, "the culture wars," which have been and continue to be waged over the legitimacy of homosexuality. What is pertinent to this study beyond Grindstaff's theoretical assertions is that these public discursive contests "render mass consciousness as observable" (10) to those who choose to study them; the incorporeal becomes material. Indeed, an examination of the discourses of coming out presents ideology as an observable phenomenon, one that can be researched and studied. This is a notion that this study takes advantage of as it looks at the campus community and the rhetorical contests which took place.

Laib's theoretical work on "rhetorical territories" furthers the concept of "rhetorical contests." Laib's ideas help to explain how discourses carve out positions

within rhetorical situations that are not always easily maintained. It seems the boundary lines shift as the contests are fought. These shifts require discourses to work at maintaining their power. Furthermore, Grindstaff's theory of the materiality of discourses allows one to see how discourses interact during rhetorical contests, rising up and withdrawing as they are needed. Like soldiers in a military exercise, discourses are called forth and engaged strategically to do battle to win discursive territory. The materiality of discourses also helps to trace the rhetorical lineage of discourses. As discourses are called forth to win territory, they are subject to change. This change may create a new type of discourse, but its historical roots are still present and visible. In analyzing the study's data, the notion of discursive lineage is significant. The theoretical ideas of both scholars, Grindstaff and Laib, are brought more to light throughout the remaining chapters.

b. Queer Theory, Judith Butler, and Heteronormativity

In addition to rhetorical theory, queer theory is a significant theoretical framework throughout the study. Queer theory, Jonathan Alexander asserts, "takes seriously the discursive turn in sexuality studies and launches a substantive critique against normative understandings of sex and sexuality that privilege certain kinds of sexual expression and identity over others" (47). Queer theory, Alexander goes on to write, "is also deeply invested in social, cultural, and political interrogation and change" (47). With change being so central to this research study, queer theory offered me many important concepts as avenues of investigation.

My theoretical cornerstone for this study was Judith Butler's work on performativity. In books such as *Gender Trouble* and *Bodies that Matter*, Butler asserts that gender and sexuality are performances individuals are socially called to perform

again and again. Far from being fixed, stable identities, gender and sexuality are seen as changeable and unsure by Butler and exist largely in the discursive realm, as a set of labels evoking certain types of performance. However, Butler is not saying just because gender and sexuality are discursive that labels or performances do not matter. On the contrary, she warns that there are material affects to the discourse surrounding gender and sexuality. Her work *Excitable Speech* critically examines hate speech, particularly homophobic hate speech, as a discursive practice. She finds that hate speech impacts both those who use it and those on whom it is used. It constructs identities, relationships, and even points of resistance. Butler's theories have influenced me to consider LW's coming out as a discursive performance that he is called on to perform again and again at the campus. Although there is expectation for his performance, the data will show his coming out is not fixed and stable, but changes as his audience and situation changes. At the same time, his coming out does exist in the corporeal world where it has consequences, particularly on future discourses.

In a manner similar to Bitzer's notion of rhetoric, Butler's theoretical work is pragmatic. She is concerned about conditions in reality and how discourse impacts them, just as Bitzer is. Another way Butler's theory of performativity fits well with Bitzer's theory of rhetorical situation is that both share a sense of genre, that is, they see recurring or generic situations which call for a response that is preordained by the audience one is communicating to. While there is always a possibility of slight variance within a genre, a variation that is too great has the possibility of being disregarded or misinterpreted, which cannot further change. In addition, Butler and Bitzer see discourses taking place within organized structures, and Butler makes particular note of how those structures are in

some way related to areas of power. Finally, both Bitzer and Butler see audience or those who are interpreting the performance as critical to the discourse situation. All in all, Bitzer and Butler share many rhetorical perspectives, complementing one another as theoretical frameworks.

Another important concept that this study makes use of from queer theory is heteronormativity. Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner define “heteronormativity” as “the institutions, *structures of understanding, and practical orientations* that make heterosexuality seem not only coherent—that is organized as a sexuality—but also privileged” (548). Society posits that heterosexual and heteroerotic behavior are the only “normal” sexual and erotic behaviors. As such, society has naturalized the position. It has done so through narrations of heteroerotic love between one man and one woman. Efforts to secure this story of intimacy can be found throughout much of the mass media, as well as in laws across the country that codify marriage as existing between a man and a woman. CC was a heteronormative campus when LW arrived; the assumed position was always heterosexual. However, LW’s coming out disrupted this heteronormative narrative on the campus. His coming out brought attention to other possibilities for students, colleagues, and supervisors. As a queer study, this work is also one that chronicles the changes in the heteronormative nature of the campus to one that becomes more inclusive of others in its discourse.

5. Method of Study

Because the research for this study is centered around “how” and “what” questions, I identified qualitative research to be the most appropriate research method. John Creswell points out, qualitative studies “often start with a *how* or *what* so that initial

forays into the topic describe what is going on” (17). Another reason for a qualitative study is that the structure of the study made it impossible to tease out only one variable for examination, an important aspect of quantitative research. Instead, I would need to consider multiple variables as I investigated this rhetorical situation and the people who were a part of it. Without considering multiple variables, it would be difficult to know the sources which inspired change at CC. To a large extent, the study’s design was intent on examining as many possible variables as were plausible in an effort to not only understand the impact of the professor who came out, but also, the context in which his disclosure was taking place. This context certainly included local concerns, but was also influenced by the discussions of gay and lesbian issues occurring on the national stage. Thus, qualitative research was better suited to this sort of complex and complicated research study. Moreover, a qualitative study allowed for an emergent design, rather than a fixed one. As fieldwork provided many twists and turns, much would have been lost if the study’s design was unable to adapt to changing situations and unexpected data information.

Within the qualitative research tradition, I chose ethnography as the specific investigation strategy. Harry Wolcott wrote of ethnographers, they “are rightly accused of making the obvious obvious (or, more kindly, of making the familiar strange . . .) because, quite literally, their task is to describe what everybody already knows” (41, 42). In the case of my study, it is understood that there has been a change in attitude toward gay and lesbian faculty members. I readily concede that point. My interest goes beyond the notion that there has been change. Rather, my focus is attempting to understand how the change happened and the role of LW in creating that change in one local situation.

Moreover, an ethnographic investigation strategy allowed me to study an entire community, and college campuses are certainly communities, as they sit in the midst of larger communities and are composed of many smaller social groups. Another benefit of ethnographic research was how it allowed me to see distinctive patterns of behavior in and among the communities, both large and small, that make up the campus. Observing these behaviors revealed attitudes towards gays and lesbians on campus, beliefs about sexuality, and the place of sexual discourse on a higher education campus. An ethnographic strategy seemed most in keeping with the theoretical concerns of this study as well. The method would lend itself to providing a thick description of a rhetorical situation with a significant lifespan and a remarkable level of the exigency having been filled during the lifespan. An ethnographic study would also produce empirical data, which is important to queer theory. Gayle Rubin tells Judith Butler in an interview, “[a] lack of solid, well-researched, careful descriptive work will eventually impoverish feminism, and gay and lesbian studies, as much as a lack of rigorous conceptual scrutiny will” (77). Ethnography as a research method would provide the sort of empirical data that is essential to both rhetorical and queer theory. It also benefits the work of future researchers as the data included in this study becomes fodder for future research.

Shakespeare, in *Henry IV*, Part 2, observes, “there is a history in all men’s lives.” This research study looks at the lives of those who are a part of one college community. Many have done exemplary work, but their spheres of influence are not great. This is not a study of the famous or infamous. Still, the manner in which acceptance of a gay faculty member took hold on this campus is worth understanding better. This is a study of those men and women who lived through that experience. Also, this is a study about nearby

history. Since my move to southern California in 1993, I have considered it my home. The institution in this study was where I began again to earn a college degree. Studying nearby history helps me to better understand a place that is a part of my history. More significantly, though, the study of nearby history can benefit those located nowhere near this site. Nearby history can “reveal the origins of conditions, the causes of change, and the reasons for present circumstances,” David E. Kyvig and Myron A. Marty argue (10). Understanding these factors at one site can be of assistance in understanding similar events and actions at another site. Most important, though, a study of nearby history was the best way to document and understand the changes in attitudes that took place. Rather than surveying a wide swath of higher education faculty to find out what current attitudes and conditions were like, as previous researchers did, I focused, instead, on one openly gay faculty member and his campus community. This is how I built upon the important work of Crew and Keener and McNaron; I created a study to explain the change that they found.

The formal structure of this study has come about during my doctoral studies at Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP). During the summer of 2008, I began to formally design this study and draft proposal summaries, as well as seek out institutional review board approval from IUP. CC did not have an institutional review board, thus no approval was sought from the campus. In 2009, my dissertation committee reviewed my first four chapters and approved me to continue fieldwork. Field research for the study took place from 2009 to 2011. Fieldwork primarily consisted of interviews with my focal participant, LW, and others associated with the campus community; archival research through the student newspapers, institutional reports, and other ephemera that CC had

gathered since 1982; and field notes taken both at the site and later on as I analyzed data. Although data analysis was on-going throughout the data collection process, more formal coding of data took place in 2011, followed by drafting of the final dissertation chapters.

6. Significance to the Field

Coming out by gay and lesbian faculty members is important to the field of Composition. The professional organizations that serve this field, NCTE and the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC), have consistently taken positions in resolutions that supported and encouraged coming out by gay and lesbian faculty. These organizations' resolutions have been characterized by Patricia Thatcher as "the heart of the organization's soul" (iv). Thus, the resolutions are not some token gesture. In 1976 at the NCTE Business Meeting in Chicago, Illinois, the membership for the first time "declared their opposition to discrimination against individuals on the basis of sexual preference" ("On Discrimination"). The resolution went on to state:

Resolved, whereas lesbians and gay men are now and have always been present in society and members of our profession, both as students and teachers, we the members of the National Council of Teachers of English urge the immediate end of all discrimination against them wherever it may exist, specifically in the hiring and firing practices of our profession, in the textbooks of our discipline, and in our own classroom practices and exchanges with students. We further urge that NCTE establish an appropriate group charged with both investigating problems faced by lesbian and gay male colleagues and students in the discipline of English

and the formulating of recommendations to the Council concerning their welfare in the profession.

The membership passed the resolution, but by only six votes. Despite this slim margin out of the hundreds of votes cast, a progay position endorsing instructor disclosure moved forward within the organization and remains so to the present day.

Less than twenty years later, in 1992, at the NCTE Annual Business Meeting in Louisville, Kentucky, a second resolution on sexual orientation was put forth and passed. Titled “On Recurring Discrimination against Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual People,” the authors of this resolution

cited recurring campaigns against gay, lesbian, and bisexual people, including attempts to disenfranchise them from professional and civic involvement. They noted attempts to criminalize consensual gay and lesbian sex and to discriminate against homosexual and bisexual people in hiring, housing, and other policies and practices.

The resolution itself referenced the earlier 1976 resolution and called for an immediate end to discrimination and then it went on to condemn any actions that resulted in gays, lesbians or bisexuals being treated as second-class citizens. Further, the resolution called for NCTE to support educational programs that would bring awareness of the contributions of gays, lesbians, and bisexuals to the profession at large. Certainly, the most controversial aspect of the resolution was its call for the organization to do no business with cities or states that discriminated:

[NCTE should] refrain from future scheduling of conventions and conferences in any city or state that (1) has criminalized consensual gay

and lesbian sex or (2) has laws and codes that allow discrimination against homosexual and bisexual people, unless such legislation has been found to be unconstitutional or the city or state has been enjoined through court decisions from enforcing it.

Following in the steps of NCTE, CCCC quickly passed a similarly worded resolution at their next meeting. While the rhetoric of the resolution is supportive to gays and lesbians, some NCTE and CCCC members have been quick to point out how economic and other concerns have played a role in the decisions of the organizations, causing it to ignore the resolution when convenient. One such example of disregarding the resolution was the 2008 CCCC convention in New Orleans, Louisiana, a state that maintains discriminatory sodomy laws against gays and lesbians. It would seem that if the resolutions are part of the organizations heart as Thatcher asserts then on occasion the heart has been broken apart in an effort to serve many concerns.

Given the actions of NCTE and CCCC, not only in their business meetings, but also, in their literature, studies of gay and lesbian faculty are necessary. Without further study, how would the national organizations know how their resolutions were working or having an impact? Outside of the two studies previously mentioned, one conducted by NCTE in 1981 and the other by Toni McNaron in 1994, no other English researchers had studied gay and lesbian faculty and the impact of their disclosures. Why had no researchers taken up the charge of investigating this topic? Could it all be attributed to a lack of interest?

A possible answer as to why no further studies had taken place surfaced in September of 2007 in a brief article published in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. The

article focused on gay faculty and the domestic partner issues they faced on college campuses and reported that progress was being made for gay and lesbian faculty; however, the article went on to identify issues where progress was less forthcoming, most notably, the challenge of finding a faculty position for those who conduct research on gay and lesbian issues. It seems that being gay and lesbian is acceptable, but researching the topic is not. One research advisor plainly stated, “People who study gay topics are not finding employment” (Bollag). Further, those studying gay topics are finding it difficult to secure grant funding for their research, the article reported. These conditions would certainly cast a pall over any academic, but most particularly over doctoral candidates or tenure-track assistant professors, who, as they are starting out, are depending upon their research to help them secure positions and advance within the academy. If those individuals, who are certainly responsible for a significant amount of the research conducted in higher education, are discouraged from investigating gay and lesbian issues because of employment and promotion concerns, then clearly heterosexism and homophobia are still at work in the academy. This dearth of research would also mean there is a substantial gap in our knowledge of this issue of coming out and the way it relates to faculty, students, and administrators, as well as how it impacts teaching and learning. This study is a start on filling that substantial gap in knowledge on this important issue to the field of English.

7. Chapter Overviews

The study is composed of seven chapters, with the first being this introduction. To help readers follow this study, a brief description of the remaining six chapters follows.

Coming out is an expressive, rhetorical, and physical activity. As a complex and complicated notion, which serves so many different functions, it is important to define the term for this study, which is one of the goals of Chapter Two. The chapter opens with a discussion of coming out and the challenge of defining the term, requiring this researcher to put forth his understanding of what the term will mean for this study. Next, I explore the rhetorical bias toward coming out in the literature about college instructors, and follow with a discussion of three composition researchers, Harriett Malinowitz, Zan Meyer Gonçalves, and Jonathan Alexander, and their work related to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) issues. I subsequently take up the challenge of identity-related research in a poststructural paradigm. I negotiate through the poststructuralist and essentialist rhetorical contest to advocate for realists theories as a means to acknowledge both the constructed nature of experience and its material nature, too. I discuss the consequences of using realists theories and relate them to rhetorical and queer theories mentioned in this introductory chapter.

Chapter Three teases out the meanings of rhetorical situation and how Grindstaff's concept of "rhetorical contests" and Laib's notion of "territoriality" can be useful in investigating rhetorical situations. To test out these ideas, the chapter investigates the discursive lineages that have influenced my focal participant, LW, as both a gay man and a writing teacher. The emphasis here is on how these two disparate activities are in fact both influenced by three powerful, more dominant discourses: science, protest, and pluralism. In the chapter, I trace the influences historically and the ways that the three discourses clashed and fought to define both activities. Of course, the

ways discourses position individuals is not benign, and the disastrous affects these discourses wrought are chronicled.

In Chapter Four, I explain the design of this study and the influence of that design on the project. I begin by identifying the design as qualitative and ethnographic, and then go on to discuss how this choice of method impacted every aspect of my research. First, I illustrate how theories of qualitative and ethnographic research mattered in my site selection and in the selection of my participants. Next, I go on to show the ways the study's design influenced how both the site and participants would be studied, including the methods used for collecting data from the site and from participants. Following this, I argue how the study's research design guided my data analysis strategies, encouraging a search for themes and patterns. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the methods taken to insure verification and trustworthiness and of the limitations that are a part of this research study.

Mindful of the fluidity and change inherent within identity categories, Chapter Five isolates four major cornerstones that contributed to LW's success at CC. These cornerstones made it possible for him to be a part of shifting attitudes at the campus. They were what helped him persuade others that his sexual orientation was valuable to CC. The cornerstones are: 1. LW spoke out from the beginning and continued to speak out across the campus; 2. He made use of his disclosure as a pedagogical tool; 3. He consciously made a great effort to be exemplary in all that he did at CC; and 4. He accommodated others with his disclosure and actions related to it. The chapter is a detailed account of how LW influenced others with his language and action, even as he changed himself through the process of filling the exigency he found at CC. In addition to

this analysis, the study identifies as well the discursive heritage within LW's disclosure and position as a "gay man" and "writing teacher." The chapter makes the case that a discursive ancestry can be seen in the lived experience of a faculty member's coming out, as well as in his position as a writing teacher.

Chapter Six traces the discursive history of CC related to LGBT issues and the role of that history in creating an atmosphere where LW's coming out could bring about change. I begin the chapter by first looking at how there was embedded into the community's discourse a value for listening to one another and an adoption of ideas from the free speech movement of the 1960s and 1970s. Next, I examine the community's own rules and policies, established by both the community itself and the greater community college district, and how these were a factor in LW's hiring. I go on to consider the role that other "out" faculty, as well as campus allies, had in helping to make CC a place where LW could thrive and succeed. I next look at students, particularly LGBT student groups, and how they were often the spark that encouraged a change in thinking. Finally, I examine the impact of national discussions related to AIDS, gays and military service, and same-sex marriage on the campus attitude. Each national issue unfolded on the campus in ways particular to the campus and in a manner that brought about changes locally. These discursive historical footprints, more than the college's geographical location in southern California, helped to encourage and foster change toward LW and other LGBT individuals.

The concluding chapter, Chapter Seven, returns to the research questions and discusses the answers I found through this investigation. In doing so I will make use of the rhetorical and queer theory addressed earlier in this chapter and throughout this

report. The chapter goes on to consider error in the reading of the study and my thoughts on the implications of this study for future research. The chapter concludes with a researcher's reflection on the investigation process and the ways in which I have been personally impacted by this study.

CHAPTER TWO

COMING OUT

This ethnographic, rhetorical study investigates how a gay English professor's (LW) coming out played a role in shifting attitudes about gays and lesbians at the community college (CC) where he has worked for nearly thirty years. This study reveals how his coming out disrupted dominant heterosexist and homophobic discourses, and in doing so, went on to assist students, faculty colleagues, and administrative supervisors in shifting their attitudes towards LGBT persons. The study data will suggest that LW's coming out is a key component in CC's growing acceptance of gays and lesbians. At the same time, the study will reveal that CC itself was receptive to change and that LW's success came about to a great extent because of the context of this particular situation.

In this chapter, I consider the notion of coming out from a number of different perspectives. I begin by reflecting on the challenges of defining it. As an individual experience and as a term of language, coming out can have varied meanings. I go on to clarify what the term represents for this study. Next, I look at selected research related to higher education faculty and coming out. My analysis considers the ways this research becomes a means of persuasion, encouraging other faculty to disclose. I follow with a discussion of the individual research of three compositionists: Harriett Malinowitz, Zan Meyer Gonçalves, and Jonathan Alexander. Each studies the intersection of composition and LGBT sexuality; their research informs my own study. Subsequently, I address issues associated with coming out and discourse, particularly in light of conflicts between essentialist and poststructuralist theories. Essentialist thinkers advocate that the gay or lesbian experience is one that has been a part of the human condition forever;

poststructuralists, on the other hand, emphasize the constructed nature of language and sexuality and assert that gay and lesbian identity is attached to a specific time and place. My discussion includes how these two seemingly contradictory theories can be reconciled through employing *realist theories*, which suggest ways to perform identity-related research that speaks to both essentialists' and poststructuralists' paradigms. I then apply these realist theories directly to the issue of coming out and this study. The discussions in this chapter build theoretical interpretations necessary to defining and understanding coming out, as well as addressing how one would study the activity and its relationship to shifting attitudes.

1. An Understanding of Coming Out

Coming out as a term of language has become ubiquitous throughout the United States. The notion that one might come out about anything, including one's race, ethnicity, age, marital status, religious beliefs, or personal concerns, is now commonplace in everyday conversation among people of all walks of life. The everyday nature of the term might seem to suggest that it does not need definition; we all know what it means. However, the term represents, at best, a summary of the lived experience of gay men and lesbian women, and as such, no single definition can stand for it.

Coming out has been presented as a rather easily understood, straightforward affair in the popular media. Fundamentally, what seems to be required in most mainstream narratives of coming out is for the individual to come to the realization that he or she is a gay or lesbian, to tell others about his or her sexuality, and then go on to lead a public life as a gay or lesbian person. On the surface, this simple thinking about coming out might seem to be what actually happens. Many gays and lesbians have

followed the patterns set forth in these dominant coming out narratives. They have told their families and those who are close to them that they sexually desire those of their own sex. Although they may have gone through some initial difficulties with their families, so the stories tend to go, eventually their loved ones come to accept them. Or, in other narratives, the family does not choose to accept the gay or lesbian individual, and he or she goes on to make a new family with friends and lovers. Whatever the response to the disclosure by others, coming out in these narratives is generally presented as an activity that is carried out once and then dispensed with, finished, never needing to be repeated again. Henceforth, the individual is known as a gay man or lesbian woman; the individual's sexual identity is set in stone. Through this completion of coming out, the gay or lesbian identity becomes as stable and as unified as other identity categories, such as male/female or white/black, in the public's mind.

One challenge to this thinking about coming out as a stable identity category originates from the work of Vivienne Cass, who contends coming out is a series of stages. In her 1979 article "Homosexual Identity Formation: A Theoretical Model," she argues, "there are six stages of development that individuals move through in order to acquire an identity of 'homosexual'" (220). She goes on to identify the stages as: 1. Identity Confusion, 2. Identity Comparison, 3. Identity Tolerance, 4. Identity Acceptance, 5. Identity Pride, and 6. Identity Synthesis. Cass finds that each individual plays an active role in the acquisition of his or her identity and may choose to arrest his or her development at any given stage. Cass's model attempts to reconcile the private and public aspects of identity such that in the final stage the individual is able to integrate together his or her private and public selves. Cass writes of this final stage, "Instead of being seen

as *the* identity, it [homosexuality] is now given the status of being merely one aspect of self” (235).

Right away, it is easy to see how Cass’s research contradicts the popular idea about what coming out is. Her model suggests coming out should be seen on a spectrum with numerous points where an individual might choose to remain; she makes a point to show how progression is not inevitable for the gay or lesbian individual. Stopping at Stage Three might mean that one would never speak out about their sexuality but has come to accept it personally. That stage might be considered a coming out to one’s self, but not necessarily a public disclosure. That sort of coming out is not mentioned in the mainstream narratives. Is that individual still in the closet? Furthermore, mainstream narratives suggest that all gays and lesbians who come out achieve identity synthesis. Cass identifies identity synthesis as the final stage in coming out to oneself and others, and she reports that not all reach or even desire to reach this stage. Identity acceptance or pride is where many individuals end their coming out. Are these individuals still in the closet? Cass’s model reveals the complex and complicated nature of coming out whose nuances are never seen in popular coming out narratives.

Since Cass’s first writing, questions have been raised regarding the linear nature of her model. Some argue that coming out is recursive with individuals returning to stages each has previously passed through. Another argument is about the individual who fails to go through each of the six stages. Can he or she be considered a well-adjusted individual? According to the model set forth by Cass, it would be difficult to see someone who stops at identity acceptance as someone as well-adjusted as another who achieved identity synthesis. Another concern with Cass’s research is the validity of all six stages.

With the rapid changes taking place in society regarding the acceptance of homosexuality, some doubt whether or not individuals go through each of the stages, or if going through all of them is a necessity. In 1984 Cass herself reworked her model, combining some categories and enhancing others to try and more accurately portray coming out and ended up with four stages (“Homosexual Identity Formation: Testing a Theoretical Model”). Some have even suggested that the Cass model places too much emphasis on sexuality in identity formation at the expense of other socio-cultural factors that can greatly impact identity development. Sexuality is not always the salient issue when an individual thinks of him or herself. Although these complaints about Cass’s model are valid, her pioneering work is valuable here as it contradicts the simplistic notions of coming out that have so dominated most commonplace thinking on the topic. Additionally, her critics have only furthered the notion that *coming out* is a term that must be considered contingently.

Prior to Cass’s psychological research into the stages of coming out, Julia Stanley offered a linguistic investigation of gay slang in the pages of *College English*. Stanley was searching for the meaning behind the term *coming out* which had been picked up and used by the popular media with regard to homosexual disclosure. What, indeed, was one saying when he or she came out Stanley questioned in her 1974 article. Her answer was to define coming out as a political activity where individuals struggle to know what to call themselves in the face of a homophobic society:

In 1969, gays began marching, chanting, ‘Out of the closets, into the streets,’ ‘Ho-ho-homosexual, sodomy laws are ineffectual,’ ‘Two-four-six-eight, gay is twice as good as straight,’ and ‘Better blatant than latent.’

Words that had formerly referred only to one's sexual identification, like *gay* and *straight*, or that had been pejoratives, like *dyke*, *faggot*, and *cocksucker*, had become instead politically charged terms that affirmed the new identity of gays. *To come out of the closet* now has a political meaning; the phrase refers to the assumption of one's identity as a positive thing, something to be yelled in the streets, rather than hidden and whispered about behind closed doors. And once you are out of your closet, you no longer cringe when someone calls you a *dyke* or a *faggot*. To be a dyke or a faggot refers to one's political identity as a gay activist. Being *gay* no longer simply refers to loving one's own sex, but has come to designate a state of political awareness in which one no longer needs the narrowly defined sex-role stereotypes as bases for identity. (390)

Coming out signals a move by the individual to be an activist, a political player in the fight for equality. Along with this sense of being an activist is the embrace of contemptuous terms that are scorned by most others; *dyke*, *faggot*, and *cocksucker* are to be reclaimed and repurposed. Instead of being ashamed to be called those names, they are badges of honor that gays and lesbians choose to call themselves. Stanley seems to be suggesting a further inversion of meaning when she speaks of turning negative terms into positive ones; thus, what it means to come out continues to shift as pejoratives become terms of admiration.

Furthermore, these names complicate the coming out process as the individual must come to terms with what he or she will call his or herself. What sort of homosexual will one be? For example, the man who identifies as *gay* may understand his sexuality

and political positions in a radically different way from the man who adopts the more radical moniker of *queer* or *faggot*. In addition, Stanley's work in 1974 could hardly have anticipated how much more diverse homosexuals would come to portray themselves as time passed. Now, a gay man can identify as a *twink*, *bear*, *daddy*, *boy*, *chub*, *chaser*, *master* or *slave*, just to name a few possibilities. Even within these categories, there are further divisions and sub-sections. These different categories of gay male identities can be vastly different lived experiences. Likewise, when these gay men come out, their disclosure can be as different as each individual. Who the gay man chooses to have sex with is only one feature among many in his sexual identity. This discussion of what it means *to come out out of the closet* becomes even more complex when the experiences of lesbians are considered, too. Whether a woman sees herself as *butch* or *femme* or a number of other potential categories will impact her disclosure just as it does her life experience.

Coming out, then, does not have a straight-forward, clearly understood, all purpose definition useful to this study. Instead, it is a notion open to many possibilities and varies greatly within different contexts and among different individuals. Thus, it becomes important to define the term for my study and, at the same time, acknowledge that any definition will not be able to encompass the richness of what it means when one speaks about coming out. The definition will be a compromise, as aspects of the experience are either elevated or slighted by defining. Still, the task remains. For this research study, coming out is viewed as a social and rhetorical activity which connects or brings people into a rhetorical situation where possibilities for new ways of thinking take place. Specifically to this study and this site, coming out is a continuous dialogue

occurring at a college campus. It is a conversation, rather than a monologue. There is give and take in the coming out, and change happens to all parties who participate in the rhetorical situation. Indeed, coming out is a part of a thinking system, a world-view, an intellectual activity.

Also, coming out is a performance. The disclosure is a presentation that takes place in various venues and where the one coming out, LW, makes use of external elements to make himself more rhetorically persuasive. As such, coming out will be “constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a *stylized repetition of acts*” (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 179). As these acts are repeated over nearly thirty years of history, LW’s identity becomes more and more familiar to the community. The familiarity of his performance helps to integrate LW into the fabric of the community. Likewise, the response of LW’s audience to his disclosure has affect on his performance; it evolves as the responses to his coming out evolve.

Coming out in this study is about more than sexuality and the sex act. Instead, coming out is seen as a social performance occurring within a rhetorical situation. It is a persuasive act, intellectual, capable of changing the performance of others with regard to LGBT individuals. However, defining coming out in that way leaves less space for sexuality and the sex act, the very performance elements that bring about the disclosure in the first place. To a large extent, this study as a piece of academic work minimizes the sexual and personal nature of coming out. This absence is a consequence of the compromise that comes with defining and is certainly a limitation of the study. That being said, the sexual and personal associated with coming out are not entirely ignored,

but they are considered within the social and rhetorical performance that this study privileges.

2. Higher Education Faculty and Coming Out: Privileging Disclosure

Mary Elliott observed, “The fascination with the ‘secret’ of lesbian and gay identity and with the abyss a gay or lesbian teacher crosses to come out in the classroom should have spent itself by now” (693). However, she finds that is not the case in 1996. Indeed, fifteen years later in 2011 the “pedagogical shock value” (693) of coming out remains very powerful, despite efforts to make disclosure seem commonplace. Sherry E. Woods and Karen M. Harbeck explain why: “Since the schools historically have been charged with the inculcation of society’s morals and values on a population considered to be highly impressionable, lesbian and gay male educators have often faced tremendous hostility” (143) when they come out. As homosexuality has been seen as a sin, a crime, and/or a mental disorder for such a long time in American history, the transition toward acceptance of the gay or lesbian teacher evolves unevenly. The pace of acceptance varies from place to place, with different regions of the US, different states, and locales within states displaying more tolerance of LGBT teachers and instructors than others.

Although there has been such a varied response to coming out across the US, that diversity does not seem to be reflected in the literature about gay and lesbian instructors. Elliott suggests that since the Stonewall uprising over 40 years ago, most academic publications and conference presentations have chosen to present coming out as an everyday occurrence; they have minimized the negative reactions an instructor can receive from coming out and have, instead, “assume[d] a political position that privileges disclosure over non-disclosure and self-naming over a pretense to ‘neutrality’” (693). In

this section, I review a number of these publications and identify their rhetoric in favor of disclosure. Also, I address how this pro-disclosure position becomes a moral imperative which places extra pressure on faculty to do something that many acknowledge as potentially dangerous and possibly unwise.

Louie Crew and Rictor Norton's editorial "The Homophobic Imagination" is identified as the first or one of the first pro-disclosure pieces published in any academic journal in the US. Published in *College English* in 1974, the editorial makes clear that coming out is a moral responsibility for instructors. After acknowledging that an instructor may lose his job, be disowned by his family, and spurned by his friends, they insist that a teacher who does not come out "contribute[s] to this cycle of oppression for our gay students, who, without gay role models or support, will very likely experience the kind of self loathing, ignorance, and fear that no young person should ever be subjected to" (288). Crew and Norton position coming out as an activity that serves a higher purpose. Whether or not coming out benefits the individual disclosing seems to be beside the point; instead, disclosure is to assist the next generation, clearing a path for them. This notion of assisting the next generation is in direct contrast to those who would claim coming out was a private matter and hearing it would be of no benefit to anyone. Later in the editorial, Crew and Norton make the claim that most find after they have been out for a while, "the water is fine," but "a bit chilly" (288). Of course, at the time the two men were writing the editorial, the "water" the two men found themselves in might be warmer than in other possible locations: Crew was already an associate professor and Norton had taken up residence in England. It is difficult to know if someone who lost his job, his family, and his friends because he came out would characterize the environment as

merely “a bit chilly.” Instead, he might characterize the environment as “glacial.” Crew and Norton’s perspective of coming out did have resonance with future scholars.

Regardless of the acknowledged hardships that one might face, coming out would be positioned in the future as a moral imperative. This was accomplished in a number of different ways.

In initial studies about gay and lesbian instructors, researchers focused on the negative aspects of the closet. To encourage disclosure, the argument was made that non-disclosure caused one greater problems, such as stress, having to live a double life, isolation, drain of energy, and harassment by students, teachers, and administrators. While there were problems with coming out, one could at least live with oneself if he or she would come out. Just as Crew and Norton contended that the “water was fine” after coming out, other researchers encouraged disclosure by making the negative repercussions of remaining in the closet clear. Woods and Harbeck’s study of the identity management of lesbian physical educators illustrates this sort of research perspective. In their research report conclusion, they address the “toll” of remaining in the closet for their participants, with some facing self-hatred, frustration, fear, and loss of an ability to fully function as professional educators (160). The closet is positioned in this research not as a safe place to hide, but one in which self-loathing consumes those who remain locked inside. Participants in their study reported great remorse that they did not come out, expressing feelings that they had failed to be “positive lesbian role models” (160). The failure was a moral failure; the participants believed they did not have enough moral fiber to stand up against homophobia. As a result, the participants felt they were condemned not only by a homophobic society who despised homosexuals, but also, by the LGBT

scholarly community that advocated disclosure as a moral imperative. Participants in these sorts of research studies were positioned in isolation. They were not seen as members of any community. Their aloneness was seen as a consequence of their inability to come out. No other possible interpretation, even individual preference, would be offered to explain the participant's isolation.

On the other hand, other researchers touted the positive ramifications of teachers who have come out of the closet to the exclusion of all else. These ramifications, such as becoming more integrated educators, challenging stereotypes, and creating a more open atmosphere, fostered the moral imperative of coming out. These positive outcomes would be ones that all educators would want to encourage. Many of these studies painted a rosy picture of why all teachers should come out, ignoring the real risks and fears faced by gay and lesbian educators. Pat Griffin's study of 13 gay and lesbian teachers went so far in the presentation of the data to state: "no one in the group has had any negative professional repercussions as a result of participation in the project or any of the activities that have grown out of the project" (193). Of course, with this small of a sample size, that may indeed be the case, but the report takes the fears that participants initially expressed before starting the empowerment activity and seems to suggest that they are unfounded. Additionally, there is a suggestion in drawing this conclusion that any fears faced by gay and lesbian faculty related to coming out are unfounded. This rhetorical position serves to put additional pressure on faculty to disclose and causes many to see any personal hesitations as some sort of moral failing. Even though coming out was part of a liberation movement, it quickly changed into a kind of dogma where there was no middle ground to

be held. Coming out was good, staying in the closet was bad. The moral view had become that black and white.

By presenting gay and lesbian educators as either in or out of the closet, scholars washed over the complexities of negotiating the “closet door.” Rather than seeing coming out as a spectrum where the individual may advance by degrees or reach a position where he chooses to remain, most of the literature about gay and lesbian educators presents coming out as an “in” or “out” proposition. Even when scholars and researchers acknowledge the need to revisit disclosure within certain contexts, there is still a privileging of greater openness. Underlying this call to openness is a rhetoric of courage that has long been associated with coming out. This rhetoric of courage can be seen when Kate Adams and Kim Emery write, “a whole passel of opportunities opens up when lesbian and gay teachers [. . .] *dare* to engage the world with the whole of their lives” (26, emphasis added). Coming out is positioned here as a challenge, a mountain to climb, and to a great extent, the question being posed in the research is whether or not the instructor is up to the challenge. As it is not a physical challenge, it becomes a moral one, a challenge of character. Will one have the courage to face the moral challenge? This seems to be the question one is left with after reading the studies.

Some scholars take a more realistic approach of portraying coming out as a continuum or a process with fits and starts. Others, such as Debbie Epstein and Richard Johnson, recognize that being open about sexual orientation often occurs on a case-by-case basis: “There are decisions to be made on a continuous, day-to-day basis—often several times a day. Decisions like these involve a careful scrutiny of each context. Each such decision is accompanied by a risk and a wide range of possible effects” (199). Since

teachers face a new round of students every semester, coming out is a repetitive process, as expressed by one of Kevin Jennings interviewees: “I envy famous people. They come out on television or in a magazine article and never have to do it again. For the rest of us, coming out is a difficult and never ending process” (131). Openly gay participants in this study described approaching disclosure with mixed feelings of trepidation and excitement. The research takes a more nuanced position to disclosure portraying it in shades of gray rather than in black and white.

The likely reason for such a pro-disclosure position in the literature is a consequence of those who are conducting the research. Toni McNaron discusses how her research results were skewed by the fact that most of the 304 individuals who participated in her study chose to give her names and addresses for potential follow-up research. Many went even further, providing McNaron with lengthy essays describing their campus working conditions (23). With participants who are so willing to be open about their lives, it is not surprising that she finds the vocal and visible presence of out faculty on campus to be rated the single most important factor in bringing about change. A great many of her participants had come out on their campuses; her participants wanted to believe that their disclosure mattered. McNaron’s own story emphasizes how important coming out was in her conducting the research study. Had she remained a closeted professor, she would not have conceived the study or put it into action. Similarly, scholars and researchers who have explored coming out are individuals who have disclosed. Given that the scholars and researchers investigating coming out have crossed the “abyss” themselves, it is no wonder that a pro-disclosure position is advocated. Likewise, the legacy of the moral imperative to come out, first discussed by Crew and

Norton, has remained a constant in the scholarly work on the topic of higher education faculty and homosexuality.

3. Gay and Lesbian Research in Composition Studies: Three Examples

Composition researchers who are interested in the intersection between sexuality and writing have benefited greatly from the work of three groundbreaking research studies: Harriet Malinowitz's *Textual Orientations: Lesbian and Gay Students and the Making of Discourse Communities* (1995), Zan Meyer Gonçalves's *Sexuality and the Politics of Ethos in the Writing Classroom* (2005), and Jonathan Alexander's *Literacy, Sexuality, Pedagogy: Theory and Practices for Composition Studies* (2008). Each of these pedagogical studies has as its focus students and the ways in which gay and lesbian or queer sexuality can be useful as a tool to teach writing. Alexander identifies a common thread running through these works: "[they] argue for the importance of challenging homophobic responses in student writing and creating safe spaces in which queer students . . . can articulate their truths, tell their stories, and explore the development of literate practices that describe what their sexuality means to them" (12).

These studies are transdisciplinary, connecting the researcher's understandings of critical pedagogy, rhetoric, and gay and lesbian studies to issues specific to composition.

Additionally, these studies are ethnographic and have theoretical frameworks influenced by poststructuralist, feminist, and queer theories. These studies very much ground my own research. They are what Alexander and his collaborator, David Wallace, call "the 'queer turn' in composition scholarship" (12).

Malinowitz's book, *Textual Orientations*, was the first to make use of theories from poststructuralism and gay and lesbian studies and apply those ideas to the first-year

writing classroom. To theoretically ground her study, Malinowitz blends the ideas of Kenneth Bruffee and James Berlin into what she labels a social construction theory. Bruffee offers the following summary as a partial definition of social construction theory: “Concepts, ideas, theories, the world, reality, and facts are all language constructs generated by knowledge communities and used by them to maintain community coherence” (777). Malinowitz then takes this theory and adds in notions of rhetorical discourse drawn from Michel Foucault, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, and Judith Butler to develop a transdisciplinary theory useful for composition research. Her purpose is to create a means to investigate gay and lesbian students’ writing in a first-year composition course. Social construction theory assists her in developing an explanation of how gay and lesbian students negotiate their sexuality in their class writing assignments.

Malinowitz’s emphasis on social construction theory leads her to examine the concept of discourse through the lens of community. She takes into account a number of scholars in her discussion of discourse communities, such as Patricia Bizzell, Bruce Herzberg, John Swales, and Joseph Harris, among others. While she agrees with these researchers that discourse is indeed a community product, she chooses to focus her investigation around the challenges community brings to the notion of discourse, particularly for gay and lesbian students who are involved in a classroom community. For her, the “real battle becomes not so much one over turf and inclusivity . . . but one over the naming or erasure of tensions” (86). Malinowitz is most concerned with the homogenous tendencies of community discourse and the way these tendencies smooth out disruptions creating the appearance of a community that speaks with a single voice. Malinowitz finds that when gay and lesbian students speak out about their sexuality,

dissonance is a by-product of their disclosure. While she finds that this dissonance can be valuable to the learning situation, she is also cognizant and concerned about what it takes for the gay or lesbian student to speak out and live with this dissonance. Dissonance can be disconcerting. Malinowitz's research illustrates how the activity of coming out can be a disruption to community discourse.

My study builds on Malinowitz's conclusion that coming out disrupts community discourse and can create dissonance, which the community will attempt to lessen. For some in the community, the lessening will be a matter of ignoring LW's sexuality. They will conveniently "forget" that he is gay, until his rhetoric reminds them. My study of a faculty member, rather than a classroom of students during a single semester as in Malinowitz's study, allows for a historical examination over many years. This fact helped me to see how disruption and dissonance comes and goes in the community. It is not possible to sustain either the state of sameness or difference in the community's discourse. Instead, there is a state of flux, a range of movement between the two positions. Although there will be times that the community's discourse appears homogenous, it will not be long before it is disrupted by internal or external forces. Similarly, the state of dissonance can not be sustained, but eventually the community discourse will settle down. How my study builds on Malinowitz's work is to illustrate the dynamic nature of community discourse related to gay and lesbian disclosure.

Coming out is central as well to the work of Zan Meyer Gonçalves whose *Sexuality and the Politics of Ethos in the Writing Classroom* "investigates the differing discourses [gay and lesbian] student speakers use and explores how [these] students are positioned in various dominant discourses by those discourses and how [these] students

apparently learn to reposition themselves by using alternate or subjugated discourses” (29). In other words, she looks at the ways openly gay students rhetorically disrupt dominant discourses and remake them in a way that includes the students’ own experience. She sees “students reclaim and redefine . . . the dominant discourse that pin[s] them into stigmatized subject positions” (29). Her research site is a LGBT speakers’ bureau at a state school in the Northeast. The speakers’ bureau sends out gay and lesbian students to talk about their lives in public forums both on campus and off. The students in essence come out to their audience at each speaking engagement.

One dominant discourse that Gonçalves observes being disrupted by her research participants is the discourse of romantic narrations. When stories of love between gay and lesbian couples are shared, Gonçalves finds the idea of marriage as a union between only a man and a woman questioned by those listening to the stories. Moreover, in disrupting the dominant romantic narrative, her research participants underscore how some are excluded from participation in social structures because their particular stories do not match those of the dominant group. The students in Gonçalves’ study are a physical manifestation of this exclusion for their listeners, and in speaking to their audience, they change thinking, certainly their own and possibly others. Gonçalves finds that when students’ come out to their peers a disruption in heterosexist discourses occurs.

My research further substantiates the ways coming out calls attention to heterosexist discourses. Within his own classroom, LW makes use of his sexuality to address issues of language and the meanings of words. He is candid with students about the exclusion or derision that may accompany his status as a gay man. LW’s coming out directly addresses the heterosexist presumptions within society. LW also calls attention to

“custom” and the way it may be used to exclude or set apart gay and lesbian individuals. Once, LW had an administrator tell him that he should not flaunt his sexuality. LW’s response was to ask the administrator about the wedding ring on his left hand. The man defined the ring as “custom.” LW pointed out that what is “custom” to one may be flaunting to another. Sharing these sorts of stories with students is a means for unsettling heterosexist discourse. This study further illustrates and deepens the work of Gonçalves.

In his 2008 book, *Literacy, Sexuality, Pedagogy: Theory and Practice for Composition Studies*, Jonathan Alexander makes the case that sexuality and literacy are entwined in our culture. He asserts that everyone must be able to speak and think about sex and sexuality “intelligently, critically, and even comfortably . . . if we are to participate in some of the most important debates of our time” (2). Yet, he finds “compositionists, those charged with forwarding and developing literacy among students in higher education, have done surprisingly little to understand this intertwining of literacy and sexuality” (3). He believes we who teach writing must change how we “understand the interrelationship of sexuality and literacy and to think more fully and critically how we as literacy specialists can – and should – address this relationship in our composition classes” (3). He admonishes compositionists that “paying attention to and exploring how sex and sexuality are constructed and figured in literacies” (17 - 18) is an important goal for writing studies. The reason for this is that the maze of sex and sexuality discourses presented to students each day will only continue to grow more complex and complicated in their future. Without a critical literacy that assists students in interrogating this maze of discourses, they may be lost in them, unable to find their way through them.

His study looks at a number of classroom practices that might assist in building the “sexual literacy” he is calling for. His study’s focus is directly on the students and the ways in which they gain critical literacy through the investigation of dominant sexual discourses. In some ways, Alexander’s research is exploring how the culture’s seemingly endless conversations about sex and sexuality, particularly by those with authority, might make for a worthwhile investigation in a writing classroom. The classroom practices he investigates employ queer theory in the designing of writing assignments, transgender rhetorics as a means to reconceptualize discussions about gender and identity, and investigations of marriage in light of discussions about monogamy, polyamory, prostitution, and reproductive rights and responsibilities (28 – 29). What he concludes is that instructors who have students explore the varying institutional discussions of sexuality can build their students’ critical literacy.

While the theoretical concerns Alexander brings to bear on this discussion are important to my own study, my research differs from his in that I explore the instructor’s role or identity in this process. Critical literacy in Alexander’s study is encouraged and developed through activities and assignments in the classroom. To some extent, the instructor is an invisible presence in the classroom. Who the instructor is does not matter in Alexander’s research. The literacy worker at the head of the class remains uninvestigated. By leaving the instructor out of the research, it would seem an important aspect of the context and situation remains unexamined.

As can be seen in the earlier discussions of Malinowitz and Gonçalves, the queer turn in composition research over the past fifteen years has focused research on students and student communities. The sexuality of the instructor has been left out of the research.

The reasons for this slight are unknown, but my study intends to take up the challenge of investigating the instructor. One might speculate that the research focus was on students because a significant element of composition research tries to understand student writing and thinking experiences. Although if this is the goal, interrogating the instructor's role in students' writing and thinking experiences would be necessary. A more significant reason for not considering the instructor is the standing of identity-related issues within the field of composition. As Composition has adopted poststructural thinking and tried to distance itself from essentialist notions, the entire field has moved away from identity-related research. In the next section, I discuss the challenges of conducting identity-related research in Composition given this current ideological preference. Also, I intend to address how I overcame the problem identity-related research presents to empirical researchers.

4. Identity and Poststructural Theory

Poststructural thinking boils the life experience down to language situated within discourse, elevating discourse above all else. Paula M. L. Moya helps explain how discourse came to be at the center of poststructural thinking: "Because subjects exist only in relation to ever-evolving webs of signification and because they constantly differ from themselves as time passes and meanings change, the self – as a unified, stable, and knowable entity existing prior to or outside language – is merely a fiction of language, an effect of discourse" (6). Despite our desire to present ourselves as knowable, understandable, and centered, we only know who we are through the language we speak to ourselves and others, as well as the language spoken to us. While our rhetoric may attempt to unify and tie up our loose ends, it is subject to change with the passing of time,

revealing our identities as contingent. Further, because language is, as David Richter writes, “fraught with intractable paradoxes” (818), no one can possibly rely on language for a truth that is anything but contingent, even the truth of knowing who we are.

This move toward an emphasis on discourse by poststructuralists has come about in large part as a response to essentialist views of identity that have dominated mainstream thinking. These views hold that identity for both individuals and groups is knowable, stable, and fixed; it is most often based on a single, salient factor, such as race, gender, or sexuality. Helping to further tease out the definition of *essentialism*, Leitch and the other editors of *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism* describe it as “the belief that certain people or entities share some essential, unchanging ‘nature’ that secures their membership in a category” (2194). The concept of essence and secure membership are what poststructuralist thinkers find most disturbing about essentialism and what they refute most vigorously when they respond to essentialist thinking.

In the tug of war between essentialism and poststructural thinking, the notion of identity seems to be caught in a war zone where it may be praised and protected in some circles of the academy and scorned and derided in others. There are sites within the university, such as Chicano and African-American studies programs, where essentialism continues to be an organizing principle in the scholarly, political, and activist endeavors of the discipline. This is where essentialism is praised and protected. Identity in these circles provides a means of articulating and examining significant correlations between lived experiences and social locations. The concept, however, also has meaning within the field of English. One prominent literary scholar who has pushed back against those who would reduce her experience as a black, lesbian woman to simply discourse is

Barbara Smith. In her important essay, "Toward a Black Feminist Criticism," Smith makes "connections between the politics of Black women's lives, what we write about, and our situations as artists" (20). She does this as a result of her own "rage" (21) at the lack of attention paid "to those who want to examine Black women's experience through studying our history, literature, and culture" (21). Smith considers the move against essentialism as not much more than a narrow academic debate and is quoted in the *Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism* as "shar[ing] an objective political status with other Black females in this country, a political status that is not substantially altered by economic or educational variables" (Leitch 2301). Smith seems to be basing her identity in this remark on a single, salient feature: her race. As Smith's position illustrates, essentialism, while a popular mainstream concept, can also hold great sway in some parts of the academy. It is a theoretical position still defended by important academic thinkers.

On the other hand, identity does not fare so well in the hands of poststructuralist thinkers, who are more likely to scorn and deride it. They are likely, according to Moya, to "claim that it is an error to grant ontological or epistemological significance to identity categories" (4). In a polar opposite position to Smith, poststructuralists, such as bell hooks, see rejecting essentialist notions as imperative because in doing so "a serious challenge to racism" (2482) is mounted. By abandoning essentialist thinking, hooks argues that it will be easier to challenge "colonial imperialist paradigms of black identity which represent blackness one-dimensionally in ways that reinforce and sustain white supremacy" (2482). Essentialism, when viewed from a poststructuralist perspective, is a tool for maintaining the status quo, rather than as a position that can unite those with common political interests, as Smith advocated. Identity in poststructuralism becomes a

principle that reifies what has come before it. Instead of serving as a means for changing structures in order to make them more equitable, essentialist thinking maintains imperialist notions. As such, essentialist thinking is seen as pernicious by poststructuralists. The binary that results from poststructuralism's opposition to essentialism creates a significant hurdle for those attempting to use identity-related concerns, like coming out, as a means to examine a human activity, an activity such as rhetoric. In some sense, these two positions, essentialism and poststructuralism, must be reconciled in order for me to carry out my research.

Making this reconciliation even more necessary is the degree to which rhetorical research has adopted poststructuralist thinking. Linda Brodkey states the importance of poststructural theory to rhetorical research when she writes, "If what we say and write matters, if what students say and write matters, if words constitute world views rather than simply state reality and thoughts, then poststructural theories are the only ones I know of that even broach the implications of that claim for research" (307 – 08). Of course, Foucault, as one of the major sources for poststructural thinking, asserts that the theory has changed the role of the intellectual from one concerned with speaking universally to one who speaks "within specific sectors, at the precise points where their own conditions of life or work situate them" ("Truth and Power" 1667). Likewise, Alexander advocates that the turn toward poststructural thinking in composition has "significantly transformed how many of us understand, theorize, and practice writing instruction" (6). For my study to have meaning to rhetorical studies, it must present identity in a manner that is in keeping with poststructuralist thinking, but also employ identity in a way that sheds light on the issue of the rhetorical situation.

Other scholars have also been concerned with how identity fares in a poststructural environment. Keith Gilyard, in his 2000 chair's address to the CCCC, observes that identity "often gets stuck in passive relativism, just a classroom full of perceived instability. It's useful at times to complicate notions of identity, but primary identities operate powerfully in the world and have to be productively engaged" (270). As a remedy to this dilemma, Gilyard discusses how he is drawn to the theoretical work of realist theorists, such as Satya P. Mohanty, Caroline S. Hau, and William S. Wilkerson. Mohanty addresses the binary between essentialists' and poststructuralists' thinking and attempts to reconcile the two positions when she suggests, "we need to explore the possibility of a theoretical understanding of social and cultural identity in terms of objective social location" (43). She goes on to write, "we need a cognitivist conception of experience . . . enabling us to see experience as a source of both real knowledge and social mystification" (43). Both knowledge and mystification are important, not one or the other, as essentialist and poststructuralist notions seem to suggest. Along with this, both knowledge and mystification should be "open to analysis on the basis of empirical information about our social situation and [as] a theoretical account of our current social and political arrangements" (43). Thus, an identity-related study situated within an explanation of the culture has value for it reveals important information about the culture. Regardless of whether identities are inherited or constructed, "they are valuable," Mohanty claims, and "their epistemic status should be taken very seriously" (43).

Carolyn S. Hau also takes up the challenge of identity as a research lens when she asks, "How, in fact, does the intellectual go about identifying and articulating, creating and communicating knowledge and experiences adequately?" (135). Hau seems to be

asking whether or not identity-related research can be trusted, if that is what is suggested by “adequately.” The issue of reliability is a prominent criticism of identity-related research by poststructuralist thinkers, so addressing this issue is important in bridging the two positions. For Hau, the reliability of identity-related research is found in the concept of error, not by avoiding it, however, as most texts on academic research would strongly recommend. Instead, Hau would have the researcher embrace error and what it can bring to the identity-related research project. The realist account, in Hau’s words,

foregrounds the question of error and mystification and highlights the potential contribution of our understanding of error to the revision and reinterpretation of knowledge. In other words, the extent to which a theory can be revised and improved on the basis of new information depends in large part on our ability to acquire a precise understanding of the nature and sources of error and mystification. (160)

Hau thinks theorists should move away from a consideration of error per se to a consideration of the uses of error. For Hau, error is always present in academic research; thus, she embraces it. One of the greatest uses for error, Hau suggests, is to employ it as a way of making better theory. Hau identifies theory as an entity that is evolving and unstable and that error may be the driving force in a theory’s evolution. The need to identify and correct error by researchers creates a perpetual discourse, keeping theory on the move and valuable to its moment. Acknowledging error and keeping it in the forefront of research is not a detriment to the research, particularly if that research is building theory knowledge, as my study attempts to do. Additionally, the use of error can assist the researcher in testing out which theory is most appropriate to the data. Hau

writes, “the necessity of adjudicating between competing theories” (160) will be required, “emphasiz[ing] the indissoluble link between theory and practice, between learning and teaching” (161). As research studies like mine are designed to be knowledge-making for both the researcher as well as the field, error is a means for this student researcher to learn how to apply and select theory as well as a means for teaching the conclusions of the study. Whatever conclusions I arrive at, acknowledging the possibility of error in arriving at that conclusion is necessary. Likewise, when the study is published, the presence and acknowledgment of error within the study will be both a learning and a teaching tool for those reading it.

Realist theories of identity were useful to my study. They helped me bridge poststructural understandings without sacrificing the significance of how lived experiences matter to those participating in my study. Realist theories provided a theoretical understanding with which to investigate how an identity-related issue, coming out, plays a role in shifting attitudes. By creating a bridge between the positions of essentialism and poststructuralism, realist theories maintain the strengths of each theoretical position and make identity-related research possible.

Next, I will discuss coming out and how this activity has been very much at the center of the tug-of-war between essentialist and poststructuralist thinking. Diana Fuss writes, “Few other issues have been as divisive and as simultaneously energizing as the questions of whether ‘gay identity’ is empirical fact or political fiction” (97). In my research, the tension between essentialism and poststructuralism regarding the LGBT experience was seen another way, and realist theory, articulated by Wilkerson, was most useful in reconciling these polar opposite positions for this research project.

5. Reconciling Coming Out and Poststructural Theory

Important to the issue of legitimacy, coming out narratives are a way for individuals to link themselves with others, not just in the present time, but also with those in the past. In this way, a lineage, an empirical fact, is established where the modern gay or lesbian can trace their heritage back to Plato and Sappho. This lineage is an important element in essentialist understandings. For many gays and lesbians, this lineage is more significant than their own family history. A recent example of this essentialist thinking was on display when gay activist Larry Kramer returned to Yale University, his alma mater, and where he had donated one million dollars to the Gay Studies Department. In his 2009 speech accepting the lifetime achievement award from gay alumni, Kramer accused Yale of misusing his gift because the university had situated the Gay Studies Department within gender studies, a discipline highly influenced by poststructural thinking. In his speech he makes the case for the essentialist argument: “Why can’t we accept that homosexuality has been pretty much the same since the beginning of human history, whether it was called homosexuality, sodomy, buggery, hushmarkedry, or hundreds of other things, or had no name at all? What we do now they pretty much did then.”

Contrary to Kramer’s essentialist thinking, poststructuralist perspectives see the current gay or lesbian identity as very different from the identities of those who engaged in same-sex practices in previous eras. In theory set forth by queer scholars, heavily influenced by poststructural thinking, gays and lesbians are understood to be historically situated within a cultural moment, and that sexuality, as discussed earlier, is best understood as a rhetorical activity. David M. Halperin in *One Hundred Years of*

Homosexuality argues, “sexuality is a cultural production: it represents the appropriation of the human body and of its erogenous zones by an ideological discourse” (25).

Sexuality is a product of the culture’s current language.

One of the first concerns that poststructuralists raise regarding essentialist coming out narratives is the idea that the individual comes to a realization of his or her sexuality. Thinking in this way, coming out is viewed as the individual coming to an understanding of a pre-existing condition, a condition that others may know but that the individual is personally unaware of. Sedgwick has argued against this *apriori* thinking. For her, coming out is a speech act that “may have nothing to do with the acquisition of new information” (3). Instead, she has forwarded the notion that coming out is a performance, not a report (4). It is a performance gay men and lesbian women create out of the language systems they are within at the time. Thus, when individuals reflect upon past experiences and see those as indicative of “gayness,” they are performing this action through a discursive position that they did not have at the time the experience first took place. Moreover, when they are performing the discursive act of linking past events to their current situation, they are finding a latent pattern in these events. This pattern tends to unify the events in an effort that makes sense to the person. At the time, the events did not alert the individual that they were gay, but in hindsight, where there is a strong need to make discursive sense out of the events of one’s life, the activities are understood to be a sign of “gayness.” This making sense of past actions is the realization or awareness that Sedgwick was troubled by in coming out narratives.

Poststructural thinking also questions the idea that the gay or lesbian individual comes out and is done with it. Instead, the recursive nature of coming out is considered. It

is a fallacy that the LGBT individual comes out once and the action is complete. Perhaps that is the case for celebrities and movie stars, whose public statements are carried across mass media, but for the common individual who encounters situations everyday where he or she must choose whether or not to disclose, coming out is a continuous activity.

Rather than making the decision once and having it settled, each new situation presents a choice to disclose or not, and the individual may choose not to come out even if he or she has come out in other or similar situations in the past. The choice to come out may be dictated by contextual conditions that cause the gay or lesbian person to remain silent during certain situations. This does not mean the individual would not come out in the future, if the circumstances were similar. What it does mean is that coming out is a rhetorical discourse, and as such, the choice not to make use of it is always available.

My own personal experience provides an example of this phenomenon. When I have been in adjunct teaching situations where I felt little support from the department chair, I certainly have chosen not to verbally disclose my sexuality to colleagues or students. Of course, my teaching vita clearly indicates my strong interest in the intersection between composition and gay and lesbian scholarship, so my sexual preference is most likely known, but I still say nothing. Instead, I cover. *Covering* is a term identified by Goffman in his 1963 book, *Stigma*. He defines the term in the following manner, “persons who are ready to admit possession of a stigma . . . may nonetheless make a great effort to keep the stigma from looming large” (102). In other words, someone may know that I am gay, but I choose not to bring up anything related to my sexuality, making my gay identity less obtrusive to the department chair. I choose to say nothing not because I am being discrete, but because I feel the need to cover to

maintain a relationship with someone who has power and authority over me. Kenji Yoshino makes use of Goffman's term in his 2006 book, *Covering*, where he details the negative consequences of covering for all minorities, including gays and lesbians, as well as the society at large. Yoshino sees the demand to cover as "the civil rights issue of our time," and posits that until this need to cover is surmounted "we will not have full citizenship in America" (23). Even as a lived experience, then, the requirement to repeatedly come out in a variety of situations makes the seemingly straight-forward affair of coming out far more troublesome.

Once coming out is seen from a poststructural perspective, other concerns are raised. One of the associated issues that arises regarding coming out is how it may both define and limit the individual. Those hearing the coming out may find the individual's sexuality more remarkable than any other identity marker that the individual may possess. Susan Talburt has taken up these issues in her ethnographic study, *Subject to Identity*, where she reports on the experiences of three lesbian educators at a large state university. She finds her subjects "being called upon to be representatives or spokespersons within the university, commodified, and tokenized precisely because of their status as successful minorities" (23). This defining and limiting aspect of coming out has been one of the main challenges to using it as an identity marker. Coming out, when viewed in light of poststructural thinking, seems to be an activity that compartmentalizes human experience rather than understands the human condition within a more holistic framework.

Yet, coming out continues to be a material event, meaningful to many, even as it is understood to be a rhetorical event, too. To simply discount and not study the activity

that takes place regularly in higher education classrooms seems foolish. Why would researchers want to miss an opportunity to discover its affect on a number of important pedagogical concerns? Perhaps the issue is the binary the two positions generate, not the theories themselves.

As a consequence of the binary between the essentialist and poststructuralist perspectives, a more multifaceted understanding of coming out is needed. This notion must bridge the essentialists' and poststructuralists' views of coming out to build a theoretical perspective that will be useful for identity-related research. William Wilkerson constructs such a bridge when he brings the essentialist and poststructural perspectives together in his definition of coming out: "[It is] the reinterpretation of homoerotic experiences, previously thought forbidden, as legitimate and positive. This reinterpretation is accomplished via nonhomophobic understandings of the world" (252). Arriving at this point of reinterpretation and understanding of past experiences, which is what occurs when one comes out, leads to reshaping one's past experiences of desire, including the experiences that motivated an individual to come out in the first place. Wilkerson notes, "the experiences themselves cannot be self-evidently meaningful" (252), but instead, must be thought of as "different *retroactively*, such that previous elements of experience cohere together in new, meaningful patterns" (253). Wilkerson's definition recognizes that coming out is an understanding that one comes to, not something that already existed and that the individual somehow finds. His definition goes a long way to address the concerns raised by Sedgwick.

Thus, Wilkerson in his definition helps to reconcile the essentialist and poststructuralist positions of coming out. On the one hand, coming out is an essentialist

activity in that it is a lived experience that someone goes through; on the other hand, coming out is a poststructuralist experience as it is discursive. His definition, however, is two-fold. The second portion of the definition addresses how coming out “is spurred on by a rejection of homophobic institutions and ideals in the current society” (276).

Wilkerson contends that the rejection is “theoretical mediation” (277) made possible by interaction with others who present the individual with alternatives. These others may be self-accepting gays and lesbians, but they need not be individuals. Ideas, such as the criticisms of gender relations, can serve as mentors in helping one reject negative views on homosexuality. In other words, alternative discourses may be provided locally by individuals or nationally by societal debates. When LW comes out, he, too, may be throwing out a discursive lifeline to a gay or lesbian student, or even to a heterosexual student who might question what he or she has been told about “those sorts of people.” LW’s coming out in some cases leads to a rejection of homophobic institutions and ideals by those who hear his disclosure.

Utilizing Wilkerson’s definition, the act of coming out becomes a rethinking endeavor. Certainly I have shown how coming out causes the one performing the action to rethink his or her past, but there may still be a question as to whether or not the action has similar consequences for those who are hearing the disclosure. Of course, the experience would be meaningful to the speaker, but will what he or she is saying matter to others? This is a critical question for this study. To answer it I return again to Sedgwick who contends “that the erotic identity of the person who receives the disclosure is apt also to be implicated, hence perturbed by it” (81). She is saying not only is the gay speaker reinvisioning past experiences when they come out, but the person listening is

also doing the same. Moreover, the person's mind has been set ajar, disrupted. This happens, as Sedgwick says, "because erotic identity, of all things, is never to be circumscribed simply as itself, can never not be relational, is never to be perceived or known by anyone outside of a structure of transference and countertransference" (81). Erotic identity lives in a world of discourse that has implications for both the person speaking the coming out and the one hearing it. It does not stand alone in the mind but connects to other notions, ideas, and concepts. It requires the speaker and the listener to create new understandings. As this is happening, my study suggests that erotic identity is a tool to shift attitudes of students, faculty, and administrators across an entire campus community.

In this chapter, I examined the concept of coming out and how it has been problematized by theorists, developing a definition that favors the social and rhetorical nature of the activity. Additionally, I reviewed some of the discussions regarding coming out and higher education faculty and found that overwhelmingly the academy has taken a pro-disclosure stance. I completed the first section of the chapter with a discussion of how three prominent composition researchers have explored gay and lesbian sexuality in their research. In the latter half of the chapter, I looked at the tensions between essentialist thought and poststructural theory with regard to identity-related research studies. I argued that employing an identity-related activity as an analytical lens requires defining the activity, which in my study is an instructor's coming out, as both material reality and constructed discourse. Realist theories bridge the divide between the two positions. Through acknowledgment of both material and constructed perspectives, the study will be meaningful to the many theorists of both positions who have informed it. In

the next chapter, I focus on the rhetorical theory and literature that also informs this study.

CHAPTER THREE

RHETORICAL CONTESTS

This study looks closely at how coming out made a difference. It looks at the experience of one community college (CC) and an English professor (LW) who teaches there and was open about his sexuality for nearly 30 years. LW is part of the first generation of faculty who disclosed their homosexuality in their higher education workplace environments. Theorists such as Crew, Norton, Keener, and McNaron assert that coming out changes attitudes towards gays and lesbians. Indeed, the data from this study will show that they are correct, but this study goes farther and depicts how changes come about. It portrays these changes, first, by looking at what LW did to make his disclosure satisfy the rhetorical situation, and second, by chronicling the ways in which CC responded to his disclosure in order to fill the community's own exigency.

1. Rhetorical Situation, Rhetorical Contests, and Lineage

I now move forward to a discussion of the rhetorical situation and what Davin Grindstaff calls "rhetorical contests" (1). Grindstaff's notions help to further clarify the meaning of rhetorical situation as he chooses to identify them as contests. He sees these contests as taking place in the public realm and that they are "constitutive" (3) in forging identities, including sexual ones. Rather than seeing identity as an individual construction, Grindstaff argues, "[g]ay male identity [. . .] is essentially public, essentially a product of rhetorical invention, and essentially the residue of social-political contests" (3). Grindstaff's work disputes conventional thinking, which asserts that individuals control their own identity formations. Moreover, his argument is helpful in understanding what is taking place within any rhetorical situation where identity is central to the issue,

not just in the cases that focus on the disclosure of a gay faculty member. Grindstaff contends all identity constructions are public, a product of rhetoric, and carry something left over from previous contests. To identify oneself or another as this or that requires an understanding of the public contest taking place over the identity-marker.

Nevin K. Laib's discussion of rhetoric as "territorial" (581) provides further illumination of Grindstaff's notions of rhetorical contests. Laib defines rhetoric as "the art of claiming, controlling, and defending property and status" (582). Laib's definition suggests that someone or something is attempting to wrest the property or status away, while another is holding on to the "territory." Clearly, some sort of contest is taking place in this description, with possibly very high stakes. The connection between Grindstaff and Laib seems more evident when Laib goes on to write, "[rhetoric] defends property whether that be an acre of land, an idea, a field of research, a way of life, one's self-image and reputation, or the extent of one's power, authority, and position" (582). Laib's use of the verb *defends* makes clear the nature of the rhetorical exchange: it is a challenge, a contest that is taking place. Additionally, Laib sees this territorial battle playing out in the public sphere, as fighting for territory means fighting for rhetorical ground against others. Of course, not just individuals fight for rhetorical ground; it can be groups of people with common connections, such as LGBT individuals, but it also can be disciplines, such as history, biology, or composition. Grindstaff's "rhetorical contest" metaphor, coupled with Laib's "territoriality" position, helps in understanding how all identity constructions, not just sexual identities, are forged through the public discourse.

Beyond a theoretical perspective, Grindstaff's theory of rhetorical contests provides an analytical strategy for investigating rhetorical situations. Rhetorical

situations, Scott Consigny claims, “involve particularities of persons, actions, and agencies in a certain place and time” (178). As the rhetorical situation is filled with these particularities, each one jockeys for position in an effort to gain influence. Thus, an examination of a rhetorical situation would try to understand how these particularities or constraints competed for this influence. The point of this, according to Ralph L. Larson, is to see the conditions “within which a piece of discourse is generated, in the hope that knowing these conditions may help us more precisely to distinguish kinds of discourse” (168). By examining a rhetorical situation using the rhetorical contest metaphor, it is possible to differentiate discourses one from another. Moreover, if a researcher can distinguish between the separate discourses active in a rhetorical situation, then histories of these discourses could be generated by the researcher in order to better understand how discourses emerged and what their discursive lineages are.

In this chapter, I will employ Grindstaff’s “rhetorical contest” metaphor to probe the discursive lineages of gay men and writing teachers. As an openly gay writing teacher in higher education, LW interacts almost daily with the discursive lineages that bear down on coming out and the teaching of writing. Whether it be students, other faculty, or administrators, they bring to their interactions with LW the residue of previous rhetorical contests related to these two activities. I intend to demonstrate that these discursive lineages remain powerful and that they continue to shape all of my participants’ thinking when it comes to the activities of coming out and teaching writing. It is impossible to be a gay man or a writing teacher and to escape the outcomes of rhetorical contests that have taken place previously in relation to these two spheres. My purpose in exploring these discursive lineages is to make them more transparent, generating a kind of “family tree”

that reveals the ancestry of the current discourses which surround gay men and writing teachers. Additionally, these discursive lineages are important in comprehending and interpreting the research data presented in Chapters Five and Six of this study.

Although my initial interest in these discursive lineages was based on the fact that LW both discloses and teaches writing, I have discovered through a consideration of the rhetorical contests that coming out and teaching writing share unexpected common discursive ground. The analogy between the two activities grows even stronger when coming out and teaching writing are considered over the past one hundred and fifty years. Unexpectedly, I found that they reflect one another: 1. Both trace “being a problem” back to the nineteenth-century; 2. Both elevate their visibility following twentieth-century societal changes in the United States; and 3. Both struggle to be heard by and to receive parity with other, more dominant discourses in an increasingly global discursive environment. Given these commonalities in their histories, the notion that coming out and teaching writing share discursive lineages is perhaps less unexpected than would be first thought. Mikhail M. Bakhtin helps to explain how disparate entities can share discursive influences when he observes, “Language is not a neutral medium that passes freely and easily into the private property of the speaker’s intentions; it is populated -- overpopulated -- with the intentions of others” (294). This would suggest that those who come out and those who teach writing struggle to control their own language and must contend with outside influences from more dominant discursive positions. These dominant discursive positions hold intentions toward these groups that are not benign; the discursive positions are out to win rhetorical territory after all. This chapter will identify and trace the impact of dominant discursive influences on both gays and lesbians, as well

as writing teachers. This extended analogy is a beginning in creating a discursive family tree for gay men and writing teachers.

Although there are many possible dominant discourses that influence both, I will focus on what I consider to be the three most significant: the discourses of science, protest, and pluralism. A discussion of these three shows how these more powerful discourses “overpopulate” understandings of both coming out and teaching writing, generating rhetorical contests that influence the behaviors of those involved in the enterprise. Just as this study contends that coming out shifts attitudes, the study also acknowledges that rhetorical contests between these powerful discourses have materiality. The dominant discourses are difficult to fight against, as they have substantial rhetorical resources. Furthermore, the discourses of science, protest, and pluralism position subjects, in this case homosexuals and writing teachers/students, in specific ways, asking individuals engaged in the activities of coming out and teaching writing to straddle numerous ideological conceits at the same time. This straddling results in what is seemingly contradictory behaviors and cross purposes, taking away much of the homosexual’s or writing teacher’s own agency.

Prior to embarking on this discussion of discursive lineage, it is important to note that in my presentation my goal is not to suggest ironclad divisions between eras.

Although I will use divisions as an organizational tool and as a means to consider the discursive lineage of coming out and teaching writing, I am mindful of the arbitrary nature of divisions. My purpose in using divisions is similar to James L. Kinneavy’s efforts when he attempted to define the aims of various discourses in early composition instruction. In considering the use of divisions, he wrote, “[s]uch an exercise must be

looked upon as any scientific exercise -- an abstraction from certain aspects of reality in order to focus attention on and carefully analyze the characteristics of some feature of reality in a scientific vacuum, as it were” (297). The divisions I make use of allow me to analyze discourses in a way that would not be possible without the use of divisions. The divisions I will use are already common to the fields of LGBT and composition studies, which is certainly not to say that these divisions have not been questioned by scholars and in some cases found lacking. As I make use of the divisions, I will point out how lines should be blurred and divisions seen as somewhat arbitrary.

2. The Discourses of Science: Trying to Solve the Problem

Robert Connors in *Composition-Rhetoric: Backgrounds, Theory, and Pedagogy* and Sharon Crowley in *Composition in the University* have investigated how the required writing class developed in the nineteenth-century and subsequently influenced the teaching of writing. Both Connors and Crowley in their narrative histories identify Harvard’s laments over the writing of their entering students. Both see the institution’s desire to fix students’ poor writing as a pivotal moment in the development of the discipline of Composition. Connors goes on to discuss Adams Sherman Hill, the administrator of the Harvard entrance exam, who instituted a remedial writing class, English A, to assist in solving the crisis. While the intention was for this class to be temporary, Connors notes, the class “was the prototype for the required freshman course in composition that within fifteen years would be standard at almost every college in America” (11). Instead of being a temporary fix, the class spread like wildfire and became ubiquitous at every higher education institution. As Crowley points out, the story of the required writing class is part of a larger narrative that includes the rise of the

middle class in the US at mid-nineteenth-century and following the Civil War (54).

Higher education experienced pressure from these changes. The increase in the middle class encouraged more people, including women, to demand additional subjects beyond the ministry or teaching for higher education study. With the passage of the Morrill Act of 1862, which established the Agricultural and Mechanical Colleges, a new population of students considered attending colleges. Connors writes, “colleges were flooded with students who needed to be taught to write, who needed to be taught correctness in writing, who needed to know forms, and who could be run through the system in great numbers” (9). This is the beginning, according to Connors, of “try[ing] to solve the problems of teaching writing” (10).

To solve the problems that came from admitting more and more students with varied literacy skills, colleges chose a strategy that centered on having teachers teach certain criteria and rules. Connors argues that these criteria and rules shared “an attraction for taxonomy and simplicity” (12) and that they were “put forward in a series of textbooks remarkable for their unanimity of view on and their similar treatments of these canonized concepts” (13). As the required writing class was coming into existence during a veritable discursive explosion in science, the teachers found themselves building knowledge on scientific ways of thinking. Science thus became one of the lineages associated with writing instruction. Connors points out, “This was a time when the names of Darwin, Huxley, and Spencer were in the air, and in the burgeoning scientific atmosphere of the day, there seemed a real possibility of a truly scientific rhetoric based upon discoverable laws of discourse” (271). Taxonomy, in the form of established criteria and divisions, was an important factor in schooling students generally. Classification and

division were taking place within the rapidly developing fields of biology, botany, and other natural sciences, and this way of thinking about a concept became the model for teaching and learning across higher education; thus it was applied to writing. To this point, Connors mentions David J. Hillis' *Science of Rhetoric* "which assumed that composition is as much a science as botany or chemistry" (272).

The rules that were to be followed in writing were drawn from seventeenth-, eighteenth-, and nineteenth-century conventions. The simplest way to teach these conventions was thought to be through drilling. However, drills were not compelling enough to hold the students' attention. To make the drills and the importance of correct writing more paramount, students and teachers needed to see the work as a correction of some sort of moral deficit. Therefore, the rules were to be drilled into undergraduates for the purpose of not only making them stronger communicators but individuals of higher moral purpose. It was not long before the association between a person's moral character and their ability to compose grammatically correct prose was firmly established, another lineage in writing instruction that remains powerful to this day. Crowley quotes from Brainerd Kellogg, who taught at Brooklyn Polytechnic in 1893:

[O]ne's English is already taken as the test and measure of his culture -- he is known by the English he keeps. To mistake his words, (even to mispronounce them or to speak them indistinctly) to huddle them as a mob into sentences, to trample on plain rules of grammar, to disregard the idioms of the language, -- these things, all or severally, disclose the speaker's intellectual standing. One's English betrays his breeding, tells

what society he frequents, and determines what doors are to open to him or be closed against him. (63).

Those who spoke or wrote incorrectly were not just uninformed or uneducated but were somehow less as human beings. For the most part, this way of thinking and teaching writing is at the center of what comes to be called “current-traditional rhetoric.” In this atmosphere, the teaching of writing is about much more than writing; it is also about conforming to a certain appropriate standard.

Just as the required writing class in the nineteenth-century was influenced by the discourses of science, so, too, was the notion of the homosexual. Neil Miller reports that the term *homosexuality* seems to have been used first in 1869 by Karl Maria Kertbeny, a German-Hungarian campaigner for the abolition of Prussia’s laws that criminalized sexual relations between men; however, the more widely used term of the time for same-sex activities was *inversion* (13). Karl Westphal invented the phrase *contrary sexual feeling*, which further established homosexuality as less than heterosexuality. Foucault addresses how in the scientific atmosphere of the day same-sex activity became the primary identity-marker for an individual: “Homosexuality appeared as one of the forms of sexuality when it was transposed from the practice of sodomy onto a kind of interior androgyny, a hermaphroditism of the soul. The sodomite had been a temporary aberration; the homosexual was now a species” (*The History of Sexuality* 43). Prior to the scientific community defining homosexuality in the last half of the nineteenth-century, the individual who engaged in same-sex sexual contact was thought to practice sodomy. Only the act was significant; the person and his or her identity were seen as separate from the act. However, in the scientific atmosphere of the late nineteenth century, the view

changed, and the sodomite became a personality, the homosexual. As Foucault states, "Nothing that went into his total composition was unaffected by his sexuality" (*The History of Sexuality* 43). From that time forward, Foucault argues that sexuality is understood as ruling an individual's makeup, and to understand the person requires that you understand the role sexuality plays in his choices and actions (*The History of Sexuality* 43). This lineage is seen in many present day discussions related to gays and lesbians. For example, the discussion of essentialist thinking in Chapter Two illustrates how sexuality is still seen by many to rule a person's actions.

Like students who had to take remedial writing classes, homosexuals were judged to be in a deficit position and in need of a transformation. Their status as homosexuals reflected not just on their behavior but on their poor breeding, the company they kept, and their moral character, just as writing students' poor use of English reflected these same failings. Kellogg's previously noted comments about one's English being a marker could be applied just as easily to homosexuals. The prescription for the behaviors of poor English speaking and homosexuality were similar; those with authority thought a combination of both moral instruction and scientific experimentation would be the cure.

This is not to say that homosexuals shared a status anywhere near as elevated as inadequate speakers and writers of English. Writing students might be thought of poorly; they were seldom demonized, however. Harbeck notes that during this time "homosexuality was considered to be innately evil" ("Gay and Lesbian Educators" 121), although rarely were the terms *homosexual* or *homosexuality* even used in legal documents. Naming the behavior seemed to be a moral breach for some, as Harbeck points out in her analysis of Blackstone, a prominent legal scholar at the beginning of the

twentieth-century. Harbeck quotes Blackstone regarding the naming of homosexual infractions in the codes of law but observes that he identifies the behavior only as a “crime against nature not to be named among Christians” (“Gay and Lesbian Educators” 124). Similar to the euphemism, “the love that dare not speak its name” it seems that same-sex activity could only be alluded to, rather than addressed directly. This lineage of silence about same-sex desire is very much a part of the rhetorical contest then and still remains a powerful force today when discussing coming out in classrooms and workplace environments. Many ask, “Why do we have to talk about it at all?” when what they really want to say is “I don’t approve, stay in the closet, and shut up!”

Moral instruction for homosexuals would focus on the correct way of behaving, attempting through repeated activities to undo the desire the individual felt. Likewise, correctness is seen in how writing students of the time performed grammar drills, rather than investigating why the discourses of the privileged and few had to be adopted by the many. Instead of questioning the “rightness” of the dominant culture’s discourses about sexuality or writing, homosexuals and student writers were put to work remediating themselves by those in charge. Both sexuality and writing were to be used by the state for the state’s purposes. Any suggestion that there was an alternative was quickly rebuked and punished. Absolute, sure moral positions dominated the discourses surrounding both homosexuality and the use of English. Conformity with the ideals established by powerful institutional structures was the dominant thinking of both educators and policy-makers. It did not matter whether the issue was the gender of a sexual partner or the poor use of the English language; variation from the standard was seen as personal inadequacy. This forced conformity resulted in some devastating actions.

Science attempted to cure the homosexual. It did this through a number of cruel, torturous techniques that frequently involved either knives or electricity. Knives were used for lobotomies or for the even more severe action of castration. Electricity was employed for electroshock treatments (Yoshino 32 - 33). None of these methods ended up being the cures that were hoped for, which was the eradication of homosexuals. What is even more disturbing about these treatment methods is that they were often requested by homosexual men and women, rather than ordered by some outside authorities (Yoshino 35). The residue of society's discourses against homosexuality were so powerful that homosexuals internalized them and came to hate themselves for experiencing the world the way they did. They asked to be mutilated in an effort to rid themselves of what was so despised. The lineage of this discursive position is seen today in the many gays and lesbians who continue to keep their closet door shut tight.

One of the left over remnants of science's attempt to cure homosexuality is the discursive lineage of self-hatred that has come to be associated with homosexuals. This discourse has been perpetuated in books, movies, and plays, particularly in the mid twentieth-century. One excellent example of how this discursive lineage worked can be seen in the film version of Lillian Hellman's *The Children's Hour*. Hellman's play, written in 1934, focuses on how a lie told by a child can have great rhetorical resonance. By the time the play was turned in to a film in 1961, the story was no longer about the lie, but instead, about the horror of realizing one is a lesbian. Additionally, the discourse of self-hatred went beyond the sufferings of the individual man or woman. The self-hating homosexual was a ready symbol for evil, just like the man in the black hat or the Russians who were the cold war enemies of the US. For the community to be set right

again, so the narrative would go, it was necessary to destroy this evil influence. The homosexual character was seen as a predator, preying on innocent, unsuspecting victims. Most disturbing about this narrative is the idea that the destruction of the individual is justified because the individual so despises his or her self. In this narrative, the community is not only cleansing itself by getting rid of the person but also ending the pain and suffering of the homosexual man or woman. The fact that this elimination meant death was of no concern to the community; eradication of homosexual men and women was the goal. This reinforcement of the discourses of self-hatred and societal loathing through various cultural media strengthened and firmly established them in the culture. What began when science attempted to fix homosexuals quickly became a means within the culture for perpetuating injustice. The lineage of this discourse lingers to this day, as the LGBT community faces greater suicide rates in comparison to the rest of the population (Paul, Catania, Pollack, et.al).

At this time, there were no organizations or coalitions to speak for homosexuals, making it difficult for individuals to resist the negative scientific discourses. Likewise, the required writing class was not seen as a content area at the university, but a burdensome activity handled by the contingent faculty of the English department. No organizations advocated for composition as a discipline, a site of worthwhile knowledge and research. In addition, few scholars existed for either the study of homosexuality or required writing, and those who did tended to assert a deficit approach to their topic, seeing their participants in need of remediation and change. Not until the end of the Second World War would both homosexuals and those who teach required writing begin to form associations that might advocate for them. The Conference on College

Composition and Communication, (CCCC), the primary support organization for writing teachers, was formed in 1949, and at around the same time, Henry Hay conceived of the Mattachine Society, the first homosexual rights organization. These new organizations would take an entire generation to transform into viable entities that could counter the negative dominant discourses. Under these difficult circumstances many writing teachers and homosexuals wanted to convert to literature teachers or heterosexuals, respectively. If they could not covert, many attempted to pass as literature teachers or heterosexuals.

This passing, however, is not without its consequences for the writing teacher or the homosexual. Pat Griffin, who studied homosexual instructors who felt they could not disclose their sexuality, found that these teachers had to keep their personal lives separate from their professional lives at all costs in order to maintain their authority and their jobs (168). Not only did many institutions have moral clauses in the contracts, which would allow them to fire an instructor who was homosexual, there was also concern that identification as a homosexual would mean a loss of status. Students would no longer find the accused instructor credible. Griffin identified four protection strategies that homosexual instructors commonly used in attempting to pass. The first involved reputation and the effort to be seen as a “super teacher,” above reproach, by both students and staff. Another strategy was preparation, where “careful advanced planning on how to respond to direct confrontation or generalized homophobic remarks made by students or colleagues” (174) were anticipated. The third strategy she found was regulation of behavior. Participants in the study likened this to wearing a mask or keeping their guard up, as they monitored every aspect of themselves, including their wardrobe choices, their gestures, and their speech -- all in an effort to control what information they revealed to

others through their behavior. The final strategy was strict separation of their gay or lesbian life from their professional life. Participants made sure that those they knew in one sphere would not have contact with those in another one. Griffin's participants often called this strategy living in two worlds or being schizophrenic (174, 175).

To some extent, the above four strategies are similar to the actions of writing teachers who want to be seen as literature scholars but are employed to teach in current-traditional rhetoric classrooms instead. These frustrated literature teachers have their own means of "passing." By drilling students in the conventions of the academic essay and marking papers extensively, instructors hope to be seen as excellent English teachers. They bolster their reputations as language analysts in carrying out these strategies, regardless of the reality that Composition research shows that these are unsuccessful ways to teach writing. Another passing strategy by these instructors is being prepared to discuss the incompetence of student writing and the poor quality of student essays with colleagues in faculty meetings or in casual mail room conversations. Rather than speaking out and sharing current Composition research that helps to explain the challenges student writers face when they encounter an academic audience for the first time, instructors who want to pass readily agree with senior literature faculty's assessment of how poor the writing is of their beginning students. This helps the writing faculty to fit in. As far as controlling their behavior, writing instructors who want to pass as literature faculty keep the emphasis on literature in their writing classrooms, having students read and write essays on fiction, poetry, and plays, rather than grappling with non-fiction texts or the texts created by students. And, with regard to separation, faculty who want to pass stay as far away from Composition research and the best teaching

practices that come from this research as possible. Instead, they teach their students as their literature professors have taught them previously. Attempting to pass, whether it is homosexuals or writing teachers, requires a great deal of investment in strategies that research suggests do not work and are harmful to one's own sense of self. Nevertheless, the discourses associated with passing are compelling. For many, they are too difficult to resist.

The discourses of science had a profound impact on both homosexuals and the enterprise of teaching writing in the university, and surprisingly, both were impacted in similar ways. Both had to contend with a deficit approach, that those involved were inadequate and through a quasi-scientific course of action could be changed and made adequate. While on its surface, the plan sounds simple, but in its execution the results were devastating and difficult to ever overcome. However, the negative model that science imposed on homosexuals and writing teachers could not dominate entirely, and eventually a prior discourse began to assert itself, changing the rhetorical contests.

3. The Discourses of Protest and Resistance: New Ways of Thinking

Since the arrival of Europeans, the United States has been an environment where discourses of protest and resistance have found an opportunity to take root. Although the discourses of assimilation have dominated the nation prior to the American Revolution and continue to exert influence up through our present day, there have been from time to time moments when discourses of resistance have been extremely influential. These discourses of resistance are certainly part of the country's discursive lineage. One need only consider how the country was founded to see the significance of resistance in the nation's discursive heritage. In this section, I look at what takes place when that

discursive lineage of resistance begins to forcefully challenge assimilationist discourses in the 1960s and 1970s. It leads to dramatic changes for both homosexuals and writing teachers.

Lester Faigley makes the point that the student radicalism of the 1960s was prominent in the development of the process movement in the teaching of writing (57). Similarly, Stephen O. Murray in *American Gay* writes, “student movements were important not just as examples, but because many of those who would participate in the early gay liberation organizations had direct experience” (48) from their time as student activists. In the 1960s and early 1970s the discourses of protest and resistance once again gained significant traction in the United States. This happened as a result of discussions that were occurring at all levels of society as the country responded to the on-going civil rights struggle by Black Americans, an unpopular war in Vietnam, and the elevation of popular culture over high culture. Along with these changes in ideas about what was acceptable and what was not, the protest discourses of this era advocated for a more equal playing field for everyone. The feminist movement of the time, along with the actions of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'irith, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, all helped to develop discourses around the notion that each individual should not fail because of their identity. A minority identity should not automatically doom an individual. This idea had been brewing since the end of the Second World War and a great many milestones which encouraged this thinking had taken place, such as integration of the Armed Services, the US Supreme Court decision *Brown v. the Board of Education*, and the establishment of television as a common denominator in American life. As a result of these discursive changes, the current

generation of students attempted to take greater control over their education. Although some professors saw this as a siege by the barbarians, Faigley observes, “many college writing teachers greeted student activism with enthusiasm” (57). Faigley goes on to note that Ken Macrorie and Donald Murray, two highly thought of and influential writing scholars, “saw the writing-as-process movement as an answer to students’ rejection of traditional authority, and they emphasized in their pedagogy the values that their students cried out for -- autonomy, antiauthoritarianism, and a personal voice” (57).

The protest discourses that were having an impact in writing classrooms were also having an impact on homosexuals. The Stonewall Uprising, which occurred in Greenwich Village, New York, in June of 1969, had a very humble beginning when the immediate circumstances are considered. However, in the intervening years this event has come to symbolize a shift in positions for homosexuals and the beginning of the modern-day gay rights movement. Police entered the Stonewall Inn, a gay bar, in one of their typical and frequent raids. The officers went there to hassle the patrons and arrest a few of them. This was a typical strategy to get “the fairies” in line. Only this day, the men, who were mostly young and homeless and heretofore had been ashamed and compliant when dealing with authorities, rebelled. They did this in much the same manner as student protestors were doing on college campuses across the country. When provoked, they threw rocks and bottles. They destroyed a police car. These individuals’ newfound boldness took the form of refusing arrest and barricading themselves within the bar. Certainly, the notion of barricading a group into a space was akin to the actions of student groups who were choosing to barricade themselves into administration buildings across college campuses.

Although not a pre-planned civil disobedience like student protests, the news of what was happening at the Stonewall Inn spread rapidly throughout Greenwich Village and the entire city of New York, eventually drawing supporters and spectators to the location to see what was taking place. David Carter in *Stonewall: The Riots that Sparked the Gay Revolution* reports that supporters included protestors from various radical left groups (202). The struggle between the police and the patrons continued on and off for three days until finally the police relented. Leftist groups in particular were astonished at the results as they had never been able to get the police to back down in any of their protests. In attempting to illuminate what contributed to the Stonewall Uprising, Carter argues that the civil rights and the antiwar movements of the period must be added to the list of factors (259). What gay men and lesbian women learned from those struggles had great impact on the gay liberation movement. The examples of civil disobedience presented by the civil rights and antiwar movements stirred the conscience of those at the Stonewall Inn and caused them to act that night.

Both writing instructors and homosexuals created for themselves enduring slogans during this period, and these slogans became a way to view the discourses of each of their respective worlds. For writing instructors, the slogan was “Teach Writing as a Process not Product,” which was Donald Murray’s manifesto, first published in 1972; for homosexuals, it was “Come Out of the Closet,” which Stephen O. Murray identifies as “not just the most important criterion for establishing membership” within the gay community but also as “the central moral imperative within it” (218). Remarkably, the notions and the activities associated with both slogans have a number of similarities. Just as homosexuals wanted to no longer hide their sexual identity, so, too, writing instructors

no longer wanted to be thought of as literature teachers in waiting. Many writing teachers went so far as to argue for removal of writing classes from English departments in an effort to gain greater visibility and recognition. Writing and coming out were similar in that both were thought of as a process that took place over time. Both teaching writing and coming out shared a focus on the individual, the student and his writing in the case of the process movement and the homosexual person and his or her sexuality in the case of the gay rights movement. As the reader may note, the term *homosexual* underwent a transformation to *gay* in an effort to remove negative stigmas and to provide a new vocabulary for viewing what homosexual men and women could become. Likewise, the English writing teacher transformed into a *compositionist*, a term like *gay* that attempts to counter the negative stigmas associated with *English* teachers. Students also were transformed, as teachers were encouraged to see them as *writers* and to treat them as such. In the discourse of the process movement, students were no longer viewed as in need of moral correction or as inadequate but were seen, instead, as legitimate writers in their own right, and classes were focused on the writings of these students. Like the gay community, those connected to the process movement celebrated the potential in individuals and what they could become as they discovered their own truths in writing. The rhetorical contest between dominant and alternative discourses in both areas was now fully engaged as gays and lesbians, as well as writing teachers, attempted to take more control over their discursive identity.

Scholarship played an important role in advancing these new perspectives. The mere act of researching in these two disenfranchised areas assisted in giving them both legitimacy, something each would greatly need to counteract those who questioned the

changes. Despite how compelling many of these arguments were for seeing the teaching of writing and coming out in a new way, in both cases many were not won over. Just as current-traditionalist rhetoric continued to dominate the teaching of writing within higher education, homosexuals continued to be castigated, criticized, and frequently excluded from civil rights discussions and protections offered to other minority groups. The dominant structures still continued to dominate. Scholarship in both areas became a method that would help to legitimize the discursive changes that were being contested.

One way to show the significance of this period in Composition scholarship is to examine the publication dates for the anthologized articles in Victor Villanueva's *Cross-Talk in Comp Theory*. Even with the editor's acknowledgment that there are gaps in the scholarship of this book designed to introduce graduate students to the discipline of Composition (xiv), there is little mention of any work in the field prior to 1960. What is more, most of the articles Villanueva selects date from the 1970s and beyond. Although this is not to say that there was not scholarship in the field before this point, Connors, for one, documents a number of studies; most significantly, scholarship from this earlier time is not now a part of the tradition that is currently being taught to graduate students preparing to enter the field. By examining the dates of the research, it would seem Composition studies did not exist prior to the 1960s. Likewise, the field of gay and lesbian studies had to wait until Jonathan Katz's *Gay American History*, published in 1976, to have a text that could be used widely as a scholarly reference. For the most part, the period prior to the rise of discourses of protest and resistance seems to be a wasteland for advancing knowledge in the areas of composition and homosexuality.

To make up for this, scholarship in both areas exploded with an increase in journals and books on each topic. All seemed to share a common rhetorical feature: the research advocated that the central tenet of the movement, process for writing instructors and coming out for gays and lesbians, was the solution to the problem. The old way of doing things in both fields was not only ineffective, these scholars suggested, but it was causing further damage. In other words, current-traditional rhetoric instruction resulted in bad student writing, and homosexuals who remained in the closet were not assisting in the march to gain equality. Ultimately, although it takes a number of years for it to happen, these two ideas come together when Paul Puccio at the 1989 CCCC calls for writing instructors to not only come out in their classrooms, but to bring the subject of sexual orientation into the writing classroom (Berg et al. 108). Previously, studies such as Griffin's and Kate Adams and Kim Emery's, which were referenced in the preceding chapter, viewed the idea of coming out in the classroom as an act of courage that will result in positive feedback from administrators, fellow teachers, and students. The worse that seems to happen, according to Adams and Emery, is that the instructor will become a "native informant," which can easily be solved if the instructor will make sure to complicate his or her identity position (32). Griffin's rhetoric is even more optimistic as she asserts that in her empowerment study not one participant suffered a negative consequence from coming out (193). Although each of the participants mentions their fear of losing their job or their authority in the classroom at the outset of the study, neither one of these things happens during the course of the study. This result would suggest that the fears that the participants had prior to the study were more imagined than real, and although that may be case for this group of participants, to propose that most

gay and lesbian writing instructors would not have encountered some kind of homophobia during this period of time is inaccurate. Indeed, Crew and Keener's report, "Homophobia in the Academy," discussed in the opening chapter, graphically presents the damage that can come from coming out during this very time period. Research of the era ignored those conditions and supported the idea that coming out was critical for teacher effectiveness and student learning. Coming out became a mandate, a discursive lineage that continues into the present day.

Composition scholars seemed to paint the teaching of writing in rosier colors after they adopt the process method. As gay and lesbian studies scholars had much to gain from advocating for disclosure, Composition studies scholars gained much in advocating for process. Crowley points out that with the onset of the process movement in the teaching of writing, faculty identified a research agenda, lost the need for drilling grammar and marking papers, and began to read writing assignments that were more fun to read (191). The process movement went a long way in establishing student writing as an area of research. An important, new study by Janet Emig, *The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders*, began to change the limited conception of writing taught in the schools. It also helped to usher out for some writing teachers the dreaded grammar drills and marking up of students' papers when Emig wrote, "There is little evidence, for example, that the persistent pointing out of specific errors in student themes leads to the elimination of these errors" (99). Emig goes on to criticize current-traditional rhetoric instruction for how it stifles opportunities for a personal voice (100). Personal voice would be cultivated through personal narratives in a process approach. These essays were more enjoyable to read than the overworked assignments of current-traditional rhetoric,

sparing teachers some of the dread associated with reading student work.

It is common to find disclosure in student personal narratives. Disclosure is at the center of the gay man or lesbian woman's coming out narrative as well. Both the personal and coming out narrative are born out of the discourses of protest, and they flourish during the era and into our own. Both of these genres share similar notions; they position writers/speakers, audience, and purpose in a related manner. The writer/speaker is the most important of the three and what is occurring in his or her individual life is of primary significance for both the personal and coming out narrative. Additionally, the writer/speaker takes a position where he or she is in some way disconnected from the dominant discourses of the society. The writer/speaker is compelled to tell his or her story, finally. In both personal and coming out narratives, the disclosure has been closely held in silence for a period of time. Personal and coming out narratives share a belief that disclosure is worthwhile for both the speaker/writer and the audience. The audience needs to know the information, even if they do not want to learn about it. The purpose, to tell something important about one's self to someone else, is very much mirrored in both personal and coming out narratives. Written coming out narratives in fact served as models for students who were assigned personal narratives in their first-year writing class. Louie Crew's "Thriving as an Outsider, Even As An Outcast, in Smalltown America," anthologized in *Life Studies*, is one example of the written genre of coming out narrative that was assigned to students to read. Further analysis of personal and coming out narratives might find similarities in structure, development, and vocabulary. The discursive lineage of protest and resistance that came to define an era helped create what are the personal and coming out narratives.

As significant as they were, discourses of protest and resistance were not the nation's dominant discourses during the 1960s or 1970s. These discourses were discourses of opposition. They were overshadowed by the discourses of the silent majority, peace with honor, and the future of plastics, as humorously described in *The Graduate*, a popular movie of the era. Even as process gained a base in higher education, there was still a great deal of ground to make up. And, most teachers and administrators did not let go of old traditions, just as most of the country found homosexuality to be something they wished people would stop talking about. High schools and colleges in some cases established stricter criteria and imposed more rules on writing teachers and students. In the same manner, gays and lesbians who came out were very much a minority of the entire community. Remaining in the closet was the choice for most gay men and lesbian women. In both cases, the teaching of writing and coming out remained as they had been from the latter part of the nineteenth-century with very little change in the material conditions.

4. The Discourses of Pluralism: Internal Fractures Change Understandings

Much has been made of Thomas Kuhn and his notion of a paradigm shift occurring in society and at institutions of higher learning during the 1960s and 1970s. However, this shift is not truly seen in writing instruction or in gays' and lesbians' coming out behaviors until a later time. Composition studies' scholar Maxine Hairston argues in 1982 that "we are currently at the point of such a paradigm shift in the teaching of writing" (76) which is at least a decade after the supposed shift was to have taken place. Patricia Bizzell, another prominent scholar who has investigated what Kuhn's paradigm shift means to writing, emphasized in 1979 how the shift has moved language

from being seen as self-referential to “the study of language as the product of a community, reflecting the community’s shared values, its historical situation, its cultural traditions, and so on” (46). These changes in the composition community’s discourse helped bring forth a pedagogical idea known as the New Rhetoric, introduced by Chaim Perelman and Lucy Olbrechts-Tyteca in *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation* in 1969. The New Rhetoric encourages teaching writing from a community perspective rather than from the position of the individual. With this idea of community beginning to dominate writing pedagogy, a fracturing begins to take place in writing instruction that had not been seen before. Rather than centering instruction around prominent ideas, such as correction and error or personal narratives, as was seen in previous eras, writing instruction diversified. There was no community, activity, idea, topic, or technology that was closed to writing instruction. Composition scholar Anne Ruggles Gere even went so far in her essay “Kitchen Tables and Rented Rooms: The Extracurriculum of Composition” to argue, “In concentrating upon establishing our position within the academy, we have neglected to recount the history of composition in other contexts; we have neglected composition’s extracurriculum” (79). Her call to study this extracurriculum would open up many more possibilities for teaching and researching writing. Furthermore, writing became less confined to the required writing class and notions such as writing-across-the-curriculum and writing-in-the-disciplines began to receive serious attention at higher education institutions.

One consequence of this change in thinking was a greater politicalization of the required writing classroom. The focus of the class moved from personal writing to issue-oriented discussions, and students wrote essays about many of the problems that the

nation faced. Political issues, such as ownership, sustainability, and national identity, became the focus of many writing classrooms. Language and its often ambiguous, unclear nature also became a major thrust in the New Rhetoric classroom. Class discussions included a healthy dose of rhetorical theory, resurrected from Plato and Aristotle. But, these discussions were not the old style version of rhetoric from early in the nineteenth-century. Instead, these discussions were examinations of the rhetorical situation, something mentioned by Aristotle but not thought of closely until Lloyd F. Bitzer and Richard E. Vatz debated the subject. The attention to the rhetorical situation, the situation which calls the discourse into existence (Bitzer 5), allowed students to tease out the power of the audience and situation to shape discourse, a very different perspective than the writing from the process movement, where the writer and his or her thoughts were at the center of the communication experience.

Furthermore, writing assignments became more than just essays. Reflective practices led to the significance of journal writing; advancements in technology during the 1990s, most certainly the greater availability of the computer, revolutionized the types of writing explored in the classroom. Certainly, with the widespread availability of the World Wide Web and the Internet at the beginning of the twenty-first-century, sites for research were forever changed, and texts, such as email and web pages, became items to study and critique for compositionists. Composition theory as a whole begins to fracture. Genre theory became a significant area for research in the field, as did basic writing. At the same time, literary theory, particularly poststructuralist theory, which was influencing the way literary texts were being read, makes its way into composition studies. It opens the door to viewing texts from a number of different social perspectives. Ideas such as

critical literacy become more important to writing teachers. Service learning also becomes a significant element of composition studies as instructors focused their praxis on providing students with “real” writing situations.

Likewise, the homosexual community underwent a similar metamorphosis as the community matured and faced an epidemic, AIDS, which subsequently fractured the community into more nuanced positions. Lesbians, bisexuals, and transgender people were sub-groups that more clearly began to define their positions as separate from the larger community of “gays” during this period of time. However, even within the community of gay men a more pluralistic sense of who and what a gay man is began taking place. Eric Rofes argues that “[d]iversification of gay communities is the primary reason the crisis construct of the 1980s has moved into a less central position in the life of [gay] communities” (81) as time has passed. Rofes sees long-term uninfected gay men, gay men of color, and young gay men who are entering the community as those helping to create diversity within the community (83 - 94). What it meant when one said one was a gay man was not as easily definable as it had been before. The questions Julia Stanley raised in 1974 with “When We Say ‘Out of the Closets!’” were even more relevant than before. The discourses surrounding homosexuality continued to grow more complex and nuanced as the community divided.

AIDS further politicized the gay community, even as it exposed divisions and fissures that existed in the community. With the first cases appearing in the early 1980s and the epidemic declared in 1981 by the Centers for Disease Control, AIDS became the issue that was to be the culmination of the gay liberation movement that had started in 1969. What would follow at the end of fighting the discrimination associated with the

disease and caring for the sick who were ravaged by it was exhaustion, a kind of combat fatigue. Additionally, the epidemic seemed to increase the number of individuals who had come out, and this coupled with the aging of those who began the movement, resulted in a community that no longer had just one central purpose. While there would be battles that the community faced, rarely could one find unanimity among gay and lesbian community members. Advocates for allowing homosexuals to serve in the military were met by those in the community who opposed participation in war at any level. Those who fought so tirelessly for marriage equality came up against those who argue that marriage and monogamy are a failed heterosexual notion that the gay community rejected in the 1970s. Many who participate in the growing Bear and Leather gay subculture communities reject the very idea that gay men are feminine and concerned with fashion and physical beauty. Instead, they adopt hyper-masculine iconic models to represent themselves. Moreover, there are online discussions on gay listservs that posit there is no gay community whatsoever and the very idea of one is a farce. Many of these men who reject the idea of community see themselves as similar to heterosexuals in terms of their lifestyle, the only difference being with whom they have sexual relations. They desire to return to the time before science created the homosexual. Just as the notion of community became more difficult to define in the pedagogy of the New Rhetoric, the gay community found the task of defining its own community challenging.

Like the New Rhetoric and its focus on language, the gay community began to have their varied language discussions. These tended to center on the issue of identity as different kinds of gay men and lesbian women attempted to adopt a moniker that was more telling of who they were than the terms *gay* and *lesbian* allowed. Most significantly

was the adoption of the word *queer* by a number of younger activists and academics. Although many tended to see the term as one that could assist in building coalitions across gender boundaries, others did not. Jay Kent Lorenz points out the use of the term *queer* is for a number of older gays and lesbians so pejorative in its meaning that its use by a young activist is a slap in the face to all the hard work that was done to stop the public from using a term that was at one time considered the most hateful thing you could say to any individual (48). Queer theory certainly became a dominant strategy for analyzing literature in the academy during the 1990s and early 2000s. With its focus on complicating gender roles and interrogating sexuality of all sorts, queer theory was valuable in the literature classroom. Recently, Compositionists have brought queer theory into the writing classroom where it has been used to analyze language and develop writing assignments, as was discussed in Chapter Two. Scholarly journals helped advance queer theory in Composition. In fact, in 2004 *JAC* devoted a number of pages to essays discussing how queer theory can be used in the writing classroom, and before this the journal *Computers and Composition* gave over an entire issue of the periodical to the subject.

Another way to understand the differences in the *gay* versus *queer* discussion is to consider how the two notions view the past, which plays a role in understanding how each represents a different discursive perspective. Here is another way that Composition theory and the gay and lesbian experience seem to relate. According to James Berlin, process pedagogy “believe[s] in the existence of verifiable truths” (772) while the New Rhetoric finds “[t]ruth is dynamic and dialectical” (774). Let me use the terms *gay* and *queer* to explain. The term *gay* tends to associate itself with notions of essential qualities

and the existence of gay people throughout the ages, similarly to the process movement and its relationship with Platonic truth, a truth that is ever-lasting. The arguments in favor of tolerance for homosexuals during the early gay rights movement attempted to establish that there is an essential gay identity, an identity that has been a part of man's history since the very beginning. Thus, a significant amount of scholarship during this time focused on identifying the men and women in history who preferred same-sex relationships. The argument's logic seems based on the notion that by finding antecedents throughout history, it would be more difficult for homophobes in the present to contend that homosexual practice is unnatural. Thus, *gay* tends to be historical; *queer*, however, is not.

Queer comes out of a poststructuralist position just as the New Rhetoric does and takes as foundational the notion that identity and truth are constructed in and for a specific period. *Queer* views all people, regardless of their orientation, as primarily a product of the now. Those who engaged in same-sex activities in a previous era did not think of themselves or the activity in the same way that gay men do today. In addition, the queer perspective is less concerned with sexual activity. Instead, it is a discursive position that anyone can hold, including those who do not engage in same-sex relationships. It is less of an identity-marker and more of a way of thinking. It is situational and contingent, just as writing is understood to be. The New Rhetoric and *Queer* share many of the same ideological, discursive positions in large part because they share a similar discursive lineage.

As a consequence of the homosexual community fracturing, the idea of identifying oneself by coming out in the classroom became a problem. Just as teaching

the process did not meet all the challenges of the required writing class, choosing to come out did not always satisfy, either. This new discursive era, symbolized by the New Rhetoric and the AIDS cocktail, became a critique of the previous period. Susan Talburt in her narrative study of one openly lesbian instructor illustrates how identity becomes some sort of box that others place her in, forcing her to be something she is not, speaking for those whom she may not understand (“On Not Coming Out” 62). Perhaps coming out is more trouble than it is worth, Talburt seems to say, but she certainly sounds like a New Rhetorician when she declares, “‘Coming out’ in classrooms is not a simple either/or dichotomy but a highly idiosyncratic act made in the context of social and academic knowledges; intellectual, political, and personal commitments; and pedagogical goals and relations” (“On Not Coming Out” 71). Just as New Rhetoric would encourage the writer to address the myriad of perspectives and stakeholders engaged in an issue, Talburt asserts that the same must go on when the instructor decides to come out. Moreover, she is concerned that by coming out gays and lesbians will be commodified by institutions which will “reduce them to roles of representing, embodying, and speaking as or about their reified categories -- offering consumers informational commodities” (“On Not Coming Out” 73). Coming out is seen as possibly feeding the Capitalist mechanism, placing gays’ and lesbians’ sense of agency against notions of social advancement for all workers. While in the previous discursive period coming out was thought of as a freeing experience that established a strong agency for the individual, a strain of the current era sees discourses associated with coming out as potentially damaging to both the individual and the community.

Student writers also lose a great deal of their agency with the advancement of the

New Rhetoric when they are told to adapt themselves to the rhetorical situation. No longer does the voice need to be authentic, but, instead, it needs to respond to the complexities of any given situation, and almost any situation in writing is made complex under the New Rhetoric. Problematizing a situation is the dominant discursive perspective in the New Rhetoric, and, as a consequence, solutions to problems are difficult to find. While action may need to be taken, it is unclear what action will satisfy the stakeholders invested in any particular situation. Even when a possible solution is arrived at, the solution needs to be understood as conditional and with an expiration date, forcing the issue to be reconsidered again and again. Just as the gay instructor must limit his or her agency in the classroom, so, too, must the student writer, for no identity is fixed, and the writer must be free to adapt/adopt a different role depending on the communication situation. Although this may indeed be what is necessary for writers in the twenty-first-century, it is not an easy concept for eighteen-year-olds to grasp, as they are still very much in the process of coming to grips with a larger world than their home and friends. At this point, it would seem that the New Rhetoric does serve to make writing a more complex activity, worthy of a great amount of study, but whether or not it makes better writers and thinkers of beginning college students may not yet be known. Likewise, gay and lesbian instructors who maintain a fluid identity may find themselves unsure of whether or not they can stand for anything firmly, which in turn, may cause them to ask, “What is it that I know? What is it that I should teach?”

The discourses of science, protest, and pluralism matter to the men and women who come out in their classrooms or who teach writing. Like a kind of genetic fingerprint, these discursive lineages continue to vex those who engage in these two

activities. They are an inheritance that many gay men and writing teachers would like to not have, but unfortunately, they are not easily overcome or ignored. Thus far, there is no therapy to mitigate their affects, as is sometimes the case for those inheriting genetic diseases. Instead, homosexuals and Compositionists must fight against the discursive influences with only one tool: more discourse. As such, it is not a fair contest. As this analysis illustrates, when homosexuals and Compositionists attempt to resist their discursive lineage, a rhetorical contest takes place where battle for territory is fierce and previous discourses refuse to relent. In many ways, it is similar to fighting one's own family genes. There is little to be done but control environmental factors around you. In that way, overcoming genetic abnormalities may be easier, because there is the possibility of controlling one's environment. However, these discourses of science, protest, and pluralism have left a permanent impression and, to a large extent control the context for coming out and teaching writing. Their residue is like pitch; one is unable to remove it once it is stuck to you. Unfortunately, being gay or being a writing teacher means you have gotten the pitch on you. In Chapters Five and Six of this study, the influence of these discursive lineages on my participants will be explored.

In the next chapter, I will turn my attention to a discussion of the research design and methods I will be using for studying coming out and the rhetorical situation in an academic community. Qualitative in design, ethnographic methods will be employed to investigate the study's participants. I will detail in the chapter my participant and site selection as well as my strategies for collecting and analyzing data. In keeping with qualitative research, I will try to set forth my own involvement as a researcher in this study and the efforts that I am taking to overcome my own biases, all in an effort to

present a reliable study. I will also tease out the ways emergent design shaped the study. My purpose in the next chapter is to set forth a reliable method of study that will give those who review the work confidence in the conclusions that I reach.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

This chapter will detail my project design as well as the specific methods I employed when collecting data -- all in an effort to find answers to my research questions. My principal research question was how has a gay English professor's (LW) coming out mattered to his community college campus (CC). The goal of the study was to understand how both LW and CC were impacted by his disclosure over a nearly thirty year period. Also, the study aims to understand why CC was receptive to LW's coming out. Therefore, this study is historical as I consider events and remembrances from 1980 through 2010; also, the study is rhetorical as I examine what was said and written related to the disclosure, as well as how it was said and written; finally, the study is queer as I consider the ways in which LW's coming out was a performance designed to disrupt homophobic and heterosexist discourse.

1. Type of Design

The study's design is qualitative and naturalistic, focusing on context, tacit knowledge, inductive data analysis, and emergent design. The study is holistic and complex as I synthesize detailed viewpoints from interview participants, cultural artifacts from the institution, and my own participant observations. My purpose in doing this research is to offer a thick description of what has taken place at this site. The study explains the phenomenon of a shift in attitude at only this campus. In selecting a qualitative design, I chose to spend extensive time in the field to gain access to and the confidence of my participants. By doing this, I amassed a considerable amount of data, which I sorted through and analyzed for themes and patterns using my theoretical

frameworks, rhetoric and queer theory, as investigation and organization tools. The research is meant to be a cultural portrait of a rhetorical community and how this community broadened its discourse to include a gay faculty member's coming out.

This study is an ethnographic study. Ethnographic studies have been widely accepted among rhetoricians. Wendy Bishop in *Ethnographic Writing Research* observes that ethnography is a well-suited research strategy for “understanding the complex literacy cultures and communities that occur in schools and communities” (13). Bishop goes on to cite rhetoricians Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg who contend ethnographic research is helpful because “we need to look not only at the individual writer but at the collaborative situation of his or her classroom, personal and institutional histories, and writers’ and teachers’ political hopes” (13) when we try to understand what happens in a rhetorical situation. The holistic nature of ethnographic research is highly suitable to consider the many variables Bizzell and Herzberg list in the above. Additionally, ethnographic research has been important to queer theory. Susan Talburt suggests that ethnographies of queer subjects are “helpful to demonstrate how [queer voices] work in specific contexts and challenge the binary of *voice* and *silence*” (*Subject to Identity* 221) that often dominates studies of gay and lesbian subjects. Rather than presenting gays and lesbians as either speaking out or mute, ethnography can bring to light the subtle interplay of both voice and silence which reflects so much more the lived reality of day-to-day experience. An ethnographic approach provides me with a means of investigating in a queer manner the ways coming out impacted this rhetorical situation.

As an ethnography, the study's data presentation includes the personal and institutional narratives of the campus that came to be because LW disclosed. Likewise,

the study includes personal and institutional narratives of others that have, in turn, impacted or changed LW's coming out discourse. Also, the national discourse related to gays and lesbians is a part of the personal and institutional narratives I collected. These stories help to illustrate how the national discussion translated itself into the local community. All of these narratives of the participants' lived experiences offer new ways of looking at and thinking about the situations they present. However, the narratives and interpretations I provide are not necessarily intended for like situations but for readers to develop their own sense of possibilities. Narrative, as a form of knowing, finds its strength in the specificity of time and location, not as a transcendental text to be transported across situations. This study speaks only to the experience of this situation and my participants. Additionally, narrative reports do not render presence but evoke presences. Presenting a singular, stable presentation of LW or of CC was not the goal for this report. Norman Denzin calls these presences "truthful fictions" (23) which combine facts (events that are believed to have occurred) and facticities (descriptions of how those events were experienced). Within the limits of the partiality of representation, I endeavor to offer a text that "is faithful to facticities and facts. It creates verisimilitude, or what are for the reader believable experiences" (23).

The study's design is qualitative, ethnographic, and narrative as it tries to understand what a professor's coming out meant to a community college campus.

2. Site Selection

This study is being conducted at a southern California community college located in the Los Angeles Community College District. I first became aware of this nearby community college when I returned to higher education over ten years ago. I attended the

college as a student for one year, finishing up some required prerequisites before moving on to a four-year institution and completing my undergraduate degree. During my time at the community college, I took an English survey course required for my undergraduate degree program, and I had, as my instructor, LW, the individual who became the focal participant of this study. Following the completion of the English course, LW and I kept in contact and developed a friendship as I continued my studies. We often had lunch or dinner where we would discuss the pleasures and challenges of teaching writing to beginning college students. Also, the conversations included discussions about how our sexuality informed our teaching. Our relationship furthered my interest in investigating this campus and his role in its shifting attitudes.

My one-year tenure at the college and my relationship with this instructor were central to giving me access to the participants in this study. David A. Erlandson, Edward L. Harris, Barbara L. Skipper, and Steve D. Allen, the authors of *Doing Naturalistic Inquiry*, write, “[t]he keys to access any setting are in the hands of certain gatekeepers, or those who have the authority to allow one to enter their world” (56). Without my past history at the college and my relationship with LW, an important gatekeeper at the campus, I would not have had access and been able to carry out this study at this institution. Research related to gay and lesbian issues is still considered sensitive and many individuals remain uncomfortable with discussing the subject matter. As this study acknowledges, even now some of the conditions Crew and Keener documented in the 1981 NCTE study remain for faculty who disclose. There are still locations where safety is the predominant concern for LGBT faculty. A researcher attempting to study a campus environment without a prior relationship with the campus is unlikely to recruit many

participants, even when the focal participant is openly gay. For this study, my prior relationship with the professor and the campus was a necessity to accomplish the research.

The two-year public institution, CC, that is at the heart of this study provides opportunities for occupational training, transfer education, and life-long learning. Founded following World War II, CC is fully accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, a nationally recognized accrediting agency. CC has a high transfer rate to the University of California and the California State University systems, as well as to private institutions in the region. It offers courses in almost one-hundred subject fields and has a current enrollment of well over 20,000 students. CC reflects the cosmopolitan nature of southern California with hundreds of international students taking classes alongside an already diverse student population. CC is typical of many large urban community colleges that serve a wide-swath of students and are publicly funded. There is a seemingly constant pressure for CC to do more while spending less. As the data shows, CC has had its financial ups and downs over the past twenty-five years, resulting in years of plenty as well as years of poverty. I happened to attend the school in 1999 during a low point when there were less than 14,000 students, and the atmosphere was bleak. Currently, however, CC is benefitting from a voter approved bond measure, which has made possible substantial new capital investments on the campus; there are modern science buildings, technology-enhanced classrooms, sustainable landscaping, and new food court options already in place or coming soon.

CC is the most appropriate location for determining how coming out does indeed lead to changes in attitudes. To begin with, there is value in studying a single site. Robert

K. Yin notes that single site studies, like this one, are valuable because they can represent a watershed in theory building, as they can be “the critical test of a significant theory” (41). My study is a test of theory put forth by Crew, McNaron, and others that coming out can bring about change. Next, because CC presented me with the opportunity to interrogate the relationship between coming out and changing attitudes over an extended time, I was able to investigate this theory historically, which revealed the many factors that played a role in changing the discourse at CC. The additional factors did not explain how change happened better than the theory. Instead, they helped construct a cultural mosaic that taken together brought about shifting attitudes. A single site study was most helpful in revealing the interplay between these elements. Also, this research strategy helped me to understand the evolution of LW’s coming out and how changing conditions nationally, state-wide, and on the campus changed his disclosure. The extended engagement at this single site made those observations possible. While a multiple site study might provide a broader perspective, it would not have shown how coming out mattered for such a long time at one location. How LW’s disclosure matters over time helps to explain how his coming out meets the exigency at this site. Finally, a single site study helps to illustrate the dynamic nature of coming out, a fact often discussed but rarely illustrated. In this report, LW’s coming out is vigorous and active, low-key and subtle, brash and matter-of-fact; it is not just one thing. The prolonged engagement at a single site made all of this possible.

In addition to selecting the site because it allows for testing important theory, this particular site has been selected for the way it illuminates the situation. It is exemplary. LW is a highly successful faculty member and an important member of his higher

education community. This study tries to understand how this came to be and the conditions at CC that helped him to be successful. As a consequence, this study probably does not show what happens at most campus communities or what happens to most openly gay faculty members. Those could be important studies, too, but this study is about what may be considered a “best case” scenario. Additionally, CC offered an opportunity to study a relatively stable group of administrators, faculty, and staff; few other situations provide this sort of possibility. Many of CC’s community members have remained with the institution as long as or longer than LW. Even CC retirees were available to participate in the research, providing substantial institutional history which might not have been available at another site. Certainly, students come and go at CC, but even former students from throughout LW’s nearly thirty years of teaching were available to participate in the research. All of these factors speak to the exemplary status of CC as a worthwhile location for this study.

Yin discusses how single sites can be “revelatory” (42), based solely on the descriptive information developed through the research and then presented in the final study report. The research related to openly gay professors and how their coming out matters to their college environment has been limited. One issue that may discourage researchers is the challenge of gaining access to locations and communities where these faculty work. The inaccessibility of most potential research sites contrasts with my experience at my research site where I had the opportunity to speak with numerous important stakeholders at every level of CC. Also, I had open access to archival data from nearly thirty years of CC’s history and was able to observe the campus during a prolonged period of time, over ten years of formal and informal observation. This sort of

access to people and documents, as well as extended engagement at the site, resulted in a study of an academic community not previously offered by other scholarly research. Beyond the study's own conclusions and current value, it provides future researchers with data they may build upon and examine for their own studies.

3. Data Sources

Sources of data for this study were participants and documents.

a. Participants

John W. Creswell suggests that qualitative researchers identify clearly their reasons for selecting participants (118). In my selection of participants, I have used a purposeful sampling strategy. Purposeful sampling is a hallmark of qualitative research allowing the researcher "to maximize the range of specific information that can be obtained from and about" the phenomenon to be studied (Erlandson et al. 33). Purposeful sampling helped me get my research questions answered; it also gave me information I could not have expected or anticipated.

In selecting my focal participant, LW, access was an important factor. More importantly, though, LW was selected based on his ability to provide me with an information-rich case that manifests the phenomenon of coming out at his institution. With nearly thirty years experience at one campus, LW offers an extended history for exploration. LW has routinely disclosed his sexuality to his students, colleagues, and administrative supervisors from the very beginning of his employment. In fact, his sexuality came up at his employment interview when the conversation turned to his dissertation, which may have been one of the first in the nation to theorize a pedagogy for teaching gay and lesbian literature. With his dissertation doing the initial outing for him,

LW did not slowly crack open the closet door, test the waters, and then come out; instead, LW immediately began his tenure at the institution as an openly gay man. This turns out to be an important factor in shifting the campus discourse. Additionally, LW is a highly visible presence on his campus, having taken part in Academic Senate, even serving as its president. LW also has been the chief editor for the institution's re-accreditation reports, working with faculty members across campus in drafting, editing, and submitting the final report to the accrediting agency. LW has participated as well in statewide Academic Senate activities and has received awards for his teaching from the Academic Senate and other groups. Lastly, LW is now nearing the age of retirement. He has been a part of the first generation of men and women who were open about their sexuality during their time as instructors in higher education. The opportunity to study this pioneering generation of men and women in their teaching environments is quickly passing. My study will capture his experiences and understandings that may very soon be lost. LW's rich history, high visibility, and generational significance will produce a number of different avenues to interrogate how his coming out has played a role in shifting attitudes at the campus.

Other participants for the study were selected in a purposeful manner based on their access, relationship to LW, and role on campus or in the community college district. Out of the initial list of potential interviewees, there were some retired faculty and students who were unable to participate in the study. While these individuals would have further colored the study, I was still able to have a wide-range of participants. Those who participated were either former students, or faculty colleagues who work with LW now or in the past, or administrators who currently supervise or work with LW or who did so previously. These participants offered me insights and perspectives from their points of

view, as the audience who heard and responded to LW's coming out. What all the participants have in common is that, in one fashion or another, they were a part of LW's disclosure. Any current students of LW, as well as any students who continue to be enrolled at the college, were excluded from the study. Although I believe no harm would have come if the students participated, I decided to err on the side of caution. There were plenty of potential participants even when excluding this population.

I invited LW to take part in this study over a meal shortly after completing doctoral course work in 2005. I began to outline for him my ideas for the study, which were still in the beginning stages, and he readily agreed to participate. What is more, LW assisted me in identifying and inviting others to participate in this study after I had completed four extended interviews with him. I asked him to develop a possible list of interview subjects from both current and former students, colleagues, and administrators. Working together, we coded his list into three parts based on who we thought were most important to interview. Those at the top of the list, chosen because of their extended tenure with the college and with LW, were the first to be invited to participate. This included eight individuals, all faculty or administrators. The initial contact with these potential participants came about through email, first one from me explaining my study and inviting them to participate and a second one from LW encouraging the potential participant to be a part of the study. In one instance, a participant was contacted by phone when no electronic response came from the individual. The follow-up emails by LW were essential in getting participants to respond. LW's email reassured participants of the significance of the research and LW's participation in it. Almost all who received the

emails were eager to participate. Subsequently, those I interviewed first recommended others to me and helped facilitate additional interviews.

Students were recruited in much the same manner. While LW once again provided me with a list of potential individuals that I used to make contact, I also received assistance in recruiting from some of those administrators and faculty who participated in my first-round of interviews. One person would recommend another student to me and provide me with an introduction that led to an interview. In many ways, the process seemed old-fashioned, even though I was often communicating in a twenty-first-century digital environment. A participant would provide me with a “letter of recommendation” in the form of an email to the next potential participant. This evolution in the selection of participants is certainly in keeping with emergent design where the study’s design, including who participates, evolves as the study continues, rather than remains set and fixed from the commencement of the study until its completion. In total, I was able to speak with over twenty-five former and current administrators, faculty members, and students at CC. A purposeful selection strategy for participants worked well for this research project.

b. Documents

Archival documents from the college were an important data source for this study. With LW’s extended history at the institution, there have been a number of primary documents that have either focused on him or been created by him that relate to this study’s interest in a changing rhetorical situation. Some documents were controlled by LW, such as academic reports, and others were public web documents, such as syllabi and course content, making them easy to access. Still other documents, such as issues of

the student newspaper, which featured a number of interviews with LW conducted throughout the years, were more challenging to retrieve.

Another important data source was LW's dissertation, which was completed in 1980, a few years prior to his beginning his position at CC. The dissertation and the ephemera related to it were significant to LW coming out at CC and in him receiving the offer to teach there. As there were limited copies of the dissertation, before I could examine it I made an electronic copy. Fortunately, LW had a microfiche copy of the dissertation, which could be copied page by page and converted into electronic text. By doing this, I provided LW with his first electronic copy of his dissertation.

While the above are examples of documents that existed prior to this study commencing, the study itself has generated important documents in the form of field notes and LW's biographical outline that he prepared for me before we began interviews. Field notes turned out to be very significant to data collection for this study. As I analyzed the field notes in comparison with my interview data, I found that the field notes often extended a narrative I had been told, or offered another perspective different from the one I had learned about in an interview. Additionally, field notes were sometimes my only record of a document or piece of ephemera. Field notes very much enriched this study and played an important role in data collection.

Prior to beginning interviews with LW, he generated a biographical timeline for me. This document, five pages, single-spaced, noted the high and low points in LW's life story. This developed timeline provided me with reference points as we moved through our interviews, helping me connect what was happening on campus with other activities

that were playing out in LW's own life. The biographical timeline made it possible to connect events in LW's life with his coming out at CC.

4. Data Collection Techniques

Data collection came from interviews, archival documents, and researcher's field notes. Interviews with LW utilized an open-ended life history approach over a series of interviews. Conversely, interviews with other participants were semi-structured and occurred only once. Archival documents were collected from two sources, either LW or from CC. My researcher's field notes were generated throughout the period of investigation.

I used an open-ended interview technique to collect data from LW. Robert Atkinson recommends this technique in biographical work because it "will help draw out the person's feelings about their experiences as well as their deep, reflective thoughts on their life" (40). The interviews were semi-structured in that I came to the interviews with an agreed upon topic and a number of questions to get us started. There were a series of five, one and a half hour interviews that took place from January to April of 2009 which focused on: 1) General information and administration, staff, and governance, 2) Colleagues, 3) Pedagogy, 4) Students, and 5) Personal relationships and observations regarding other potential participants. The choice of these areas was mine, and they reflected the influence of Toni McNaron's book *Poisoned Ivy*. McNaron's 1997 study of how lesbian and gay academics confront homophobia reports on the experience of some three-hundred individuals. She divides her chapters in much the same manner as I organized the interviews. I did this so that when I later analyzed the material I would have McNaron's prior research for comparison. I audiotaped interviews that included a

“mixture of participant observation and almost casual chatting with notes taken” (Plummer 95) about the selected topic. My purpose in the interviews, as Irving Seidman recommends, “[was] to have the participant reconstruct his or her experience within the topic under study” (15). Four of the interviews took place in LW’s home, while the last one took place in my home.

Other participants were scheduled for less extensive, one-time interviews of a half hour in length. Some interviews ran longer than a half hour with one going nearly one hour, while others were shorter, only lasting twenty minutes. All together I conducted twenty-two of these one-time interviews in a variety of locations, including faculty offices, coffee shops, restaurants, and parking lots. All interviews were conducted in person. These one-to-one, audiotaped interviews were semi-structured. The questions I asked related to LW’s disclosure and its impact on the interviewee. I also asked about any changes related to gays and lesbians at CC that had come to the campus since LW’s arrival. Finally, I encouraged my interviewees to provide information not addressed in the questions I asked. Participants who had a longer history with the campus than LW were asked questions related to the atmosphere on campus prior to LW’s arrival and how that atmosphere had been created and developed. Student interviews were approached differently. They were more open-ended than interviews with administrators and faculty. The interviews tended to become a type of “literacy narrative” of the student’s experience in LW’s class. The stories included historical material about the students’ own encounters with other GLBT faculty and how they arrived at their current beliefs about the issue. These narratives offered strong evidence that coming out can help students see more varied perspectives, helping them to build critical thinking.

To access CC's archival material, I had to conduct research at CC's library. None of the archival material was in a digital format. Additionally, none of the material had been archived in any meaningful way. Once I made contact with the college's librarians and found out the current status of the archive, I sought permission to begin to organize the material. Beyond researching in the archive, I tried to assist CC in organizing its repository of material and offered support when speaking with others about the need to protect this important archive of student newspapers, campus publications, and special print ephemera. Prior to working with the archive, I was unsure whether or not the material would play much of a role in the study. I learned as I was reviewing the material how much archival material would further illuminate the interviews that I had already conducted. In many ways, the archive was what helped in filling out the context of the situation and in documenting the shift in attitudes that took place at CC.

My researcher's field notes of my observations were generated throughout the study period. During the interview phase of the research, my field notes were primarily generated following interviews with my participants. Almost all of my interviews involved leaving my work site and going to the campus or to my participant's home for the interview. As a result, I found it best to write my field notes after I returned home, using the twenty-minutes or so that it took to drive home as a time of reflection in preparation for writing. Some field notes were taken during the interview, but for the most part I kept my attention focused on my participant. My goal in the interview was to create an atmosphere where the participant felt like his or her contributions to the study were worthwhile and important.

When I examined archival material, on the other hand, field notes became the only way to make a record of the data for later study. All of the archival material had to stay at the CC library. Although there were copy machines at the library, they were many years old and none of them could accommodate the material. The archival material had been bound in 36" x 24" hardback editions by year. These were so large and hung over the side such that it was impossible to operate the copy machine when the bound material was on the copier's platen. My only choice was to take careful field notes as I studied the documents in the CC library. I worked with the archival material for a period of many months and ended up generating over one-hundred pages of field notes, which included a significant amount of primary source material that I transcribed directly into my field notes.

5. Data Analysis Procedures

Bishop stresses the importance of data reduction when she discusses data analysis procedures (113). Clearly, as the above discussion of data collection through interviews, documents, and field notes indicates, a great deal of material was generated during the course of this study. However, to make that material useful, it had to be compressed in some way through some system of analysis that made sense to the reader. C. Marshall and G. Rossman advocate that researchers "bring . . . order, structure, and meaning to the mass of collected data" (qtd. in Erlandson et al. 112), and this process began as I started the interviewing process. Data reduction was part of data collection.

Coding collected data involved dividing and classifying data to look for emergent themes. While I started with interviews and field notes that were already divided into the categories McNaron had set forth in her research, I quickly found that those categories,

while useful, could not contain my material and cross over began to take place. This occurred even more as I began interviews with LW's former students, colleagues, and supervisors, and it continued as I began to examine the study's archival documents. At this point, I began unitizing data, which Erlandson et al. describe as breaking down the data into the smallest possible units "that may stand alone as independent thoughts" (117) and still have meaning. This process was done with post-it notes and a coding system to help me sort through the substantial amount of material. I also did much of this coding in a digital environment, making use of coding devices within word processing programs.

The coding system was based on the theoretical discussion of coming out and the rhetorical situation that make up Chapters Two and Three of this study. In using a theoretical understanding of coming out, emergent category designations (Erlandson et al. 118) began to take place as I worked through the data. In other words, I began to blend together my data and the scholarly theory connected to coming out and the rhetorical situation to create emerging categories. This brought forth my two most substantial categories of heterosexism and homophobia, and along with these the data emerged that illustrated how LW's coming out impacted or brought change to other's thinking. In this way, I could begin to see how LW's coming out was a tool for filling the exigency of the rhetorical situation.

Also, important to this process was the notion of the negative case analysis. As explained by Erlandson et al., this analytic strategy focuses on material that might not fit into other categories and may "refute the researcher's reconstructions of reality" (121). The central question in my negative case analysis has been what if coming out makes no difference. What if it is meaningless in light of twenty-first-century understandings?

There have been some participants in this study who questioned whether or not coming out even mattered anymore, and some participants minimized the role of coming out in LW's life. What I often find most interesting about this development, however, is how closely related this thinking was to notions of heterosexism. The individual making the negative case was often the one who was least aware of how dominant heterosexist notions were at CC. Consequently, negative case analysis further reinforced my findings and has become a way for me to strengthen the themes and patterns emerging out of the data.

6. Methods for Verification and Trustworthiness

Triangulation and member checking were two important components in developing an ethnographic study that is valid and trustworthy. Triangulation is a process, according to Creswell, whereby "the researcher tests one source of information against another to strip away alternative rival explanations" (210 – 11). Triangulation took place in my study through interviewing some of the many individuals who participated in LW's coming out. These individuals, hearing the disclosure from different perspectives, offered their own perspectives on the disclosure. Thus, I collected data on a single incident from numerous points of view. In this way, I have triangulated the data.

Another point of triangulation in this study is its interdisciplinary nature. By building bridges between understandings of rhetoric and queer theory and making use of historical and anthropological research methods, I have broadened the possibilities for understanding how LW's personal coming out impacts a community. This idea of interdisciplinary triangulation is one that Bishop links to Mary Louise Pratt and her notion of *contact zones*, "where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often

in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power” (34). Ethnography, according to Bishop, “exists where cultures meet” (48) and this interdisciplinary study of rhetoric is no exception, as not only gay and heterosexual cultures are in play within the content of this study, but also, the cultures of various disciplines are being brought to bear in the design and construction of this study.

Peer debriefing or what Creswell identifies as “respondent validation” “consists of determining whether the actors whose beliefs and behavior are being described recognize the validity of their accounts” (211). Member checking took place in this study as I collected data. I sought to summarize individuals’ positions and accounts during interviews to make sure that my understandings and interpretations of the data were correct. I also used data from previous interviews to inform a current interview. Doing so helped me double-check whether or not others saw an event in the same manner as the individual who first shared the information with me. Finally, LW reviewed drafts of the final document for how it captured the narrative’s events and the people who participated in the event. LW also assisted me greatly with the proofreading of the dissertation text. His attention to detail was very helpful.

7. Limitations

I have tried my best to create a study that is ethical and that addresses the questions with which I began this study. I have taken steps to conceal the identity of participants and the campus I am researching. I have been particularly careful with students by choosing not to interview any of those who may be still associated with the campus and who might for some reason find themselves back in LW’s classroom. In my data analysis, I attempt to represent accurately what all participants have said, being

mindful that these participants still have an on-going relationship with one another and that as colleagues and supervisors they continue to work together.

However, I, like all researchers, am biased and come to this study with a certain position, one that I have attempted to make clear in the opening chapter as well as in other places in this study. I believe coming out is important. I lead a life where I am open about my sexuality in all areas of my life. If I did not, I more than likely would not be conducting the study. The ethnographer must always be concerned with “going native,” the idea that one becomes so much a part of the culture that one is studying that it becomes impossible to have enough distance from it to analyze it. In the sense that I believe it is important for the gay or lesbian teacher to come out, I would acknowledge that I am in agreement with LW who advocates this position. Despite this, I believe that in other important ways I can view the community college I am studying from the position of a researcher, which will allow me to present a report that advances our understandings of the relationship between coming out and shifting attitudes.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE LITERACY WORKER

The concept of the “Literacy Worker” is taken from the theoretical work of Andrea Lunsford, Helene Moglen, and James Slevin, who define such individuals as “teachers of reading and writing in classes from first grade through graduate school” (1). Literacy workers are increasingly being examined in the current educational atmosphere. There are reports of research looking at why they are effective, others about why they fail, and still more that suggest what they should be teaching and how they should teach it. The value of these studies is debated by stakeholders as each is released to the public. One methodological challenge found in many of them is that they position the literacy worker as a kind of empty vessel: someone waiting to be filled up by whatever new teaching strategy or pedagogical tool is popular at the moment. There is no acknowledgment that the literacy worker has a personal identity or that his or her personal identity is a factor to consider when examining the teaching/learning situation. This study, like the others, is centered around a literacy worker, LW, but it is unlike those other studies in the way it treats identity. Instead, it regards a literacy worker’s identity as highly significant, particularly when the instructor’s identity is that of a gay man. Therefore, this study is very much about how a literacy worker’s identity matters to his teaching, service, and research at a community college where he has taught for nearly thirty years.

During that nearly thirty year period, significant shifts in attitudes about gay and lesbian people were reported. Therefore, this study is also about how this shift occurred at a Los Angeles area community college, CC, and the openly gay professor, LW, whose

coming out assisted in bringing about the shift. Important to note is that only three years prior to LW beginning his tenure at CC, NCTE reported atrocious conditions at college campuses for many gay faculty. Even more than a decade later, McNaron in *Poisoned Ivy* found similar conditions still existing for some gay and lesbian faculty in higher education environments. What both empirical studies concluded was that to change these conditions faculty needed to come out, the admonition that had first been declared by Louie Crew and Rictor Norton in the pages of *College English* in 1974. Doing so would make a difference, both studies asserted. LW is an example of an instructor who did come out, despite facing some of these challenging conditions noted in previous studies; he is an exemplary test case of this claim that coming out changes attitudes. He and CC were able to negotiate a discursive relationship where he could thrive and serve the campus for an extended tenure. As this happened, he helped CC to shift its attitudes about gays and lesbians in the campus community. In this chapter I explain the rhetorical efforts LW took to persuade members of CC, how he went about addressing what Lloyd Bitzer calls “the rhetorical situation,” and in doing so, how he navigated treacherous discursive lineages attached to his positions as both a gay man and writing teacher.

Although some see the identity-markers of *gay man* and *writing teacher* as easily understood, the previous chapters have shown such is not the case. Coming out as a gay man is not a straightforward matter, but is, instead, a rhetorical activity which draws from an extensive discursive ancestry. This lineage creates problems for both the one coming out and those witnessing the disclosure, because both must contend with the negative discursive history attached to these identities. These discursive lineages are remnants of what Grindstaff calls “rhetorical contests” (1). In these contests, discourses compete

against one another to define ideas, such as *gay man* and *writing teacher*, in the public's imagination; the outcomes from these contests remain attached to the idea, almost guaranteeing future rhetorical contests. As Nevin K. Laib notes, these discursive contests are battles for what he sees as "territory," and the discursive winners gain the right to dominate the definition. However, the battles are not the war. Continued contests reposition rhetorical property lines, causing certain discursive lineages to raise up or recede as boundaries shift. With regard to gay men and writing teachers, both have been defined in a deficit manner through these discursive contests. This negative perception presents LW with a major challenge to overcome at the start of his tenure. Furthermore, when LW identifies as a *gay man* or *writing teacher*, he is attempting to define himself as something which is discursively in flux and unstable. What is meant by *gay man* or *writing teacher*? The rhetorical contests over those terms is anything but settled. Both identity-markers encompass so many varied discursive positions that one might have trouble understanding how one manifestation of *gay man* or *writing teacher* can be considered within the same category as another. This discursive ancestry is certainly a part of LW's rhetorical situation at CC.

Mindful of the fluidity and change inherent within these identity categories, this chapter isolates four major cornerstones that contributed to LW's success at CC. These cornerstones made it possible for him to be a part of shifting attitudes at the campus. They were what helped him persuade others that his sexual orientation was valuable to CC. The cornerstones are: LW spoke out from the beginning and continued to speak out across the campus; He made use of his disclosure as a pedagogical tool; He consciously made a great effort to be exemplary in all that he did at CC; and he accommodated others

with his disclosure and actions related to it. What follows is a detailed account of how LW influenced others with his language and action, even as he changed himself through the process of filling the exigency he found at CC. In addition to this analysis, the study identifies as well the discursive heritage within LW's disclosure and position as a "gay man" and "writing teacher." The chapter makes the case that a discursive ancestry can be seen in the lived experience of a faculty member's coming out as well as in his position as a writing teacher.

1. Speaking Out While Teaching

As noted in Chapter Two, coming out is a recursive activity, requiring one to return to it over and over as encounters with new individuals require disclose once more. Another aspect of coming out's recursive nature is how it changes over an individual's lifetime. In my own experience, my coming out as a young gay man is vastly different from the coming out I experienced as a middle-aged man. A case could be made that each disclosure is in some way different from the previous, as every disclosure impacts the next disclosure. Thus, coming out looks different at different points in one's life. LW's experience of coming out also illustrates this sort of recursiveness and change. However, because his disclosure takes place in the same location over nearly thirty years, it is possible to see how his coming out evolves as the exigency of his rhetorical situation changes. Change is clearly on display because of this extended tenure. For example, some of the change LW sees in his coming out he credits directly to his experiences with and responses from his students. Their feedback played an important role in the ways his coming out transformed. Also, LW's disclosure takes place at CC in varied settings, not just his classroom. While his classroom is the primary location for disclosure, he speaks

out across CC in the classrooms of other faculty, in meetings with other staff, faculty, and administrators, and at campus-wide events. By coming out in these varied locations, LW has extended the reach of his coming out, but each rhetorical situation bring changes to his disclosure, too.

a. Deciding to Speak Out

LW's decision to speak out while teaching came early in his career, before he was employed by CC. As a high school, college, and university teacher, he would come out to his classes. However, in the beginning he was unsure whether or not he should disclose. "What was its educational value?" he asked himself. He found his answer when he was teaching in the Miami-Dade area of Florida and drafting his dissertation in 1979. LW was teaching part time at a number of institutions, a freeway flyer, trying to make enough to live on and still have sufficient time to complete the dissertation. An older male professor in one of the English departments where LW was teaching was a former "Navy man." He and LW, a former Marine from 1970 to 1973, would swap stories back and forth about their service in the Armed Forces. The senior English faculty member loved the Navy and still had his hair cut in a flat top, just as he did when he was in the service. LW's sexuality was never discussed between them. Because of LW's unusual dissertation study about teaching a gay literature class, the media picked up on his work, and *The Miami Herald* published a newspaper article about LW and his research. The article clearly identified LW as a gay man and included a photograph of him along with the article. The senior English faculty member reacted disappointingly to the newspaper article: "The day that it came out in the *Miami Herald* that I was gay, he never talked to me again. He would just turn his back," LW recounts. The rejection was not particularly notable to

LW, though, until later when disturbing information about the senior English faculty member surfaced from a surprising source.

LW goes on with the story:

One morning while I was in my office grading essays, my office mate, Katie, gasped, and said, “LW listen to this.” She was grading essays, too. It was an essay from his [the senior English faculty member’s] daughter, who Katie had in class. His daughter wrote about going to the Klan meetings with Mom and Dad. And, I said, “Katie, what would be the difference of him coming out to his class as a member of the Klan and me coming out to my class as a gay person? Is there a difference? Should I not do that and disclose?” She had a response immediately: “LW, you’re disclosing to open discussion, to give another point of view, to add diversity. He would be disclosing to shut down discussion, to let the people of color and gays and others know they are in danger and to shut up.”

His officemate’s response gave LW the pedagogical answer he had been searching for. Coming out would be about expanding the conversation in his classroom and helping students to learn different perspectives. This discursive position justified his disclosure, to his thinking. Coming out would be central to his teaching pedagogy, a strategy for instructing his students, a learning tool. However, this way of thinking about coming out was not part of the discursive lineage associated with gays and lesbians. In fact, the discursive ancestry had favored silence greatly over speaking out, as seen in state laws like the Helm’s Amendment in Oklahoma which silenced teachers when it forbade them

from speaking out in either their public or private life. LW's choice to characterize his coming out as a learning tool would result in powerful rhetorical contests between the varied discursive perspectives at CC.

b. The Evolution of His Disclosure

LW has come out to each class he has taught at CC since 1984. While LW has shown a remarkable consistency in coming out, he acknowledges that the way in which he discloses has changed considerably over the years. In the early days of his teaching, the disclosure played an important role in building community and trust with the students. "Once a teacher could talk about homosexuality openly with a class, there's a trust relationship built between the teacher and student. Now we can talk about anything." This is what he observed happening when he first disclosed as a high school English teacher: "In every single class, all six hours of the day, a student had a cousin, a brother, an aunt, someone in the family that was gay or lesbian. You could just see the relief that they were able to talk about it finally." Once he began teaching at CC, he would share this story of his disclosure while teaching high school with his college students. Similarly, his CC students seemed to have the same response: They were relieved that they could speak about it. Silence, as a discursive strategy, has long been associated with coming out. When an individual can finally speak about themselves or others close to them, the discursive experience can be cathartic.

Over the course of his teaching, LW's coming out changed as it became a part of a lesson about descriptive language. Rather than disclosing in the opening weeks of the course, he would choose, instead, to come out on what he liked to call "insult day." Insult day was part of an examination of Gloria Naylor's essay, "'Nigger': The Meanings of a

Word,” first printed in *The New York Times* in 1986. Eventually, the essay would come to be anthologized in a number of first-year writing readers, including *The Brief Bedford Reader*, a text that LW has employed in teaching composition. Naylor’s essay argues that it is meanings attached to words by “the consensus that give them true power” (388). For her example, she chooses to discuss her experience with the word, *nigger*. LW uses Naylor’s essay as a jumping off point to explore other words that had been given power by the consensus. He would work with students to develop a list of words guaranteed to offend when used in a pejorative manner, but, on the other hand, could be perfectly acceptable in other situations when used by other speakers. This lesson helped students to understand the role of context and audience in relationship to language. Most certainly the list of offending words would include words associated with homosexuality, such as *faggot*, *queer*, *homo*, *nelly*, and a host of others. Once the list was assembled, LW would turn to his students and ask, “Which ones can I call myself?” This example helped students to understand the connections between language and identity, language and power. It also served to announce that LW was gay.

However, despite his success with this strategy, LW abandoned it based on a student course critique: “The changes have been prompted by student course critiques and how my audiences have viewed the issue. Some students comment on it every semester from various points of view.” The critique that brought about the change was from a student who observed that when he disclosed on insult day it was so dramatic that it overpowered the rest of his teaching. This comment led him to a coming out less dramatic and more informational. On his syllabus, he included contact information and in class informed students of his lack of availability on Monday evenings due to his

rehearsal commitment with the Gay Men's Chorus of Los Angeles. Once again, he disclosed on the first day of class. This disclosure, used in the late 1990s through the first decade of the twenty-first century, was considerably more low key than previously. Also, the change coincided with increased disclosures by other CC faculty at the time. In addition, much more general discussion about gays and lesbians was taking place across the campus and the nation. No longer the only faculty member speaking out seemed to be a factor in LW downplaying his own disclosure. The more faculty who disclose, the less significant any one disclosure becomes. Still, this more low key disclosure can be startling to students on the first class. One recalled, "In the first ten minutes of the class you learn that LW is a former marine, Christian, and gay – if you have a problem with any of that, you're welcome to leave. It was a lot to get my head around."

c. Negative Student Responses to His Disclosure

Certainly not all of the commentaries in LW's course critiques are positive. "Once every year or two, from one or two students, who are in some way dealing with the issue, comes a critical commentary," LW observed. Recently, a student had gone so far as to accuse LW of being "uncomfortable with the issue" because of his gay references in class. The student argued the references were excessive and unnecessary. In this negative evaluation, the rhetorical contests between older and newer discourses surrounding gays and lesbians can be seen. The student's critique comes from discursive notions that talking about sexuality, particularly gay sexuality, is inappropriate in an educational setting, perhaps any setting. This clash between a student who believes sexuality must be silenced and an instructor who believes speaking out is a requirement repeats over and

over at CC. Throughout this chapter there will be further evidence of how the battle between silence and speaking out is waged.

Another critique LW received recently accused him of favoritism toward male students. This was from an older, female student who failed her first-year writing course. Unhappy with her grade, she felt that male students had a chance of making a better grade than females. The notion of bias and that a gay instructor would favor males in his class is drawn from a similar discourse that accuses heterosexual, male professors of favoring female students. LW disputes the student's claim and says in some ways the opposite is true with regard to the young, gay men in his class. "They should write well" is his position. This student's critique extends the discursive lineage that says sexuality does not belong in the classroom and those who bring it in are behaving inappropriately.

In addition to negative course critiques, LW has had students speak out inappropriately. One student upon hearing his disclosure blurted out in front of the class, "Are you a fag?" LW responded to the middle-aged woman by saying it would not be the language he chose to describe himself with, but, in reality, she was correct. That student left the classroom at the break. Students leaving the class after his disclosure also occurs. This phenomenon is more common in LW's *Bible as Literature* class, which he has taught since the beginning of his tenure at CC, and seems to take place less so in his first-year writing classes. One explanation would be that the *Bible as Literature* class is an elective, whereas the first-year writing course is a general education requirement. However, a more plausible explanation would be that some students in the *Bible as Literature* class are not comfortable with a gay instructor teaching the literature and history of the Bible. Students who stay for a few sessions and leave may be bothered by

LW's feminist and queer interpretations of the Bible. One student commented that when she took the class, "a number of students dropped out after his announcement, and one young man got up and walked out immediately." However, there are generally students ready to take the exiting student's place. LW's classes are capped at forty, and he always has a waiting list of students wanting to add.

The students in this study disagreed that LW raises the issue of sexuality in excess. Instead, interview participants claimed sexuality was a part of the conversation only when it was pertinent to the issue being discussed. The same comments were made by students with LW's references to God, the Marines, and marriage. What is more, very few students have complained to other faculty or administrators about LW's disclosure. In fact, during research for this study, not a single faculty member, chair of the department, or college administrator could recall a student complaint against LW. LW, though, recalled a specific instance when a student did protest to administration, accusing him of "ridiculing orthodox Christianity, making fun of Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson, and destroying Christendom by his gay perverted attitudes." Nothing came of the complaint, even though there was a great amount of administrative paperwork involved in addressing the issue. A fellow faculty member did note that once when she recommended LW as an instructor for an older, Latino student he shook his head and told her he could not study with a homosexual. The faculty member explained, "This incident occurred sometime in the 1980s, during the height of the AIDS epidemic, when many feared being in a room with gay people." LW's very public coming out may help keep some students out of his classes as the information about his sexuality passes from student to student. Students who would be troubled by his sexual orientation may choose

to avoid his class. All in all, few complaints have been lodged and the increasingly accepting attitudes of students to his disclosure have been one important factor in LW's ability to persuade others. Without acceptance by students, LW's coming out would not have had the impact it did in shifting attitudes at CC.

d. Speaking Out Across Campus

In addition to speaking out in his classroom, LW has spoken out across campus. "There were a number of articles about me in the student newspaper," he shared. These articles happened in large part because of a writing assignment LW gives to his first-year writing students. In his assignment, he requires students to go out and conduct an interview with an expert on a topic of the student's choice. As a result, a number of students have chosen over the years to interview the faculty advisor for the student newspaper. In what might be considered a turnabout, the faculty advisor for the newspaper often assigns his beginning reporters "to go interview LW about being a gay teacher." LW has chosen to see these interviews as an opportunity to inform and educate. The interviews over the years have given him an opportunity to speak out about important national discussions related to AIDS, gays in the military, and same-sex marriage. LW recalled how the interviews changed over the years, moving from skepticism and ignorance about homosexuality in the early days because the student reporter "didn't know any gay people," to conviction and knowledge during his middle years as the student reporter shared with LW about gay family and friends. Now, LW says the interviews have dropped off, because his disclosure is seen as "ho-hum."

Because of his high profile on campus, LW has sometimes been a one-man speaker's bureau. He has offered his insights in other classrooms when invited by faculty,

as well as participated in campus lecture activities, as both a sponsor bringing in others to speak to the campus and serving as a guest speaker himself. Mostly, these speaking activities have centered around LW's sexual orientation and his Christianity, sometimes each issue separately, and other times, discussed together. For many in his audience, the two discursive ideas together seem contradictory: It is not possible for a gay person to be a Christian. An article from the student newspaper quotes LW as introducing himself at a 1986 CC panel discussion on gay rights by saying, "I was raised with a strong religious background. I am a born-again Christian, and I am a member of the MCC [Metropolitan Community Church]." As this example illustrates, LW's disclosure about his sexuality often becomes a disclosure about his religious beliefs, too.

In coming out in this way, he illustrates how his sexuality is connected to many aspects of his life. This multiple discursive disclosure as a former Marine, practicing Christian, and gay man helps LW promote the *multivalent* thinking he wants to teach his students. Borrowing the term from chemistry and math, he uses it to describe thinking that is aware of multiple subject positions. Thus, he can use his own multiple discursive positions as a pedagogical activity. For some in his audience, the juxtaposition of the two concepts, homosexuality and Christianity, opens up new ways of thinking about both topics. LW's disclosure has been used by himself and other faculty to provide students with a way of seeing that they may not have considered before; his coming out has been used to develop a more critical consciousness in students. As a result, LW's disclosure is seen discursively as a critical thinking tool, a means to help students examine concepts, ideas, and situations from multiple perspectives before arriving at a conclusion.

Establishing this purpose for his disclosure at CC is significant to LW's success in being able to incorporate his coming out into the larger campus discourse.

2. Teaching Students in an Atmosphere of Disclosure

LW's coming out has an impact on the teaching that takes place in his classroom. As already shown, his disclosure serves as a pedagogical tool that colors the classroom conversations. Also, LW's disclosure is associated with numerous other identity-markers. He is a person from the Midwest, a person from a small village rather than a large city, a person who is male, white, and over 6' tall, a person who is a Christian, a former Marine and husband, and, finally, a gay man. LW tells his students, "These are the prisms through which I will see the world. You need to filter what I say as we are working together through those prisms, comparing what is different in my interpretation and what is similar to your own understandings." He describes these prisms as warrants, borrowing the phrase from Stephen Toulmin, the British philosopher. His prisms, therefore, are principles by which he interprets both the world in general and the specific readings he assigns in his courses. He feels that if he does not disclose his prisms to his students, they may struggle to understand the way he interprets the world: "I've had students in the early days before I came out to my classes say, 'Teacher, I don't understand how you reached that conclusion.'" However, once he would disclose, he found explanations less vexing. His coming out was a touchstone that he and the class returned to throughout the semester. Drawing students' attention back to his coming out helps explain his interpretations of the course material. His coming out inspired his teaching in other ways. It encouraged him to look closely at language and its meanings in his readings and

assignments and to see disclosure as a means to learning. His coming out serves as the foundation of his teaching pedagogy.

a. Language and Its Meanings

As a literacy worker, LW's writing classes are centered around issues of language, focusing on how language is used by writers to communicate powerful ideas, ideas which may be contested, questioned, or even ignored, similar to the discursive lineages LW contends with when he comes out. This would suggest that LW's personal rhetorical contests may have made him particularly sensitive to these issues surrounding language. Recognizing language as opaque, LW teaches students to dig deeper than the surface when attempting to give language meaning.

Language and its meanings was an important concern of LW's classroom teaching even before he began his tenure at CC. Shortly after he finished his dissertation, LW attended a NCTE conference and participated in the Classroom Idea Exchange. He prepared a handout on the denotations and connotations of language, using the term *homosexual* as a point of exploration for the lesson. The conference he attended, which took place in the early 1980s, was within two years of Crew and Keener's landmark study of gay faculty where nearly 60% of respondents reported that those who come out as gay or lesbian were likely to experience overt job discrimination. In this instance, LW did not experience job discrimination, but it did appear as if he was censored when his flyers were removed from the table by one or more participants who were going through the Exchange line. Fortunately, the NCTE staff had collected a copy of his materials and later they were reprinted in *College English*. In the introduction to the material, LW asked, "Are these [materials] really so dangerous that professional adults at a professional

gathering of their professional organization need to be shielded from them?” Apparently some thought so. This event once again demonstrates the rhetorical contest between silence and speaking out. This contest between these two is a long disputed boundary for rhetorical territory. As one sides pushes one way, the other pushes back. More and more, speaking out seems to be gaining the upper hand, but throughout this study, there is evidence that silence remains a powerful discursive argument.

As this example attests, language, particularly when it is associated with sexuality, can have a very powerful affect on people. But, it is not just sexuality and language that can prove to be a volatile mix. Clashes between many identity-markers occur at CC and in LW’s classroom. Over his tenure, he has seen CC move from a campus dominated by Anglo, Caucasian students to one that has a heavy concentration of Latino, Arabic, and special needs students. Each of these groups bring its own community’s issues with language into LW’s classroom. A great many discursive traditions are represented when this happens. What is more, the campus is made up of students who come from great wealth as well as those who come from great poverty. LW finds that economic conditions play a significant role in how language is interpreted and understood; thus, another rhetorical contest is in play between the rhetorical lineages of wealth and poverty. As a community college, LW’s classes contain students who vary greatly in age. His students have ranged from thirteen to ninety-four. Likewise, he has part- and full-time students. There are others who attend CC intent on earning an Associate’s degree, while some attend CC only to fulfill a general education credit before returning to their home university. This diverse student body results in a classroom where language and its meanings can be a rich area for investigation and conflict.

Illustrating the significance of diversity in his classroom and its connections to language, LW shares his experience of teaching a nineteen year old Jewish refugee who had fled Tehran and his classmate, an eighty-four year old German woman whose father was conscripted into Hitler's army in World War II. Having students meet and introduce one another to the class on opening day resulted in these two very different students meeting and becoming friends. They were taking LW's *Bible as Literature* class, and when the class read the Gospels and discussed the anti-Semitism in the text, both students could share how they had seen anti-Semitism take place in their lives and the repercussions of it to themselves and others. The different perspectives each offered on the topic promoted the multivalent thinking LW seeks to teach his students. Further, CC's highly diverse student body allowed LW to explore conflicts that arise between communities, both in the US and abroad. During his tenure, he has taught many students whose countries were at war with one another currently or historically. Defining what it means when one says "Israel," "Palestine," "Russia," and "Iran" and recognizing the contested nature of those definitions further promotes students' understandings of varied perspectives.

Even though LW emphasizes the ambiguity of language in the content of his courses, clarity, he observes, is the most important principle he tries to teach students about writing. In the remedial writing courses he teaches, he emphasizes personal writing where students use their own experiences to understand and explore a concept: "Clarity in sentence structure, clarity in word choice, clarity in content to show us as much as possible what the writer means is what I want students to achieve," LW notes. In the first-year writing course, he continues to emphasize clarity, even though the essays are more

academic in the sense that they call for incorporating the work of outside sources, rather than the personal experience of the writer. He advises students when it comes to selecting topics, “Don’t take the most difficult, challenging topic you can find. This is a college writing class. It’s not the Pulitzer Prize. Take something that you know and nail it.” His reasoning rests on the notion that students writing about something they know well will result in clearer writing.

Clarity is a central concern about student writing at many levels of higher education. Discussions take place in a variety of academic and more general environments and the result is a general bemoaning that students cannot write clearly. Each assignment or exam only encourages this thinking. Consequently, the discursive lineage of clarity is derived from a deficit model. In other words, something is lacking in the student writing which makes it unclear. LW, like many writing teachers, has responded to the perceived deficit by highlighting its importance, and he has encouraged students to write what they know as an antidote. This advice is somewhat of a contradiction when put next to another important tenet of LW’s teaching that students should learn something new in their education. If they are learning something new, will students be able to write clearly about this new knowledge? Furthermore, LW’s own acknowledgment of the opacity of language would help to explain in large part students’ lack of clarity in essay writing. This example of conflicting academic ideas illustrates how the discourses surrounding writing teachers are at odds with one another. As these various discursive lineages compete, they position LW and what he says in contradictory ways, requiring him to straddle numerous ideological positions. The clarity and coherence of LW’s identity as a writing teacher is impacted by the discursive lineages he

must contend with, and his students must attempt to make sense out of the mixed messages.

b. Disclosure as a Means to Learning

It is not unusual to have students in LW's class who come from countries which are currently or historically at war with one another. Often when students are working on research essays for his writing courses, they want to write about how their nationality is portrayed by US media. LW recalls earlier in his career when a number of Palestinian students wanted to explore this topic, but they struggled to self-identify as Palestinians and were told by their parents that American Zionists would find out about them and do them harm. In many ways, it is self-censorship that seems to trouble LW the most in his work with students. As he has adopted a discourse of disclosure in his classroom, he has encouraged it among his students, too. This encouragement of disclosure is not new to writing classrooms. It can be traced back to the discourse of the process movement in writing, as process privileges students telling their own truths. A pedagogy based on disclosure is going to be a pedagogy that borrows a number of discursive ideas from the process movement.

The consequences of this strategy can be very dramatic in the classroom, LW reports, as the following story illustrates:

It was a summer class [. . .]. There was a drop dead, gorgeous, Irish – pale skin, dark black hair, and blue eyes - young man who sat in the front row wearing shorts. It was a first-year writing class, an evening class, also. We were talking about language and sexism, and he's the one who said his strategy for picking up a girl was to go to the local mall, stand at the

bottom of the escalator, and pick out one and say, “Hey, you want to ball, chick?” He repeated the phrase because some of the people in the class didn’t know “ball” as a verb. The young man reported that every single night he went home with a different girl and had sex. The class, the women, were just stunned. There was a matronly woman in the back of the room in her forties [. . .] and she just -- this was just before the break, so I stepped back and let the students start discussing, then called time out for a fifteen-minute break. This woman came up then and took him [the young man] out on the lawn and hugged him, embraced him. Fifteen minutes later, he came back in tears. “I didn’t realize how sexist and how demeaning that is. It was fun: I had fun and they had fun. But, maybe, I should move beyond that.” The other students had gotten to him.

The disclosure stunned everyone, the young man, his classmates, and certainly his instructor. These sorts of dramatic moments have to be expected, however, in an environment where personal disclosure is privileged, and students being able to speak their own truths is integral to their learning.

Although the above story presents a vivid coming out in LW’s classroom, disclosure happens regularly in his class in both large and small ways. To some extent, it is not possible to be successful in writing a personal narrative without some degree of disclosure. Inherent within the form is an expectation to reveal something the reader will find unexpected. The revelation in many ways serves as the hook to get the reader’s attention. To be successful writers, students must disclose. Perhaps because of the similar concepts associated with process writing and coming out, it makes it easier for LW to

disclose in his classroom, and the disclosure is more accepted by his students. Also revealing is that LW allowed the class to handle the situation, rather than him stepping in and imposing his views on the young man. Sharing disclosures and receiving peer responses is very much a part of the discursive lineage from the process movement.

An important note about the above story: LW recalled it as a defining moment for himself in terms of his sexual expression on campus. He readily admitted that he found the young man in the story physically desirable, such that he had dreamed about him and became aroused:

I sat up in the bed and my then partner, Le Roy, woke up and asked what was the matter. I said, 'I'm shutting this off.' Ever since then, I've shut off my sexual response [to students]. Sometimes I've done so willfully. When I drive through the gate at CC, I'm a non-sexual being. When I go to other colleges for meetings, there are handsome people and my eyes flit all over the place, but on my own campus, it is shut down totally. I'm not sure if that is a healthy thing.

What LW's response to his dream seems to suggest is that exploring sexuality intellectually is acceptable but exploring same-sex desires and fantasies about students is not. Intellectual, theoretical discussions about homosexual issues are fine on campus; however, homoerotic fantasies are a violation and a threat. Fantasies go too far. Of course, this same thinking may take place among heterosexual faculty as well. In this case, the gay male teacher admits to controlling his desires through controlling his thoughts.

LW is not alone in shutting off erotic thoughts about students. Using myself as an example, I, too, find myself being a “non-sexual” being at my campus. One thing that drives me to do so is my openness. Because I am well known on campus to be a gay man, I feel the need to be extra careful not to leave myself vulnerable to accusations of being a predator. Because the discursive lineage associated with gay males has for so long included references to pedophilia, most often without merit, it impacts my own thinking. The notion that gays and lesbians are predators dates back to at least the middle of the twentieth-century, and the discursive lineage remains strong today as witnessed in many local news reports on sexual activity between students and teachers. It drives both LW and me to shut off a part of our mind whenever we enter our campuses.

3. *The Best Little Boy in the World*: Exemplary Teaching, Service, and Research

LW’s performance of his coming out is another important factor in his acceptance at CC. In constructing his performance, LW is as exemplary as possible in all that he does. The idea that a gay man would try to make himself exemplary as a consequence of his sexual orientation was explored most notably in the 1973 bestselling book *The Best Little Boy in the World*. In it, the author, writing under the pseudonym, John Reid, tells his own story of trying to be the best so no one would recognize his homosexuality. He describes his rise in both the public and private sector while hiding his sexual orientation. Eventually, staying in the closet would devastate him. The book spoke to many gay men who came of age in the 1970s. Like John Reid, they had tried being *The Best Little Boy in the World* in the hope of hiding what they would never want discovered, their homosexuality. Pat Griffin’s study of gay faculty details the efforts by faculty members to be the very best and the costs that come to them as a result. Of course, coming out does

not exempt one from the syndrome. Even some of those who come out, like LW, still feel the need to excel, to be the best, in order to make their sexuality more acceptable to others and to represent themselves in the most positive light. *The Best Little Boy in the World* rhetorical strategy is a part of the discursive lineage of gay men and lesbian women.

LW began to understand as a teenager the level at which he would need to perform in order to overcome the homophobia that he would encounter throughout his life. He bargained that if he could perform at high level, he could distract his audience from seeing his homosexuality. However, if that plan of action was not successful and his homosexuality was discovered, LW hoped his exemplary work would be so valuable to others that his sexual orientation would be overlooked. LW's experience is a discursive model for many men, illustrating how many negotiate their discovery that they desire members of their own sex. They seem to figure if they can be good enough in their chosen endeavor, they can stand up to the taunts and jeers they will face regarding their sexuality. LW recalls a story from when he was a high school drum major that illustrates his recognition of this need for him to perform at such a high level to gain acceptance:

In many senses, though, that is what I consciously became [*The Best Little Boy in the World*]. I've done that my entire life, my entire life. I knew when I walked down the [school] hall with a twirling baton in my hand in a small town, I had to be very good. And, I had to brace myself. I knew I'd be called 'sissy.' I knew I was a sissy, but they didn't know. So, I practiced at home. 'Wait until you see me, wait until the first game,' I'd say. The first game, the band director had me do a solo and the crowd

loved it. I was good. I won the state championship. In order to get to where I wanted, I had to be *The Best Little Boy in the World*. And, the same in my work on campus.

It would not be enough for LW to be average, so he felt, once he decided to be public with his sexual orientation. To be successful would require him to do more than others, at least in his thinking. This way of thinking has driven many gay men to perform exceptional work and become outstanding in their fields, noted for their devotion. Of course, not all gay men respond in this manner. Many men find they are unable to be the best and that failure, coupled with their sense of failure regarding their sexuality, presents them with a powerful discursive challenge to overcome. For many, it can be a pernicious discursive lineage to contest.

Evidence of LW doing more than what was expected of him can be seen in every aspect of his professional life. As a classroom teacher, faculty member, and intellectual, LW performed at a high level and received recognition, which greatly influenced how his disclosure was acknowledged on campus. He worked to become an exemplary model. As such, his coming out was well-received across campus. Although his success is acknowledged by all the participants in the study, few are aware, however, that the motivation for LW to do his best came in large part because of his sexuality, because of his desire to make his sexuality more acceptable to the campus.

a. Teacher Awards and Evaluations

In March 1998, the California Community College Foundation awarded LW the Hayward Award for excellence in education. LW was the first nominee from CC and the first one of its faculty to win the award. This accomplishment is considered by him to be

one of the highlights of his career as a teacher. According to the Foundation, a Hayward Award nominee should be committed to serving students, community colleges, and the school's communities. In addition, the nominee should represent his or her profession beyond the local institution through service in statewide and/or national activities.

Winners of the award are selected through a process that begins locally with the campus Academic Senate nominating a peer for the award and then forwarding that nominee on to the statewide Academic Senate. Four honorees are then selected from across the state.

The award was established in 1989. When LW's nomination was submitted to the statewide Academic Senate, it included a letter of support from the then CC college president, who praised LW as "a consummate professional" with a "passion for teaching which is contagious to students." Prominent in LW's nomination and materials sent to the statewide Academic Senate was his work with sexual minorities. Although LW credits this work with winning him the award, he believes it played a role in him being silenced at the award presentation. Unfortunately, when LW was silenced, all the rest of the honorees were silenced, too.

At the award presentation, recipients were traditionally given a few moments to address the members of the Foundation. That was not to be the case when LW received the award. All four of the recipients were instructed not to say anything as they were given their award. No explanation was offered to the candidates for this action, but LW felt that it was because of him. Rather than risk him speaking out about his campus work with sexual minorities, it was easier to have none of the faculty speak, he reasons. All four faculty recipients were silenced because a trustee might be uncomfortable for a few minutes while LW spoke about his work with gay and lesbian students. LW was unaware

of who made this decision, but curiously, after the award presentation and at the doughnut table during a break in the meeting, a couple of the trustees, businessmen who had been appointed by the governor of California, came over to LW, patted him on the back, and encouraged him to keep up the good work he was performing on the CC campus. While someone may have wanted to silence LW at this important event, his work was able somehow to speak for him when he could not.

In addition to the statewide recognition, LW was recognized at his campus both formally and in less traditional venues. He received the first Outstanding Teacher Award given at CC in 2007. The Associated Students, who sponsored the award, noted that this recognition signified LW's dedication to serving the students at the college. Additionally, LW enjoyed favorable evaluations from his students, including high ratings through informal measurements of faculty, such as the website "Rate My Professors." Although this site is disdained by most faculty, it does seem to carry weight with students. A number of my student participants used it regularly in selecting their classes and instructors. Those I spoke with mentioned that LW's high ratings on the site encouraged them to enroll in one of his course sections. One student particularly noted how LW was praised for his professional demeanor and attitude, which convinced the student to enroll in a writing course with LW.

LW's extended tenure at the college causes a number of other faculty and students to recommend him as an instructor. He credits this with providing him with motivated students who are more likely to finish the course. Retaining students in class and helping them complete the course is a challenge for faculty in this community college system where students are allowed to withdraw from a course as late as the tenth week of the

semester. LW has one of the highest success rates of any CC faculty member in getting students to finish his classes. He starts the semester with forty students and generally loses no more than 10 to 15% throughout the semester. Many other CC faculty see their class sizes dwindle by as much as 50 to 60% over the course of the semester. Beyond LW getting motivated students in his classes, his efforts at communicating with his students also seem to get results. By his and others' accounts, he has been known to go to great efforts in tracking errant students down to help them complete his class. One returning student, who was also a high school teacher, commented that LW "wasn't a teacher who taught and went home, but was involved in the life of the campus. He made himself very accessible to students." This factor may be one of the most important ways LW serves the students of his campus and helps him to fulfill his commitment to being *The Best Little Boy in the World*. Considered one of the most respected teachers at CC, he has turned what is generally considered an unfavorable discourse, coming out, into one that students clamor to hear.

b. Serving the Campus

In addition to serving students, LW served the college campus by being its Academic Senate president in the mid-1990s. LW remembers, "I took the Senate presidency because the Senate had been run so badly. What was happening was the department council, run by the Academic Affairs office and made up of the department chairs, was often contradicting the Senate." LW had been a member of the Senate since his first semester on campus and had seen how haphazard and disorganized Senate meetings were. "The first semester I served in the Senate, the president would show up with a letter opener and sit in the meeting and open the Senate's mail. He hadn't even

opened the mail! There was no agenda!” As president, his goal was “to bring the Senate up to a respectable academic voice for the campus. Now decisions don’t get made without running them through the Senate.”

LW’s service in the Marine Corps plays an important role in the success of his coming out discourse at CC, and its influence is certainly seen in his tenure as the president of the Academic Senate. Unlike his predecessor who could not get through the meeting agenda on time, LW ran the meetings with military precision. “The first thing that I did when I ran the meeting was stand-up, so I could see everyone. The second thing I did was carry around a yellow legal pad with me and list names of people wanting to speak. Everyone felt comfortable, everyone had their voice. Later on, I happily turned it over to competent people.” LW’s service in the Marine Corps had him working directly with senior officers who taught him a great deal about how to organize and command groups of people working toward a common goal. He was able to take this skill and translate it into his work at the college. When LW decided not to stand for re-election and continue as president, he shared with the readers of the student newspaper what he believed was his biggest contribution to the Senate: “My skills include the bringing together of all campus issues and constituencies.” At the same time, he assessed his weaknesses: “I don’t think I was a very good president. I wish I had motivated more faculty to come forward to form committees.” Despite his assessment of his term, the archival material reviewed for this study seemed to emphasize his significance. While there was substantial discussion of his term as Academic Senate president, there was little to no mention of other Academic Senate presidents at the college in the archives.

LW's own assessment of his ability to motivate others notwithstanding, a number of faculty both past and present speak of how effective LW was in a leadership position. Many gay or lesbian faculty fear coming out will cause them to experience a lack of respect, but this does not seem to be the case here. Despite his disclosure or, perhaps, as a result of his coming out, he commanded respect clearly. One faculty member felt that LW "was very effective, and caused faculty to rethink their position on issues." Another characterized LW as having "very little ego, no sense of personal advancement," which enabled him to advocate for the greater good: "His ability to recognize the bigger issue at hand was a benefit to the college at large." LW attributed some of this advocacy as a response to his own impatience. "I synthesize well. I listen and I will take this idea and another idea and the ideas of two or three others and put them together. Often, I get credit, but I do it to move things forward." Two of the college's past presidents discussed their admiration for LW's leadership and both acknowledged that they had benefitted from it when they were faced with critical issues. At the time the research was conducted the current college president called LW "one of the most engaged faculty members he had ever worked with, he was the drum major for the campus." Both presidents I interviewed felt LW's leadership made their terms in office easier.

At the behest of his colleagues LW has taken an active lead in editing the college's accreditation report. The campus is a member of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges and is required to submit an accreditation report every six years. Prior to LW taking over the editing of the report, the campus had nearly lost its accreditation. The association had to give the campus additional time to address issues of concern. Once again, LW's military experience helped him to organize faculty to get the

writing accomplished. Through his work on the reports, LW has contact with every department on campus, as each contributes some element of the final report. This has done two things for LW: First, it allows him to know issues across the campus, not just in one department. It helps him to see the campus more globally. Second, it helps him to make friends and allies across the campus, as he works with faculty to craft their written statements for the reports. Praise for his work editing the reports has come from faculty as well as the association itself. This effort has furthered his acceptance and influence at CC.

LW's leadership and service to CC has also been noted by the community college district. In 2009, a high level faculty administrator worked to pass a resolution that would create a sexual diversity conference across the state. The resolution would make it possible to connect the efforts of all California community colleges regarding sexual diversity for the first time. The hard work behind the resolution began with a committee of about fifteen gay and lesbian faculty from across the district. The faculty administrator says he learned quickly "not to schedule a meeting without LW," as nothing would get accomplished. One challenge the faculty administrator faced was that most of the faculty he was working with were not open about their sexuality on their campuses. Although these faculty had found the courage to attend a district meeting, they still were not comfortable enough with their positions on campus to come out. All these faculty members held tenure. The faculty's timidity hindered getting anything accomplished, such as writing the resolution. The faculty administrator acknowledged that LW wrote the resolution, leaving the faculty administrator with the task of negotiating some of the resolution's language with the other state-wide board members. The resolution was

passed and received affirmative votes from some of the most conservative areas in the state. The faculty administrator went on to say of LW, “There’s no one like him of his age. He set a standard. The only other out faculty in the district are twenty to twenty-five years younger than him.” LW’s efforts to be *The Best Little Boy in the World* made a difference to his campus and his district. He forwarded these institutions. All the while, he did not compromise but continued to be open about his sexuality; by being so, he wove his coming out into the fabric of these institutions’ discourses. It, too, became a part of the institutional discursive lineage.

c. Research and Scholarship as a Means for Speaking Out

Although LW earned a D.A. from the University of Michigan and published one of the first dissertations to identify gay and lesbian literature as a topic in English, he chose not to have a publishing career, in large part to spare his parents any embarrassment. LW chose to live an open life, but he did not want his life and the way he lived his life to negatively impact his parents’ lives. LW came from a rural community in Michigan, and his parents were conservative politically and in their interpretation of the Bible. His homosexuality presented a challenge to his family. Thus, after completing the dissertation, LW shied away from formal publishing; he published one article in *College English* on the issue of censorship and the teaching of gay and lesbian literature, which was done prior to him joining the CC faculty.

Once he arrived at CC, he quickly began to teach the *Bible as Literature* class. A 200 level course and one that is taught mostly in the evenings one night a week, the class draws a varied mix of traditional and non-traditional students for a fifteen-week reading and discussion of the Bible as a literary work. Having long held an interest in the Bible,

this was LW's informal research area for many years before he began teaching at CC. Although there have been discussions between LW and the department chair about him creating a two-hundred level gay and lesbian literature course, he has chosen not to stay current in that area. In large part, it seems to be because of the satisfaction he derives from studying the Bible and researching the extensive scholarship that has developed in the area of theology. Although community college faculty are not generally expected to conduct research, LW's research on the Bible has played an important role in the success of his coming out.

LW has taught the *Bible as Literature* class every year, with only a few exceptions, since 1985. Currently, he uses *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha*, edited by Michael Coogan, Marc Brettler, Carol Newsom and Pheme Perkins, and *The Bible as Literature: An Introduction*, 5th edition, by John Gabel, Charles Wheeler, Anthony York, and David Citino for textbooks. Additionally, he provides students with a supplemental reading list that references a wide-range of thinking related to the study of the Bible. This list contains over 50 sources and includes references to scholarship from feminist and queer thinkers, new critics and deconstructionists, legal analysts, folklorists, and scholarly theologians. Additionally, LW has made sure that the CC library has these books available for student check out. He uses these sources to offer a class where the goal is to seek out varied interpretations of the Bible, rather than to settle on just one interpretation. He has made the study of the Bible his area of scholarship. He is considered the expert on the text of the Bible in his community.

As a consequence, at least for many, LW has brought together the unexpected: homosexuality and God. LW's ability to speak out about and critically examine both of

these concepts has had an impact on how his coming out has been received and perceived across the campus. Often, coming out narratives tell of religion's negative influence on the individual, and the rejection of religion entirely by the gay or lesbian. If God is in the narrative, it is not usually in a positive way. Although LW's story is not an antidote to those narratives, he does present a different sort of coming out. His coming out includes his faith and an understanding of the Bible drawn from critical thinking and academic scholarship. This sort of intellectual perspective on Christianity may be absent when others speak about their religious beliefs. In that way, LW speaks about religion in ways that many find unexpected. For several in his audience, the relationship between his faith and his sexuality causes him to be more acceptable. As mentioned previously, LW has often spoken at campus-wide events or invited speakers to the campus to speak on the issue of religion. One such speaker was the Rev. Dr. Troy D. Perry, founder of the Metropolitan Community Church, a Christian church dedicated to serving the LBGT community. With the guest speakers he has invited to campus, LW enriches not only one's understanding of homosexuality but also of the Bible and Christianity. This has made LW as well-known on his campus for his understanding of the Bible as he is for his sexual orientation. It is impossible to separate out how much of the campus's response to LW's disclosure is impacted by this marriage between these two parts of his identity.

LW's focus on the Bible for his scholarship brings him respect at his community college, just as highly-regarded researchers on Shakespeare or James Joyce are respected at research universities. Attaining and maintaining respect is an important element for anyone who sees himself as *The Best Little Boy in the World*. The entire point of being the best is to be respected, well thought of. Many gay faculty worry that coming out will

prevent them from receiving respect or even cause a loss of respect by students and colleagues. The discursive lineage that is a part of coming out has always included loss of respect as a consequence. That has not been the case at this site, because, in part, of LW's exemplary work. He has excelled in all three areas important to his campus. His teaching has been recognized locally and at the statewide level; his service has brought positive change to the campus; his scholarly activities have brought him campus recognition and respect. These efforts impact the way his audience hears his coming out and causes them to be more accepting of him and his discourse.

Of course, these efforts come with a price. By LW's own admission, stress is a contributing factor to his illnesses and sometimes it is necessary to take what he terms "a mental health day" in order to avoid the pressure of the situation. In the rhetorical contest surrounding coming out, the need by some men to fulfill the requirements of being *The Best Little Boy in the World* has physical costs to them. They take on the burden of the discourse and feel they must be exemplary because they represent all others who are like them. This is a heavy burden to carry. Although the pressure to be the best seems to be self-generated, the concept is embedded in much of the nation's discourse as we celebrate those who made great sacrifices to be the first in any given situation. The phenomenon is seen in discursive moves that suggest an individual is a "credit to their race," or "a fine example" of what a particular identity should be. These individuals set the standard for others to be judged. One can recall the significance of Jackie Robinson as such an example, but as the story of Robinson's efforts to integrate baseball are revealed, it is clearly apparent that the pressure he felt was not entirely self-generated but also came from within the rhetorical situation as owners, managers, other players, fans, and casual

observers expected him to perform at extraordinary levels. Although LW's disclosure does not take place in such a large venue, within his own rhetorical situation, he feels the pressure to be an exemplary model. This is one of the ways the rhetorical contests between discourses manifests itself. It is a discursive lineage with physical consequences.

4. Accommodating Others: Negotiating Discourses with Colleagues and Administrators

An important factor in shifting attitudes has been the varied ways LW accommodates other members of the campus community in his disclosure strategy. Most often, coming out is seen as something entirely controlled by the one who is coming out. This notion is why those opposed to disclosure believe silence is possible. This study sees that conclusion as far too simplistic. In looking at coming out through the lens of rhetorical contests and battles for territory taking place within rhetorical situations, LW's coming out is brokered through a number of competing discourses, which require accommodation if he is to be successful. This accommodation takes many forms, including presenting himself in a conservative manner, making a point to know most everyone in the campus community, using humor to connect with others, building solidarity with colleagues, and addressing resistance to his disclosure through constructive dialogue. Each of these discursive strategies helps him to persuade others of his worth and value to CC.

a. Appearing Conservative

Previously, it was noted how LW's Christianity plays a role in his coming out. Likewise, his military service in the Marine Corps from 1970 to 1973 is an important aspect of LW's identity and factors prominently in his disclosure. In addition, LW is the father of two children from a previous marriage in the late 1960s. When LW comes out,

he not only comes out about his sexuality, he also comes out about these other components of his identity as well. Helping the listeners of his disclosure to see him as more than a “gay” man is one of the ways that LW goes about accommodating others with his discourse. By doing so, he offers many points of contact between himself and the individuals or groups to whom he is speaking. Even if a listener finds LW’s homosexuality off-putting, there may be another aspect of his identity that the listener finds more relatable. His multiple disclosure strategy creates a difficulty in pigeonholing him, which, in turn, may help to make his coming out more accessible and acceptable to others. Of course, this accommodation may also play a part in why so many of his colleagues struggle to understand the significance of his sexuality to his campus life. It may allow them to favor other aspects of his identity while disregarding his sexual orientation. They can forget about the fact that he is a gay man.

By choosing to disclose not only his sexuality but his Christianity, his stint in the Marine Corps, and his experience with fatherhood, LW presents himself as both an outsider and someone who participates in and values traditional notions. One of the ways he exemplifies traditional values is through his dress. His conservative manner of dress is central to the acceptance of his coming out on campus. A retired faculty member believes LW’s conservative dress “opened up a lot of people, and certainly helped his students [in accepting his disclosure].” LW has dressed in a conservative manner for all of his professional life. His reasons for the conservative dress stem from at least two sources. The first reason he offers is his history in the Marine Corps: “The Marine Corps is very much about persona and presentation and the uniform and dressing well.” The second reason he articulates relates to his childhood growing up in a small village in Michigan:

“My background, coming from a modest family, dad sold Kitty Litter, that was his trade, and mother’s family was so poor in the Depression that they got one pair of shoes a year. Well, to be a college professor is so beyond a dream that I had, such an honor, that I’m holding the honor.” It seems that personal pride plays a substantial role in LW’s choice of dress. It also provides him with a discursive strategy that is acceptable to a wide-swath of individuals.

Of course, LW’s sexuality also factors in his choice to dress conservatively. While many of his generation would flaunt their sexuality with their dress, LW chose a different path. When he was in Miami finishing his dissertation, he was on a panel with another gay panelist who was known in the community as the “gay freak.” This individual was flamboyant in dress and in actions, claiming on a local radio program, “He stayed young by eating semen every day.” The gentleman’s showy nature came up in the panel discussion. LW’s response to the gentleman, “We need people like you to open up the door, but then we need people like me who are conservative, dress conservative, go to church, to come through the door after it’s opened up. I actually wore a tie in those days, and a tie in Miami was unusual. [Dressing that way] makes us look normal to others.”

Even after LW left Miami and was teaching at CC in a tenured position, he dressed conservatively: “I was wearing a coat and tie up until 1989, without air conditioning. Finally, I abandoned that. I will never teach in jeans, though. Never.” Although more flamboyantly dressed and behaving gay individuals tend to capture the media’s attention, LW’s strategy has been designed for more sustained interaction between himself and the other members of his campus community. The strategy seems to have worked. Over the years, he has determined that his conservative dress provides him

an important benefit: “I can espouse radical ideas and they are more acceptable because of the way I present myself.” Instead of a focus on his physical presence, it is the content of LW’s thinking that is discussed. By dressing conservatively and shifting the focus to ideas, instead of how he looks, LW’s coming out accommodates more of his listeners, causing them to be more accepting.

b. Knowing Someone

LW makes it a point to meet the other administrators, faculty, staff and who work on campus, despite his claim of shyness which he says he had to overcome if he was to be successful. His range of relationships goes from the district chancellor to the local custodial staff.

I take the president of the college to lunch once a month. The vice-presidents and I know one another very well. I don’t overuse it [the relationship] or abuse it. On the other hand, I know the name of the guy who empties the waste basket in my office, Dan. Bernard does the gardening right outside my office. Dan and Big Mike do the roofing and such. I know these people. If I don’t know their names, I’ll go up and say, “Hi, I’m LW, and your name is?” So, we really interact that way. It’s hard to hate people that you know.

He has built close, abiding relationships with all of these varied individuals. Some of his colleagues have wondered whether or not a faculty member has the right to speak directly to the district chancellor or, conversely, needs to speak to the man who empties his trash. LW’s response, “I have never felt bound by protocol,” which seems incongruous with someone who has been so heavily influenced by the military. By its nature, the military is

a highly structured environment where protocol plays an important role in how things get done. Surprisingly, LW credits being a Marine Corps officer, along with his stints as a Drum Major of the University of Michigan band, and a school principal, for his willingness to disregard protocol. In all three situations, the goal for LW's work was to get a task accomplished. The final evaluation was based on what was accomplished, not the order in which it was accomplished. As a consequence of knowing his co-workers on campus, LW has developed a vast network of support in a number of different corners of the institution, helping him to be more successful in his coming out.

c. Using Humor

Humor and laughter are important components of LW's disclosure. He uses it with both students and colleagues, and, likewise, students and colleagues seem to have a good time laughing with LW. When asked what has changed about his class over the years, LW's immediate reply was, "There's always been humor in my classes, but now there's more humor. It is important to have them [students] laughing. Laughter is disarming; laughter takes down barriers; laughter allows insights and 'ah ha' moments. I close my syllabus with 'We will laugh with each other during the semester, but we will never laugh at each other.'" The motivation behind the humor comes from LW's pedagogical perspective about teaching writing and literature:

G. B. Harrison, a Shakespeare scholar at Michigan from the 1960s, said, "The aim of literature is delight." My teaching tries to incorporate the delightful aspects. Matthew Arnold writes that the purpose of criticism is "to know the best that is known and thought in the world, and by in its turn making this known, to create a current of true and fresh ideas." A lot

of students come to school thinking criticism is to show all the bad points, the negatives, but criticism is about the best. We're ready to pick that up and enjoy and savor good poems and good essays and such.

One former student recalled how humor made discussing difficult topics easier. "Students responded well to his humor. The humor was always related to the subject matter, and it was appropriate. He never did anything to make anyone feel uncomfortable, but the laughter and joking around made it easier to have the class discussions." LW's use of humor is certainly one of his pedagogical strategies.

Humor is central to LW's relationship with his colleagues. "I am now quite comfortable on campus joking with colleagues on several levels." In fact, he encourages other gay and lesbian faculty to loosen up and joke with colleagues, particularly the ones who are allies. Recently, he met with a group of other gay and lesbian faculty from across the district, telling them, "Get to the point where you can joke with colleagues about gay issues. Now, you don't have to do fag and dyke jokes, but you can joke about heterosexism and homosexual behavior. We do funny things. My God, when we dress up in camp stuff, leather and drag, we do it to be fun." Once again, LW's service in the Marine Corps seems to have served him well in this effort as he has become very adept at using humor with his heterosexual male colleagues. The time in the Marine Corps seemed to teach him how to laugh and joke with men, and he has carried that forward. Being able to laugh with heterosexual male colleagues may make him seem more like one of the guys and help ease any awkwardness that heterosexual men might feel. LW's ability to be facile with the many discourses associated with his different identities helps him accommodate others.

LW has also been successful in using humor with his female colleagues. His long time officemate jokes about being his “first wife” at the campus. During their seventeen years together, there seemed to be a few occasions when she did play the part of the traditional wife, making sure LW was dressed properly. She recalls a time when the seam of LW’s slacks had pulled apart, and she happened to have a sewing repair kit in the office, where she had him take off his pants and give them to her for repair. This sort of incident is the type of thing the two of them have laughed over for a number of years. She joked during the interview that “everybody wants LW” because of how much fun he is to be around. LW is popular on his campus. His ability to be witty and clever, particular on the spot, as well as having a strong sense of how to move a meeting along, has made LW the de facto emcee over the past decade for CC Spring graduations. Each Spring he and another administrator, who has been given the moniker, “the second wife,” run the graduation, finishing the ceremony on time and having lots of fun along the way.

Because LW has developed a reputation as someone who is open to teasing, he’s learned a great deal about some faculty as they have teased and joked with him. In particular, he recalls a faculty member with a long tenure at the college who only wants to know about his sex life. “Every time I see this women, every time I see her, she asks me, ‘how’s your love life?’ What’s going on? To her, I’m a walking sexual object, just someone who engages in sex.” They have been colleagues for over twenty-five years, and her interest in him is focused solely on his sexual life. Some individuals do not seem to be able to get past the discursive stereotype that gay men are highly sexual individuals. As a means to marginalize gay men, this discursive lineage has been a common one, so it is not surprising that LW’s experience would illustrate this point. Humor that

essentializes him in this way is not what LW appreciates, but he chooses to accommodate this long time colleague rather than make a fuss. He seems to feel this sort of response may come with his disclosure. It is easier to grin and bear it than it is to complain.

Humor plays a central role in LW's disclosure strategy, and by using humor, he disarms the negative discourses that characterize the unhappy, self-hating homosexual. Using humor in his rhetorical situation is an accommodation that costs LW little but brings him tremendous rewards. His ability to charm his students and colleagues with humor makes LW's life more fun. He is more relaxed. At the same time, it has brought him lasting relationships and students who come up to him years later and recite funny stories they heard in class. He may be known as the "gay" professor, but he is also thought of as the funny one.

d. Building Solidarity

Although LW has not been particularly active with his professional union, he has been pivotal in working with faculty on issues of common concern: "I've always been a social activist about helping." This effort on his part is another accommodation strategy that has made him and his coming out more acceptable to the campus and has gone on to shift attitudes. Even though LW received an offer of employment following his interview disclosure, not everyone was pleased with having an openly gay faculty member on campus, according to one member of his hiring committee. As a result, it was important that LW connect with other faculty and win them over if he was to be successful. Fortunately, at the time the institution had a space where faculty could meet and interact with one another, building relationships that would prove pivotal to him in the future. LW tells of how he began to meet other faculty on campus.

At that time, the faculty dining room was operating. It no longer exists. Large numbers of us, twenty to seventy people, would share lunch with one another and interact. The fact that I had been married, the fact that I was religious, the fact that I had been in the Marine Corps and then was gay, really made an opening on many different levels, especially with the more conservative, Republican, homophobic types who could relate to the Marine Corps or the church. We'd talk about those things and get to know one another. I got them to see me as more than one thing.

Helping other faculty to see him as more than just a gay man was an important way LW tried to buffer the impact of his homosexuality. While some would not be comfortable with him as a gay man, LW revealed other aspects of his identity to his colleagues in order to put them at ease. Moreover, he countered the essentialist discourse that would suggest he be defined by only one salient feature.

His coalition building would be important as faculty fought for what they believed in with regard to student education during difficult economic times. One particular action that stood out in several faculty members' minds was an incident involving increasing class size numbers for developmental writing classes, a battle many writing faculty across the country have faced. Several years ago, the English department chair had twice agreed with the administration to raise class sizes by ten students in developmental writing classes. Classes would increase from thirty-five students to forty-five. Twice the department had unanimously voted against the proposal and said "no," but the chair signed off on the agreement anyway. When the instructor for the developmental writing class met her students at the beginning of the semester, LW and another English faculty

member met the students as well. The instructor accepted the first thirty-five on the roster, then LW and the other faculty member walked the remaining students on the roster and those who wanted to add the class down to the dean's office and said, "Here they are." Administrators buckled under student complaints and opened up another section of the course to accommodate enrollment. Other faculty never forgot how LW supported fellow faculty members in standing up to administration.

Beyond class size issues, LW has been an active participant when other concerns arose about administrators, including vice presidents and presidents of the college. Managing the land resources of the college has always been a challenge, as the college sits on many acres of prime southern California real estate. Battles have been fought over land usage and whether or not the land should be sold to investors to bring in more income. In addition, throughout LW's tenure with the institution, the college budget has been a highly contested issue. From his first semester there in 1984, during the throes of the Reagan administration, through the economic crisis of recent years, CC has needed to trim its budget, fighting to stay ahead of inflation. Sometimes the cuts have been called for from the state house while other times the call to cut has been from the district, but each time it has involved a battle that CC faculty has fought. Although not always successful, sometimes the faculty has been able to slow down or impede the budget cuts. Perhaps as a consequence of the budget situation, CC has gone through a number of presidents in the past 20 years, which as the current chair of the English department put it "has tended to draw the faculty together, as they face one new regime after another."

Frequently, LW has been one of the leaders of the charge against administrators. Prior to becoming Academic Senate president, LW was an important player in a no-

confidence vote against one of the college's academic vice-presidents. The no-confidence vote was first passed by the English department and then moved on to the Academic Senate where a vote to censure the vice-president was nearly held before the individual decided to resign and leave the college. Although LW has had excellent relations with many of the administrators over the years and has been courted by them to become an administrator himself, he did not shy away from confronting administrators when he and others felt they were not doing their job and causing the campus harm. His solidarity with his colleagues has been significant to the acceptance of his coming out.

e. Challenging Homophobia and Heterosexism

On occasion, LW has challenged homophobia directly on campus. Although cooperation and working behind the scenes seems to be his preferred method, he has from time to time used his platform as a tenured faculty member to confront some of the issues which have arisen. His direct confrontation is a part of his accommodation strategy as much as his willingness to build solidarity and use humor. In addressing issues of concern straight on, he makes his position clear, enabling others to agree or disagree with him. By speaking directly, there is no question of where he stands on an issue; there is no need for others to try and figure out his position. Instead, dialogue can commence. When LW chooses to challenge heterosexist or homophobic policies, he does so in an effort to open up conversation on the issue, but he wants that conversation to take place with his positions known.

One incident where LW chose to confront homophobia involved hate speech and negative stereotypes of gay and lesbian people. Student clubs at CC are encouraged to have a small booth on the campus main mall so they can inform students of the different

activities each offers to students. The Lesbian and Gay Organization of Students (LAGOS) is a group that has had a booth on the main mall since it first formed at around the time LW began teaching at CC. In the Spring semester of 1995, the booth was defaced with the words “The Fag Club” written on the front and “The Pussy Club” written on the back. Although LW was disappointed by the graffiti, he was not as troubled by the incident as he was the response to the incident. Despite the student newspaper assuring LW, as well as others, that the episode would be covered, the Spring semester came and went with no mention in the newspaper. Nothing was done over the summer. The booth sat on the campus mall with the hate speech plastered across it. Six weeks into the Fall semester, LW chose to confront the matter directly with a letter to the editor. In his letter, he discusses how, as the group’s faculty advisor, he asked the club what they would like to do about the defacement. The club decided to do nothing, just allow the graffiti to remain on the booth, in order to see how the campus would react. The campus response was not what the students or LW had hoped for. LW writes, “The silence has been oppressive – and disturbing.” Throughout the many months the booth sat on the campus main mall, no one said or did anything to address the issue of the defacement. The derogatory slurs remained for all to see and no one complained. For LW, the problem was not the actions of a few homophobes who spray-painted the booth but the fact that the campus community had not spoken out against the defacement. Moreover, the CC newspaper had chosen to remain silent on the issue, not fulfilling their promises to him and others.

The paper admitted they had “dropped the ball” on this issue. In an effort to make the situation right, the student newspaper asked LW to write a guest column, addressing

the negative stereotypes that gays faced still. The following is an excerpt from the column:

I certainly understand that some members of our college community may not like gay and lesbian people, just as some oppose the military and are not favorable to nondiscrimination on the basis of veteran's status, or others may oppose some religions and would be unfavorable to nondiscrimination on the basis of those religious beliefs. But in a pluralistic society, we have reached an agreement that we will allow open access to all persons in our community, and we certainly have gay and lesbian citizens among us.

A college is a collection of individuals who come together to seek the truth. That is why diversity is needed; if we all come to this collection with the same viewpoints, the same value systems, the same assumptions, we cannot learn as much as we can when we share the views of others.

Thomas Merton believes that 'truth comes to us in three ways – sacred texts, in our own hearts, and most profoundly in the voice of the stranger, the person from whom you wouldn't expect to receive the truth.' Gay and lesbian faculty, staff, and students have traditionally been the strangers, and we still remain that to many in our society. Our perspectives are needed in the college community precisely because they can challenge the status quo, precisely because they can help us think anew about our lives and our values.

In his letter, LW makes the case that diversity is essential to the campus if intellectual activity is to progress. Rather than learning being focused on the status quo, learning needs to be about the unknown, the understandings of the one who is different. Moreover, he asserts that it is the outsider who can be most beneficial in helping to interrogate the accepted practices of the status quo. However, gays and lesbians certainly continue to be outsiders when no one on campus will address and condemn homophobic actions, such as the spray-painting of the LAGOS booth. Raising one's voice is difficult when raising it may cause others to do harm to you. Even at a campus such as CC, where LW's discourse of coming out has been woven into the fabric of the campus discourse, there still remains the need to remind others that bigotry must continually be addressed by allies speaking up and condemning hate speech. It is through engaging in the rhetorical contest that discourses may be changed; silence only perpetuates the status quo.

Another example of LW confronting homophobia relates to the donation of blood. Since 1983, the American Red Cross has had a ban for life on gay men donating blood. In the past five years, the Red Cross has attempted to lift this ban but has made little headway with the Federal Food and Drug Administration, which regulates blood collection in the US. LW had been a long time blood donor prior to the ban and has continued to resent his inability to participate in blood donations at his place of employment. While LW understands that HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) positive individuals should not give blood, he sees no reason for the exclusion of gay men from the donor pool. "There are faculty and students who are unable to participate in saving the lives of injured and sick men, women, and children. The only reason is because they are gay. The Red Cross should consider all blood donated as tainted without

exception. AIDS [Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome] cannot be detected by a questionnaire or survey.”

LW finds the Red Cross policy of asking donors about their sexuality and then accepting these responses as truthful a poor policy. Because of the homophobia and heterosexism within the culture, there are many reasons an individual might not be truthful on a questionnaire. Further, the policy itself discourages blood drives and donations from an entire community that prior to the ban was a consistent and generous source of blood donations. “If a child were bleeding to death, I don’t think the family would mind if it were receiving gay or straight blood,” LW asserts. Given the many population groups, such as women and people of color, are affected by the HIV virus, the current policy, which excludes only gay men, seems mired in the conservative politics of the 1980s and does not seem to represent present realities. LW has had little success in confronting the policy, but his vocal opposition continues to give others reasons to think more deeply about the correctness of the policy.

Losing a battle and carrying the issue at a later time is a strategy with which LW is comfortable. Early in his career at CC, LW challenged the district’s domestic partners policy, and even though the status was not granted to him and his then partner, the Board of Trustees began the process of reconsidering the policy, which would eventually be changed a few years later. “Le Roy [his then partner] and I, when West Hollywood became a city and established domestic partnerships in 1984, went over and paid our \$15, stood at the City Clerk’s office, held up our hands, signed the domestic partner agreement, and took it home and put it up on the wall,” LW recalls. After this and near the end of his first academic year at CC in May 1985, he decided to challenge the

district's policy and file for domestic partner benefits. Before doing so, he informed his department chair, the dean, the vice-president, and the college president. LW wanted them to be informed and not surprised by his actions. He said to them, "We do not offer domestic partnerships now, but various companies do. IBM, I think, and maybe AT&T. I'm going to ask for it. If you don't ask, you don't get it." None of the administrators made a complaint and most were encouraging, so he moved forward.

He filed the application. The letter rejecting his application was written by one of the vice-chancellors who later became a college president at CC while LW was serving as Academic Senate president. In the letter, the then vice-chancellor made it clear that domestic partners could only be two individuals of the opposite sex. This exclusion of all same sex couples, including those who might be seeking domestic partnership benefits for elderly parents or adult children, clearly privileged heterosexual relationships and positioned the benefits as something only available to opposite sex couples. The discriminatory nature of the ruling against LW and his partner became clear and eventually led the Board of Trustees to expand the district's domestic partnership agreement to include same sex couples. By doing so, the domestic partnership policy more closely resembled the hiring policy of the district, which offered equal consideration regardless of sexual orientation.

LW has chosen carefully the times that he has confronted homophobia and heterosexism directly and in a public way. Perhaps that is why one of the lessons he says he learned early on at CC was that he did not need to speak out on every gay issue. He determined early he would pick and choose his battles with care. When he did confront homophobia and heterosexism, he addressed issues of silence, as when the campus

community did not speak out against the homophobic and sexist speech spray-painted on the LAGOS booth, and institutional policies designed to discriminate or favor one group over another. Rather than focus on individual slights, he kept his attention on the institution, where the change that might come about would benefit many, rather than just him. His goal for the confrontation was to make a space for all members of the community. LW accommodates many when he chooses to confront homophobia and heterosexism. He also directly engages in the process of challenging the discursive lineage of coming out, creating new lines of thinking that in this rhetorical situation began to take hold and change the way individuals thought about gays and lesbians.

Speaking instead of remaining silent, linking his disclosure to his teaching, performing *The Best Little Boy in the World*, and accepting accommodation as an aspect of coming out are the cornerstones of LW's rhetorical strategy. His rhetorical strategy brought about change to CC; he was persuasive. To be so, he had to face a number of discursive lineages that pushed back, unwilling to relinquish the territory they had held for so long, lineages with long histories of controlling the conversations about homosexuals and homosexual teachers. In some cases, LW faced battles with discursive lineages attached to his identity as a writing teacher, and these rhetorical contests influenced events related to his disclosure. Despite these discursive challenges, the evidence presented in this chapter shows some ground was gained through his disclosure. In the next chapter, I examine the conditions the rhetorical situation presented and how gaining ground was possible within this context. At another location, LW's rhetorical strategy might not have worked as well. Moreover, his rhetorical strategy might not have

developed in the same manner as it did because the responses he would have received might very well have been quite different.

CHAPTER SIX

THE CAMPUS

Place matters when higher education faculty choose to come out. Where the institution is physically located influences faculty disclosure, as what one may be able to speak in one locale is not possible in another. My focal participant, LW, makes the point, “If I were in Tupelo, MS, I’d rethink my coming out very carefully.” If one’s personal safety might be at risk due to the community’s attitudes toward LGBT individuals, faculty are given little choice in these situations but to cover their identity and remain silent. The institution, CC, where this study was conducted is not in such a physical location. Instead, the CC campus in Los Angeles, CA, is in a physical location where disclosure is possible with minimum risk to one’s personal safety. This is a result of a number of factors. Employment protections for LGBT persons at district, municipal, and state levels began to be put into place during the 1970s. These protections, along with the increasing presence of openly gay and lesbian individuals in the region, have helped to create a setting where one might be able to speak out with minimal fear of physical reprisal. As the previous chapter documented, LW was able to disclose throughout his tenure at CC without fear for his physical safety. However, place is more than a geographical location. There are factors beyond geography and the institution’s physical surroundings that impact how coming out may be received. It is those aspects of place that this chapter explores.

Community colleges, like CC, are one kind of crossroads in our culture. Described by Howard Tinberg as “between places” (vii), institutions like CC bring together a diverse and complex set of people. They meet at this crossroads for a vast

array of reasons, which is not surprising given the many purposes that community colleges themselves are asked to fill. There are students who are there to earn their Associate's degree, while others are taking lower division classes in order to transfer to colleges and universities. However, community colleges are serving more and more non-traditional students by offering numerous certificate and achievement programs. These programs in fields such as child development, agriculture, and industrial technology require workers to earn certificates in order to be employed. These programs cause the community college classroom, particularly the ones where remedial and first-year writing are taught, to be heterogeneous. Students of various ages, nationalities, ethnicities, religions, economic situations, gender and sexual orientations are brought together to learn to write. Likewise, over the past thirty years the diversity seen among students has come to be seen among staff, faculty, and administration at these institutions. As it is a location where so many different types of people come together, the community college serves as a robust site for exploring how discursive change happened with regard to gay disclosure.

This chapter traces the discursive history of CC related to LGBT issues and the role of that history in creating an atmosphere where LW's coming out could bring about change. I begin the chapter by first looking at how there was embedded into the community's discourse a value for listening to one another and an adoption of ideas from the free speech movement of the 1960s and 1970s. Next, I examine the community's own rules and policies, established by both the community itself and the greater community college district, and how these were a factor in LW's hiring. I go on to consider the role that other "out" faculty, as well as campus allies, had in helping to make CC a place

where LW could thrive and succeed. I next look at students, particularly LGBT student groups, and how they were often the spark that encouraged a change in thinking. Finally, I examine the impact of national discussions about AIDS, gays and military service, and same-sex marriage on the campus attitude. Each national issue unfolded on the campus in ways particular to the campus and in a manner that brought about changes locally.

In considering the CC community and the ways it contributed to changing attitudes within this rhetorical situation, it is possible to see even more clearly Grindstaff's "rhetorical contest" (1) and Laib's "territorial" (581) concepts at work. Throughout LW's tenure, in fact from the very beginning, there were contests over the meaning of *gay*. The definition the campus held when LW arrived placed him and others in a position where they had to challenge the definition if they were to be successful. The contests that resulted led to gains in territory, which helped established the value of *gay* thinking. Furthermore, the discursive lineages from these battles are visible. The roots of previous discourses, as well as the lines of thinking that they spawned, are examined. While the previous chapter focused on the discursive lineages associated with LW, this chapter looks closely at the lineages found in the rhetoric of other community members. Often it is the combination of voices that help to fill the exigency in the rhetorical situation. Additionally, the chapter analyzes the relationship between these local discursive lineages and events taking place nationally related to LGBT issues. This chapter provides evidence that coming out is a community activity and a community discourse, rather than an act of a single individual.

1. A Legacy of Being Outspoken

Located in what once was farmland, CC sits in the midst of what is now a densely populated area of Southern California. Since its inception in 1947, first as a junior college and then later renamed as a community college, CC has served an increasingly diverse student body. In the beginning, the college was open to only men, most of them studying agricultural science, a major that continues into the present day. However, within ten years of its founding, women were being admitted to the institution, and in 1966, CC hired its first woman president, Marie Martin. Martin would play a pivotal role in setting the campus discourse by rejecting censorship and promoting free speech activities, significant cornerstones for future faculty's disclosure.

Martin, who continued as president until 1970, saw the campus through tremendous growth in both population and diversity as an "open admissions" policy was instituted at California community colleges. With few admission restrictions as a result of the policy and no tuition costs, CC attained its largest student enrollment to date with over 35,000 students attending classes. At the same time, CC increased its ethnic diversity within the student population. While CC was experiencing these changes on campus, outside factors were influencing on-campus activities. Some of the most prominent events of the era, such as the civil rights struggle, the Vietnam War protests, and women's rights demonstrations, were playing out on the CC campus. Rather than shy away from these challenging events, Martin embraced the rights of students to protest and petition their government. According to another former CC president, "she laid out a plan of action with her faculty to sit and listen to what students had to say, to hear their arguments and allow students to voice them peacefully." The notion of listening to

others' opinions encouraged both faculty and students to speak their minds and became a part of the campus discourse. A discourse that included listening to one another fit well with the developing free speech movement which had taken hold on campus.

Part of Martin's tenure would include navigating the challenges of this movement, which grew further after she left the presidency. One retired English faculty member, who characterized the campus as "conservative" when she began working there in 1968, played an important role in bringing speakers such as Daniel Ellsberg and Jane Fonda to the college to speak out against the Vietnam War. Another member of the English faculty at the time characterized the speech of some of the speakers as "seditious," leading to an atmosphere where on a number of occasions the campus was "battened down," in anticipation of rioting. CC faculty maintained a loose association with faculty at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), where free speech activities involving faculty member Angela Davis were attracting national headlines. In addition to free speech activities, students at UCLA, CC, and other campuses were putting increasing pressure on institutions to offer courses that explored less traditional literature. In response to these demands, CC English faculty created and developed courses such as African-American, Latino, Native American, and women's literature to meet this need. One now retired faculty member characterized this time period as one where you "could get almost anything accomplished" in terms of developing courses and programs for students.

In this era significant rhetorical contests were taking place at CC with regards to education, war, racism, and other national issues. While many college campuses chose to squelch discussion and muzzle protest discourses, CC chose another strategy. It seemed

to embrace the change within some limits. CC ceded rhetorical territory in an effort to keep the institution moving forward during challenging times. For many, CC was doing more than moving forward; it was prospering and thriving as new classes and new students began to shake up the traditional canons of literature and thinking. The rhetorical contests were creating a more vibrant, current campus, which was better suited to serve the needs of the time. However, older, more traditional lineages never really went away. They lingered in the background, waiting for the right moment to reassert themselves into the college's discourse.

While the imprint of this free speech era would continue to play a part in the institution's discourse, CC, like many other educational institutions, underwent a change at the end of the 1970s and into the early 1980s. The conversation surrounding higher education changed. Instead of a surplus for higher education, funding would need to be reduced. A downturn in economic conditions at the state and national level, along with a rise in conservative ideological values, started to dominate higher education discussions. Instead of developing new classes, classes were cut. Ways to reduce the expense of faculty were sought as institutions began to rely more and more on contingent faculty for their workforce. One faculty member thought that at this time there was a "shutdown between faculty and students, as there was a lot of finger-shaking taking place, leading to administrators gaining more power and authority over the campus." The faculty member went on to suggest that students' growing conservatism during the 1980s assisted the growth in administration. To justify to students, the state, and the federal government the value of students' education, more paperwork was required; all of this paperwork had to be done by administrators, thus administrative growth came in part out of what came to

be known as a discourse of accountability. Another retired faculty member also spoke about how “the entire atmosphere was changed” as Reagan moved into the White House and conservative values took a firmer hold on students’ thinking. Rather than being able to accomplish anything, instructors were required “to justify their teaching to the administration,” the faculty member recalled with some disdain.

The rhetorical contest between CC’s liberal values of free speech and serving student needs would be pitted against a rising conservative discourse that sought restrictive budgets and limited course offerings. The promise of “open admissions” turned out to be costly; no one wanted to foot the bill. Thus, there became an ever present debate at the college about how to do what needed to be done with less. It is in this time of flux and changing rhetoric that LW interviews for a full-time, tenure-track position in the English department at CC. Despite the budgetary restrictions, the campus needed additional full-time faculty to continue to serve the student population and meet state and regional accreditation requirements.

2. Hiring Their First Openly Gay Faculty Member

LW is credited by those who participated in my study as being the first person to speak openly about his homosexuality at the college. Moreover, when he discussed his sexuality at the college for the first time, it was more than just an announcement, but a discussion of his teaching pedagogy. It was not supposed to happen. When LW interviewed for the position at CC, the college district had already instituted anti-discrimination policies which protected gays and lesbians and provided them with equal employment opportunities. If all had gone as planned, his highly visible coming out would not have happened in the way it did. However, the consensus by those involved in

his hiring, including LW, is that it turned out well. What happened may best be explained as a moment of serendipity, a stroke of good luck or fortune that happened to take place during his job interview.

Traditionally, interviewing for a faculty position within the English Department at CC involved a committee of ten or more faculty members. Interviews were scripted, perhaps because of the size of the committee, as well as other hiring mandates required by federal, state, and district employment policies. Each candidate was asked the exact same questions in the exact same order. This was the case during LW's interview for employment in 1984. However, near the end of the interview, one committee member, the Dean of the Humanities department, veered off the script during a discussion of LW's dissertation research. LW's dissertation, a study of teaching gay literature, was one of the first dissertations in the nation to identify material from the traditional canon of American and English literature as gay or lesbian based on its author or the work's subject matter. LW's research had employed the use of commonplace authors, such as Emily Dickinson and Walt Whitman, but did so in a class that spoke openly about these writers' same-sex desires and the roles those desires played in the literature. The dissertation explored methods of delivering the course material to both gay and nongay students in a higher education classroom setting. Classes in what would come to be called gay and lesbian literature classes were only beginning to gain traction at this time, so LW's dissertation was an unconventional topic.

As a consequence of his research topic, it is not surprising how the interview took this turn; LW was seeking a position where he would teach literature and writing to students. What he would teach students would be a relevant issue to bring up in the

interview. However, at the same time, the discussion about the dissertation also became a discussion about LW's sexuality and his own status as a gay man. It would be difficult to discuss the dissertation without referencing LW's sexuality or his experiences in teaching students about gay and lesbian authors. The personal nature of the discussion, though, during an employment interview could be cause for a lawsuit. All the district policies were designed to keep the candidate's sexuality, as well as his or her race, religion, and gender out of the conversation. If the candidate's sexuality played a role in the institution deciding not to hire the candidate, the district and the school could be vulnerable to litigation.

As soon as the issue of sexuality was broached, other committee members attempted to end the discussion, fearing that this line of questioning would place the institution at risk. By the account of some of those who were there, it appears the room descended into chaos for a brief time. LW at some point gained control of the conversation and insisted on answering the question. He took action in some part because the issue was now the proverbial elephant in the room, but mostly because he thought his sexuality and his research were relevant to the interview. He was not ashamed to discuss his work with the committee. As LW explains in his dissertation preface, "Whenever anyone begins working in a new or emerging field, there is always a risk of controversy. This is, of course, heightened if the area of study is political." Rather than shy away from the controversy, he addressed it. Some on the committee may have been concerned that the topic of gay literature might be too controversial and too political for CC; LW felt obligated to explain his position to them and why teaching gay and lesbian literature was important.

If there were concerns among committee members, those holding them seemed to be persuaded as the committee universally recommended LW to the president. Another instructor, a substitute teacher at CC, a doctoral candidate at the University of Southern California, and a Latina, was the committee's second choice. A senior faculty member who was a committee member recalled how she and the hiring committee chairperson gave the college president an ultimatum: If he rejected their first choice, the committee would begin their work all over again. When speaking to the instructor who was the committee's second choice, she corroborated the information and noted that the president was concerned; "if LW did not sue the institution, I would." It seemed that a decision for either candidate could be interpreted as an act of discrimination. The president also was concerned about the additional costs of hiring LW, as his terminal degree, a Doctor of Arts from the University of Michigan, required the college to pay him more than the other candidate, who only held a MA at the time. The dilemma ended up being resolved when funding became available to hire both candidates, who together in the Fall of 1984 began their careers at CC where they would spend seventeen years as officemates before each would be awarded a private office.

LW's disclosure of his sexuality at his interview was unavoidable for the most part as any discussion of his research would lead to speculation about his own sexuality. Generally speaking, research on gays and lesbians is conducted mostly by those who identify as gay or lesbian; heterosexual faculty may have less interest, feel they do not know enough about the subject, or may not want to risk the potential damage to their careers that can come from studying homosexual issues. Researchers studying gays and lesbians can get a type of academic resin on their hands that marks them. Being marked

in this way can present challenges to being hired. Perhaps more importantly to this study, is how what happened during the interview made LW's sexuality known to almost all the members of the English department. Prior to LW's hiring, some faculty members were known to participate in homosexual behaviors, but all did so while maintaining a heterosexual lifestyle. A retired faculty member shared a story about a former English department chair who was married but was known to have taken male lovers. On the other hand, LW was the first openly gay instructor at the institution. With this many faculty members knowing about his sexuality from his interview, it was not long before faculty in all disciplines found out that the college had hired an openly gay man. LW's coming out was now part of the discourse of the college community. The rhetorical contest of what it would mean to be "gay" at CC began in earnest.

3. "I Am Not the Only One": Other Staff and Faculty Who Disclosed

While LW's coming out has played a significant role in the campus discourse, he is not the only faculty member who has disclosed his sexuality. As faculty continued to be added to the staff at CC, others joined LW in speaking out about their alternative sexuality. When he began at CC in 1984, LW was the only one that was open, but within five years, other faculty began to join him in speaking out. This began to reinforce and diversify the discourse of disclosure at the institution as men and women with different perspectives about their sexual identity participated in the campus conversation. Coming out was no longer just LW's discourse. The singular became plural; discourse changed to discourses. Multiple voices would help to redefine the discourse surrounding disclosure on the campus and help gain important rhetorical territory that would lead to LW's success and rise in status on the campus.

One voice that became prominent in addition to LW's was a counselor who eventually became the Campus Researcher. She began speaking out about homophobia soon after her arrival on campus in a 1989 editorial published in the student newspaper. In her editorial, she responded to a recent campus arrest made in a bathroom located in an isolated section of the campus where World War II style bungalows were used for classrooms. The arrests had involved two men who were caught having sex. Following the arrest, the administration had the bathroom stall doors removed. The student newspaper had reported the incident and the changes in the men's bathroom on the newspaper's front page. The Campus Researcher contrasted the response to this incident with a similar incident in the campus library that had occurred a few months previously. In the library incident, the two individuals caught having sex were male and female. The Campus Researcher wrote,

There were no police involved and the stacks weren't removed to discourage sexual activity. Why a reasoned reaction then and overreaction now? Homophobia. An internalized, irrational fear of homosexuals. How is it manifested? In irrational responses to incidents like those outlined above. Rather than a man "just saying no" to an unwanted sexual advance, it is criminalized.

Her comments about homophobia at CC are the first by faculty printed in the school newspaper. She went on to become chair of the AIDS advisory committee, where she, along with faculty in the sciences, would speak out on AIDS issues across the campus in the coming decade.

Among those science faculty voices was a chemistry instructor who had AIDS and taught nearly until his death in 1996. In the two years prior to his passing, he was featured a number of times in the student newspaper and also was a speaker during AIDS week. He is quoted in the newspaper as saying, “the greatest challenges in AIDS education stem from cultural barriers.” This chemistry instructor would use his illness as a way to teach the content of chemistry. He would explain to students how the disease created negative chemical reactions in his body, which the medications he was taking were trying to undo. He focused on the science of the disease to help students move past the cultural barriers they might bring into the classroom. The chemistry instructor’s experience suggests that one way to gain rhetorical territory is to move the discussion outside the realm of cultural morality into a more objective sounding discourse where ideas and diseases lose their volatility. The articles on this teacher brought the discourse of AIDS to the campus in an intensely personal way; they become a catalog of how he fought, but eventually was overtaken by the disease.

The chemistry instructor’s influence at the institution is still felt, even though 15 years have passed since his death. I experienced this first-hand one afternoon as I returned some archival material to one of the senior librarians on the campus. I had been combing through the campus newspaper from the early to mid-1990s, which contained the articles about the instructor. I had reached the mention of his death in May 1996, just as an academic year was coming to an end on the campus. It seemed a fitting place for me to stop that day’s work and pick up fresh next time. As I returned the bound material, I mentioned to the librarian that I had been reading about the chemistry instructor. Immediately, her face lit up with a smile. “He was wonderful,” she exclaimed. “He

always assigned students library activities, even if it was nothing more than vocabulary to help them learn the language of science. He died too soon.” Unfortunately, this instructor was not the only faculty or staff member who died from complications from AIDS. Throughout the 1990s the campus newspaper noted their passings with brief articles. These articles would often include the mention of a “long time companion” or references to volunteer activities with gay organizations. The discourse of coming out at CC became intertwined with the campus AIDS discourse.

Other staff members were also significant to gaining territory. One member of the counseling office served many times as the faculty advisor for the various incarnations of the gay and lesbian student club. Like LW, he was identified as an openly homosexual man. However, the fact that he was also Latino had meaning to a campus who has a significant Latino population. Another prominent voice in the early to mid-1990s was a community member who served on the AIDS committee. His work on HIV education materials won him and CC awards and was adopted by many other colleges across the district and the state of California. In more recent times, there are an increasing number of gay faculty among CC’s hires. Openly gay faculty are found in a number of departments across the campus, making disclosure increasingly commonplace.

4. Allies

Throughout its history, CC has had a number of heterosexual faculty who have been allies for LGBT students and faculty. Allies are essential in the acceptance of coming out as part of the campus discourse. It is allies who encourage acceptance and model for other heterosexuals how to treat gay and lesbian faculty with respect. When heterosexual students see heterosexual administrators, faculty, and staff accepting gay

and lesbian faculty, it makes an impression. It brings a validation, saying gay and lesbian faculty are “ok.” Also, it provides the student with a discursive cover, a way to protect oneself; “If the college president thinks this gay faculty member is alright, then I can, too.” Allies who command authority and respect are critical to acceptance. Many, if not all, of the individuals who were interviewed for this research were in fact some sort of ally for LW and LGBT people generally. None seemed to set out to become allies, but one common element among many of them was their personal history with LGBT individuals. It seems each of them had someone significant to them whom they knew as gay or lesbian from a critical time in their life.

Family relations were the most common connection with a gay or lesbian person. Some had uncles or aunts who they were close with; others mentioned a sister or a brother, cousin, even a father who was gay. Many knew the partner of their gay relative. Some were closer to their gay family member than others, but none had a hostile or negative relationship with their relative. It is possible this familial connection made it easier for LW’s colleagues to accept and welcome him. Of course, not all allies had familial connections. Others had friendships that brought them into close contact with gays or lesbians. A former CC president developed an important friendship with a gay man while he was serving in the US Army, stationed in Washington, D.C. Another administrator had lived across the street from a lesbian AIDS researcher and her partner for the better part of ten years, during which time the two families would sometimes vacation together. Because of these close connections with gays and lesbians, allies had a keen sense of the ways in which their family members or friends suffered discrimination. As I conducted interviews following the defeat of Proposition Eight in 2008, an

amendment to recognize same-sex marriages in California, I heard over and over again the frustration these allies had with the defeat of the legislation. Almost all were surprised with the vote and had expected it to go the other way. They had come to accept their family and friends as gays and lesbians and believed they deserved the same rights and privileges that were afforded to heterosexuals.

The most telling illustration of the importance of campus allies can be seen in CC's response to LW being hit by a car. In August of 2000, just a few weeks before the start of the Fall semester, LW and three friends were making their way home on a Saturday night from a musical event. Once the group reached LW's home, LW and a friend got out of the car. To get to LW's home, they would need to cross the street. Not seeing any cars coming, they crossed. An elderly man who failed to turn on his car headlamps happened to be driving down the street at the same time. LW and his friend were struck right in front of LW's house. LW took the brunt of the blow; it was estimated that his body flew 42 feet. The next thing LW remembers is waking up in the hospital at 3 AM. He had cracked his neck, broken his right shoulder, and shattered his right leg, but there was no serious damage to any of his internal organs.

LW would spend the next five weeks in the hospital, the first week in intensive care, the second in general surgery, and the final three weeks in rehabilitation. When LW left the hospital, he had a cast on his leg, his arm in a sling, and a neck brace to keep his head stable; it would be some time before the broken bones would heal well enough for him to take care of himself. Even as the bones would heal, he would need months of outpatient physical rehabilitation. It became clear immediately that he would not be able to teach during the Fall semester. In fact, it was unclear when he would be able to return

to work. As a full-time employee with CC, LW had sick days available to him, but not nearly enough to cover the entire semester or beyond. The English Department chair and secretary went to work right away on collecting sick days from other employees. The district policy allowed faculty and staff to donate up to two accumulated sick days a year to colleagues. In a very short period of time, ninety sick days had been donated to LW. Most of these donations were in one day increments, with somewhere between sixty to seventy individuals donating a day to LW. The donated sick days covered LW's entire semester absence and when he returned to work for the Spring semester, he still had fifteen days left over.

College and university employees often donate sick days to colleagues, and even at CC, others have been the recipients of donated time. However, the generosity colleagues showed toward LW was not typical. As an example of this fact, a number of years later another faculty member had a severe illness requiring an extensive hospital stay and had to use up all of her accumulated sick days. A request for sick day donations was circulated throughout the campus, but in this case the request only resulted in a donation of six days. When the faculty member asked LW why he had received so many and she had received so few, there was little LW could say. The answer was clear: he meant more to the campus community.

Donating sick days was only one of the ways that the campus community expressed what LW meant to them during this difficult time. As LW was 52 when the accident took place, both of his parents were elderly and found it difficult to travel. His father was particularly frail, which required LW's mother to stay home in Michigan to care for him. Estranged from his siblings because of his sexuality, none of them chose to

visit him during his hospital stay or recuperation. He could not count on his family for assistance. Always an active member of the local Metropolitan Community Church, LW organized and took the lead when a church member had something horrific befall them, but when LW was the one who was in need, the church struggled to respond. The CC community was left to fill the void.

To begin with, they visited him both in the hospital and later at home. The visitors were so numerous in the hospital that the nurses started restricting the number of visitors he could see in a day. As a result, he received over four hundred “get well” cards from those who could not get in to see him. As a former Academic Senate president, LW served on the Senate executive committee with six officers. Once LW was home from the hospital, the executive committee took it upon themselves to provide him with meals. Some would bring prepared food for him, and others actually purchased groceries and came over and cooked in his kitchen. Every day from early October through the end of the semester in December, a member of the executive committee checked on LW and made sure he had a meal. In addition, they provided him with transportation, and when he was able to walk, the current Senate president would take LW to a nearby park where he would spend an hour walking around the lake with him.

Former students also played a critical role in LW’s recovery. One former student spent enough time shuttling LW around town that she purchased a chauffeur’s cap to wear. This entertained LW a great deal. The other person with LW that had been hit by the car was a former student as well. Fortunately, her injuries were not as severe or as life-threatening. As she recovered, she visited often and assisted with transportation. Later,

after LW returned to teaching but still struggled to write responses to student writing, this individual would sit with him and write responses for him on student essays.

One of the challenges that LW faced in recovering from the accident was post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Because the accident had occurred in front of his home, anytime he would hear a car squeal or brake hard, he would be reminded of the accident. In addition, for many months doctors were unsure of whether or not his neck would heal properly and the threat of further damage, even the possibility that LW might become a quadriplegic, loomed large in his mind. All of this came together in the PTSD, which turned out to be even more life-threatening to LW than the accident itself. The support of the CC community, administrators, faculty, staff, and students was significant in helping LW recover from this serious injury both physically and emotionally. The outpouring of support LW received during this unfortunate event illustrates clearly how much of the rhetorical contest he had won. Along with other out faculty, LW had by the mid-point of his tenure at CC gained a great amount of rhetorical territory, creating an atmosphere where he and his sexuality were valued on the campus.

5. The Gay and Lesbian Club for Students

Gay and lesbian student groups are an essential component of any coming out discourse on campus. To a large extent, it has been student groups that have paved the way through difficult terrain to make possible campus disclosure for both students and faculty. The group's mere presence thrusts itself into the campus discourse as it calls for recognition of what many may want to stay silenced. Furthermore, by being connected with the group, individual members become more willing to speak out about their

sexuality. Students, even more than faculty, have the power to keep coming out as part of the campus disclosure.

The gay and lesbian club for students at CC was chartered prior to LW joining the campus. The first faculty advisors of what was then called the Lesbian and Gay Organization of Students (LAGOS) were a married couple, he a psychology professor and she a member of the support staff for the psychology department. Regardless of this couple's involvement, many former and current staff and faculty give LW credit for developing the student club. It seems the club had gone defunct, and LW was asked to be the sponsor when the club resurrected itself in the mid-1980s. When I spoke to the vice-president of Student Affairs in 2009, she noted, "Like all clubs at CC, it has waxed and waned over the years." LW recalled how the number of members in the club varied from as small as six, the minimum number of students required by the campus to maintain the club's charter, to more than fifty students. In addition to changes in the number of the members, the club underwent transformation in name and purpose throughout the past years. Even though these changes occurred and membership fluctuated, the club and its members remained a part of the campus discourse, frequently being written about in the campus newspaper. This reporting about LGBT issues kept the rhetorical contest invigorated and contributed to the environment where LW's disclosure took place.

LW recalled when he began as faculty advisor of LAGOS, "we met in the bungalows at the back of the campus, advertising the meeting with little signs that no one could see, and mostly recruited members through word-of-mouth." Out of safety concerns for the students, LW always sat where he could see who was coming in the door. Fortunately, there never was a safety issue at a LAGOS meeting. Sitting across

from the door, however, allowed LW to observe a phenomenon. When the door was left open, he noticed that he would see students walking outside the bungalow, looking in the room. Over time, he became aware that it was the same students passing the door when the meetings were held. "I pointed this out to students whenever they felt discouraged about the club. I would say, 'Those students are too timid to walk in here now. But the fact that we are here gives them comfort. They know there's a safe place. They can't come in yet. They are too scared. But maybe next year or the year after or years from now, they will be able to join us.'"

The focus of LAGOS in the mid-1980s was on support for LGBT students, particularly helping individuals to acknowledge their sexual orientation and come to terms with it. In many ways, the club represented a place where students could be open about their sexuality without fear of reprisal. Reprisal against homosexuality is something club members and the club has had to face continually throughout its tenure at CC. In many ways, the rhetorical contests that took place at the school play out most dramatically with relation to the club. At a club dance in the mid-1980s, a group of rowdies came over and egged the dance. LW remembers that no one was hit, but there were eggs all over the dance floor. While the incident was unwelcome, it gave the club publicity when the student newspaper ran a story about the incident. Often the group has been able to take advantage of homophobic events and parlay them into publicity as they discursively fought back. LW encouraged students to publicize these sorts of incidents: "Egging the gay and lesbian dance is something we don't do on this college campus. In this case, publicity, good or bad, gets our name out there." This seems to be one of the

legacies LW has left with the group, as there have been many articles in the student newspaper over the years reporting on homophobic activities directed against the club.

Another legacy LW gave to LAGOS is an ethos of following the rules, participating, and helping out, including doing some of the things others may not want to do. Once again, LW's service in the military certainly taught him how important it was to complete the paperwork and submit it on time. "We always made sure we followed every guideline to the rule. We got our papers in on time. We got our meetings done on time. I was there as faculty advisor. Everything was in place." The group would not run into difficulties because they did not follow the rules, at least under LW's watch. A second aspect of the club's ethos was participating with other clubs. Just as LW supported the Academic Senate, he made sure the club participated in the Associated Students Organization (ASO) Council, which is made up of representatives from each of the campus clubs. "Someone was always present at the meeting. When our representative sat next to the representative from the Christian club, it put us on equal footing. As a result, we had a cookout with the Christian club, which was a breakthrough. It was nice," LW recalls. The third aspect was the group members' willingness to help out. The faculty advisors for ASO knew they could call on club members to work. LW says he explains this to club members the following way: "There's a time to be a queen or a prima donna, but there's a time for setting up the tables, for putting out the paper plates, and for staying late and cleaning up. Doing so gets you respect and the reputation that you're a reliable group." These characteristics of the gay and lesbian student club at CC have helped it to be welcomed by students, faculty, and administrators.

In the late 1980s the group's focus began to change. With the fast rise in the number of AIDS cases across the nation, there was a need to educate students about the disease. Unfortunately, the disease's transmission through bodily fluids from one individual to another raised a number of moral issues for many. This factor caused debate throughout the decade about whether or not to educate and what the education should be. At CC, the first forays into providing AIDS education were rocky, in large part because the responsibility was left entirely to LAGOS. The group did not have the administrative capacity to handle the requirements of enacting an AIDS Awareness Week on the campus. For a number of years in the late 1980s, the club attempted to make the event happen, but too frequently there was no publicity or someone who was supposed to do something did not come through as expected. LAGOS came under criticism at the time as concerns for students' lack of awareness was reported on in both mainstream and campus newspapers. It was not until the Fall semester of 1990 that a successful AIDS Awareness Week was held. By that point, a special committee had been convened by the campus and was headed by a member of the counseling staff. Until a faculty or staff member was charged with the event, there was little success. The challenge and failure of the AIDS Awareness Week caused the group to go dormant for a year and a half.

The group emerged again in the early 1990s with the previously mentioned Campus Researcher as the advisor. At the time, the LAGOS leadership was primarily female, and they chose to make the group more social. LAGOS would advertise their activities and dances but found that their flyers and posters were constantly torn down by those who did not approve of their events. At that point, LAGOS saw itself as a support group. "The biggest problem homosexual students have is accepting themselves," one

club member said to the reporter writing the story about the defacement. Once again, the group had been able to take an unfortunate event and turn it into publicity for themselves. Moreover, the student newspaper furthered this discussion by running an editorial against censorship and equating the actions of destroying and defacing the group's flyers and posters with censorship. Once again, it is possible to see how the campus community's history of fighting censorship and encouraging free speech creates a helpful environment for discussing LGBT issues.

Even though the group's focus was intended to be more social, it was not possible to maintain that position during the decade of the 1990s, when so much discussion was taking place around issues of concern to LGBT peoples. Individuals who were open about their homosexuality were asked about AIDS, same-sex marriage, and military service, the gay issues that had become a part of the national conversation. Already, in 1990, two years before President Clinton enacted "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," the issue of gays and lesbians serving in the military was of concern to club members. One club president from the era is quoted on the issue: "When they need us, they'll use us, and then when they're done, they'll put us in jail. If the government will not treat us equally, why should we expect anyone else too." In the next few years, speaking out would become a part of the club's mission as a speakers' bureau was established to come to classes and speak out about homophobia. Easing other students' fears of gays and lesbians was very much the point of club members' participation in the speakers' bureau. One student speaker in a 1994 interview said, "You can still feel the tension in the room whenever you tell them you're from LAGOS." The student speaker hoped the tension would not still be there at the end of the class period. The speakers' bureau has remained

an important part of the club's mission over the past twenty years. One recent club president considered the speakers' bureau the most significant way to address issues of homophobia and heterosexism on the campus.

As previously mentioned in Chapter Five and within this chapter, graffiti and defacement of LAGOS property has been a chronic issue. Throughout the 1990s the club booth located on the campus main mall had vile and threatening language directed at gays and lesbians spray-painted on it a number of times. Often, this defacement seemed to happen when the club would experience any sort of renaissance or resurgence; the club would face a homophobic backlash of vandalism. Here is an example of how the discourse was in the midst of not only a rhetorical contest for territory, but also, a physical one where the idea of destroying the booth came to represent destroying the club and the presence of gays and lesbians on campus.

Perhaps this overt homophobia played some role in the name changes to the club in the late 1990s and early years of the new millennium. LAGOS was replaced with the Gay/Straight Club for a time. Name changing continued into the first decade of the new millennium as the group returned to being the Gay and Lesbian Student Alliance in 2003, but switched again to the Gay-Straight Alliance Club in 2006. The name changes help to illustrate how the club was in some cases more of a support group for gay and lesbian students that allowed them a place to socialize and speak out where they felt safe. On the other hand, the group, as one club president remarked was about creating coalitions saying the club "is more inclusive and more about building bridges than being repressed." Thus, the outreach efforts, such as maintaining a speakers' bureau and cultivating heterosexual allies, would be an effective strategy for addressing the resistance and hate

speech the club encountered. The club's identity was constructed out of the situations it faced and the public discourse which surrounded it.

The club presidents were significant in forging the club's identity. Each president brings his or her own agenda, a particular way of constructing the LGBT experience. "One club president," LW remembers, "wanted to do a drag show in the Performing Arts Building and he would star." More recently, a club president who intended to join the 2008 Obama presidential campaign used the meetings as a forum to talk about his upcoming experiences. Another club president was more political, and he battled the Solomon Amendment, a federal law passed in 1996 that allowed the Secretary of the Defense to deny federal grants, including research grants, to higher education institutions if they prohibited or prevented the Reserve Officer's Training Corp or military recruitment on campus. The club presidency has gone back and forth between male and female students. Finding a club president and officers has not always been easy. In fact, the club has waxed and waned in large part depending on whether or not there is any student leadership, not an uncommon problem with community college clubs. Despite these changes in its fortunes, the club has remained and continues to insert itself into the campus discourse. Frequently, it has been on the frontlines of the rhetorical contest for discursive territory, and without it, LW would have faced a far greater challenge towards acceptance and integration into the campus community.

6. Moments in History: The Discourse Beyond the Campus Mattered

CC certainly does not exist in a vacuum. The rhetorical contests that were occurring nationally regarding gay and lesbian rights made their way onto the campus. LW recalled a research study of the word, *gay* in *The Los Angeles Times*. In 1984, the

term had been used every day in the newspaper. The year previous, the newspaper had almost no mention of the term. Recognition of gay people was becoming mainstream during the period of LW's employment; rhetorical territory was being gained. Previously, homosexuality had been "the love that dared not speak its name," but that would be the case no more. The coming out campaigns encouraged by gay activists in the 1970s had brought gay discourse out of the closet along with individuals. Even newspapers such as *The Los Angeles Times* and *The New York Times* would come to identify someone as gay. Further, these newspapers used the term chosen by gays, rather than calling them homosexuals as all had done previously. The significance of that rhetorical contest victory on changing the national discourse is difficult to measure, but certainly important. LW's tenure at CC would occur during a virtual language explosion regarding gays and lesbians. Never before had the nation held such an open conversation about homosexuals and their right to exist. While LW's coming out would be the most prominent one at the campus, the sense that there were so many others speaking out certainly played a role in the acceptance of his disclosure. Often, these discussions of national discourses became a vehicle for LW's own coming out. The three prominent national "gay" discussions during LW's tenure were AIDS, "don't ask, don't tell", and same-sex marriage.

a. AIDS

During the Fall of 1984, LW's first year at CC, the student newspaper ran an article titled "Gays Break Stereotypes: AIDS Threat Changes Lives." The article focused on how homosexual men and women can have durable, long lasting relationships. According to the student newspaper, this was news. It seemed that the presentation of sexual liberation that gays had expressed throughout the 1970s had left an impression that

gay men were always sexually promiscuous. Promiscuity and gay men would be linked together throughout much of the first ten years of the AIDS epidemic in the US. The battle for same-sex marriage in the mid-1990s would begin to change this discourse and gay relationships started to be recognized for their permanence. Unfortunately, few thought gay men had meaningful relationships during the mid-1980s when the virus first began to claim its victims. As a result, the student newspaper found it newsworthy that some gay men had long lasting relationships, and not all of them were out seeking different sexual partners on a regular basis.

The article's content discussed the need for more government funding to learn more about the disease. Government funding was minimal both nationally and locally in 1984. It would not be until 1987 that Congress would appropriate \$30 million in emergency funds to assist states in purchasing the drug, Azidothymidine (AZT), the first drug approved by the Federal Drug Administration to treat the disease. The president of the US, Ronald Reagan, had not even spoken the word AIDS in public in 1984, even though 1,000 US citizens had died from the virus. He would not say the word until 1986, with only two years remaining in his presidency. One of the reasons for this inattention by the government and others was seen in the student newspaper's headline caption: "Gays Break Stereotypes." Because of the discursive connection between gay men and promiscuity, many believed gays were incapable of or did not want to have long lasting relationships; it was easy for many to see the disease as a consequence of a lifestyle. The prevalence of this negative discourse would have some say that gay men were getting what they deserved by contracting AIDS. Some conservative religious leaders went even

further and argued that AIDS was a plague sent by God to wipe out homosexuals. As a result, nothing should be done to stop, contain, or manage the disease, they argued.

The strains of this rhetoric are seen in 1986 when LW is asked at a panel discussion to respond to people who said that gays were responsible for AIDS: “AIDS is a worldwide disease and not exclusive to our community,” he noted. LW was correct. In 1985, AIDS had been diagnosed in China, resulting in every region of the world having a case of the illness. The epidemic would now be considered a pandemic. The notion that gays were responsible for AIDS is an idea that unfortunately was enforced by the earliest AIDS pioneers. “When I talk about AIDS,” LW observes, “I always talk about it in terms of language. AIDS was originally called GRID. It was a horrible mistake linguistically. GRID: Gay Related Immuno Deficiency. That’s what the CDC [Center for Disease Control and Prevention] scientists called it. Because it got the *gay* name attached to it, heterosexuals said it isn’t our problem.” The GRID name was very short-lived. By the next year, AIDS became the term for the virus. However, the notion that the virus was something that affected only gays certainly slowed down the response to the catastrophe. It would take a change in the face of AIDS for federal funding to begin to flow. When middle-schooler Ryan White went public with his expulsion from an Indiana school, he quickly became the new face of AIDS. With a child as a victim, the country could more easily marshal its resources to fight the disease. Ultimately, however, Ryan White was not able to get legislators and the president moving quickly enough as federal funding would not come until after White had died in 1990.

Certainly, others were becoming infected with the disease as well as gay men, but those victims’ voices were small when compared to the number of gay men who were

infected and dying from the disease. The first AIDS reported death on the campus occurred in 1986 when an English professor died at age fifty-one of AIDS related illness. It would take another year before the newspaper would begin to address the issue more forcefully and regularly in its pages. Late in the Spring semester of 1987, a page full of articles about the disease were published. From that point forward, the newspaper expressed concern consistently about the growth of the epidemic among eighteen to thirty year olds, the age of most of CC's students. Using statistical information from Los Angeles County, the student newspaper reported in 1988 that there were 4,854 AIDS cases in the county. With most experts predicting that the numbers would grow, the newspaper sounded the alarm and began to speak more and more about the need for young people to use condoms when they engaged in sexual activity. The association of sexual activity with death became a part of the campus discourse at CC.

The campus response to AIDS first came at the district level in October of 1987. LW served on the committee that helped draft the policy approved by the district board of trustees. The policy needed to walk a fine line between the rights of those with AIDS and what some called the "worried well" who felt that any sort of contact with anyone who had the disease could be enough to pass it on. As scientists struggled in the early years to determine the ways in which the virus passed from one person to another, many believed that AIDS could pass through casual transmission. Throughout the decade, scientists continued to zero in on bodily fluids as the primary mechanism for transmission, but that did not alleviate the fears many held. In an interview at the time, LW is quoted as saying, "It [the district policy] is a good compromise." He points out that there was compromise; "However, in the end we agreed that there was no way to fully assure those who have

irrational fears and phobias.” The policy could not protect those with AIDS and HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) and address those who did not want to have any contact with an infected individual. The policy came down in favor of allowing faculty and staff to continue working and for students to continue attending classes.

On the CC campus, the district policy was not satisfactory to at least one faculty member. This now retired faculty member may not have used his office for seven years because LW was in an office down the hall. When LW received his private office, it was located in the same building as this professor’s office. By this time, LW had been on campus for seventeen years and had known the professor all of those years. Even though LW was not HIV positive, the professor worried that merely touching the same doorknob as LW would be enough to give him AIDS. So, he did not use his office. LW began to notice that the professor was never in his office and that trash and materials were collecting around the door. Knowing that the English department needed another faculty office, he devised an experiment to see whether or not the office was being used. A bookseller’s representative had left a card in the door. LW marked the location of the card and dated it. After a year and a half of the card being undisturbed, LW shared the results of his experiment with his department chair. When the professor was approached about vacating his office so someone else could use it, he refused. However, he continued to not use his office until his retirement. This example of extreme homophobia shows how irrational the response to the disease could be.

Increasingly throughout the 1990s, student newspaper articles about AIDS were victim focused, usually profiles of those struggling to live with the disease. More and more the face of AIDS in the student newspaper became women, sometimes mothers,

sometimes women of color, who were living with the disease. Also, the reporting highlighted the guest speakers who were brought in each semester during AIDS week. HIV testing during AIDS week was offered anonymously and free of charge and this fact was prominently reported by the newspaper. A number of science faculty included discussions of the disease within their courses, and they were featured in newspaper articles as well. There was the chemistry instructor, mentioned previously, who used his own experience with the disease to help students understand bodily chemical reactions. One biology professor in 1991 created a class that studied only sexually transmitted diseases, including AIDS. The class continued for a decade.

LW credits AIDS with further opening up the conversation about gays and lesbians on campus: “What AIDS did was let everyone talk about it. Even the homophobe was speaking about gays and the virus. What had been little spoken about, now loomed large.” Much the same could be said for the response around the nation to the disease. While much of the rhetoric about gay men and the disease was negative, it was a conversation taking place about something that had not even been mentioned previously. Clearly, despite the horrors and personal sacrifice that AIDS brought to the community and many of its members, there were gains in rhetorical territory as a consequence of the disease.

Plays, such as William M. Hoffman’s *As Is* and Larry Kramer’s *The Normal Heart*, movies, such as *Longtime Companion* and *Philadelphia*, and books, by Randy Shilts, *And the Band Played On*, and Paul Monette, *Becoming A Man*, all explored the epidemic and those who were living with and impacted by it. As a result, there was a great deal of “talk” about homosexuality, and the discourse was highly sympathetic.

Silence, which had been the most effective strategy to deny LGBT people their rights, was no longer a possibility in the reality that AIDS created. The magnitude of the disease required discourse to fill the exigency; one poignant example of discourse filling the exigency was the Aids Memorial Quilt. Through participation and viewing the quilt many were able to express a collective grief. The quilt's discourse helped the LGBT community, and someone like LW, gain rhetorical territory that would be beneficial in future contests.

b. "Don't Ask, Don't Tell"

The election of Bill Clinton to president in 1992 further established gay and lesbian concerns within the nation's discourse. Clinton courted wealthy gays and lesbians during the election campaign to help him raise funds for the hard fought race with George H. W. Bush. In turn, these gay donors pressured Clinton to bring about a change in federal policy regarding gay and lesbian service members. It was widely known and reported that gays and lesbians had served in the military for many decades, but the Uniform Code of Military Justice set up specific instructions for the discharge of homosexuals from the service. The ban on homosexual service was furthered by Ronald Reagan in 1982 when he issued a Defense Directive stating that homosexuality was incompatible with military service. Regardless of the Uniform Code and the Defense Directive, gays and lesbians continued to serve and to distinguish themselves in military service. The hypocrisy of the situation was noted in newspaper editorials, and the policy was an object of ridicule by late night comedians. The Clinton campaign believed it was time to admit the facts. Clinton made a campaign promise to lift the ban on gays and lesbians serving in the military if elected.

However, when Clinton assumed the presidency and took steps to fulfill his campaign promise, he seemed unprepared for the push back he received from military and conservative groups when he attempted to pass the legislation in congress. Military and conservative groups may have come to accept some discussions about homosexuals in society, but they were unwilling to cede anymore in the rhetorical contest. Much of the rhetoric that opposed the legislation centered around the issue of military cohesiveness, which became a code for saying that homosexual and heterosexual soldiers could not live and work together. The military had used a similar rhetorical strategy when African-American and women were being integrated into military service.

In this case, however, the rhetoric of those opposed to “don’t ask, don’t tell” focused on portraying the gay or lesbian service member as a predator, one who would force themselves on a heterosexual against the individual’s will. The homosexual was more than different, which had been the complaint against African-Americans and women. Instead, gays and lesbians were painted as persons who could not control their sexual urges and who would be compelled to act on them no matter what. In this way, the gay or lesbian was portrayed as more animal than human. This trope of the homosexual as a predator was at its most powerful during the mid-twentieth-century when much of the popular culture portrayed homosexuals in this manner, as discussed in Chapter Three. As the twentieth-century was coming to a close, the idea continued to have resonance with the public. The military establishment was afraid of homosexuals, and the use of this discourse helped them win the rhetorical contest and defeat the measure in Congress. Ultimately, after nearly a year of battling, Clinton issued a defense directive that military applicants should not be asked about their sexual orientation. This directive becomes

known as “don’t ask, don’t tell.” Being gay would not automatically disqualify a gay or lesbian from service, but it would severely limit the gay or lesbian’s freedom of speech and actions. Although the directive was intended to make things better, in reality, it was born out of the same language as the Briggs Amendment in California and the Helms’ legislation in Oklahoma. In those cases, the legislation was designed to silence and restrict teachers; in this case, service members were the ones being denied their constitutional rights of free speech.

As a former marine, LW was asked by the school newspaper to comment about the lifting of the military ban when it was first taken up by Congress in February of 1993. He was in favor of lifting the ban and argued that it was fear, homophobia, that was keeping the top brass from supporting it. He also understood that lifting the ban could be a significant victory for gay and lesbian civil rights. Referring to President Harry S. Truman’s 1948 order to integrate the armed forces, LW said, “I think the military integration helped Blacks become more integrated into society, and I think the same thing will happen with the gay community.” He felt those fighting the hardest against lifting the ban were those who most wanted to keep gays and lesbians from speaking out. With regard to the military cohesiveness concerns, he remarked, “It is only injurious to morale, if you allow it to be.” LW recalled how in his time in the military he had replaced a man who had received a discharge for exhibiting homosexual tendencies and that during his year at the Marine Corps Air Station anywhere from four to twelve Marines were removed each month because of accusations of homosexuality. He had seen first-hand how the military policy banning homosexuals caused turn-over and lack of unit cohesion.

The problem was the policy, not the gay and lesbian soldiers. “We have been there all along,” LW observed. “All we want now is to be open about it.”

Clinton’s defense directive opened the door for gay and lesbian service members but did little in solving the problem of fully integrating gays and lesbians into the Armed Forces. In fact, what happened was service members were denied free speech, because if they did identify themselves as gay or lesbian or attended any activity related to other gays and lesbians, they were in danger of being separated from military service. Soon, this denial of free speech and open discrimination against a specific group of people would cause conflict between college campuses and military recruiters. CC provides one such example. The college had a long-standing nondiscrimination policy dating back to the early 1980s. The policy states: “All programs and activities of the district shall be operated in a manner which is free of discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, creed, sex, pregnancy, marital status, medical condition, sexual orientation, age, disability or veteran status.” As previously mentioned, Congress passed the Solomon Amendment in 1996, which required any college or university receiving federal funds, including federal student financial aid funds, to be open to military recruiters. The military’s policy of open discrimination against gays and lesbians was clearly in violation of the district’s nondiscrimination policy. The military would allow a gay or lesbian to serve, but they could not openly identify themselves as gay. Essential to the district’s nondiscrimination policy is that the individual has the right to identify themselves as a member of one of the protected groups. Speaking out is the only way one’s sexual orientation could be known. CC chose to do what many other colleges chose to do, keep taking the money and look the other way with regard to their

nondiscrimination policy. For most colleges and universities, choosing to abandon their own policy was easier than giving up the federal money, which they had come to depend upon.

Students, however, were not always understanding of this decision by college administrators and began to protest against military recruiters on campus. Leading the way at CC was a newly revitalized LGBT campus club with an older president in his forties who wanted to ban recruiters from the CC Job Fair. At the same time, the gentleman who ran the Job Fair wanted nothing to do with the club's concerns. He wanted to keep the LGBT club away from the recruiters. The conflict got the Academic Senate's attention and allowed the club president to make a presentation. His presentation consisted of an explanation of the amendment and its impact on colleges. In attempting to find a way to reconcile the divergent positions, the club president suggested a compromise model used at San Francisco State and City College of San Francisco. Both campuses had grappled with a similar issue and chose to resolve it by presenting both sides of the argument. They allowed military recruiters to participate in the Job Fair, but placed them at a booth that was next to the LGBT club. The compromise would allow the campus to meet federal requirements, but also, illustrate how problematic the mandate was. The gentleman who ran the Job Fair was unhappy about this compromise and continued to fume about it on the day of the event. Once the recruiters saw where their table was placed, they protested as well. Their protests fell on deaf ears. "My response to their protests as well as the club's response was to say, 'If you can't stand some fags and dykes next to your table, we don't want you to defend us'" LW remembered. The

military and the gentleman who ran the Job Fair were forced to accept the conditions set forth by the Academic Senate.

For some, this compromise was not enough. As time passed, the student newspaper continued to complain about the Solomon Amendment. In an editorial against the “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy and the Solomon Amendment in 2002, it accused the college of losing its way; “Integrity caved under the strain of money.” The editorial went on to say, “The only real solution is change. . . we need to rectify the laws which allow the military to blatantly discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation – discrimination which is prohibited by law in all other private and public sectors of employment in the US.” Protests against the policy by the LGBT club continued through the past decade. Often, the club would join with other organizations from other campuses at the Federal Building in West Los Angeles, not far from UCLA, to protest the policy. As the measure was about to be repealed in late 2010, there were campus-wide protests calling for the end to the ban; student newspaper editorials encouraged the lifting of the ban as well.

Designed to restrict speech, “don’t ask, don’t tell” became a means for more discourse as the policy was critiqued. By this time, not speaking about gay or lesbian sexuality was no longer an option; that territory was no longer in the control of those who wanted gays and lesbians to stay in the closet. A change had taken place in the national and campus discussion. A rhetorical contest had been decided. Additionally, once again, gay and lesbian disclosure became a discursive discussion which critically interrogated language. In this case, the homophobia and heterosexism that was embedded within discussions about gay and lesbian military service can be plainly seen. The arguments against service were not logical but based entirely in discourses of fear and moral

disapproval. Increasingly, it became difficult to maintain these arguments as more and more Americans got to know and came to accept openly gay and lesbian individuals and couples. There were too many allies that joined in the conversation, which contributed to the gain in rhetorical territory.

c. Same-Sex Marriage

Same-Sex marriage was twice voted on and rejected by California voters during the first decade of the new millennium. Both times same-sex marriage came up for a vote, there was passionate discourse on the CC campus. This is not surprising as same-sex marriage has been the LGBT issue that has generated the most “talk” over the past ten years nationally, with a number of states holding legislative or citizen votes regarding the issue. Indeed, it is no wonder that it would be strongly discussed at CC as mainstream media and both proponents and opponents of same-sex marriage attempted to sway student voters. Although it was the same issue each time, the discourse varied between the first and second vote. The differences reflected the growing acceptance of same-sex marriage within the campus community over time. Despite the fact that the same-sex marriage measures were rejected statewide, the CC campus community seems ready for marriage equality based on the community’s discourse.

The first vote took place March 7, 2000, and was a ballot initiative, Proposition 22, or as it was more informally known, the Knight Initiative. The motivation for the ballot measure was a landmark decision in spring 1997 by the Hawaii Supreme Court that lifted a judicial ban against people of the same sex acquiring marriage licenses. The CC student newspaper ran an editorial following the decision calling for “a legal relationship [to] be created and recognized for all people choosing to live in a long-term committed

arrangement, and that legal relationship should be afforded the same tax, property and custodial rights that any 'straight' marriage does." It was just these sorts of calls for accepting same-sex marriage in California that the authors of the Knight Initiative wanted to put a stop to. According to those advocating for the initiative, including state senator William "Pete" Knight, the ballot measure's namesake, the vote was necessary to close a loophole in the California State Constitution, which would require California to recognize a same-sex marriage validly contracted in another state. Knight, as well as others, did not want gay and lesbian Californians flying to Hawaii to get married and then expecting the State of California to recognize their union when they returned from the islands. A favorable vote for the Knight Initiative would prevent the state from recognizing same-sex marriages performed in other states and add Section 308.5 to the Family Code: "Only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California." Because the Act was an ordinary statute, it could be struck down if it were found inconsistent with the state constitution, which would later lead to the second vote on same-sex marriage in 2008.

The Knight Initiative created a vigorous discussion on the CC campus before the vote. Not only were there newspaper articles and editorials in the student newspaper, there were public forums scheduled for the entire campus with guest speakers representing both sides of the issue. In one important forum, the speaker in favor of the initiative and against same-sex marriage failed to show up, leaving one of the college's political science faculty to explain the rationale behind the initiative, which he found difficult to do. In the case of the Knight Initiative, most of the discussion on the issue took place prior to the vote, even though the outcome of the election seemed to be

assured, as public opinion polls indicated that the initiative would pass overwhelmingly. In part, the conversation regarding the Knight Initiative was one the campus had been having since the US Congress passed and President Bill Clinton signed the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA). DOMA defined marriage as a legal union between one man and one woman; under DOMA, no state may be required to recognize as a marriage a same-sex relationship considered a marriage in another state. DOMA and the Knight Initiative were nearly identical, and some argued that the Knight Initiative was not necessary in light of DOMA. Those arguments were not heeded and the election was held.

The mood of those opposed to the initiative, like LW, was one of resignation. From the moment the initiative was first announced, it was expected to pass. In fact, what was most watched was how close the vote would turn out to be. In the end, it was a landslide victory for those opposed to same-sex marriage: 61% were in favor with only 39% opposing it. The large margin of victory surprised some as a Field Poll taken days before the election estimated support at only 53%. Commenting on the vote, LW, as well as other gay and lesbian faculty and staff at the college said they were not surprised by it. During the election campaign, much was made about civil unions by those in favor of the initiative. Civil unions, they said, could provide the same rights and benefits to same-sex couples as marriage, and many opposed to same-sex marriage said they would be in favor of the state taking such action to support gay and lesbian couples. LW commented in an article printed a few weeks after the election that he would be waiting to see if those in defense of the initiative would follow through on their promise to make civil unions equal to marriage.

Little more was said about the election at this time and same-sex marriage went quiet for a time. Surprisingly, the Knight Initiative turned out to be just the opening skirmish in what would become a much greater rhetorical contest over marriage equality. A number of same-sex couples sued the State of California over the initiative, and the California Supreme Court in a five to four decision found the statute unconstitutional. As a result, same-sex marriages were allowed and began taking place in California during the summer of 2008. Quickly, a ballot initiative, Proposition Eight, designed to amend the state constitution against same-sex marriages, was placed on the ballot for the November 2008 election.

Proposition Eight, which used the same language as the Knight Initiative, generated far less conversation at CC before the election when one is compared with the other. In large part, this may have been because most expected Proposition Eight to be defeated and for same-sex marriages to continue in California. Public opinion polls during the summer when gays and lesbians were marrying in large numbers seemed highly favorable to defeating the constitutional amendment. Even a Field Poll as late as mid-October indicated that the proposition would be defeated by five percentage points. When the vote took place and same-sex marriage was banned, it was a shock to many. One faculty member told me of “how she was caught unaware by the passage” and the conflicting feelings that she felt on election day, thrilled at Barak Obama’s election to president but saddened and disappointed at California’s 52% to 48% vote in favor of Proposition Eight. LW recalled how some heterosexual and married faculty members called him the next day to express their disappointment in the outcome of the vote; “Many were quite upset. They were ashamed of how other heterosexuals had voted.”

The Field Poll explained the discrepancy between polling numbers and the election outcome by discussing how church-goers, influenced by last minute appeals from religious organizations, voted solidly for the ban on same-sex marriage. A late night phone call LW received from another faculty member the night before the election illustrated the conflict many church-goers were facing. The faculty member, a married, female instructor had a teenage daughter, who she believed might be a lesbian, but at the same time, she and her family were members of a large, evangelical megachurch that was heavily involved in fighting for passage of the proposition. LW explained to the colleague that her choice was clear. She could support her daughter's future opportunities and vote against the proposition, or she could support her church and vote against her daughter's future. How she voted is not known, but interestingly, when her daughter enrolled in classes at CC, she selected LW for her freshman composition instructor and then went on to enroll and do well in his *Bible as Literature* class.

What was different between the Knight Initiative and Proposition Eight was the margin of victory. It was not a landslide. Just as significantly, the response after the Proposition Eight election was different. It was far more vocal and confrontational than it had been following the Knight Initiative vote in 2000. On the CC campus, there were protests against the vote, just as there were in most major California cities and at many California colleges and universities. CC students picketed on sidewalks next to major streets surrounding the campus, making sure the nearby community was aware of their displeasure at the vote. The statewide anger and protests over the vote carried into semester finals and the holiday season. Supporters of same-sex marriage refused to accept the vote, resulting in several lawsuits being filed in the State Supreme Court and

the Federal District Court. In August 2010, the Federal District Court Case, Perry v. Schwarzenegger was heard by US District Court judge, Vaughn R. Walker, who overturned the constitutional amendment, but stayed his ruling pending appeals. A year and a half after Judge Walker's ruling the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals has upheld Judge Walker's ruling. However, the ruling is expected to be appealed to the US Supreme Court. LW was particularly encouraged to see how close the election was, even if he had hoped for a better outcome. He remains optimistic that public opinion will continue to trend toward acceptance and that he will see marriage equality in his lifetime.

Although this rhetorical contest has not been fully decided one way or another, it is one of the strongest examples of gains in territory. Within LW's lifetime, homosexuality evolved from a subject that was restricted and silenced to one that was debated and discussed at every level of society, in homes and businesses, within the halls of power and justice. Current polls seem to suggest that marriage equality is inevitable within a short time. This by no means would suggest that the rhetorical contests over this matter will cease, but it must also indicate that significant rhetorical territory has been captured and this territory seems unlikely to be relinquished any time soon. A change in thinking has genuinely taken place.

Indeed, this change has happened because rhetorical situations were ready for a change, as CC must have been with its history of free speech and participation in other rhetorical contests surrounding minorities and women. As more and more LGBT individuals disclosed on the campus, a heteroglossic view of homosexuality began to be understood. The variety of gays and lesbians disclosing seemed to further understanding rather than reduce it. This furtherance may have happened in part because with a greater

variety of types of LGBT people on campus there was also a greater variety of allies. Together, they formed a critical rhetorical mass where there were so many supporters of LW that when he most needed the campus community following his accident, they responded to him with abundance. Helping to create rhetorical mass and to gain important rhetorical territory was the campus LGBT club. In many cases, the club took the brunt of the rhetorical battles as they pushed forward to gain a voice at the table of power. Finally, national discussions about the issues of AIDS, “don’t ask, don’t tell”, and same sex marriage and the ways those issues were responded to locally helped to enact a change in attitude across the campus. As this chapter makes clear, the change that took place came from more than one instructor coming out. In the next and final chapter, I detail the implications that can be drawn from this study and possible directions for future research. I close with a reflection about my journey through this research study.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE WORLD TURNED

In 1966, a *Time Magazine* essay, “The Homosexual in America,” described homosexuality as “a pathetic little second-rate substitute for reality, a pitiable flight from life.” Among the era’s more notable representations of gay life were Mart Crowley’s play *The Boys in the Band*, in which a group of gay men cry in their cocktails and wound each other with lacerating wit, and the Hollywood version of Lillian Hellman’s *The Children’s Hour*, which ended with an unhappy lesbian hanging from the rafters. The *Time* essay closed by stating that homosexuality “deserves no encouragement, no glamorization, no rationalization, no fake status as minority martyrdom, no sophistry about simple differences in taste – and, above all, no pretense that it is anything but a pernicious sickness.” With editorial opinion such as this, in what was considered a liberal publication, it is no surprise that in representations on stage and in films gays and lesbians were destroying themselves and each other because of their sexual desires. Acceptance of homosexuality seemed an impossibility.

Today, forty-five years later, a change has taken place in the acceptance of homosexuals. “Out” gays and lesbians are recruited into the military, many have domestic partner benefits provided by major corporations, and in some states they are allowed to marry. Marriage equality, while not yet universal, is becoming more and more accepted. Recently, a 2011 Gallup poll reported a majority of Americans favor legal gay marriage for the first time (Newport). Other signs of change range from President Obama as the featured speaker at a black-tie fundraising dinner for a gay rights organization, the election and re-election of openly gay and lesbian congressional candidates, state

legislators, and mayors, and the appointment of gays and lesbians to local, state, and federal judgeships. Culturally, millions of Americans invite gay and lesbian television personalities into their homes, enjoy the music and performances of gay and lesbian singers and actors, and take advice on such divergent issues as fashion and finance from gay or lesbian experts. No one could call the homosexual life “second-rate” or “pernicious” now.

Discussing this change, historian John D’Emilio and his colleagues William B. Turner and Urvashi Vaid assert, “Over the past generation the change in the texture of gay and lesbian life and in its relationship to American society has been extraordinary. The shift has been both dramatic and unexpected” (viii). The authors go on to suggest that the changes for homosexuals are as extensive as the changes that have come regarding race and gender during the same time. When identifying the reasons for this change in opinion, the authors make one point which resonates with the findings of this study: “ordinary individuals, by their courage and determination, can inspire others to act as well, creating a swell of human energy that pushes relentlessly for change” (viii). This study, as presented in previous chapters, bears witness to this idea that human energy in the form of discourse can bring about change.

In this final chapter, I start by revisiting my research questions. Making use of my theoretical cornerstones, rhetorical and queer theory, I discuss the answers I found from conducting this investigation. Next, I address the relationship between the literature review and the data from this study. I go on to consider the implications for future research, and conclude with a researcher’s reflection.

1. A Return to the Research Questions

My research questions for this study went through their own evolution as the data was collected. The following is the final iteration:

- a. Given the findings of previous research on gay and lesbian faculty, why was this literacy worker's experiences as an openly gay man different?
- b. How was this literacy worker's coming out received and responded to by his students, colleagues, and administrators? How did those responses change over time and what were the factors behind the changes?
- c. How did the responses that the literacy worker received cause him to change and adapt his coming out? What role did this play in his success?
- d. Had the literacy worker's coming out helped to shift attitudes at this particular campus as other scholars had suggested was possible?

Using qualitative methods, I interviewed my focal participant, LW, as well as students, faculty colleagues, and administrators at the community college where he has disclosed for nearly thirty years. Additionally, I examined college archival data from this same time to learn more about how the college responded to this literacy worker, to other lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) faculty and students, and to the significant issues being discussed across the nation in relation to LGBT persons. This data was analyzed using rhetorical and queer theories. Blending theories from these two traditions promoted an understanding of coming out as a repeatable performance occurring in a definable rhetorical situation. Furthermore, the theories suggested that within these situations, coming out was a discursive contest with rhetorical territory at stake. Gains in rhetorical territory helped bring about changes in attitude on the campus. Through this investigation

process, I learned much about how change came to this southern California community college and how the instructor who pushed for change was changed in the process.

a. Constraints and Change

As Lloyd Bitzer sets out to explain his understandings of rhetorical situation, he makes clear the significance of historic context to rhetorical discourse. To explain, he draws a metaphor from nature: a tree does not receive its character from the soil it grows in but from the genes embedded within the seed. There is something influencing the tree prior to contact with the soil. Rhetoric, on the other hand, is unlike a tree, because it receives both its genetic footprint and its care directly from the historic context within which it is situated. Rhetorical activity, Bitzer maintains, “belong[s] to the class of things which obtain their character from the circumstances of the historic context in which they occur” (3). The situation both generates and cultivates the rhetoric. It is its DNA and its soil, providing rhetorical performances with the opportunity to develop, grow, and replicate. Thus, a rhetorical situation both calls forth the rhetoric and at the same time controls its development (5, 6).

Bitzer’s ideas help to explain how the campus history at CC generated and nurtured LW’s disclosure. Previously, homosexual activity at the campus had been gossiped about amongst faculty and staff, but those conversations had yet to fill the exigence which existed. To fill it required a serious, sustained conversation about what homosexuality meant to the intellectual life of the campus. Until such a conversation took place, change would languish and the exigence would remain unfulfilled. Filling it would require a specific union of persons, events, objects, and relations to come together in a particular place and time. This union, Bitzer stresses, generates “the very ground of

rhetorical activity” (7) required for filling the exigence. Further, the union forms the “set of constraints . . . which are parts of the situation because they have the power to constrain decision and action needed to modify the exigence” (8). Among these constraints are the traditions and facts associated with the place. In this study CC’s discursive history with civil rights, feminist, and free speech discussions prepared it for LW’s disclosure. This discursive history created a rich atmosphere where grappling with a gay instructor’s coming out could be viewed as an expected next step. Steadily moving away from its Caucasian and agrarian roots to a campus that was far more heterogenous and urban, the discourse of CC was prepared for an openly gay instructor when LW was hired. The rhetorical situation was calling for such a hiring, which could, in turn, lead to a discussion of what that individual’s coming out meant to the campus. Being prepared for the discussion was important to changing the discourse at CC.

National discussions about LGBT issues were constraints for the local discourse as well. The country’s discourse surrounding homosexuality grew and changed during the 1970s, laying the groundwork for the campus conversation. This groundwork included national events such as the Stonewall Uprising in 1969, which quickly led to a pro-disclosure discourse within the fledgling gay community. This pro-disclosure discourse was powerful and brought about the coming out of gays and lesbians across the country throughout the 1970s, including LW. These individual experiences only furthered the conversation when coming out began to seep into the national conscience. The removal of homosexuality from the American Psychiatric Association’s list of disorders helped many see that a gay or lesbian life might be acceptable. Further, credible discussions of gay and lesbian life in books, plays, television programs, and films began to appear

during the decade. America's number one-rated television program of the era, *All in the Family*, presented numerous episodes where characters came out. While these fictional works presented gay life as one filled with many challenges, the life was not one that ended with destruction as seen in previous portrayals. CC students, faculty, and staff were influenced by these events and the changes in the national discourse. The rhetorical situation at CC and its exigence were generated out of both local and national discursive discussions.

After LW began his employment with CC, national discussions about LGBT issues nurtured local disclosure discussions; they were important constraints to creating change at CC. AIDS, "don't ask, don't tell", and same-sex marriage generated discourse at every level of society throughout LW's tenure. Just as Foucault finds "a veritable discursive explosion" (*The History of Sexuality* 17) surrounding sex in the seventeenth-century, our most recent times have seen a discursive explosion surrounding homosexuality and its disclosure. This explosion of discourse was seen in national newspaper headlines and in lead stories for network evening news broadcasts. However, it also was important locally as it worked its way into Board of Trustees and Academic Senate meetings, student clubs, guest speaker appearances, and classroom discussions. The discourse required a response, and most often in the 1980s and 1990s LW was called upon to give the response. With the need for regular responses, something unexpected occurred. LW's disclosure gradually became less remarkable and more acceptable to his audience, his performance of his disclosure began to be taken for granted by his audience, and the disclosure was naturalized by the community. As noted, LW rarely is the subject of student newspaper articles now because his performance as an openly gay professor

seems commonplace and is no longer “news.” Becoming mundane is an indicator of how much rhetorical territory LW gained over his tenure at CC. This change in response to his disclosure, in and of itself, may be one of the strongest pieces of evidence that change occurred at CC.

A final constraint explains why this situation was different from so many others. The social nature of the individual who played the role mattered greatly. The gains made in winning rhetorical territory at CC were very much the result of how the performance was played by LW. Judith Butler, who argues most strenuously for seeing gender as a script controlled by the culture, acknowledges that the “script may be enacted in various ways, and . . . requires both text and interpretation” (“Performative Acts and Gender Constitution” 526). Likewise, in the case of coming out and living one’s life as an openly gay instructor, LW enacted and interpreted the script in a manner that made him appealing to many. His gender and his life experiences as both a Christian and Marine influenced how he behaved as a faculty member, but they also influenced how others responded to his disclosure. Perhaps most significantly, the way LW consciously used these elements of his identity in conjunction with his sexuality influenced others’ thinking. His ability to favor one aspect of his identity over another is important to his success. He let others see what they wanted to see in him. For those troubled by his sexuality, they could see him as a church-goer or former serviceman, conservative identities which they might find more acceptance. His sexuality could be an aspect of his identity that others came to accept gradually. Gradualism is one key to acceptance identified in Toni McNaron’s study of gay faculty (190). LW’s willingness to be patient

with others and let them come along in their own time is not something other faculty may choose to do.

LW is no shrinking violet; his history as a drum major would certainly attest to that fact, as does his tenure at CC. His gregariousness is seen in the many who know him and the many he knows. Further, his willingness to serve in leadership positions at the college meant many had some sort of personal relationship with him. His performance as a gay instructor was anything but retiring. He was very “out,” if for no other reason than his high visibility across CC. Consequently, LW’s coming out was more than a disclosure; it was an opportunity for engagement with him, often at many different levels. His coming out was a means to an end, rather than the end. It was purposeful as it filled the exigence of the situation. The campus community came to see his disclosure as an intellectual activity, making it more than a discussion about LW. It was a discussion about the campus community and the value of sexual identity in that conversation. Because LW played the role the way he did, what happened at CC was not typical. The degree to which LW won rhetorical contests at CC would be unlikely in another place and time. The constraints that were needed to fill the exigence fit together in a manner not typical.

b. Fitting Responses and Change

The responses LW received to his coming out were generally favorable and became more so over the years. Of course, there were always some who responded negatively to him, but the negative responses never impeded his progress at CC. As LW became more and more accepted, so, too, were other gay and lesbian faculty who joined the community and disclosed. As more faculty became accepted as community members,

the idea that these members were being denied rights became more accepted within the campus discourse. Because faculty members spoke out, they were on the minds of others, which led to changes in thinking on the campus. What had been something only whispered about in earlier times became a public conversation, one which came to value disclosure over silence. LW's choice to link his teaching pedagogy and his coming out was much of the reason for this change. Instead of gay disclosure being only a personal declaration, it was, instead, a teaching strategy. While other legitimate arguments support the need for faculty disclosure, none were as meaningful as this strategy, which emphasized coming out as a means to further students' critical thinking skills.

One reason this disclosure strategy worked was because furthering critical thinking skills was of great concern to California higher education institutions throughout LW's tenure. Teaching critical thinking became important when California instituted an open admissions policy, where vast numbers of what were considered "underprepared" students entered the state's community colleges beginning in the 1960s. This action brought forth intense discussions about critical thinking and how it could be developed in students who did not have it. Given that constraint, the need to teach critical thinking, it is possible to see how LW's coming out came to be accepted by the CC community. In order to fill an exigence, Bitzer argues that there must be a fitting response (9). Because critical thinking and its development were so much at the center of CC discourse, the community accepted LW's coming out as a solution to this vexing situation. His disclosure was a fitting response to the exigence created by the need to teach critical thinking. Consequently, acceptance of LW's coming out as a critical thinking tool became so prevalent that LW was invited by other faculty and administrators to repeat his

coming out performance over and over in other classes and in public forums, all in an effort to present students with critical thinking activities. Making his coming out about others' education explains why LW received such favorable responses throughout his tenure as concerns over students' critical thinking continued to grow.

Another reason for favorable responses to LW's coming out were the allies he cultivated. Their support helped place him in leadership positions where he could win rhetorical territory. Likewise, McNaron found allies to be significant to any gains gay and lesbian faculty made at their campuses (67). By asking him into their classrooms, or requesting he speak at campus-wide events, or electing him Senate president, allies helped make LW more visible to the entire community. They provided him with opportunities to disclose his sexuality. Allies were critical from the beginning when he received the job offer; he might not have been hired otherwise. Allies continued to be important as he was mentored by administrators and faculty in his early years. Ultimately, they supported him as he served as a campus leader. LW's allies came from across the campus and included students, staff members, other faculty, and administrators. Allies recruited others until it reached a point where nearly the entire campus could be seen as LW's ally. Certainly the outpouring of support he received during his recuperation from a near-fatal car accident makes it seem that he had an abundance of allies willing to ensure his well-being, even if it cost them in time or benefits.

In fact, LW's allies were so strong that those who responded negatively to LW's coming out were often dismissed as irrational and illogical. This response caused LW to win rhetorical contests against the homophobia and heteronormativity displayed within

the few negative responses. Afraid of touching a doorknob because of AIDS, as one faculty member was, or suggesting that Christendom would be destroyed because a gay instructor taught the Bible as Literature class, as one student complained, were rhetorical responses few at CC took seriously. These responses did not “fit” the situation as it was constructed at CC; these responses did nothing to fill the exigence of the rhetorical situation. When the community rejected these responses, the rejection influenced others. It caused LW’s disclosure to be seen as increasingly legitimate. Acceptance created further acceptance as the balance tipped toward LW. Anyone who would oppose LW’s coming out could find themselves in unpopular company with individuals who were on the fringe of the community. The community ceded great amounts of rhetorical territory to LW as the years passed, and his coming out was woven tighter and tighter into the discursive fabric of the community. A favorable response to his disclosure became as important to the community as it was to LW. The community was vested in his success.

c. The Coming Out Performance and Change

LW’s performance changed as thinking about homosexuality changed on the campus. What was needed in his early days at CC was not what was needed later. Additionally, the disclosure became more nuanced as the years passed and one disclosure built upon previous ones. The repetition of his coming out performance and the accumulation of multiple performances had an impact on CC and led to change. Eventually, it became a situation where LW’s coming out was not a single act but a continuous state of discourse across the campus, causing LW to be able to say less but register more. Additionally, the presence of other gay and lesbian faculty, LGBT student groups, and national discussions about LGBT issues played important roles in the

evolution of LW's disclosure. At the same time, it is important to acknowledge how individual students and colleagues who responded to LW's disclosure evolved his discursive performance.

While the rhetorical situation existed for some time, it was a situation that was in flux throughout LW's years at CC. During those years, the situation changed as the exigence continued to be filled and other discourses appeared on or returned to the scene. When a rhetorical situation exists for several decades, as this one did, it is possible to see what brought about the evolution in the rhetoric. One element was the presence of other faculty who were disclosing. At first, LW was a single voice at CC. He laid the groundwork for the disclosures that would follow. However, it is difficult to gain much rhetorical territory when only one individual is speaking out. There is a need for some sort of discursive critical mass. As others joined the community and spoke out, this critical mass was attained. It did not require large numbers of individuals but a variety of voices. A greater variety of individuals coming out caused coming out to be seen as no longer a soliloquy given by one player. Instead, it was multi-voiced and could include the life experiences of others, others who came from different gender, racial, and socio-economic experiences. Greater diversity in disclosure allowed more points of contact for those hearing the disclosure; more points of contact brought about greater acceptance of gays and lesbians at CC.

One thing that is clear in the evolution of LW's disclosure is that the initial announcement became simpler as other gay and lesbian instructors became woven into the discourse of CC. Gains in rhetorical territory changed the ways in which the exigence needed to be filled. Once the discourse was established and multi-voiced, there was no

longer the need for the dramatic first disclosure. Instead, a brief mention on the first class period would do. Two reasons for this change: First, the audience hearing the disclosure became more sophisticated about gay and lesbian coming out discourses over time; second, more disclosures across the campus reduced pressure on LW's disclosure to be significant. The shock value of the first disclosure lessened as community members were aware of LW's sexuality or entered his class already more accepting of his homosexuality. In addition, as a tenured faculty member with a consistent schedule, information about LW's sexuality easily circulated around campus between students. Those who would have been troubled about his sexuality could avoid taking his classes, reducing LW's challenges. Additionally, because of the critical mass of coming out discourses at the campus, LW was confident that his audience would hear the issue discussed more than once, not only in his class but across the campus. The more other faculty and students came out at CC and the more the issue was discussed in general on campus, the less LW had to be the sole representative of the discourse. The burden of being the token minority member, the only person speaking out, which so many gay and lesbian faculty members chafe at, can only be eliminated when there are multiple faculty members coming out across the campus.

An important component in the change that took place in LW's disclosure involves student LGBT groups. When out faculty and student groups work together, they take more rhetorical territory and win more rhetorical contests. In many respects, LW's initial disclosure could become less dramatic, less remarkable because of the presence of LGBT students who banded together and raised the profile of homosexuality across the campus. Just as faculty who disclosed contributed to the critical mass needed to change

the discourse, LGBT student groups pushed the discourse to be more inclusive. Furthermore, they could do this in ways that faculty could not by seeking publicity when they were challenged. While a faculty member might need to suffer in silence to maintain relations or a position, student groups had no need to do so. They could take risks and speak out as a group in ways that pushed the campus to consider equality in ways never imagined before. Often, LW found himself in the position of mentoring these students and strategizing with them how to have these discussions with others, but the burden of disclosure was placed on the students, not LW. As LGBT student groups pushed the campus discourse to be more inclusive, LW could be a supporter, instead of a foot soldier on the frontline. His role as a mentor and advisor changed his disclosure.

Another consideration in how LW's coming out evolved is the role of national discussions related to homosexual issues and concerns. As conversations about AIDS, gays serving in the military, and same-sex marriage took place on the campus, LW was called to speak on these issues publicly in newspaper articles and campus-wide forums. Coming out became something more than a declaration of an individual truth, but was, instead, a nuanced response to an issue being discussed on the national stage. LW's experience as a member of the US military and his Christianity factored greatly in these discussions, as he brought both of these perspectives to bear on his responses to the issues at hand. As these issues gained traction nationally, rhetorical territory was ceded toward acceptance of gays and lesbians, despite some very intense discursive battles. These gains had affect on LW. Each year LW encountered less and less resistance as national acceptance marched forward. These national conversations made LW's disclosure more acceptable and provided him with more to discuss when he did disclose. National

discussions on gay and lesbian issues were important rhetorical constraints in the evolution of LW's coming out at CC.

Individuals and the role they played in the evolution of LW's coming out must not go unrecognized. Sometimes, the individual who brought about change was not even known, as the change was caused by a comment on an anonymous student evaluation. Other times, the change came because a department chair or an administrator spoke directly to LW and caused him to rethink his disclosure. These responses to his coming out had influence. Certainly, this study illustrates vividly that coming out is not an activity that remains in stasis but is one that can be changed by discursive exchanges at all levels, from the local to the national. For coming out to continue to successfully fill the exigence at CC, it had to be rhetorically flexible and open to change.

d. A Coming Out Creates Change

In 1974 when Louie Crew and Rictor Norton insisted that gay and lesbian instructors come out, they maintained that only through individual instructor disclosures could the next generation of gays and lesbians be saved from "self loathing, ignorance, and fear" (288). They held that an instructor's disclosure was powerful enough to be a change agent. What had come before for gays and lesbians could be different for future generations, if faculty came out. They said this at a time when homosexual acts were illegal in all 50 states, where saying you were a homosexual in many communities could get you arrested, and when most faculty could still lose their jobs by disclosing. However, many did come out, despite these challenges. McNaron's research 20 years later confirmed Crew and Norton were right: "the single factor rated most pivotal for change is the vocal and visible presence of out faculty on campus" (19). She reasoned

this was because individuals who come out, “both by their being and their doing” (19), put a face on something that had been invisible.

My research study built on these previous works and looked at one of those faces in an effort to try and understand how his coming out brought about change. To measure change, Nevin K. Laib suggests a consideration of “an individual’s ability to proselytize, to increase adherence in the present or future to the beliefs and theories the individual espouses” (583). If this occurs, Laib describes this as a gain of rhetorical territory. Using Laib’s standard to measure LW’s disclosure reveals significant gains took place in rhetorical territory throughout LW’s tenure. These gains in acceptance and in support of LGBT concerns were across the spectrum, at the district, the college, and the classroom level; all were possible because LW chose to come out.

Although the district had already included sexual orientation in its non-discrimination policies, LW was one of the first to put a face to the policy. He was the first at his college to openly speak out, which made him one of the first in the district to come out. He was certainly one of the first in the district to seek domestic partner recognition. He took what was only an idea on paper and brought it to life. In doing so, he often caused the district to take further action in favor of LGBT concerns, which is evident in the district’s development of a domestic partner policy following his challenge. Until someone challenges a policy or a way of thinking, change is unlikely to happen. Additional examples of how his disclosure brought about change at the district level included his participation in the development of a district AIDS policies, which, in turn, influenced AIDS policies in other districts across California. Also, he was instrumental in the creation of a state-wide community college policy supporting LGBT student groups

and the rights of LGBT students. The way in which the district treats LGBT individuals is in part a result of LW coming out. Throughout his tenure, the district enacted policies that showed more respect for and deeper understanding of LGBT persons.

At the college level, it is possible to see even more how adherence to LW's beliefs and theories occurred, helping him gain rhetorical territory and bring about change. He elevated the discussion at CC about gay and lesbian sexuality, moving it from whispered gossip to an open conversation taking place in department and faculty meetings all over campus. When he arrived at CC, there were no other openly gay faculty members. In little more than ten years, faculty were comfortable enough with LW to elect him president of the Academic Senate, and the community came to count on him to edit their accreditation reports. Other faculty invited him into their classrooms to speak; program planners counted on him to speak at campus-wide events. Even today, he is the face of CC, as he introduces new faculty to everyone from janitors to vice-presidents when he gives campus tours. Serving as the Master of Ceremonies for CC graduations for over a decade now is another way he is the face of the campus. The CC community's attitudes changed about homosexuality because LW chose to come out.

Of course, the greatest changes that took place are those which may be the most personal as student after student entered his class and left it thinking differently. His disclosure helped to erode homophobia and heterosexism as he challenged students to consider issues of sexuality critically. For many, he may have been the first gay teacher they encountered, but because of his disclosure and that of many others, he might not have been their last. What is more, his disclosure encouraged the disclosure of many others who ended up in the teaching profession, making what he did reverberate well past

his classroom at CC. Perhaps just as importantly, he helped to create allies out of the many heterosexual students who took his classes, another way his actions echoed beyond the campus and across time. LW was a model and his coming out did, indeed, help students see that being gay did not require the self-loathing, ignorance, and fear that Crew and Norton worried would be the legacy for the next generation. His coming out changed lives. It mattered.

2. The Importance of Error in Furthering Knowledge

In Chapter Two, I discussed the importance of acknowledging error when drawing conclusions about identity-related research. Carolyn S. Hau advocates that considering error when performing identity-related research is what is needed to help make better theory. Error helps the researcher to continue to question the relationship between theory and research data, as well as question theory itself and its meanings. Through this process, Hau observes, “theory can be revised and improved on the basis of new information” (160). Error has been important to this study in a number of ways. It has influenced the study’s design, data collection, and analysis. Now, as the study and this text come to an end, it is important to note how error must be a part of the reading experience of this document.

Through offering a thick description of LW and CC’s history, I have given it an order and a shape. As an ethnographer, I have taken random and individual events and filled them with meaning. Further, I have organized these events and the people who participated in them in a manner to make them appear cogent and coherent. I have made the rough smooth, brought order to chaos, all in an effort to produce a readable document. Thus, my reader must be mindful of the constructed nature of this document and the ways

it retells a community's story using writerly notions of coherence. In an effort to achieve coherence the document cannot help but present LW and CC as far more stable identities than is the case.

Additionally, the study excluded much that is significant to LW and CC. As a researcher, I focused only on coming out as a research variable. However, sexuality is only one component of LW's personhood; likewise, it is only one element among many when considering the discourse of the college. While I have worked to provide a broad spectrum of experiences in the report, it is not possible to research and write about the many aspects that are a part of the rich relationship LW had with CC. What to leave in and what to leave out were a researcher's decision rather than a participant's choice. I certainly invite readers to consider error as a way of questioning what is on these pages, but to also consider the ways in which the error found in this research might be a springboard for further study on this topic. The error within this study and these pages will be most valuable to those who deepen this research through their own investigations of the relationship between coming out and the community who hears the disclosure.

3. Implications for Future Research

This study looked at an environment where a gay faculty member's coming out mattered to the campus. It was a success story; it is not the typical story of most faculty disclosures. It is hardly the only story. To understand how coming out has reshaped discourse across college campuses, many more studies are needed, studies that take place in different locales across the nation as well as at different types of institutions. A study conducted at a college in the Midwest or the South will look entirely different, just as a study of another southern California college would vary from the one presented here.

Also, a study of a four-year or advanced degree granting institution would provide additional insights into how the rhetorical situation brings about a different response to disclosure in different environments. There need to be studies of different sites.

Ethnographic studies of other focal participants are necessary to help further knowledge about coming out and its impact on higher education communities. Not all faculty are inclined to be as outspoken or as involved in campus activities as LW. Further, not all faculty present themselves in the conservative manner in which LW did. Studies that address how faculty with different identity traits negotiated homophobic and heterosexist environments would be valuable. There is a need also for additional ethnographic studies of how women traverse coming out in higher education environments. This study reflects coming out through a male perspective. What works as a strategy for a man may not be the same for a woman. Similarly, individuals of color may experience disclosure on a college campus differently. This study looked at a Caucasian instructor who brought to his coming out a significant amount of privilege. That privilege played a role in his acceptability as a leader in the community, which helped greatly in spreading his coming out across the campus. Other studies are needed that explore participants with different racial and ethnic backgrounds. Correspondingly, studies are needed of faculty who are not tenured. Once again, as a tenured faculty member, LW enjoyed considerable privilege. Those who teach at the college or university but are not guaranteed employment experience the locale in a significantly different manner. We need to learn about these instructors' experiences with homophobia and heterosexism. There need to be studies of different sorts of participants.

There is also a need for studies that are similar to this one in the sense that the instructor uses the disclosure as a pedagogical tool. For too long, coming out has been seen as nothing more than the individual instructor unburdening himself on his students and the campus. This study makes clear that is not the case. There is a need for more studies to see how disclosure works as a teaching tool. Furthermore, these studies should move beyond sexual disclosure as a focus to a consideration of how coming out about a myriad of issues associated with identity impact teaching. Even what may be apparent, such as race, ethnicity, ability, and size, still require a disclosure if they are to be used as teaching tools. Research that helps to build understandings of how different sorts of disclosures work as teaching tools would have great value to a wide number of teaching practitioners. There need to be more studies about teacher disclosure as a teaching tool.

Composition teachers must also be studied more by Composition researchers. Studies of Composition teachers are few, while an abundance of research on students has been conducted. Of course, studying students makes sense, but not to the point of ignoring faculty. Those of us in the field must not entirely abandon the study of faculty, considering it the work of those in education. Only other Compositionists have a direct interest in the work of other Composition instructors. Furthermore, Compositionists are in the best position to understand and interpret the goings on in a Composition class to the rest of the academy. The crossroads that is the composition classroom is unique in the academy. While there continues to be much research into this crossroads, we must not forget to look closely at the person who delivers the course. How he or she organizes and presents the material to students is important. Some may argue that the previous statement goes without saying, but if one were to look at published research on

instructors, it is possible to conclude that the instructor matters little. Researchers should be encouraged to look at the lives of writing teachers. There need to be more studies of Composition faculty.

NCTE took a bold step with its support of disclosure in 1976 and 1992. However, the organization has done little since to understand how its actions have mattered to those doing the coming out. This error should be corrected by the organization. NCTE should not ask so much of its membership without studying how it has impacted the membership. Moreover, the organization should consider the need for research regarding any of its position statements. It is not enough for an educational organization to take a stand on a political issue; research on how the organization's actions impacted those effected is necessary. Without research, NCTE can have no sense of whether or not the position statements were of any benefit or even necessary. In fact, the position statements could do harm or be entirely disregarded. The purpose behind NCTE position statements is honorable, but without research on their impact it seems impossible for NCTE to know if position statements are indeed worth the energy and time invested in them. There need to be more studies of NCTE position statements.

4. Researcher's Reflection

One day as an undergraduate in a Gay Literature class I posed the questions: "Will we ever be able to move beyond coming out as the singular gay experience? Is that all we have to say?" These questions came after reading a number of literary works that focused on the experience of a character or narrator disclosing their sexuality, most often with dire consequences. It seemed all we read in class was about coming out; writers were stuck on it, so I thought. As I posed my question, I did so with an air of smugness.

Gay writers focusing on the coming out experience was somehow a mark of immaturity, I implied, immaturity for both the writers and the gay community. My question inferred we should just all move on to something more important. As I look back on my question many years later, I chuckle at myself and feel sheepish knowing my own energies have been spent trying to understand the complexity of coming out and what it means. Much like those literary writers, I have invested considerable time trying to understand something that is so much a part of my life. I know now that I did not have enough respect for how important coming out was and continues to be.

Through this research, coming out has become more complex and complicated for me. My relationship with it has been changed as a result. I have found coming out on a college campus to be a day to day experience, where the unexpected plays an important role. I had no sense before this study of how my purpose behind disclosing would evolve, particularly after I became an instructor. Nor did I understand the extent to which changes in thinking about gays and lesbians nationally would change the way I think about myself and the ways I disclose. What is more, I had no sense of the impact that takes place when someone comes out in a rhetorical situation. I was amazed to learn of the power disclosure has as it moves across campus. There are few things one can say that demand a response in the way that coming out does. I did not recognize the power that disclosure holds.

These understandings about coming out are all found in this study, but they are also found in my personal experiences. My research into LW's disclosure at CC paralleled my own experiences as a college writing instructor. At times, my research provided me with rhetorical strategies to use in my own rhetorical situation. As I would learn from the

research, I would enact what I had gleaned, often helping me to negotiate my own disclosure. I became better at communicating with my community; I took more time to build allies. At other times, what happened to me helped me better understand my research data. I brought myself to the data and used those insights to help discover meaning. For example, teaching academic writing gave me insights into LW's teaching, working with faculty showed me how LW performed with faculty, and coming out helped me grasp LW's coming out. The study was transformational to me and my transformation was essential to the study, for without it I would never have understood the research.

It is some time since I stepped into LW's English class in 1999. I see now that walking through the door into his classroom became a portal to another world for me. In this new world, I recovered from the wounds inflicted by Oklahoma and the Helms amendment and discovered new possibilities for myself and my future. The greatest of these possibilities was the opportunity "to know thyself" through the process of learning about others. As I now reach the end of my formal educational exploration, I can say with confidence that the learning has been deeply satisfying and fulfilling. How fortunate I was that LW disclosed. Because he came out, my life was changed. It is little wonder that gay writers have spent their literary careers exploring the coming out experience. It is deserving of such attention.

Works Cited

- Adams, Kate, and Kim Emery. "Classroom Coming Out Stories: Practical Strategies for Productive Self-Disclosure." *Tilting the Tower*. Ed. Linda Garber. New York: Routledge, 1994. 25-34. Print.
- Alexander, Jonathan. *Literacy, Sexuality, Pedagogy*. Logan: U of Utah P, 2008. Print.
- Arnold, Matthew. "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time." *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*. Ed. Vincent Leitch. New York: Norton and Co., 2001. 806-25. Print.
- Atkinson, Robert. *The Life Story Interview*. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1998. Print.
- Bakhtin, Mikail M. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Austin: U of Texas P, 1982. Print.
- Berg, Allison, Jean Kowaleski, Caroline LeGuin, Ellen Weinauer, and Eric A. Wolfe. "Breaking the Silence: Sexual Preference in the College Composition Classroom." *Tilting the Tower*. Ed. Linda Garber. New York: Routledge, 1994. 108-16. Print.
- Berlant, Lauren, and Michael Warner. "Sex in Public." *Critical Inquiry* 24.2 (1998): 547-66. Print.
- Berlin, James. "Contemporary Composition: The Major Pedagogical Theories." *College English* 44.8 (1982): 765-77. Print.
- Bishop, Wendy. *Ethnographic Writing Research: Writing It Down, Writing It Up, and Reading It*. Portsmouth: Boynton/Cook, 1999. Print.
- Bitzer, Lloyd F. "The Rhetorical Situation." *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 1 (January 1968): 1-14. Print.

- Bizzell, Patricia. *Academic Discourse and Critical Consciousness*. Pittsburgh: U of Pittsburgh P, 1992. Print.
- Bollag, Burton. "Gay Professors Face Less Discrimination, but Many Still Fight for Benefits." *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 28 September 2007: B10. Print.
- Brodkey, Linda. "Articulating Poststructural Theory in Research on Literacy." *Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Literacy Research*. Ed. Richard Beach, Judith L. Green, Michael L. Kamil, and Timothy Shanahan. Urbana: NCTE, 1992. 293-318. Print.
- Bruffee, Kenneth. "Social Construction, Language, and the Authority of Knowledge: A Bibliographical Essay." *College English*. 48.8 (1986). 773-90. Print.
- Butler, Judith. *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex*. London: Routledge, 1993. Print.
- . *Excitable Speech: The Politics of the Performative*. New York: Routledge, 1997. Print.
- . *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. London: Routledge, 1990. Print.
- . "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory." *Theatre Journal* 40.4 (1988): 519-31. Print.
- Carter, David. *Stonewall: The Riots that Sparked the Gay Revolution*. New York: St. Martin's, 2004. Print.
- Cass, Vivienne. "Homosexual Identity Formation: A Theoretical Model." *Journal of Homosexuality* 4.3 (1979): 219-35. Print.

- Cass, Vivienne. "Homosexual Identity Formation: Testing a Theoretical Model." *The Journal of Sex Research* 20.2 (1984): 143-67. Print.
- The Children's Hour*. Dir. William Wyler. Perf. Audrey Hepburn, Shirley MacLaine, and James Garner. United Artists. 1961. Film.
- Connors, Robert J. *Composition-Rhetoric: Backgrounds, Theory, and Pedagogy*. Pittsburgh: U of Pittsburgh P, 1997. Print.
- Consigny, Scott. "Rhetoric and Its Situations." *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 7. 3 (1974): 175-86. Print.
- Coogan, Michael D., Marc Z. Brettler, Carol A. Newsom, and PHEME Perkins, eds. *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books* (NSRV). 4th ed. New York: Oxford UP, 2010. Print.
- Creswell, John W. *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Traditions*. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1998. Print.
- Crew, Louie. "Thriving as an Outsider, Even as an Outcast, in Smalltown America." *Life Studies*. 2nd edition. Ed. David Cavitch. New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1986. 41-49. Print.
- Crew, Louie, and Karen Keener. "Homophobia in the Academy: A Report of the Committee on Gay/Lesbian Concerns." *College English* 43.7 (1981): 682-89. Print.
- Crew, Louie, and Rictor Norton. "The Homophobic Imagination: An Editorial." *College English* 36.3 (1974): 272-90. Print.
- Crowley, Mart. *The Boys in the Band*. New York: French, 1968. Print.

- Crowley, Sharon. *Composition in the University*. Pittsburgh: U of Pittsburgh P, 1998. Print.
- D’Emilio, John, William B. Turner, and Urvashi Vaid. *Creating Change*. New York: St. Martin’s, 2000.
- Denzen, Norman. *Interpretive Biography*. Newbury Park: Sage, 1989. Print.
- Elliott, Mary. “Coming Out in the Classroom.” *College English* 58.6 (1996): 693-708. Print.
- Emig, Janet. *The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders*. NCTE Research Report No. 13. Urbana: NCTE, 1971. Print.
- Epstein, Debbie, and Richard Johnson. “On the Straight and Narrow: The Heterosexual Presumption, Homophobias, and Schools.” *Challenging Lesbian and Gay Inequalities in Education*. Ed. Debbie Epstein. Buckingham: Open U P, 1994. Print.
- Erlandson, David A., Edward L. Harris, Barbara L. Skipper, and Steve D. Allen. *Doing Naturalistic Inquiry*. Newbury Park: Sage, 1993. Print.
- Faigley, Lester. *Fragments of Rationality: Postmodernity and the Subject of Composition*. Pittsburgh: U of Pittsburgh P, 1992. Print.
- Follett, Richard J. “Censors in Our Midst.” *College English* 43.7 (1981): 690-93. Print. ---. *On Teaching Gay Literature*. Diss. U of Michigan. 1980. Print.
- Fone, Byrne. *Homophobia*. New York: Metropolitan, 2000. Print.
- Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality*. Trans. Robert Hurley. New York: Random House, 1978. Print.

- . "Truth and Power." *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*. Ed. Vincent Leitch. New York: Norton, 2001. 1667 – 1670. Print.
- Freedman, Mark. "Homophobia: The Psychology of a Social Disease." *Body Politic* 24 (June 1975). 18 – 40. Print.
- Fuss, Diana. *Essentially Speaking: Feminism, Nature and Difference*. New York: Routledge, 1989. Print.
- Gabel, John B., Charles B. Wheeler, Anthony D. York, and David Citino, with a new chapter by Nicola Denzey. *The Bible as Literature: An Introduction*. 5th ed. New York: Oxford UP, 2006. Print.
- Gere, Anne Ruggles. "Kitchen Tables and Rented Rooms: The Extracurriculum of Composition." *College Composition and Communication* 45.1 (1994): 75-92. Print.
- Gilyard, Keith. "Literacy, Identity, Imagination, Flight." *College Composition and Communication* 52.2 (2000): 260-72. Print.
- Goffman, Erving. *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1963. Print.
- Gonçalves, Zan Meyer. *Gay and Lesbian Educators: Personal Freedoms, Public Constraints*. Malden: Amethyst, 1997. Print.
- The Graduate*. Dir. Mike Nichols. Perf. Dustin Hoffman, Anne Bancroft. Paramount. 1967. Film.
- Griffin, Pat. "From Hiding Out to Coming Out: Empowering Lesbian and Gay Educators." *Coming Out of the Classroom Closet: Gay and Lesbian Students*,

- Teachers and Curricula*. Ed. Karen Harbeck. New York: Haworth P, 1992. 167-96. Print.
- Grindstaff, Davin. *Rhetorical Secrets: Mapping Gay Identity and Queer Resistance in Contemporary America*. Tuscaloosa: U of Alabama P, 2006. Print.
- Hairston, Maxine. "The Winds of Change: Thomas Kuhn and the Revolution in the Teaching of Writing." *College Composition and Communication* 33.1 (1982): 76-88. Print.
- Halperin, David M. *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality: and Other Essays on Greek Love*. New York: Routledge, 1990. Print.
- Harbeck, Karen. "Gay and Lesbian Educators: Past History/Future Prospects." *Coming Out of the Classroom Closet: Gay and Lesbian Students, Teachers and Curricula*. Ed. Karen Harbeck. New York: Haworth, 1992. 121-40. Print.
- . *Gay and Lesbian Educators: Personal Freedoms, Public Constraints*. Malden: Amethyst, 1997. Print.
- Harris, Joseph. "The Idea of Community in the Study of Writing." *College Composition and Communication* 40.1 (1989): 11-22. Print.
- Hau, Caroline S. "On Representing Others: Intellectuals, Pedagogy, and the Uses of Error." *Reclaiming Identity: Realist Theory and the Predicament of Postmodernism*. Ed. Paula M. L. Moya and Michael R. Hames Garcia. Berkeley: U of California P, 2000. 133-70. Print.
- Hellman, Lillian. *The Children's Hour*. New York: Knopf, 1934. Print.
- Herzberg, Bruce. "The Politics of Discourse Communities." Conference on College Composition and Communication. New Orleans. 1986. Conference Presentation.

- Hoffman, William M. *As Is*. New York: Random, 1985. Print.
- “The Homosexual in America.” *Time* 21 Jan. 1966. Web.
- hooks, bell. “Postmodern Blackness.” *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*. Ed. Vincent Leitch. New York: Norton, 2001. 2478-84. Print.
- Jennings, Kevin. *One Teacher in Ten: Gay and Lesbian Educators Tell Their Stories*. Los Angeles: Alyson, 1994. Print.
- Katz, Jonathan. *Gay American History*. New York: Crowell, 1976. Print.
- Kinsey, Alfred. *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1948.
- Kinneavy, James L. “The Basic Aims of Discourse.” *College Composition and Communication* 20.5 (1969): 297-304. Print.
- Kramer, Larry. *The Normal Heart*. New York: New American Library, 1985. Print.
- . “Yale’s Conspiracy of Silence.” Yale University, New Haven. Speech. 24 April 2009. Web. 2 January 2012.
- Kyvig, David E. and Myron A. Marty. *Nearby History: Exploring the Past Around You*. Walnut Creek: Sage, 1996. Print.
- Laib, Nevin K. “Territoriality in Rhetoric” *College English* 47.6 (1985): 579 – 93. Print.
- Larson, Richard L. “Lloyd Bitzer’s ‘Rhetorical Situation’ and the Classification of Discourse: Problems and Implications.” *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 3.3 (1970): 165-168. Print.
- Lawrence v. Texas. 539 US 558 – 607. Supreme Court of the US. 2003. *US Supreme Court Center*. Justia.com. Web. 1 January 2012.
- Leitch, Vincent B., ed. *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*. New York: Norton, 2001. Print.

- Longtime Companion*. Dir. Norman René. Perf. Bruce Davison, Campbell Scott, Patrick Cassidy, and Mary-Louise Parker. The Samuel Goldwyn Company. 1989. Film.
- Lorenz, Jay Kent. "Blame It on the Weatherman: Popular Culture and Pedagogical Praxis in the Lesbian and Gay Studies Classroom." *Lesbian and Gay Studies and the Teaching of English*. Ed. William J. Spurlin. Urbana: NCTE, 2000. 36-53. Print.
- Lunsford, Andrea A., Helene Moglen, and James Slevin. *The Right to Literacy*. New York: MLA, 1990. Print.
- Malinowitz, Harriet. *Textual Orientations: Lesbian and Gay Students and the Making of Discourse Communities*. Portsmouth: Boynton/Cook, 1995. Print.
- McNaron, Toni. *Poisoned Ivy: Lesbian and Gay Academics Confronting Homophobia*. Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1997. Print.
- Miller, Neil. *Out of the Past: Gay and Lesbian History from 1869 to the Present*. New York: Vintage, 1995. Print.
- Mohanty, Satya P. "The Epistemic Status of Cultural Identity: On *Beloved* and the Postcolonial Condition." *Reclaiming Identity: Realist Theory and the Predicament of Postmodernism*. Ed. Paula M. L. Moya and Michael R. Hames-Garcia. Berkeley: U of California P, 2000: 29-66. Print.
- Monette, Paul. *Becoming A Man: Half A Life Story*. Orlando: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1992. Print.
- Moya, Paula M. L. "Introduction: Reclaiming Identity." *Reclaiming Identity: Realist Theory and the Predicament of Postmodernism*. Ed. Paula M. L. Moya and Michael R. Hames-Garcia. Berkeley: U of California P, 2000. 1-26. Print.

- Murray, Donald M. "Teach Writing as a Process Not Product." *The Leaflet* (1972): 11-14. Print.
- Murray, Stephen O. *American Gay*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1996. Print.
- National Council of Teachers of English. "On Discrimination Against Gay Men and Lesbians." 1976. *NCTE Position Statement*. Web. 1 January 2012.
- National Council of Teachers of English. "On Recurring Discrimination Against Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual People." 1992. *NCTE Position Statement*. Web. 1 January 2012.
- Naylor, Gloria. "Nigger: The Meanings of a Word." *The Brief Bedford Reader*. 8th ed. Ed. X.J. Kennedy, Dorothy M. Kennedy, Jane E. Aaron. New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2003. Print.
- Newport, Frank. "For First Time, Majority of Americans Favor Legal Gay Marriage." *Gallup.com* 20 May, 2011. Web. 6 January 2012.
- Oklahoma Stat. Tit. 70 O.S., 6 – 103.15. Print.
- Paul, Jay P., Joseph Catania, Lance Pollack, Judith Moskowitz, Jesse Canchola, Thomas Mills, Diane Brinson, Ron Stall. "Suicide Attempts Among Gay and Bisexual Men: Lifetime Prevalence and Antecedents." *American Journal of Public Health* 92.8 (2002): 1338-45. Print.
- Perelman, Chaim, and Lucy Olbrechts-Tyteca. *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation*. South Bend: U of Notre Dame P, 1969. Print.
- Philadelphia*. Dir. Jonathan Demme. Perf. Tom Hanks, Denzel Washington, Antonio Banderas. TriStar Pictures. 1993. Film.

- Plummer, Ken. *Documents of Life: An Introduction to the Problems and Literature of Humanistic Method*. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1983. Print.
- Pratt, Mary Louise. "Arts of the Contact Zone." *Profession* 91 (1991): 33-40. Print.
- Reid, John. *The Best Little Boy in the World*. New York: Random House, 1973. Print.
- Richter, David H. "Structuralism, Semiotics, and Deconstruction." *The Critical Tradition: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends*. Ed. David H. Richter. 2nd ed. New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1998. 809-31. Print.
- Rofes, Eric. *Dry Bones Breathe: Gay Men Creating Post-AIDS Identities and Cultures*. New York: Harrington Park P, 1998. Print.
- Rubin, Gayle. "Interview: Sexual Traffic." *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 6. 2-3 (1994): 62-99. Print.
- Saad, Lydia. "Americans' Acceptance of Gay Relations Crosses 50% Threshold." *Gallup.com*. 25 May 2010. Web. 1 January 2012.
- Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. *Epistemology of the Closet*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990. Print.
- Seidman, Irving. *Interviewing as Qualitative Research: A Guide for Researchers in Education and the Sciences*. 3rd ed. New York: Teachers College P, 2005. Print.
- Shakespeare. *King Henry IV, Part 2*. Ed. A. R. Humphries. London: Thomson Learning, 1981. Print.
- Shilts, Randy. *And the Band Played On: Politics, People, and the AIDS Epidemic*. New York: St. Martin's, 1987. Print.
- Smith, Barbara. "Toward a Black Feminist Criticism." *The Radical Teacher* 7 (1978): 20-27. Print.

- Stanley, Julia. "When We Say 'Out of the Closets!'" *College English* 36.3 (1974): 385-91. Print.
- Swales, John. "Approaching the Concept of Discourse Community." Conference on College Composition and Communication. Atlanta. 1987. Conference Presentation.
- Talbert, Susan. "On Not Coming Out: or, Reimagining Limits." *Lesbian and Gay Studies and the Teaching of English*. Ed. William J. Spurlin. Urbana: NCTE, 2000. 54-78. Print.
- . *Subject to Identity: Knowledge, Sexuality, and Academic Practices in Higher Education*. Albany: State U of New York P, 2000. Print.
- Thatcher, Patricia S. *An Historical Perspective on the Resolutions Process of the National Council of Teachers of English*. Diss. Indiana U of Pennsylvania. 2003. Ann Arbor: UMI, 2003. Print.
- Tinberg, Howard B. *Border Talk: Writing and Knowing in the Two-Year College*. Urbana: NCTE, 1997. Print.
- Toulmin, Stephen. *The Uses of Argument*. Cambridge University Press: New York, 1958. Print.
- Vatz, Richard E. "The Myth of the Rhetorical Situation." *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 6.3 (1973): 154-61. Print.
- Villanueva, Victor. *Cross-Talk in Comp Theory*. 2nd ed. Urbana: NCTE, 2003. Print.
- Weinberg, George. *Society and the Healthy Homosexual*. New York: St. Martin's, 1972. Print.

- Wilkerson, William S. "Is There Something You Need to Tell Me?: Coming Out and the Ambiguity of Experience." *Reclaiming Identity: Realist Theory and the Predicament of Postmodernism*. Ed. Paula M. L. Moya and Michael R. Hames-Garcia. Berkeley: U of California P, 2000. 251-78. Print.
- Wolcott, H. F. "On Ethnographic Intent." *Interpretive Ethnography of Education: At Home and Abroad*. Ed. George Spindler and Louise Spindler. Hillsdale: Erlbaum, 1987. Print.
- Woods, Sherry, and Karen Harbeck. "Living in Two Worlds: The Identity Management Strategies Used by Lesbian Physical Educators." *Coming Out of the Classroom Closet: Gay and Lesbian Students, Teachers and Curricula*. Ed. Karen Harbeck. New York: Haworth, 1992. 141-66. Print.
- Yoshino, Kenji. *Covering: The Hidden Assault on Our Civil Rights*. New York: Random House, 2006. Print.
- Yin, Robert K. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2003. Print.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Informed Consent Form (Participants)

Project Title: “As a Gay Man, I’: Coming Out in Composition”

You are invited to participate in a research study being conducted by Clifton Justice as part of his research for his doctoral dissertation at Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP). You are eligible to participate in this study because of your professional relationship with _____, the primary participant in the study. The following information is provided in order to help you make an informed decision about whether or not to participate. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

The primary purpose of this research project is to understand how a gay composition instructor’s disclosure has mattered to his students, colleagues, and administrators during his nearly twenty-five years of service at Pierce College. Additionally, the study seeks to find out how the instructor’s disclosure has been influenced by his audience’s responses. Participation in this study will require approximately 30 minutes of your time.

Participation in this research will involve one 30-minute audio-taped interview regarding your recollections of _____ and his disclosure. You may find the interview experience enjoyable as the interviews may provide you with a clearer perspective and greater self-knowledge. The information gained from this study may help explain how a gay instructor’s disclosure impacts an academic community.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to decide not to participate in this study or to withdraw at any time without adversely affecting your relationship with the investigator. Your decision will not result in any loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you choose to participate, you may withdraw at any time by notifying Clifton Justice. Upon your request to withdraw, all information pertaining to you will be destroyed. If you choose to participate, all information will be held in strict confidence and will have no bearing on your employment, academic standing, or services you receive from your employer. The information obtained in the study may be published in academic journals or presented at academic meetings, but your identity will be kept strictly confidential.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Clifton Justice
Doctoral Candidate, IUP
cjustice@socal.rr.com
18900 Ledan Street

Advisor: Dr. Ben Rafter
Professor of English, IUP
brafoth@iup.edu
111 Leonard Hall

Northridge, CA 91324
Informed Consent Form (continued)

Indiana, PA 15705

Phone: (818) 458-3682

(724) 357-2263

This project has been approved by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (Phone: 724/357-7730).

VOLUNTARY CONSENT FORM:

I have read and understand the information on the form and I consent to volunteer to be a subject in this study. I understand that my responses are completely confidential and that I have the right to withdraw at any time. I have received an unsigned copy of this informed Consent Form to keep in my possession.

Name (PLEASE PRINT)

Signature

-

Date _____

I certify that I have explained to the above individual the nature and purpose, the potential benefits, and possible risks associated with participating in this research study, have answered any questions that have been raised, and have witnessed the above signature.

Date

Investigator's Signature

Appendix 2

Informed Consent Form (Focal Participant)

Project Title: “As a Gay Man, I’: Coming Out in Composition”

You are invited to participate in a research study being conducted by Clifton Justice, as part of his research for his doctoral dissertation at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. The following information is provided in order to help you make an informed decision about whether or not to participate. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to ask. You will be the primary participant in the study.

The primary purpose of this research project is to understand how a gay composition instructor’s disclosure has been received and responded to by his students, colleagues, and administrators during his nearly twenty-five years of service at Pierce College. Additionally, the study seeks to find out how the instructor’s coming out was influenced by his audience’s responses. Participation in this study will require numerous, open-ended interviews.

Participation in this research will involve a minimum of five to a maximum of seven audio-taped interviews regarding your recollections of an institutional document. This is a document such as class syllabi, web pages, and/or departmental and institutional reports where you disclose your sexuality in some form or other. You will assist in selecting the documents. There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this research. You may find the experience enjoyable as the interviews may provide you with a clearer perspective and greater self-knowledge. The information gained from this study may help us to better understand how audience impacts a gay instructor’s disclosure.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to decide not to participate in this study or to withdraw at any time without adversely affecting your relationship with the investigator. Your decision will not result in any loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you choose to participate, you may withdraw at any time by notifying Clifton Justice. Upon your request to withdraw, all information pertaining to you will be destroyed. If you choose to participate, all information will be held in strict confidence and will have no bearing on your employment, academic standing, or services you receive from Pierce College. The information obtained in the study may be published in academic journals or presented at academic meetings, but your identity will be kept strictly confidential, unless you decide to waive that right after reviewing a draft of the study.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign the statement below and return it to me in the self-addressed, stamped envelope. Keep the extra unsigned copy. If you choose not to participate, please returned the unsigned copies to me in the self-addressed, stamped envelope, as well.

Thank you very much for considering whether to participate.

Clifton Justice
Doctoral Candidate, IUP
cjustice@socal.rr.com
18900 Ledan Street
Northridge, CA 91324
Phone: (818) 700-7871

Advisor: Dr. Ben Rafoth
Professor of English, IUP
brafoth@iup.edu
111 Leonard Hall
Indiana, PA 15705
(724) 357-2263

This project has been approved by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (Phone: 724/357-7730).

VOLUNTARY CONSENT FORM:

I have read and understand the information on the form and I consent to volunteer to be a subject in this study. I understand that my responses are completely confidential and that I have the right to withdraw at any time. I have received an unsigned copy of this informed Consent Form to keep in my possession.

Name (PLEASE PRINT)

Signature

Date _____

Email Address _____

Phone number or location where you can be reached

Best days and times to reach you

I certify that I have explained to the above individual the nature and purpose, the potential benefits, and possible risks associated with participating in this research study, have answered any questions that have been raised, and have witnessed the above signature.

_____ Date

_____ Investigator's Signature

Appendix 3

Sample Interview Questions

Administration

1. History and general background.
2. Have you seen any changes in how gay faculty have been received during your time at the college?
3. What sort of impact do you believe openly gay faculty have had on the campus community?
4. What was your first interaction with the focal participant? Do you recall the focal participant coming out to you? If not, when did you first become aware of his sexuality?
5. What have been the responses to the focal participant's disclosure? Have these responses changed over the years?
6. Have you observed any changes in the focal participant's disclosure over the years? If so, in what ways?
7. How would you compare the focal participant's disclosure to other gay faculty at CC?
8. How would you assess the impact of the focal participant's coming out on the CC campus community?

Faculty

1. History and general background.
2. What was your first interaction with the focal participant? Do you recall him coming out to you? If not, when did you first become aware of his sexuality?
3. Are you aware of any change in the focal participant's coming out over the years you've been at Pierce?
4. Does the focal participant's coming out impact his pedagogy? How?
5. To what extent, if any, do you think his sexuality impacts his relations with his colleagues?
6. Does his coming out present you with any challenges? Does it present you with any special opportunities?
7. Does the focal participant's coming out present challenges to students? Do some students avoid his classes because of his disclosure? Do some specifically take his class because of his sexual disclosure?
8. During your time at CC, have you observed any changes on campus or among colleagues, staff, or students as a result of the focal participant's coming out?
9. How would you assess the impact of the focal participant's coming out on the CC campus community?

Students

1. When did you attend CC? For what purpose? What classes did you take?
2. What were your reasons for taking the class with LW?
3. What are your memories about what you read and what you wrote in his class?
4. What are your memories about LW's lectures?

5. What are your memories about class discussions? What are your memories about LW's role in class discussions?
6. What are your memories about LW disclosing his sexuality in class? What are your memories about any discussions of sexuality that took place in the class? Do you remember if he ever used his sexuality as an example or to make a point?
7. What did you learn from taking the class? Do you think the class had any impact on your reading and writing? Your thinking?
8. What is your memory of CC? What did you take away from your time there? How would you characterize your overall experience with CC?
9. What do you remember about the support given to LGBT people and their concerns by CC faculty, staff, and students? What is your memory of the climate for LGBT people on the CC campus?

Appendix 4

Sample Interview Questions Focal Participant

Interview 1: General Issues and Relationships with Administration

1. What role has your sexuality and your openness about it played in your academic career?
2. How would you define being “out” about your sexuality? Are you out in some areas on campus more so than others? Do you ever “pass”? If so, why?
3. What has been your experience with the development and evolution of institutional policies with regard to discrimination? Has there been a gap between the language and the protection? Has that changed over time?
4. How have heterosexist assumptions impacted you?
5. To what extent, if any, have external pressures played a role in your interactions with administration and staff?
6. Have you experienced any internal censoring with regard to speaking on behalf of lesbian and gay issues? Have you experienced situations where you had to call out homophobia (speak truth to power)? How has this made you feel?
7. In what ways have you seen change take place? Where has change began? How would you characterize the rate of change?

Interview 2: Colleagues

1. What was coming out to your colleagues like in 1984? What is it like today?
2. How has the increasing legitimacy of lesbian and gay issues in the academic environment impacted your relationship with your peers? How would you chronicle this change over time?
3. How do you believe your presence has impacted your peers? Has that evolved over time? If so, in what ways?
4. What has been your experience with other gay colleagues, both those in the closet and out?

Interview 3: Teaching

1. What brought you to English as a discipline? Why did you want to teach in higher education?
2. What pedagogical strategies influence your teaching? Where and when did you learn and develop these strategies? How has teaching refined these strategies?
3. How has your “gay” body impacted your teaching? How has it served as a text for your students?
4. How does your disclosure relate to these pedagogical choices?
5. How has overachievement played a role in your teaching? What has been the cost of your efforts to be the best?

Interview 4: Students

1. When teaching students writing, what are some of the principal ideas you want to communicate?

2. In what ways have you seen your teaching evolve over the past 25 years?
3. How would you describe the types of students you teach?
4. What have been students' responses to your coming out over the years? How have those responses changed?
5. Has loss of respect because of your disclosure ever been an issue for you?
6. What impact has your disclosure had on your interactions with students outside of the classroom, such as during office hours appointments or off-campus personal activities?
7. Discuss your work with gay students and gay student groups.

Interview 5: Discussion of Other Possible Project Participants

Interview 6: *The Bible as Literature* Class

This brief interview focused on the details of the class including an explanation of the syllabus and bibliographic references used in the course.

Interview 7: Accident

This brief interview focused on the details of the accident in which LW's neck was broken.