

## CHAPTER 1

# *Token Professionals and Professorial Templates*

Research might even connote indolence, as it did to Andrew S. Draper of Illinois, who made certain that its practice was impossible by imposing teaching loads of thirteen to nineteen hours per week.

—Laurence R. Veysey, *The Emergence of the American University*, 77

Token professionals are professors who teach in mainstream universities, disproportionately evaluated on scholarly contributions while working mostly in service capacities. This study configures the pain and humiliation they undergo in overworked, underpaid, and unrewarded positions. I focus on the literature professor as token professional.

Because it does not match the mainstream job market, the standard career profile of the literary critic places many professionals in a Procrustean bed. For them, more hours are devoted to teaching and all that it entails than researching. Those who work in lower ranking institutions cannot match the template of their professorial type for the simple reason that it is developed on a different level of the academic social order—one at which research funds are greater and teaching responsibilities fewer. An academic of “lower class” schooling finds it difficult to enter the ranks of the upper academic class. Opportunities are few. Yet, the myth remains. I refer to the belief that, if an academic works long and hard enough, she will raise her academic “class status” on merit. Because of this myth, middle- and low-ranking schools can apply the standard career template to their faculty as if everyone involved were simply swept up in a “natural” progression toward a universally acknowledged telos. But, the ideal of the literary scholar as researcher suits critics who have many resources

(research time, networks, forums, research funds, higher salaries, secretaries).<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately, this does not prevent administrators from applying it to a distinctly, disadvantaged “lower” academic “class.” Hence, they can be called “token professionals,” that is, teachers whose careers will never actually match the exemplary type of which they are the token but by which template they are nonetheless evaluated.

How can a disparity persist between the current career profile of the literary critic exemplified in professors at the top of the academic ladder and the lived careers of those lower in the academic social order? The obvious answer is that those lower in the order aspire to climb the professional ladder. The rare success story sustains the myth that careers advance on merit. But a more relevant question is who benefits from the myth? Most state universities. What better instrument of containment could possibly be invented than a standard of productivity that cannot be met but is nonetheless accepted by the worker as reasonable? The working-class professional or the token professional customarily accepts standards that will invariably insure her failure.

I identify four major groups of such teachers. My classification is based on (1) available research time as an index of the currency (likely productivity) of one’s professional career and (2) symbolic capital as a marker of academic class status (Bourdieu and Passeron). In other words, if the amount of symbolic capital possessed (in this case, the number of publications) is the marker of career status for the professional, then the amount of research time made available by an institution to its faculty is the index of their access to the accumulation of symbolic capital. The token professional, then, is the university teacher of whom exemplary productivity is demanded but to whom adequate research time is not made available. Such persons are given the title of professionals by the award of degrees, etc., but function professionally as “tokens.” I use the word “token” in three of its senses to define this class. Its members are “tokens” in the sense of token theorists, token women, token minorities. At the same time, a curious mismatch between these “tokens” and their “type” pertains: they are not fully, nor can they ever fully be examples of the “typical” career of their time. In addition, they function in the academic marketplace like subway tokens, whose exchange value is created and limited by the corporate structure which produces them. The four groups I identify are as follows:

1. The token proper, those who are segregated by their colleagues because they are not quite what the current professional exemplifies, upon whom the judgment that their work is not *really* scholarship usually falls. Members of this group are often hired implicitly as token representatives of nonexemplary careers. However, they are often also “tokenized” in the sense that their work is not rewarded with research time. Examples of this group have to be localized—for example, *a* feminist (not feminists in general) whose application for research time is denied by traditionalists who believe that her work is not exemplary, that is, not up to the standards of the profession.

2. The part-time teacher and holders of revolving door appointments, those not yet having quite made it, upon whom an exemplary template is applied at the same time that research time is denied. Most universities, for example, do not give research grants to part-time teachers. At the same time, most departments do not consider their part-time faculty as worthy of full-time appointments because their careers (not their teaching) do not match the standard career profile.

3. The defielded (or deskilled) teacher whose dissertation required skills not required to manage or staff the program for which her department has hired her. In this situation the field is the token. Since fields are the specialties that make a professional an expert, “defielding” tokenizes the person involved. This is the fastest growing group of token professionals owing to the increasing number of skill courses in departmental programs and the need to staff them from among candidates whose training is based on the current career profile of the researcher. The amount of time demanded by grading papers, etc., is not rewarded by increases in research time. Defielded teachers also have difficulty in establishing a coherent record of productivity, and therefore find it difficult to obtain research time.

4. The Taylorized<sup>6</sup> teacher whose career is dominated by a series of timetables and deadlines that have no recognizable relationship to her inquiry. I refer here to the critics whose careers are shaped by the demands of university bureaucracy, whose academic work day is dominated by committee meetings, reports, conferences, and so on.<sup>7</sup> In this context, one might consider the administrative device of the faculty service report which in many universities weighs research, teaching, and service equally and asks to what extent such documents match the standard career

profile of the idealized professional critic as specialist. Teachers are tokenized by such mechanisms in the sense that the services required of faculty are not conducive to making them more expert in their fields. On the contrary, they reduce available research time. Such strategies on the part of university administrations reveal their interest (cost-efficiency) in maintaining a class of token professionals.

In short, for the majority of teachers in the American academy the standard career template is an implausible ideal. The worse irony, however, is that for them the goals underlying the career profile it implies are unrealizable.

Let me elaborate briefly on my claim that the standards by which token professionals are judged, practically speaking, are unrealizable for persons in mainstream universities. Teaching in a university financially dedicated to undergraduate instruction is not conducive to research. Research funds, release time, secretarial and clerical support, facilities for networking, and other aids to the development of research projects are severely limited. At the same time, tenure and promotion decisions often are based on the publication of "significant" research in the major, refereed journals in a candidate's field.<sup>8</sup>

The nebulous notion of "significant research," the typically encoded phrase in documents delineating the standards candidates must meet, is unrealizable. As long as significance is measured against a continuously shifting profile of the ideal researcher, anyone or no one meets the standard. Any member of a tenure and promotion committee can witness to the shifting meaning of the term "significant" in these deliberations. Each case is always a special case. Sometimes, significance is a code word for personality and legality in tenure and promotion decisions. At other times it is judged by the extent and prominence of publications. Nonetheless, whatever the adjective "significant" means when it is applied to the noun "research," the correlation between research and release time cannot be denied—the more release time for research, the more likely that research will be "significant" (here defined simply as "widely cited").

Time is the most relevant factor in any research project. Published research merits released time for publishable research. Ideally, merit is earned by labor. But, if Paula is contracted to spend her time in tasks that do not earn as much merit as the tasks Peter

has contracted to do, then Paula cannot accumulate as much merit as Peter. If research earns more merit than teaching, then teachers cannot in principle match the symbolic capital that researchers can amass. Teaching is time consuming. Professors rarely get much writing done during the semesters in which they teach two or more courses which, counting summer school, usually take up more than ten out of the twelve months of the year. For token professionals the erosion of research time is as inevitable as its accumulation is for full-fledged professionals. Token professionals have a downward spiral of productivity—the less release time they can obtain, the fewer publications they can produce, and the fewer merit points they can earn to obtain release time to publish. Token professionals spend more time teaching than researching. For universities, this system is cost-effective, especially when salaries are based on merit points.

Axiomatically, time is money. The difference between the elite and the token professional is signaled, for instance, when the latter phones the former and gets his secretary. Not only do the research counterparts of token professionals have their secretaries' time at their disposal, but their time is protected by those secretaries who will not allow others to waste it. To take another signal instance of this discrepancy—as graduate students, many token professionals have been graders for their professors. But, token professionals rarely if ever have graders. Similarly, one of the differences between a journal housed at an elite university and one housed at a mainstream university is staffing. Mainstream universities usually cannot afford large staffs for the journals they sponsor. As a result, editors of mainstream journals spend time doing what graduate assistants and clerical personnel do for elite journals. Experiences of such “time drains” are emblematic of the token professional. By definition, they are teachers who work in universities that allocate insignificant research funds but demand significant research. Token professionals are the products of institutions that place their employees in a spiraling condition wherein the ratio between released time for research and time committed to teaching (counting committee work, counseling, grading and curriculum planning) *diminishes* the possibility of publication. In sum, the conditions of our work do not promote the ideals that inform it.

Having discussed the realities of our workplaces, let us now turn our attention to the ideals that allegedly inform them. I will

take the profile of the ideal professor of literature as my case in point. *His* profile is used as a template to evaluate mainstream critics. It is derived from the functions profiled in various university documents, particularly statements of tenure and promotion criteria and faculty service reports. These have a long and complex history.

### SHIFTING AND CONFLICTING TEMPLATES

Between 1870 and 1930 American universities expanded from 563 to 1,409 and their populations from 52,000 to 1,101,000 (Bledstein 297). Such rapid expansion precipitated many changes in the various studies universities housed. In *Professing Literature* Gerald Graff identifies three periods of significant change during the concomitant history of literary studies: the "old college" (1828–76), the "early professional era" (1875–1915) the "scholars versus critics" (1915–65), and he implies a fourth by default—the period of "post–New Criticism" (1965–present). Each of these periods saw persistent debates about the roles the literature professor was to play in the American university system. As we moved from one period to the next, the conflicting rationales for our profession shifted dramatically. He notes that from 1875 to 1915 the standard profile of the teacher of literature changed from a generalist to a scholar. During the early part of this century, it shifted from scholar to critic. And we might add that, since the mid-sixties, the aims of the profession seem to be shifting again.

These transitions occurred concomitantly with changes in the university system mandated by an expanding student population and extramural, socioeconomic pressures. The first shift was a response not only to a change in the organization of university studies—departmentalization by discipline—but also to changes in the organization of businesses—incorporation. Both were administrative responses to rapid growth. In the second shift, the "scholar" was invented as a response to a reorganization of universities as departments housing disciplines which required experts. The third shift occurred in part because New Critics required fewer university resources and reproduced Ph.D.'s at a faster rate than their precursors during a period of sudden expansion after World War II. Graff does not describe the shift from New Critical rationales to post–New Critical ones, but we are all



aware that our priorities are “shifting” once again because of the many conflicts between traditional and postmodern professors.

Though we are inclined to perceive these shifts as intellectual debates among specialists, this view neglects the powerful influence extramural socioeconomic forces played in these turns of events. Since shifts in institutional priorities require shifts in the roles its members play, many of the changes in the role of the professor of literature were far more arbitrary from an intellectual point of view than we might like to believe. Let me briefly review some of them.

### *The Old College (1828–76)*

An ideology of humanism set the priorities for the “old college” (at least with respect to nonscientific disciplines) according to Laurence Veysey in *The Emergence of the American University*. Its goal was the “diffusion of standards of cultivated taste” and discussions focused on “mental discipline” as the best preparation for the student (Veysey 12, Graff *Professing*, 30–31). “Old College” teachers were also expected to play the role of humanists. This rationale translated the older religious aims into secular terms and thus transformed a primarily religious institution into a secular one, thereby providing the foundation for the modern American university.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, professionalism was embedding itself in the university system. Teachers could no longer teach in it until they had first accredited themselves as professionals. Training replaced casual study. Only by entering a professional program did one become a professor. Earlier in the century, “‘Professor’ was a grandiose title quickly appropriated by anyone who claimed to make a living at a skill. . . . Barbers called themselves ‘Professor,’ as did dancing-masters, banjo players, tailors, phrenologists, acrobats, boxers, music-hall piano players, and public teachers of all sorts” (Bledstein 21). To distinguish the “real” professionals from these rank amateurs, a series of accreditation procedures were installed, consisting mostly of exams administered by those who were already recognized as professional by the societies who had admitted them to membership on the basis of universities who had given them certifying degrees.

The rapidly expanding university system was structured during this period along the lines of successful corporations, allowing

administrators to handle the increasing numbers of students and bringing the university into line with the middle-class aspirations of its emerging clientele—though at the price of turning universities into corporations. As Bledstein points out, the shift was away from “dedication to the community, sincerity, trust, permanence, honorable reputation, and righteous behavior” to the development of “competence, knowledge, and preparation” “that separated and defined it independently of the general community.”

### *The Early Professional Era (1875–1915)*

In what Graff calls the “early professional period,” an ideology of service developed. This view of the university’s aim was often associated with “the Wisconsin idea,” namely that the university should furnish expert advice of all kinds to the state and produce an educated citizenry (Veysey 109, 220). In such a scheme, the study of English served the state. Basic skills were central to the curriculum. The teacher’s role was to be an expert who could offer a specific “service.” Thus, humanists were also to be rhetors because the emerging study of English had as its end the sort of “civil” service characteristic of rhetoric.

Toward the end of the century, an ideology of research was also developed on the model of the German university (Graff *Professing*, 62–63). In this rationale, the study of literature was seen as “scientific” and was focused upon philology as its principal method. This aim was not as widespread as those of humanism and service. It entered the American system of education with the founding of two graduate schools, Clark University and Johns Hopkins, which for a time were kept completely independent of undergraduate education. Nonetheless, the role of scholar superseded the role of teacher and the study of English was construed as the disinterested accumulation of objective knowledge. In Graff’s idiom, teachers were to be “investigators” (55ff.).

At this time the idea of autonomous fields of inquiry, or “disciplines,” took complete hold of the university system. Breadth versus depth in a field of inquiry became an issue. Specialization easily won out because it marked the boundaries of authority clearly and fit into a new institutional apparatus emerging at the same time—the department (compartmentalization often follows quantification). Whereas earlier in the century teachers were expected to range over broad areas of learning, by the turn of the century,



such generalists had fallen in status (Graff 146–47). Earlier in the century, universities had small staffs, whose members taught a wide range of subject matters. As the university expanded, staffs expanded. Intellectual terrain became an issue. The notion of autonomous disciplines took a strong foothold in this climate. Hence a new role for the teacher, the role of the disciple. Now the teacher was required to make a “contribution” to a field. To do so, in a period of increasing specialization, one had to join a particular school of thought usually dominated by persons Grant Webster calls “seminal thinkers” (8).

When the university system expanded yet again at the turn of the century, it required teachers to play several conflicting bureaucratic roles correlative to newly created colleges, departments, committees, and other hierarchies. The alleged integrity of the faculties’ role in these developments was maintained through a contemporaneous development of careerism. By prescribing various roles as stages in a coherent career trajectory, administrators made it appear that any individual could climb the ladder of the power structure. In this system, persons advanced in their careers by successfully ridding themselves of the more burdensome tasks demanded by the aims of universities. The lower you were in the bureaucracy, the more onerous (powerless) your role. The higher your rank, the less onerous (more powerful) your role. The roles are “powerful” to the extent that they gave access to institutional rewards. The reward system (and its concomitant quantification) offered a set of steps up which persons advanced by promotion. As in corporations, the ladder of success is climbed *via* competition.<sup>9</sup>

As the modern American university emerged during the early professional period, its rationales conflicted and their proponents competed with each other for funds. Graff gives a detailed account of the battles that ensued. Between 1890 and 1910, the period during which university departments first came into being, the staffs of English departments were “split between partisans of culture and devotees of philological research” (Veysey 59, Graff *Professing*, 81ff.). At the same time the university as an institution was successfully marketing itself on the ideology of service. This period witnessed changes in the attitudes of “teachers” of literature. Some teachers, like Francis James Child, left teaching (and its concomitant grading) for research. Others scorned research in favor of acculturating the untutored student population (see Graff’s discussion of “the Generalist Opposition”). For some their

roles as scholars were more meaningful than their roles as teachers. Others regarded research as scientific and hence incompatible with *belles lettres*. Considering the increasing importance of the ideology of service as a selling point to university clientele, the roles required by the complexifying university system were not easily integrated. In sum, the three rationales were competing rationales. The competition was for status and the rewards that marked it.

That the scholar's role had more status and was more institutionally rewarding than the teacher's role was first dramatized by Johns Hopkins' attempts to lure the exemplary researcher, Francis James Child, away from Harvard. When the administration of Harvard countered with the offer that he could pursue his philological interests *and be freed from his rhetoric courses*, the reward succeeded and became standard to this day (see the discussions of Child in Applebee 26–27, Berlin *Rhetoric and Reality*, 22–23, Graff *Professing*, 40–41). Child's career "advance" is an important moment in the history of departmental divisiveness. Child assumed that the creation of a lasting "monument" of definitive scholarship was the literary student's "natural goal" (Franklin 27). He produced in his *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* a work of scholarship that set the standard for his time. Teaching undergraduates, on the other hand, was for him an obstacle to scholarship. Of this time, Graff writes:

It is symptomatic, for example, that [James Rusell] Lowell's friend, Francis James Child, who joined the Harvard faculty in 1851 and was recognized as a far greater scholar than Lowell, was not able to concentrate on teaching literature courses until 1876—and then only after an offer from the new Johns Hopkins University "led to his being wholly relieved at last from the burden of correcting undergraduate compositions." In what may be the first case of an "outside offer" improving an English professor's lot, this incident showed the way professionalization would shape the curriculum. (*Professing*, 40–41)

Child's "career move" is in surprising ways pivotal and deservedly legendary. What has to be underscored is that the American university system was beginning to remodel itself along the lines of the German university on the basis of which Johns Hopkins was founded. Child's career advance had less to do with his philological bent than with the match between philology and the organiza-

tion of university study into departments devoted to single disciplines. This tendency turned out to be so distasteful to literary scholars that it incited a widespread revolt against the methods of philology and pushed literary study in the direction of historical research, which, at the time, was also construed along “scientific” or disciplinary lines. In other words, philology gave way to another “disciplined” research method. Whatever method was to be institutionalized mattered less than whether or not it could be perceived as a discipline.

After Child’s career ended, his presumable “disdain” for teaching in favor of a passion for ballads “few knew” was becoming so acceptable an attitude that, as Graff points out, in 1902 the pedagogy section disappeared from *PMLA* and in 1916 “a clause in the MLA constitution describing the object of the Association as ‘the advancement of the *study* of the Modern Languages and their literatures’ was amended to read, ‘the advancement of *research*’” (*Professing*, 121).<sup>10</sup>

Shortly after the turn of the century, the paucity of Ph.D.’s who could certify new teachers for ever-increasing numbers of students produced a graduate faculty whose role was privileged (Bledstein 277). This development set the role graduate faculty members performed apart from the roles the rest of the staff performed, especially from faculty who taught composition. As I mentioned earlier, the career of Francis James Child has become emblematic of this split since freedom from service courses was his reward for research. The importance of this split cannot be underestimated. Early in this century (1910–11) (Applebee 51), composition faculties split off from the literature faculties and founded their own professional forums—NCTE (National Council of Teachers of English) and 4Cs (Conference on College Composition and Communication). This divorce was institutionalized when composition teachers were evaluated by different salary, promotion, and tenure structures because their departmental roles were authorized by different forums, societies, journals, etc.

### *Scholars Versus Critics (1915–66)*

Increasing specialization differently authorized continued to split the faculties of English departments into antagonistic groups during the period Graff names, “Scholars versus Critics,” which drew to a close around 1965 when I was writing my dissertation. Like

Graff, when I first became a graduate student, I was unaware of the conflicts that separated my professors. It was as though the antagonisms did not exist. But even more hidden were the motives. Many of those conflicts (I realize in retrospect) were provoked by competition for scarce departmental rewards distributed across a broad spectrum of departmental missions. If these antagonisms were brought to my attention by quarrels and bickering among the faculty, I was somehow made to feel that this was an aberration having to do with the quirksome personalities of those involved. Never for a moment did I doubt the career profile that was presented to me as a role model. I was unaware that its apparent coherence masked changes in departmental priorities that reflected changes in the university (and therefore its English department) which reflected changes in society. I believed that the New Criticism I was studying was proffered to me by the faculty for intellectual reasons. I did not perceive this approach to literature in the context of departmental politics. I did not realize that the profile of the ideal student of literature had been changed to match changes in the structure of institutional rewards. I did not realize, for instance, that the role of critic had begun to supplant the role of scholar. I did not know that the market for critics had grown to equal or surpass the market for philologists and literary historians.

During this period the most significant event in the history of literary studies was the rise of New Criticism. This development produced the role of the critic, which forced a redefinition of the scholar. The goal of literary study was redefined during this period, but the roles the teacher had acquired in the periods of rapid expansion, from 1870 to 1910 and from 1945 to 1968, were retained in modified form. New Criticism, which was disseminated during the second period of expansion, was an integrative movement. It sought to consolidate the profile of the literary teacher. This was one of its greatest institutional assets. A New Critic was not only a close reader of literary texts and a person who was attentive to rhetorical techniques but also a scholar.<sup>11</sup>

By midcentury the career profile of the literary teacher was modeled on exemplary New Critics. The model (presented forcefully in a series of textbooks) offered a way of integrating criticism with scholarship, rhetoric, and humanism. As we now know, this turned out to be an illusory form of integration (Graff *Professing*, 122). Three historical circumstances of the 1960s shattered this illusion: the end of university expansion, the importation of liter-

ary theory from Europe on a wide scale, and the student revolution of the early 1970s.

*Post-New Criticism (1965–present)*

The period from 1965 saw an incredibly rapid dissemination of different theoretical stances which produced innumerable new potential roles: the Marxist, the psychoanalyst, the traditionalist, and so on. New Criticism had announced itself in 1938 as a new *Approach to Literature* in Brooks and Warren's popular textbook. In the late 1960s, it was rivaled by other "approaches." Most of these had been on the periphery of literary study for decades. Still, student dissatisfaction coupled with the need for clients led to curricular experiments. In addition, European theorists were made available in translation on a wider scale than ever before. The net result was a proliferation of aims, goals, and methods.

The proliferating theory industry reveals our willingness to accept a trickle-down economy wherein the activities of elite critics become the model for mainstream critics even though the functions required of mainstream university teachers set severe limits on our capacity to match the template of the professor manufactured and promulgated by elite institutions.

## PROFESSORIAL TEMPLATES AND THE QUEST FOR DISCIPLINE

The history of criticism from the 1880s to the 1980s reveals a drive toward a single unified field theory upon which to base "THE" discipline of literary studies. However, as Gerald Graff tells it, the same history reveals that no such theory ever became available. Instead, conflicting approaches to literature emerged. Each approach had its master critics, the persons who exemplified in practice the tenants of the school. If we can say anything about the history of criticism, we can say that it is dominated by the figures of master critics. Still, we can also note that critics who exemplified different schools almost invariably were construed as rivals to each other.<sup>12</sup>

The search for discipline manifests itself as a search for a "leading intellectual" (Paul Bové's phrase) to show us the way out of our factionalism. In the absence of such a leader, critics have had to

contend with a plurality of rival schools of thought whose rivalries have split us into factions both externally and internally. For post-modern critics, the idea that any one person could or should exemplify “the discipline” no longer has any appeal. The notion that Jacques Derrida or Michel Foucault or Jacques Lacan or Jean François Lyotard are professors whose work exemplifies “the discipline” of literary study is laughable. Nonetheless, many critics still believe that there is one such discipline but that its “sublime master” (Bové’s phrase) is a neglected critic or one yet to be found.

The history of our “schooling” suggests not only that no one template can be found but also that the search for one is doomed to failure. Barbara Herrnstein Smith, past president of MLA (Modern Language Association), writes:

I wish to suggest with th[e] term [*scrappiness*] not only that the elements that interact to constitute our motives and behavior are incomplete and heterogeneous, like scraps of things, but also (“scrap” being a slang term for fight) that they are mutually conflicting or at least always potentially at odds. That is, the relations among what we call our “actions,” “knowledge,” “beliefs,” “goals,” and “interests” consist of continuous interactions among various structures, mechanisms, traces, impulses, and tendencies that are not necessarily (“naturally” or otherwise) consistent, coordinated or synchronized and are therefore always *more or less* inconsistent, out of phase, discordant, conflictual. (Barbara Herrnstein Smith, *Contingencies of Value*, 148)

If there is no one discipline which we all practice, then there can be no single template by which we are all judged.

At present literature programs and departments appear to be thoroughly unintegrated and unintegratable. Yet, while on the one hand we have a long history of shifting and conflicting rationales for our functions within the university system, on the other we are expected to meet a set of ideals embodied in a coherent career profile of the literature professor presented to us in our tenure and promotion documents. The professorial template by which we are judged is an idealization of a set of expectations that has no basis in the concrete everyday practices that fill our work time. Hence, we are “professors” in name only, mere tokens.

For me, given our lot as token professionals, the greatest danger to our well-being is cynicism, a cancerous emotion. Working



in an institution which calls itself a university but operates like a business tends to induce cynicism. Trying to be self-reflexive in an institution where doing so makes you vulnerable is the lot of the token professional. Half-jokingly, I describe this state of mind as the condition of *not-being-able-to-be-sufficiently-cynical*. I cannot accommodate the business concerns that govern the institution at the same time that I advocate educational ideals which they contradict. Like many of my colleagues, I teach literary criticism to undergraduates who need to fulfill their humanities requirement. As a result, business and science majors who want a humanities course to fit their schedules often end up in my criticism course. In this situation, I find myself attempting to explain the concepts of Derrida, Foucault, Kristeva, and Cixous to students for whom Cleanth Brooks is far too "abstract." Undaunted, I carefully delineate the main tenets of poststructuralism even though to most of my students structuralism is only what I talked about earlier in the course. I leave my criticism class and walk across the street to teach freshman English. I turn back a paper to a student who has complained in an assignment that affirmative action is unjust to him as a white male seeking employment with a major business firm. I do not try to explain phallogentrism to him. He has trouble with his verb tenses.

The thesis of this work is that institutions promote an orthodoxy that is myopic if not blind. I don't want to suggest that the token professionals whose experience this study configures are the "new proletariat" to whose cause everyone must now rally. We are complicitous. Only we can liberate ourselves from an orthodoxy that supports an intellectual caste system from which we do not benefit. This is not a minor agenda. To carry it out, token professionals need to think in radically different terms. To think in the terms schooled into us is to subject ourselves to our own subjugation. This brings me to the matter of critical schools and their master critics.