

Writing while Black: The Colour Line, Black discourses and assessment in the institutionalization of writing instruction

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ABSTRACT: Student essays for a college-level, department-wide final examination will be scrutinized to represent the ways that students who consciously employ rhetorical and intellectual traditions of Black discourses get penalized according to limited notions of academic writing. A dynamic intersection will be examined to show how this particular group of students are understood and discarded via: 1) the larger arena of race and literacy/education in elementary and secondary settings; 2) the history and institutionalization of freshman composition in college English departments; and 3) the racialised, punitive, anti-literacy nature of institutional writing assessment and programming.

KEYWORDS: Race, African Diaspora, assessment, writing instruction, Black discourses/language.

[T]he intersections, both historical and rhetorical, between literacy and racial justice in America...explain why national literacy initiatives, like standardized testing and school vouchers, are so often promoted as the means toward racial justice, yet few of the initiatives as they are presently conceived are likely to provide that justice...though the literacy these tests promote might be a measurable one, is it also a desirable one? In some cases, these tests seem to encourage what could arguably be called illiteracy rather than literacy.

Prendergast, 2003, pp. 2, 168.

There is the language, the discourse of academe and there are other languages and discourses that are not academic....Despite our occasional intent to suggest otherwise, such habits of distillation have engendered in our field hierarchies of power, privilege, and value, and they have continually reified notions of insider/outsider, centre/margin, us/other, and also notions of good/suspect... Whether by intent or default, we have centralized in our conversation a default view of what can be sanctioned as good writing...

Royster, 2002, pp. 24-25.

INTRODUCTION

This article will illuminate the ways that the continued colour line in higher education and high-stakes testing limit writing instruction in such a way that students' cultural rhetorics and political purposes for composing get prohibited.¹ Student essays for a college-level, Department-wide final examination will be critiqued to represent the ways that students who

¹ In 1903, Du Bois published his first collection of essays, *The Souls of Black Folk*, where he identified "the colour line" as the twentieth century's central problem: a black-white governing divide in which humanity and all its possibilities and multi-ethnic variations would come to be ranked and ruled.

consciously employ rhetorical and intellectual traditions of Black discourses get penalized according to limited notions of academic writing. In this study, school writing is shown to function as one, caricatured form that disrupts the rich potential of African Diasporic discourses and relegates students' critical logos, ethos and pathos as un/non-academic.

The popular cultural adage of "Driving While Black," a phrase that refers to the hyper-criminalization of Black automobile drivers for whom racial harassment by state-sanctioned officials is allowable (Harris, 1999a, 1999b; Kowalski and Lundman, 2007; Meeks, 2000), will be adapted to mirror a punishment paradigm in writing instruction and English Department programming, "Writing While Black."² Thus, a dynamic intersection will be examined to show how a particular group of African Diaspora students' essays are understood and discarded via: 1) the larger arena of the colour line and literacy/education in elementary and secondary settings; 2) the history and institutionalization of freshman composition in college English Departments; and 3) the racialised, punitive, anti-literacy nature of institutional writing assessment and programming.

HISTORY AND INSTITUTIONS: MAPPING A CONTEXT AND POLEMIC FOR WRITING AND SOCIAL ORDER

As a discipline that began as "a remedial enterprise to repair the poor language of students", freshman composition is an important lens into the ongoing cultural and political expectations of who can and should have access to higher education (Fox, 2002, p. 91). Freshman English originated in the Nineteenth Century as "punishment" for Harvard students who had not yet mastered the most prestigious variety of written English that they were expected to produce as Harvard gentlemen (Applebee, 1974; Berlin, 1984; Crowley, 1998.) As such, the course is "thoroughly implicated" in an "oppressive institutional history," "intellectual tradition," and "cultural and academic hierarchy" that no longer maintains its punishment paradigm with Harvard's unwashed but with the large number of students who are working class and working class/of colour in today's post-secondary institutions (Crowley, 1998, p. 235). As Lewiecki-Wilson and Wahrab (2006) have shown, two-year and/or open admissions colleges that get identified with large enrolments of working-class students become scripted as sites where students need technical, remedial, and simplistic communication skills.

Currently, the universal requirement of freshman English finds a home at over 4000 post-secondary institutions in the United States with more than 13 million undergraduate students in attendance. More than a third of these students are at community colleges; with the rest

² "Driving While Black" is a type of word-play on the term, "driving while intoxicated", DWI. This type of word-play, so central to African American rhetorics, is exactly the kind of witty, sarcastic, yet politically sophisticated terms that the students in the study get penalized for. The term, "Driving while Black", a DWB, sharply insinuates that a Black driver can be stopped, searched, and charged by a police officer for trivial or non-existent offenses simply because s/he is Black. DWB, thus, signifies a long history of racism. Related wordplays include: "shopping while Black" (the increased surveillance of Blacks in malls and stores); "walking while Black" (the increased surveillance of Blacks as pedestrians), "learning while Black" (the system of demotivation, de-skilling, and structured inequalities for Black students); "flying/traveling while Black" (the targeting and stereotyping of Black travellers as drug smugglers) (Hale, 2001; Harris, 1999a, 1999b; Kowalski and Lundman, 2007; Meeks, 2000; Mosedale, 2007; Morse, 2002).

attending mostly four-year institutions (as opposed to the large research-intensive and research-extensive, doctoral-granting institutions.) In many of these institutions, students will rarely have a tenure-track or Ph.D-Ed Faculty member teach them freshman English and will instead experience their most essential, introductory college literacy experience at the hands of contingent labour – part-time workers and graduate students with little or no benefits, hardly to non-liveable wages, and no decision-making power within departments and universities.

There is considerable debate within the composition/rhetoric community whether it is feasible or even necessary to staff composition courses with Ph.D.s and tenure-track appointments (Crowley, 1998; Miller 1998, 2001; Sledd, 1996). The perspective of secondary education, however, offers another set of critiques. The predominance of underpaid and/or under-trained educators in secondary schools, particularly as it relates to the multiple literacies of young people of colour, mirrors the structural racism that has organized much of the schooling that working class/working-poor Black and Latino students have received all along. We know from education research that working class/working-poor Black and Latino students are more likely to have instruction delivered to them from the most underpaid, novice and/or uncertified teachers; and, most critically, this kind of structure has had dire consequences on these students' achievement (Darling-Hammond and Bransford, 2006; Darling-Hammond and Baratz-Snowden, 2005; Darling-Hammond and Sykes, 1999; Darling-Hammond, Wise, and Klein, 1999; Darling-Hammond, 1997). One goal of this article is, thus, to marry the kind of “contingent labour” that organizes secondary education for much of working class/poor students of colour in the U.S. to the “contingent labour” that organizes freshman composition in U.S. higher education. “Contingent labour” will be defined, in both camps, as the least experienced and least paid teachers in the system. In the case of higher education, composition instruction at the community colleges and four-year teaching colleges that most students attend seems locked at a hopeless crossroads: the stratified learning that has permeated much of K-12 schooling runs one way; continual stratified learning as part of the introduction to college/literacy runs the other way. What this article, thus, argues is that college students' ethnic rhetorics, multilingualism, and culturally-plural literacies cannot be discussed outside of the institutional contexts and constraints in which labour and college (il)literacy/education get re-organized. The organizational structures of teaching and schooling, like in K-12 spheres, thus, becomes an integral part of the historically-loaded and ongoing structural inequalities maintained via schooling, of which composition studies is not exempt. To put it most bluntly and simply: working/poor Black and Latino students have seen inexperienced and un/der-trained teachers most of their (schooling) lives as part of the structuring of the colour line. To provide these students with yet another batch of inexperienced and un/der-trained teachers in/as freshman English (the gatekeeping course that allows entrance into all other, upper-level humanities and social science courses) dooms them to fail.

While these conversations about composition and labour can be read as central, contemporary issues of literacy, pedagogy, and structured inequalities, composition and labour are also inextricably linked to historical movements in the disciplining of English and framing of its college departments. Crowley has shown that English departments in the United States actually began, not as the locus of/for literary theory, but as writing programs. Intellectual and professional status only came by moving literary study completely away from the

enterprise of teaching writing, thereby, sanctioning and siphoning off the ability to read and interpret the right kind of literature to an elite few. Strickland (2001) has further argued that this historical phenomenon has become a central paradigm for the maintenance of English Studies today, where some English departments (and/or administration of the Humanities) invest their financial and intellectual resources in literary education and use management science to organize writing programs where contingent labour teach the most students for the least amount of money. Thus, on the one hand, English departments organize the use of cheap labour for the supra-income-generating composition course/product (given how many students take these courses, often many times, in comparison to how much their instructors earn); and on the other hand, they re-encode the elite, high-brow gate-keeping of (literary) discourses and language by removing freshman English teachers and their students. This is not to say that all English departments do this across the board, in the same way, or that English departments are the supra-exploit-seeking Enron of the academy. The hyper-economic imperative of organizing cheap labour in higher education hits across all departments and schools in the context of the academy as a new, “destabilized” but rapidly-growing market: more than half of all new full-time appointments are in tenure-ineligible positions with 67% of these faculty not having doctoral degrees; part-time appointments account for more than 40% of college faculty (65% of all recent hires) with 80% of these part-time faculty not having doctoral degrees (Finkelstein and Schuster, 2006; Gappa, Austin, and Trice, 2007). The point here is that these hiring, market-driven practices serve a larger, ideological function for the disciplines: in the case of English studies, this ideological function intersects directly with freshman English. Thus, when higher education works as a capitalist market (Slaughter and Rhoades, 2004), writing program administration can often consist of making and managing placement exams, exit exams, workshops and continual re-staffing (because of high turn-over), and not focus on thinking through issues such as the performance/education of students of colour, critical literacy, critical pedagogy, or union organizing (Huot, 2002). These political economies, thus, script how English departments are often organized and, as such, as this article attempts to show, also script what Black students will be able to write and, therefore, who they are allowed to be/come as college writers/thinkers.

This contemporary management schema must also be seen as nested with hyper-testing initiatives in K-12 schools that have increased external control of schools and classrooms with detrimental effects on the drop-out rates and struggles of working class students and students of colour (Groves, 2002; Madaus and Clarke, 2001; Nichols and Berliner, 2007). The most economically-struggling schools and their students have witnessed a “narrowing” of curricular content solely to the topics covered in tests, an “increased fragmentation” of knowledge into small bits and pieces of testable items, and the propensity for teachers to use more lecture-based, teacher-controlled pedagogies (Au, 2007, p. 264). In relation to writing, Hillocks (2002) has shown how major writing assessment measures in states like Texas, Illinois, New York, Oregon, and Kentucky have promoted a technical, mechanical, five-paragraph essay form to which teachers have adopted their literacy pedagogies. Thus, as Prendergast (2003) has argued in linking literacy education and racial justice after *Brown v. Board of education*, these tests encourage illiteracy rather than literacy, all the while proclaiming accountability and equity. Although English studies and composition scholarship may not be currently accustomed to linking its writing assessment and management protocols with K-12 testing and schooling, particularly those examinations that exist at the individual

departmental levels, the connections between management structures, curricular control, teacher labour and payment, and structured inequalities show these measures to be part of an ideological continuum in the way that (literacy) education and our social order are organized.

A DEPARTMENT AND ITS EXAM: LOCAL CONTEXT AND LOCAL TEST AS NATIONAL DILEMMA

First-year students in the author's freshman English course at a small, public, urban university in the North-Eastern United States that serves a student body primarily of African descent will be the focus. Student essays written for a high-stakes writing exam at the end of a first-year writing course will be examined. Three student essays will be used to represent one of three overall grading categories: failing (grades of D and below), satisfactory (grades of B- to C), and high-pass (grades of B+ to A).

Freshman English at this university is organized via two, required semesters that must be passed with a grade of C or better to enter into any of the college's 100-level courses. The first course focuses on essay writing where students must write 6-8 essays over the course of a semester (an essay every two weeks with an emphasis on in-class essay writing) in alignment with a department-wide textbook and grammar handbook. The second course focuses on the "research paper" where students must write two "research papers", one using APA style and the other using MLA style (see Kynard, 2005). The articulation and emphasis of these requirements varied with the personality of the composition director, three different directors in the course of five years (none with a background in literacy and/or composition studies). The institutional understanding of essay writing is most closely aligned with current traditionalism: the five-paragraph essay comprised of a thesis, three supporting claims, and conclusion.

Students must pass an exit writing exam in both semesters in order to pass the course. The exam is based on a timed essay that students must write in response to two texts that they have been given approximately two weeks to read. It is a communal exam, where all students must sit for two hours to complete a short grammar test and write an edited, final essay based on a prompt designed by the Department (they can take their texts and a dictionary with them.) The writing evaluation scale used to score the essay consists of four areas: content, organization, reading comprehension and documentation, and language conventions and correctness (with no further elaboration). A minimum grade of C must be received in all areas to pass the exam. One other composition instructor in the Department must grade a student's essays alongside the student's assigned teacher. Any student receiving a grade below a C from both graders must repeat the course. If a student fails, s/he can turn in a folder of writing that they have done for the semester and a tenure-track professor in the Department will decide if the collection of essays is good enough for the student to pass the semester. It is at the discretion of each composition instructor to determine the percentage and weight of the final exam in the student's semester grade. Part of the rationale of the Department for this exam is that it will give students practice in passing the junior writing exam that all students in this city university system must take in order to be allowed to matriculate into their third year of college. During the administration of the exam in focus here, the author was the only composition instructor (a non-tenure track position at

36,000K/year) with extensive literacy training and a background in the study of composition and rhetoric. Approximately, half of the tenure-track literature and creative writing faculty taught one or two sections (because there are not enough English majors for them to teach only their preferred “content” courses) but the bulk of the teaching of the Department’s two required composition courses – courses with the Department’s highest enrolments – was relegated to adjunct labour. As is the case in many universities across the country, the English Department would simply not exist without the first-year composition course.

At the time of the exam that is the focus of this study, spring 2003, the United States was contemplating a war on Iraq and so students were assigned one text by an Indian writer, Amitav Ghosh, about war and imperialism using Indian colonialism as an example. The second text was the now canonical piece on anti-imperialism for freshman composition anthologies, George Orwell’s “Shooting An Elephant”. Students were directed to write an essay in response to one of the following two prompts that they were provided on exam day:

1. In his essay, George Orwell states that at the time of the events he describes, he “could get nothing into perspective”. Summarize how the experience of shooting the elephant changes the narrator’s perspective about imperial power. Apply this understanding to Amitav Ghosh’s discussion of current events. Be sure to summarize enough of Ghosh’s essay to give the necessary context for your discussion. Drawing on your own knowledge or experience, evaluate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the authors’ views of imperial power.
2. Summarize Amitav Ghosh’s argument about the “new American empire”. Make a connection between Ghosh’s ideas about the current situation and the view of empire presented in Orwell’s essay, “Shooting an Elephant”. Be sure to summarize enough of Orwell’s essay to give the necessary context for your discussion. Draw on your knowledge of these and other readings and your views of imperialism to make an argument about the American presence in Iraq and its potential effects on Iraqis and Americans alike.

Extensive space has been used here to provide the actual wording of the two prompts that students were given, because the interesting nature of what students were being asked to do did not transfer into what was actually allowed for them. In its most basic form, the prompt asks students to summarize and show an in-depth understanding of the texts they were asked to read, define and defend their positions on imperialism, and infuse their own personal reference points. However, the institutional ideology of freshman English, regardless of the test’s actual sophisticated and politically radical task, prohibited the majority of individual teachers from rewarding students for accomplishing *exactly* what the prompt asked of them and the Department from organizing a writing pedagogy and assessment that matched the task of the exam. In this exam, students were expected to discuss Ghosh and Orwell in a compare-and-contrast mode, with both men representing equally anti-colonial/anti-imperial stances and, thereby, argue for or against the two authors with reference to the current war in Iraq. Thus, the texts of Freshman English are already read and written for students in the most simplistic terms.

“Institution Freshman English” (IFE), not First-Year Writing (FYW)

This study examines the writings of the students in only one class: one student who failed the exam, one student who scored a satisfactory (C+), and one student who received a high-pass (A-). Although the scope is limited, the grading trends for the one class in focus could be

seen replicated across the Department insomuch as the grades that the author's students received matched the Department's norming procedures and dominant approach to writing pedagogy. Students who used a summary-driven, five-paragraph formula for their writing were most privileged on this essay exam with the range of "high pass" scores (A to B+) correlating with grammatical correctness and handwriting neatness (6 students). Students whose writing was a type of hybrid between what might be regarded as more traditional modes of academic discourse and their own cultural rhetorics (15 students) scored in the range of "satisfactory" (B- to C).

Those students who most overtly manipulated Black discourses and personal essays to construct the ethos and rhetorical styles of their writing were penalized and received a failing score (8 students). In these failing essays, students expressed, to varying degrees, a mistrust of Orwell and cast his criticism of imperialism as important but absolutely locked in whiteness. Those who expressed this sentiment most forthrightly (2 students) received the lowest grades on the exam. For the sake of full disclosure, the author used the final exam of the course as one of four project grades, most often disregarding the grade suggested by the other grader. In the case of the eight students who failed, the author sought out numerous other graders to re-grade the exam as third readers in order to obtain a passing score for the students, rather than have students face the burden of creating portfolios for the tenure-track faculty. In the end, none of the eight students failed the course and, in fact, one of the eight students received an A for the entire course based on the body of thought and writing that he produced over the entire semester. This kind of subversive activity against the testing/grading regime of the Department was certainly possible. The human resources, time, and care required to maintain surveillance of writing instructors more fully were never enacted, thus, creating many opportunities for sabotage.³ However, only a few of the instructors could be said to have engaged such subversive activity.

A discussion of student writing for each of the previously defined three categories will be provided, based on a single student that will represent the collective of student essays; an appendix is also included that provides one, full written essay sample of each category. For the purpose of this essay, the term, Institution Freshman English (IFE), as coined by Crowley (1998), will be used to describe the course and its political impact on students and English Studies. IFE is not a common term used to describe first-year writing (FYW) courses and many might argue that the borrowing of Crowley's term is outdated. While it is certainly true that the field of composition/rhetoric studies does not endorse the kind of punitive assessment measures, prescriptive writing instruction, and exploitative labour practices of the program described in this article,⁴ this program is more common than the spaces that compositionists

³ In the interest of full disclosure, students in the instructor's course were also taught to edit their essay exams very specifically and closely for sentence fragments, run-on sentences, comma splices, and subject-verb agreement since these issues were stigmatized to such an extreme by instructors in the department that essays would be deemed automatically incomprehensible and automatically fail. The content of the course, number of essay assignments, and required textbooks were also never followed by the instructor, an issue explained upfront to students so that they could choose to enroll in another section if they felt disadvantaged by the author's pedagogy.

⁴ The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) has fought tirelessly to challenge and end such practices, as evidenced by the wide array of positions and policy statements that have been promulgated by the Council (Position statement on the preparation and professional development of teachers of writing, 1982;

theorize about. Thus, Crowley's coinage is a more apt description than the more idealistic term, FYW. Furthermore, the term, IFE, suggests that the necessary changes that must mark these first-year classrooms is an ideological issue endemic to the construction of our disciplines in the context of a specific social order that the disciplines maintain rather than merely a pragmatic issue of progressive pedagogies, research-based writing instructional methods, effective writing program administration, or professional policy/position statement-making.

The Classroom and its discourse: Pan-African rhetorics of dissent for writing the wor(l)d

The prompts for the final exam unequivocally ask students to take a position on imperialism and/or war in Iraq and the students who are the focus of this study were never without comment on both issues. In fact, there was no student in the class who supported the war in Iraq. When the author conducted a secret ballot to flush out students who might actually support the war but felt too outnumbered in the class to express disagreement, no secret ballot came back in support of the war. One ballot even read: "Stop trippin Carmen. You know we not down with this war in Iraq!" The point of contention for students was not whether America was an imperialist power in the Middle East but whether George Orwell had any valuable insights to contribute to the issue. In the context of a classroom which represented the entire African Diaspora and had spent a semester reading works by authors such as Frantz Fanon, N'gugi, Merle Hodge, Edwidge Danticat, and Erol Hill, the usual reverence in composition/rhetoric studies that is reserved for Orwell's rhetorics on colonialism was simply not forthcoming. The most serious tensions in the classroom were aroused by Orwell's following, highly-quoted argument:

And it was at this moment, as I stood there with the rifle in my hands, that I first grasped the hollowness, the futility of the white man's dominion in the East. Here was I, the white man with his gun, standing in front of the unarmed native crowd – seemingly the leading actor of the piece; but in reality I was only an absurd puppet pushed to and fro by the will of those yellow faces behind. I perceived in this moment that when the white man turns tyrant it is in his own freedom that he destroys. He becomes a sort of hollow, posing dummy, the conventionalized figure of a sahib. For it is the condition of his rule that he shall spend his life in trying to impress the "natives" and so in every crisis he has got to do what the "natives" expect of him. He wears a mask, and his face grows to fit it...he has got to appear resolute, to know his own mind and do definite things....The crowd would laugh at me. And my whole life, every white man's life in the East, was one long struggle not to be laughed at (1936, par. 7).

While students certainly imagined that Orwell's discourse would be very controversial in the context of the British elite and government of its time, it did not energize their historical understandings of opposition to imperialism and European global domination in the way that Aimé Césaire and Jean-Paul Sartre had. Many students offered rich insights into where Orwell and Sartre converged and diverged, but a few of them were angered that they needed to discuss Orwell.

Teaching composition: A position statement, 1985; Guidelines for the ethical treatment of students and student writing in composition studies, 2000; NCTE position on writing assessment.)

On the day after the two texts for the final exam were distributed to students, Akua⁵, a young Jamaican woman, appeared to be absent. This was strange because she had emailed the day before to say she really wanted to talk about Orwell. When Akua finally did come to class, she was very hurried and had her two-year-old son with her; by this point in the year, the class knew that this meant her babysitter had stood her up again. Akua got her son situated in a chair and began to listen to a heated exchange that seemed to enliven the classroom. Akua entered the discussion by telling the class that she just couldn't get with this "I am a victim too" stuff that Orwell was running. Maybe his rhetoric worked for his fellow white British countrymen, who she said must have been his audience, because his arguments did not move her as a descendant of the colonized, not the colonizer. Some of the students thought that was too harsh and so Akua continued to lead the debate, while her two-year-old son began clapping and dancing delightfully in his seat, matching his mother's animation. In the best approximation, Akua said something like this to the class:

Imagine this. I ain't Akua right now. I am a white police officer. As a matter of fact, I am the white police officer who shot Hamidou Diallo 41 times in the back. And you are Diallo's mother. Now, hear dis: this a racist world. It has trained me to see your son as an animal so I am sorry for what I did. But please understand that I am just a victim here too. I just wearing a mask, cuz I been turned into a tyrant (she states this mockingly since these are Orwell's actual words, then she pauses, and raises her voice). Then she pauses, and raises her voice. You down with that? How am I the victim-puppet when my son is safe at home and your son is dead? Ain't that what Orwell is saying? We gon praise him for that? We gon call him radical for that?

The class was on fire at this point. The author had to continually interject, mostly so that the quieter Damita could get her ideas in because she had a very soft voice that could sometimes almost melt away when discussions got hot and spicy. Meanwhile, Akua's son seemed to be watching me more than his mother at this point as he began repeatedly telling the class (as best as he could pronounce): "Let Damita talk!" These kinds of pleas that students are making for a collective, radical Black consciousness might be more aptly called "Pan-African rhetorics" that function as their own unique content and style (Kynard, 2007). These Pan-African rhetorics would also shape what, how, and why students approached the writing for the final exam.

This context is very important here because this polemic surrounding Orwell's success in rhetorically undermining British colonialism is what DeShaun, a young African American man/"HipHoppa", and the student essayists who fell into the failing category presented in their essays. For many of these students, Orwell's politics simply would not be received as the kind of radical, anti-colonial subjectivity that could counter U.S. imperialism in Iraq. Even though some of these students were outrightly and wholly dismissive of Orwell, their central question remains worth asking: namely, how and why Orwell could come to represent the one and only anti-colonial text ever given institutional sanction by way of the departmental exam at a college that is predominantly African and Afro-Caribbean, with students who were the direct descendants of the colonized as their immediate parents and grandparents would have all been educated under French and British rule. Mejia (2005)

⁵ All student names have been changed. When students' ethnic backgrounds are named, the coinage refers to the words that students actually use to describe themselves.

remains one of few voices in the composition/rhetoric community who has asked this same question, interrogating the gaze and canonization of this text's dominance in freshman composition anthologies from the perspective of Latino/a immigrant and migrant students.

In the case of the exam, when students failed to provide the "correct", institutionally sanctioned reading of Orwell's radicality, they were simply regarded as unskilled readers, and, as in the case of DeShaun, whose Black nationalist discourses were consciously deployed to question both Orwell and U.S. involvement in Iraq, student language was evoked as non-academic. The oppressive history of IFE has cast these students and their identifications as outside the realm of logical and political-rhetorically successful treatises against European imperialism. Neither non-dominant languages or their subsequent argument and positionalities are allowable. There is no possibility here for even the larger scholarly discussions that have continually questioned the accepted status of Orwell as Socialist and radical in the context of his contributions to the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF), an organization funded by the CIA that worked tirelessly to legitimize anticommunism among educated Americans, especially lawyers and judges, helping usher in an era where courts routinely imposed diminished status and legal rights under the Constitution to anyone suspected of Communist leanings (Wiecek, 2001). This result, to which Orwell was connected, would be strongly felt by scholars of African descent who these students are heirs of: Paul Robeson, Claudia Jones, and W. E. B. DuBois. There is also no possibility for students to enter larger non-New-Critic-centric discussions that have continually interrogated the role that literature has played in shaping the British vision of India and the simultaneous role that India has played in shaping a British conception of literature (Booker, 1997).

During very animated conversations about Orwell's politics on colonialism, one student, Jamiyla, a young African Muslim woman who also calls herself Black American, issued a very different argument. Jamiyla received the highest external grade of anyone in the class and will represent the high-pass range of essays (grades A to B+). Jamiyla's advice to the class was to simply go into the exam and not think: just write the summaries and comparisons and "be outty", to use her words! In fact, when the students were in uproar with what will be hereafter called "The Akua Argument", Jamiyla literally covered her ears, rocked back and forth, hummed loudly, and sang a tune: "I'm not listening, I'm not listening." During the discussion, there were intervals of laughter from other students about Jamiyla's song and body language (particularly following the author's interjections of: "Look, Yall, Jamiyla done gone AWOL!"). She insisted during the three, 80-minute class periods that it was not good to have serious conversations about the assigned texts because such dialogues would make students think too much and that was a bad thing for a writing test.

LaDonna, a Jamaican woman in her early twenties who also calls herself Afrikan, and the students in the satisfactory category were divided in their responses to "The Akua Argument." Some thought this argument took it too far, but mostly, these students found Orwell inconsequential to a contemporary discussion of imperialism and resistance; their discussion of him was just another necessary evil in the schema of education. They summarized Orwell and spent most of their intellectual energy on Ghosh's text. These students often substituted a different task in their writing from the IFE requirement: they followed the prompt's demand for a summary and compare/contrast mode, but they used

their writing to make connections to and garner insights from other texts that they had read (the theme of the semester, in connection with the university's semester-long of celebration of Black music launched during Black History Month observances, was an investigation of African Diaspora spheres and the ways and reasons that the aesthetic cultures challenged and rewrote dominant paradigms). Those students whose papers were most traditionally organized and grammatically correct scored the highest in this category of essays, of which Ladonna's work will serve as the representative (she received a B-).

Perhaps Akua's son, literally sitting at his mother's side (and quite actively and energetically participating in the classroom discussion even though we could not always understand his words), symbolizes most critically the context of knowledge in this Pan-African setting. With him, we see the ongoing spaces in which Pan-African discourses of dissent and re-imagination proliferate: in this case, quite literally, at his mother's side, a self-proclaimed, born-again Garveyite, part of her family's traditions. The point is that the political stances that students are expressing are not accidental philosophies that come from nowhere but instead are deep-rooted discourses that have been shaped in the socio-political contexts of their lives. Ironically, or perhaps expectedly, IFE, as represented by the departmental exam, cannot grant the historicity of these discourses and counter-knowledges.

Mind closed, ears plugged: Jamiyla's hustle of the institution's writing/exam

Jamiyla's essay (Appendix A) is very different from her peers in how absolutely clean it is, like clean-machine, type-writer-ish handwriting. There were also very few scratch-outs and the essay was shorter than the rest of the class. Another piece of the hidden curriculum in IFE would then seem to be the cleanliness of the blue test book that is presented to the exploited labour who must toil through grading sessions. Jamiyla's essay has an introduction, a paragraph summary about Orwell, two paragraph summaries about Ghosh, and a final conclusion that connects the two texts. Consequently, the grader thought that her paper had clear paragraphs and that her "excellent summary" was "refreshing."

Clearly, Jamiyla crafted a strategy and purpose for her writing of this exam that can be regarded as oppositional and resistant. She went in with a plan to reproduce the required essay and did so, but did not equate it with thinking. In her opening paragraph, she provides a one-sentence description of each essay after making two general statements in relation to the prompt. She then states the similarity between the two texts as the task and thesis of her essay: "Although Ghosh is Indian and Orwell is British, they both share the same belief that imperialism is bad for both the imperialist and the people." One paragraph is used to summarize Orwell's narrative, a summary that could be readily found on the seemingly thousands of websites devoted to exactly the same enterprise around this canonical text. Meanwhile, the two paragraphs that summarize the essay by Ghosh consist of many of Ghosh's actual wordings that are simply lifted (without quotation marks and citation information) and placed into the summary. Jamiyla is also sure to employ one quotation, presumably for the purpose of showing the grader that she has mastered this skill.

In her final paragraph, Jamiyla links imperialism, war, and racism, signifying here on the class conversations about a song and lyrics that were discussed at length in relation to war in Iraq: Bob Marley's "War". Jamiyla, however, is careful never to name this artist or quote

the lyrics. She has figured out that, although the prompt asks her to discuss other texts that she has read, which she is more than capable of doing, she knows she will be penalized for doing so, especially if that text is a song by Marley. She ends her essay by casting the colonial subject as helpless – without resources and strength to fight back, as if to garner bourgeois liberal sympathy, an accurate description of the faculty teaching IFE. She then ends this essay with the more general terms of power and control rather than the arguments about evil and racism with which she began.

Jamiyla's summarizing and simplistic approach, however, offer political arguments that cast Indians and, thereby colonized British subjects, as passive. As she states in her third paragraph: "Many Indians were hypnotized by the nihilistic ideas and methods which were so extreme it caused a separation between the Indians." Her positions are, in fact, antithetical to what both Ghosh and Orwell are arguing, but nowhere is there a complex discussion of how and why she is presenting a competing perspective. And nowhere is she penalized for this because simplistic or not, she has presented a grammatically correct formula. In fact, not thinking and plugging her ears means she does not present a nuanced reading of the text or her own opinion and IFE, as this case shows, does not require it. After all, Jamiyla's strategy gets her the highest grade of anyone else in the course: A-. If the testing situation were, instead, the language and composition exam for Advanced Placement high school sophomores and juniors, Jamiyla's essay would not even score in the passing/adequate range (scores of 6 and above), because her essay is solely source-driven rather than a synthesis of sources around her own position.⁶ It is ironic then that the writing task and scoring rubric for elite high school students gets inverted when the subjects are working-class, college students of African descent: where elite high school students are rewarded for positioning their opinion as most central to their writing, working class college writers of colour must simply focus on summarizing other writers in grammatically correct prose.

"Never fully demoralise": LaDonna's negotiation of the institution's writing/exam

LaDonna's opening paragraph (Appendix B) looks very much like Jamiyla's. In fact, they are making almost the same argument: the standard point of view that the test is looking for. In her opening paragraph, LaDonna briefly names both required texts and gives the comparison the institution is looking for: "Irregardless of status, oppressor or oppressed, imperialism is designed to harm all parties involved."

The second paragraph provides a necessary summary of both required texts for the departmental exam by connecting descriptions of imperialism in both texts. However, the essay turns at this point as LaDonna seems to have completed the institutional cycle. She brings in her own previous knowledge about Hiroshima that she uses to offer another description of U.S. imperialism. The purpose of this description of Hiroshima as imperialist conquest seems to rest on finding a political definition of the war in Iraq as America's new Hiroshima, not Britain's Burma.

LaDonna opens the third paragraph with a seemingly obligatory nod back to her previous Hiroshima reference and then quickly directs her paragraph to the topic she is most interested

⁶ To see such scoring guidelines, go to:

http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/ap/english_lang/samp.html?englang

in: *psychosocial violence*. She brings in her own viewpoint and identification by incorporating the work of Caribbean scholar, Erol Hill, whose thinking was central to her semester's research project on music as an anti-colonial revolutionary aesthetic for the English-speaking Caribbean. She closes the paragraph with Ghosh and uses him, not as a point of connection to Orwell, but as a point of connection to Caribbean thinkers and history.

Like what she argued in her research paper, LaDonna continues to stress that colonial subjects are never passive, weak, or subordinate, "never fully demoralize[d]", as she says in her opening to her fourth paragraph. She uses the perspective of the colonized subject to locate Britain's immoral, social and political corruption, and not the perspective of those privileged by/of the Empire. The consequences for the British, even after military conquest, is a renewed, "even more potent form of anti-imperialism" among the colonized. In this case, she includes Ghosh's arguments that after military conquest, colonial subjects used the British's own Parliament and the Constitution to counter their imperialist ventures.

LaDonna's essay turns from legislative revolution to aesthetic revolution, what she calls "aesthetic warfare," with Archie Lindo of Jamaica as her example. Here again, she is using Caribbean anti-colonial struggles to connect to Ghosh and the notion of imperialism. There is an extensive quote from Errol Hill in this paragraph (it is the second quotation from him that she uses) so that "aesthetic warfare" can function as a metaphor and heuristic for her exam essay. Students are allowed to bring the exam readings with them to test and fully annotate the margins of the readings and highlight pertinent sections. LaDonna annotated her text with quotes from Hill (and a quote about Hiroshima), planning all along to write her own essay along with a little of the institution's required content. This series of positions on colonialism are a deliberate kind of narrative sequencing for LaDonna: meandering stories (also called narrative interspersion) that are provided alongside a main theme (Richardson, 2003, p. 136).

The two final paragraphs bring back the institution's interpretive requirement of marking Orwell and Ghosh's arguments as similar. However, LaDonna does this with a new poetic/metaphoric flare by interjecting phrases like: "a sign that the beast of the British Empire would soon fall", and "like a criminal who has no friend to trust". More rhythmic expressions can also be found in these final paragraphs such as: "As long as there is tyranny, there will be resistance." She ends the piece with an indirect nod to Malcolm X to reference how she believes we must approach the dismantling of imperialism: "by any means necessary". These textual changes in the final paragraphs become part of LaDonna's new tonal semantics: the sounds of things that get captured through repetition, alliteration and rhyme in writing, while talk-singing and stresses are captured in speech (Redd & Webb, 2005, p. 45; Richardson, 2003, p. 138; Morgan, 2002, p. 55). It as if she has decided to incorporate a more poetic genre as a strategy to personalize and recodify the rhetorical requirement of the depersonalized, supra-objective summarization. Orwell, up to this point in the essay, is not a seminal component of her main arguments about psychosocial violence and the various mechanisms by which colonial subjects subvert domination. Orwell is sometimes superfluous to her discussion, because after all, she has only included him because she *has* to: the institution marks him as *the* discourse of anti-colonialism. When she does discuss Orwell, she uses figurative language to mark her sentiment on colonialism. However, instead of understanding LaDonna's narrative sequencing and tonal semantics as

“strategically style shifting to make a point” (Redd and Webb, 2005, p. 49), her text was read as illogical.

LaDonna’s essay does not deploy generic tropes and modes of argumentation inherent to comparison, contrast and summarization, and is certainly located in a very specific discourse on colonialism, which does not seem to be recognizable as a viable component of IFE. Her essay received the institutional grade of C, a score for the exam that means “just passing”. Her writing was evaluated as too unorganized in contrast to Jamiyla’s essay, which was marked as “clear and concise”. LaDonna, however, did pass because her writing was deemed grammatically correct enough to absolve her from needing to repeat the course. While it might be fairly argued that LaDonna’s essay needs more work, it is clear that if she had *more than 90 minutes*, she could engage an even more rigorous discussion of the links between colonialism’s “psychosocial violence” in India and the Caribbean, the “natives” counter-cultural aesthetic revolutions, and the historical implications of imperialism and war in Iraq.

LaDonna’s essay has continually sparked the most controversy among other college faculty across a wide variety of institutions. With the exception of those who are engrossed in post-colonial studies and/or know the history of colonialism in the Caribbean, many have complained that they simply cannot understand her arguments. Without the necessary background, the connections that LaDonna makes between Black aesthetics as counter-knowledge in the context of colonialism are totally missed. And yet, there have been very few willing to concede that her arguments require background knowledge on Caribbean colonialism, a topic obviously void in IFE when Orwell provides the canonised text which can be comfortably read from the gaze of liberal whiteness and mainstream literary theory. Thus, LaDonna gets marked as outside of the parameters of a discourse on colonialism but her essay proves that she is highly aware of and is operating under a sophisticated Black-Caribbean anti-colonial politics.

LaDonna’s politics and praxis in these institutional tests are similar to Jamiyla, yet LaDonna is more intent on finding intellectual value in a task that would otherwise be a dummy exercise. It is clear that she is pushing herself to do some original thinking; it is the confines of the test and the institution that inhibit her, not her writing ability. What LaDonna *can* do is more sophisticated than what is actually allowed for/of her as she is clearly a maker of an African Diaspora system of knowledge. She is not a “beginning” writer, an *a/il*-literate student, or a low-level writing “apprentice”, though school-based literacy seems to treat her in these ways.

“Publicly speak the truth:” DeShaun’s rupture of the institution’s writing/exam

DeShaun has largely propelled this investigation, as he articulated most directly his conscious use of writing in IFE for his own political purposes. After the semester ended, he mailed a thank you letter to the author stating the following: “I really appreciated the privilege of being able to express what I really felt.... [it has been] one of the few places that gives you the freedom to publicly speak the truth....” In this letter, DeShaun clearly marks his body of essays for the semester as Black public documents where each of his writings was intended to enact a counter-position and enter the public sphere (The Black Public Sphere Collective, 1995). Unlike LaDonna, DeShaun does not use a body of scholarship to unfold his opinions.

He, like his classmates in the failing category, takes on the writing task for the exam as a personal endeavour and unflinchingly offers his own individual, controversial perspectives. And while DeShaun does not directly offer details of his personal life story like the other students in this category, his essay will represent the final category of this study. For instance, students like Malika, a young Guyanese woman who also failed the exam, opened her essay like this:

As an African-Guyanese, I migrated to this country to achieve certain goals that could not be met in my country. I have always heard about the good things that America did and how wealthy the country was. But it always bothered me why America could not help us Third World countries to develop, now I know why. America does not want any other economic system equal to or greater in wealth than its own. Our dollar at present is \$200.00 to one US dollar. In Guyana, we pay for education from kindergarten to the university; before, education was free. This is another invention of the US making sure that my country does not develop any further than it has. My country has enough natural resources that can be used to support the country and its populations. But America suppresses any economic development in such a country and installs measures that allow that country to survive only with whatever resources America provides for them....The government filled their pockets and the country was always in debt to the International Monetary Funds (IMF), a way for the US to further keep progressives of the Third World down. If you look at the welfare system and the housing projects here, they are very similar. And now what is life going to be like for the Iraqis under an American and British rule?

Though DeShaun does not offer a personal narrative such as Malika, DeShaun's essay (Appendix C) will represent the same category because his construct of "publicly speak[ing] the truth" is the cultural ethos to which this category of students directed themselves and their writing.

Unsure of whom his audience would be, but sure that s/he might be hostile, DeShaun knew he could not assume that his audience would be anti-war or supportive of his Black Nationalist politics. The first four words of his essay constituted the only time in the semester that he wrote out the words "United States of America" with a C (he usually substitutes the C with three K's, as in A-M-E-R-I-K-K-K-A). Thus, he understands the IFE audience as being very different from his peers of African descent, his previous audience who always read the documents he produced in the writing course.⁷ In his first paragraph, DeShaun loads each sentence with a sarcastic listing of false beliefs that many Americans believe about domestic democracy. He uses a type of feigned, pseudo-agreement that turns abruptly into opposition in order to create a rhetorical bridge. He ends the paragraph with what the reader can take to be a thesis statement, thus, appeasing this audience who he knows make this a central part of an introduction:

Both texts, "The Anglophone Empire" by Amitav Ghosh and "Shooting an Elephant" by George Orwell, reveal the kind of damage that has been done to the world through colonialism and imperialism, a process that the United States is continuing with both innocent Iraqis and Americans alike.

⁷ The author's policy was that each, final, and finished piece of writing that a student produced was shared publicly--- either via online format or in-class read-alouds, thereby, stressing that the audience of real writing is never simply a teacher-grader.

However, DeShaun makes a critical decision. He no longer locates imperialism and colonialism as destructive for only Iraqis and Black people, as he had done in his public comments for his fellow classmates. He is inviting all Americans to see themselves as oppressed, just in case they will not be able to sympathize with only the Black and Indian plight. According to the grader, however, DeShaun's introduction is very weak, presumably because it focuses exclusively on the war in Iraq and imperialism, which, ironically, according to the prompt can and should be the focus of student essays.

In his second paragraph, DeShaun begins by positioning Ghosh, an Indian, as an ally. He ends the paragraph by referring to "many Americans" who have other "problems" that they would like to see resolved. He doesn't introduce the problems or which "many Americans" he is referring to until he enters the next paragraph. So far, he is only citing Ghosh but he is hinting that he is going somewhere else after this in order to locate American opposition. It is in the next paragraph that he lists the issues that are most pressing for America:

These issues include racial profiling, immigrant harrasment, police brutalities, sexually transmitted diseases, tuition increases, mass layoffs, and the environmental problems of pollution.

Although this listing is a bit atypical from what he frequently does (his tends to be much, much longer), DeShaun is still adopting this device as a marker of his usual style of rhythm patterning and political evidencing. Where LaDonna uses rhythmic metaphors to create tonal semantics, DeShaun does this through listing. His listing is a type of borrowing from Martin Luther King's "Letter to a Birmingham Jail" (a text which DeShaun has studied and knows verbatim), where MLK lists all of the reasons "why we can't wait" in a seemingly endless sentence to rhetorically capture the endless injustices African Americans have faced. Though DeShaun writes these kinds of rhythmic lists frequently in his essays, he does not press his luck too much with this style in the exam and instead, creates a shorter list that is not strictly focused on African-Americans or race polemics. Since he seems to believe he might not get consensus on contemporary racial issues, he includes a reference to Hiroshima, similar to the quote that LaDonna included.

DeShaun then layers in a series of questions in a direct address to the audience that question "false beliefs" about the necessity of a war in Iraq, all the result of imperialism's brainwashing. Thus, Americans who support the war are the immoral colonizers, the George Orwells. He consciously manipulates direct address and a conversational tone with the audience in this third paragraph's discursive turn, a distinctive black discursive style that has been related to call-response and field dependent strategies, where writers become directly involved with their topics and seem to be speaking directly to the audience, almost as if waiting for a response, rather than using the traditional academic/school conventions of distance and third-person pronouns (Redd & Webb, 2005, p. 43; Richardson, 2003, p. 155-56). There is also a distinct, verbal aggression in his writing here that gets read as confrontational, non-analytical, and, therefore, not objective and distanced enough for academic/school writing (Redd and Webb, 2005, p. 45). These style-shifts are not accidental for DeShaun; nor are they the result of a misunderstanding about the discursive requirements of "academic discourse". He has outrightly rejected the five-paragraph theme and is, instead, discursively entrenched in convincing an audience that war is wrong and that racism here and war over there are the same. Furthermore, his writing physically looks like he is combining

and connecting ideas and arguments amidst a rather flamboyant and stylistic handwriting, reminiscent of a graffiti artist. There are also large chunks of text that Deshaun has crossed out as well as many arrows where he has decided to show how he wants to move chunks of writing to other places in his text. He has literally destroyed the cleanliness of the blue test book and given more work to the exploited labourer who has to follow all of these arrows and cross-outs. The management model of this exam is, thus, more of a mis-management model since there is very little chance that such writing exams will ever be organized with the resources of computerized writing sessions that would be more responsive to this generation's writing mode (there are simply not enough computers on the entire campus ---or money to get them--- to match any given semester's enrollment in freshman English). Every aspect of the exam seems to be working against DeShaun.

Continuing to debunk the ideas that he believes many Americans harbour, Deshaun brings in his central argument that he always made to his peers: this war is linked to white supremacy. He withholds this until the middle of the essay until he has taken specific steps to persuade the reader that the war is wrong and that support for it is only based on false premises. This "truth" has, thus, been revealed. Again, as a measure of keeping the reader at his side and fulfilling the demands of the assignment, he ends the paragraph with a reference to Ghosh, as with his previous paragraph. He will then turn to Orwell in the next paragraph now that he has introduced the context of white supremacy. The turn-to-Orwell paragraph uses a very conventional, traditional means of transition as if to soften the blow of what DeShaun will say next. He even sets up the paragraph with the type of feigned agreement that has previously appeared in the essay. At first, he seems to perform a detached summary about Orwell. DeShaun is no fool; he does not open with his attack on Orwell because he knows this is charged, like messing with fire. And he is right: according to the grader, DeShaun shows no understanding of Orwell and has no analysis of Orwell's text, just an argument. DeShaun has loaded his essay, not with an endless summary of Orwell's text found readily on the internet, but with the position that if Orwell was so very aware of what he was doing, as Orwell indicates in his essay, then he is a much more devastating accomplice to British colonialism than he acknowledges. And of course, this is where DeShaun literally catches the most hell since the original grader remained adamant that DeShaun needed to repeat the course based on this "misunderstanding" and "illiteracy" in relation to Orwell's text. Because his arguments fall outside of the officially sanctioned knowledge and discourse style that the test upholds, DeShaun and his writing serve to energize the central, organizing hierarchy that IFE administers for English studies: "There is the language, the discourse of academe and there are other languages and discourses that are not academic" (Royster, 2002).

DeShaun's next paragraph opens with an upfront critique of Orwell by directly labeling his statements as "poor excuses". He has little sympathy for Orwell and brings in a sophisticated issue: namely that the social order coerces those who symbolize dominance and status to dehumanize those marked as inferior which can never be a neutral, blameless process. Regarding Orwell, DeShaun sees this ability to dehumanize as intimately connected to his whiteness. While DeShaun does not fully develop the phenomenon of how the British were coerced into seeing themselves/whiteness as superior and the native as inferior/non-human/non-white, he is clearly taking on a complex intellectual task that goes beyond the scope of the exam. This dialectic, however, is the kind of issue that could be the makings of a longer writing project, something beyond a timed, 90-minute writing situation. In such a

project, it remains to be seen whether or not Orwell's story will be regarded as one which essentially challenges and rewrites the social order that marks the Colonizer/British as the optimal mode of being and the Indian as the legitimately colonized non-being. In either case, IFE's canonicity of Orwell's text does not render it beyond the scope of such critique and questioning.

To substantiate his claim of imperialism and material gain in Iraq, DeShaun employs the conventional, traditional method of discussing another source. He then ends by saying that Orwell is being manipulated into his role as a colonial agent, as opposed to being imprisoned by it. Here the suggestion is that Orwell is also manipulated into believing in his own white superiority. In DeShaun's essay, colonialism is a brutal physical, psychological and cultural violence that is sanctioned internationally and intimately linked to notions of rac(e)ism. While it might be argued that DeShaun is not representing a critically informed and theoretically expansive discussion of race, contemporary imperialism, war, whiteness and the connectedness of European history of colonialism, the construction of this exam does not value such knowledge anyway and does not give much time to investigate such complex theories. Students are simply supposed to stick closely with the text and engage in only surface comparisons. There is no notion that students need to be immersed in the subject they are writing about. They have not been told even the general topic of their essay assignments until three class periods beforehand (and it is even up to the instructor to focus on the exam readings during the three, 80-minute class sessions allotted.)

WE GOT YOUR BACKS: MOVING TOWARD A CONCLUSION

In the end, DeShaun and his colleagues in the failing category did not repeat the course and were not subjected to the Department's bogus portfolio system. The context of IFE at this particular college means that one can readily search and find a faculty member with an anti-neo-liberal and pro-Black perspective who would read an essay by someone like DeShaun and exclaim: "Oh hell naw, we can't fail this young brotha, he can write!" In fact, DeShaun insisted that he chose the author's class based on his belief that the author/instructor was "someone who would have [his] back." As he states: "I've heard about other English professors and how they just love to criticize students on their writings. It's almost like a sexual desire for them." Nonetheless, the context of this college has not counteracted the inherent tragedy of the current state of IFE.

No student in this course went on to take another course in the English Department outside of the university's general education requirement (which the administration regards as a reading class, not a literature class, to the dismay of the college's literati), though many maintained a clear interest in thinking about language, literature, world politics, and textual production. This English Department, like many others across the country, relies almost solely on enrolments in numerous sections of freshman writing for budgetary sustainability, not on its specialized literature and creative writing sections. The students who get discarded in the very beginning are, literally, the students who sustain the Department. While these students have a clear counter-knowledge and politics that could challenge and rupture IFE – what Sylvia Wynter (2000b) might call an epistemology rooted in "the specificity of [their] own existential situation" (p. 158) – the English Department does not (and I would argue, thereby,

because English Studies does not). Ironically, literary-English Studies can hardly sustain itself as a field of study, especially at those institutions that are not the doctoral-degree-granting, research-extensive universities (which are the minority of US. colleges) and yet regularly discard students who could be interesting and necessary political allies.

It is worth remembering Wynter's argument that our current genre of the human is one which is over-represented by a globally-wired/connected ethno-middle class of breadwinners, post-dotcom-investors, and bourgeois professionals who function as the optimal, if not normative, mode of being of "*homo oeconomicus*" (Wynter, 2000a). This means that the framing hierarchies of IFE, the ultimate expression in our discipline of our current genre of the human that Wynter theorizes, have discarded many working-class students of colour to such an extent that they never want (or will be able) to see the insides of an upper-level English class. Ironically, while English Studies/Departments use IFE to continually uphold and replicate the genre of an ethno-middle class optimum by casting out Akua, Jamiyla, LaDonna, Malika, and Deshaun, it is now being undone by this same genre. A degree in English is no longer deemed as useful for a college-constituency who seek professional degrees for a kind of 21st-century, technologised, uber-class-mobility or for a higher education market that relies on contingent labour. English learning is now often deployed for the sole purposes of attaining bourgeois communication skills that can facilitate business transactions (Parascondola, 2004). It is a lose-lose situation for which disentanglement does not seem likely anytime soon.

Though the composition/rhetoric community surely calls for a far more progressive education than the Department in focus here, that community is not aligned either with the *content-worldview* of Akua, Jamiyla, LaDonna, Malika, and DeShaun either. The goal of this study has, therefore, been to witness the black discourses and literacies of these students as the context of an epistemic crisis in the discipline of English studies. Though there are numerous works about the unique, linguistic competencies of students of African descent, the dehumanizing experiences that these students face as endemic to their education have not been ameliorated. Thus, this study does not deploy the kind of conclusion that sees un/der-trained instructors as operating according to what they do *not* know and so does not call for more professional development, workshops, courses, or research focused on "proving" and "showing" these students' multiple intelligences and competencies. Instead, this study calls for a Carter G. Woodsonian-stance and call-to-action: we must question how and why IFE and, thereby, English Studies has required these students' denigration as part of its everyday functioning and, thereby, imagine an altogether new goal and vision, a re-writing, for the discipline. As King (2006) has continually reminded educational scholars based on the work of Wynter: "the emphasis is on a critique of knowledge in order to make rethinking reality and rewriting knowledge possible" (p. 32). As Woodson argued with regard to the colour line already in 1933, people did not enact a litany of anti-black atrocities because of ignorance, because of what they did not know; they acted *in accordance* with what they did know, with what *they had been educated to do, be, and see* (Glenn, 2001). And so it is this *knowing* that is in question here with regard to students of African descent, literacy, writing, and IFE, not an *un-knowing*. Without such a Woodsonian-critique, we will simply reproduce more studies and workshops about the literary/literacy value of students of African descent that cannot/will not be used to re-imagine their education because the discipline is incompatible with any such treatise of their worth.

With the endless litany of high-school tests, college entrance exams, rising college-junior essay exams, and pending college-exit essay exams, literacy teaching in both secondary and post-secondary settings is more managed, punitive and class-hierarchical and, therefore, polemically linked than maybe ever before. Students, especially working-class students of colour are targeted and penalized by these systems most negatively. Yet, the most powerful historical lesson that we can hold on to for hope and inspiration rests in students. We would do well to think back on the Black student protesters in the 1920s, namely Fisk student rebellions. The denigration that these students faced meant that a college education was simply an extension of a new bureaucratic process, where they would be trained to fulfil the same kind of menial, cheap labour that their parents had done under slavery (Anderson, 1988). There was no conception in that historical moment that these students should or would be able to think, read and write and yet, these same utterly dehumanized students challenged their universities (historically Black colleges and universities, the only universities that they were allowed to attend at the time) to rework classroom curriculum and extracurricular activities, hiring practices, faculty salaries and the intellectual/political energy of their campuses, thus functioning as the predecessors to student protesters of the 1960s. If there is any light at the end of the tunnel, it will be in the epistemic challenges posed by the kinds of students described in this essay who will continue the legacy of 1920s and 1960s student protesters alongside the radical teachers, secondary and post-secondary, who will have their backs.

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Appendix A: Jamiyla's essay with commentary

Numbered Paragraphs	Commentary
<p>(1) Imperialism and the building of empires are nothing new in this society. It has been a part of American history for years and is still ongoing today. George Orwell, the author of "Shooting an Elephant," presents his arguments against imperialism in a story that shows the struggle one individual experiences under the forces of imperialism. Amitav Ghosh, the author of "The Anglophone Empire" enlightens us with the story of how empire building has changed over time and how imperialism has shaped his life as an Indian. Although Ghosh is Indian and Orwell is British, they both share the same belief that imperialism is bad for both the imperialist and the people.</p>	<p><i>The opening paragraph describes each essay and states the similarity between the two texts.</i></p>
<p>(2) George Orwell, a subdivisional police officer in Burma, was always mocked and laughed at by the Burmese people. Although many young Buddhist priests were on the street, they never did anything to help Orwell. He felt that Burma was no place for him so the sooner he did his job, the faster he could leave. Secretly he was against the empire and for the Burmese. He states: "I was young and ill-educated and had to think out my problems." This shows that he is doing a job that he neither enjoyed or is mentally prepared for. One day Orwell received a call about a mad elephant terrorizing the people in the town. He didn't exactly know what to do but he wanted to see what was going on. Along the way many Burmese stopped him and told him what the elephant had done. On its path the elephant had destroyed bamboo huts, killed a cow, and even killed an Indian man. Orwell sent for an elephant rifle to protect himself if it was necessary. Thus he says: "I had no intention of shooting the elephant." He doesn't want to shoot the elephant but the Burmese people are standing around and waiting for him to shoot the elephant. Even though he was an officer, he felt like a victim or prisoner at this point and that's when he realized that imperialism was no good for the people or the leaders. You were forced against your beliefs to serve the empire. In the end, Orwell shot the elephant by force of the people. He didn't want them to criticize or make fun of him so he hid behind his imperialist mask and did his job.</p>	<p><i>This paragraph summarizes Orwell and expresses sympathy with the main character of the text which is read as an autobiographical account of Orwell.</i></p>
<p>(3) Amitav Ghosh, being Indian, experiences the results of imperialism from a totally different perspective. In his piece, he explains the uprising against the British in Kanpur in 1857. Under the Great Indian Mutiny, many British soldiers as well as women and children were slaughtered by loyal Indian soldiers under Nana Shahib. Many Indians were hypnotized by the nihilistic ideas and methods which were so extreme it caused a separation between the Indians. Some Indians chose to join forces with the British while others decided to fight against them or simply remain neutral. After the mutiny the British followed with a plan to bring terror and astonishment to the Indians. Corpses of Indians lined the roads of Kanpur and British soldiers stampeded through the city. The effects of the uprising can still be recognized and it is the reason for the divided regions of Punjab and Bihar.</p>	<p><i>This paragraph summarizes the essay by Ghosh. Many of the words from Ghosh's text are simply lifted and placed into this summary such as: slaughtered, loyal, hypnotized, terror, astonishment, lined the roads, effects, still recognized.</i></p>
<p>(4) Clearly Ghosh is suggesting that imperialism has changed from 1857 up to now. He states: "The military power of the United States is so overwhelming that it has caused America's leaders to forget that the imperial project rests on two pillars. Weaponry is only the first while persuasion is the second." This statement illustrates how military power has influenced Americans into believing that the second pillar is not necessary. Back in 1857, when the British were colonizing, they used</p>	<p><i>Here again, this paragraph summarizes the essay by Ghosh. Many of the words from Ghosh's text are again lifted and placed into this summary such as: imperial project, pillars, military power, challenged, overcome imperialism.</i></p>

<p>both pillars hand in hand. After their takeover, the British followed up with the second pillar. They accomplished this by building educational facilities, workshops, and other things to brainwash the Indians into believing they were powerless and inferior. The people suffer by having their independence taken away from them; the colonizers are often challenged by the victims who are strong and smart enough to use the power of the law to overcome imperialism.</p>	<p><i>The major difference between this paragraph and the previous one is that the writer has used a quotation, presumably for the purpose of showing the grader that she has mastered this skill.</i></p>
<p>(5) In both stories, the events that have taken place prove that imperialism is in fact “evil” for all. Behind imperialism lies a type of racism. This type of racism will continue as long as these powerful Angloempires continue to seek and destroy those nations that don’t possess the resources or strength to fight back. These stories showed the downside of the colonizer’s position and the colonized under imperialism. The imperial process is all about power and control; whoever has the power will gain the control.</p>	<p><i>In this final paragraph, the writer calls imperialism evil and racist, signifying here on the class conversations about Bob Marley’s song, “War”, but she is careful never to name this artist. Jamiyla has figured out that, although the prompt asks her to discuss other texts that she has read, which she is more than capable of doing, she knows she will be penalized for doing so, especially if that text is a song by Marley. She casts the colonial subject as helpless – without resources and strength to fight back, as if to garner liberal sympathy. She then ends this essay with the more general terms of power and control rather than elitism and racism.</i></p>

Appendix B: LaDonna's essay with commentary

Numbered Paragraphs	Commentary
<p>(1) Imperialism is not simply the conquest of one nation by another. It represents oppression, racism, injustice and a clear attempt to dominate the world economically, culturally, and politically. Amitav's article "The Anglophone Empire" and George Orwell's short story "Shooting an Elephant" clearly support the belief that imperialism's harmful effects were seen not only in the lives of the oppressed, but in the corrupted souls of the oppressors. The oppressors are represented under the umbrella of the Anglophone Empire (American British and Australian Government). Irregardless of status, oppressor or oppressed, imperialism is designed to harm all parties involved.</p>	<p><i>The opening paragraph briefly names both articles and gives the institutional comparison: "Irregardless of status, oppressor or oppressed, imperialism is designed to harm all parties involved."</i></p>
<p>(2) The horrors of imperialism have been experienced by numerous countries and people worldwide. Orwell, in "Shooting an Elephant," describes the violence of imperialism:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">"The wretched prisoners huddling in the stinking cages of the lockups...the scarred buttocks of those that had been flogged with bamboo."</p> <p>This quote is one of the many examples of disrespect and torture the Burmese people faced as captives of the British. "The Anglophone Empire" by Ghosh also describes the violence of imperialism:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">"The road from Kanpur to Allahabad was lined with Indian soldiers that had been hanged; there were public displays of rebels being shot by cannons."</p> <p>This statement describes the horrific events suffered by the East Indians in 1857 as a result of British conquest. After being colonized by the British, an Indian rebellion occurred. One of the British trading ports was attacked by the Indian rebels killing many British civilians. In retaliation, the British went on a killing rampage to create "terror and awe" among the Indian rebels. Likewise, John Berger's "Hiroshima" shows the brutal extremes that the United States will also deploy when seeking retribution and war:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">"...suddenly one man who was stark naked...said in a quivering voice...he was burned, swollen from the effects of the A-bomb...he looked miserable, burned, and soar and naked with only pieces of his gaitors trailing behind as he walked...when I touched him his burned skin slipped off."</p> <p>With this striking description of a horrific death scene (as well as others), Berger portrays the dramatic events that unfolded in Japan during the Atomic Bomb disaster. Berger truly captured the suffering and devastation of the victims and witnesses of the Hiroshima event. The tactics that were employed in the 1857 "terror and awe" campaign are now applied in America's "shock and awe" "campaign in Iraq, as they were in Hiroshima.</p>	<p><i>This paragraph provides a necessary summary of both required texts for the departmental exam by connecting descriptions of imperialism in both texts. However, the student brings in her own previous knowledge about Hiroshima, developed at first as another description of imperialism. The final purpose of this description of Hiroshima as imperialist conquest, however, is to sustain the writer's political definition of the war in Iraq. It is America's new Hiroshima, not Britain's Burma.</i></p>
<p>(3) Strategies were used to invoke fear in the opponent but the "shock and awe" relied on sophisticated bombs and missiles. On a different note, however, Errol Hill's "The Emergence of the Caribbean Aesthetic," describes a <i>psychosocial violence</i> of imperialism also:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">"A people cannot strive living in the shadow of an alien culture. Rejection of one's heritage leads to hatred of the self. One can make no meaningful contributions to one's people if one communicates with strange tongues and foreign symbols."</p>	<p><i>The writer opens the paragraph by referring back to Hiroshima, from the first paragraph, with her reference to bombs and missiles. After the first sentence, she directs her paragraph to the topic she is most interested in: psychosocial violence. At this point, she is bringing in her own viewpoint and</i></p>

<p>Although some West Indians accepted their culture, most embraced the British culture. This tragic acceptance of the imposed foreign culture served only to marginalize the West Indians to the bottom of society. According to Hill, this state of affairs will lead to a nation of people who suffer from self-hatred as a result of cultural displacement. Similarly, in colonizing the Indians, the British bombarded them with their culture too. According to Ghosh, they relied on the tactics of persuasion which utilized British Civil Service to help convert Indians to British colonization. Instead of relying on military strength, they relied on British religious concepts, sophisticated gadgetry, and medicine to convert the Indians.</p>	<p><i>identification, incorporating the work of a Caribbean scholar, Errol Hill, whose thinking was central to her own research paper for the class on music as an anti-colonial revolutionary aesthetic for the English-speaking Caribbean. She then brings in Ghosh and uses him, not as a point of connection to Orwell, but as a point of connection to Caribbean thinkers and history.</i></p>
<p>(4) Nevertheless, no matter how powerful and cruel the English Empire was, it could never fully demoralise its subjects. According to Ghosh “their success was close to nil.” Not only is the Anglophone Empire unsuccessful; but it also suffered the negative consequences of imperialism. In the case of the East Indians of the 1800s, the defeat of the violent front of anti-imperialism simply led to the emergence of an even more potent form of anti-imperialism:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">“the next generation of anti-colonists turned in more parliamentary and constitutionalist directions and was the necessary backdrop to Mahatma Ghandi’s tactic of nonviolent resistance.”</p> <p>It was clear to Mahatma Ghandi that they could never win by using military means. However they decided to use the Parliament and the Constitution to defeat the colonized.</p>	<p><i>Similar to what she has argued in her research paper, colonial subjects are never passive, weak, or subordinate, never fully demoralised, as she says in her opening to this paragraph. She uses the perspective of the colonized to locate which British rule immoral, social and political corruption, not the perspective of those privileged by/of the Empire. The consequences for the British, even after military conquest, is a renewed, “even more potent form of anti-imperialism”. In this case, she is referring to Ghosh’s arguments that after military conquest, colonial subjects used the British’s own Parliament and the Constitution to counter their imperialist ventures.</i></p>
<p>(5) In “The Emergence of the Caribbean Aesthetic” Hill describes other nonviolent tactics employed to resist imperialism. Through the effort of many artists such as Archie Lindo, the revolutionary spirit of the West Indians was nurtured. They <i>waged aesthetic warfare</i> via the cultural arts. According to Hill,</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">“In his play perhaps for the first time on the Jamaican stage, Lindo gave dignity and authority to a black slave speaking the Jamaican dialect, who with a fatal blow struck down a white world in the name of freedom and justice for the people.”</p> <p>Not only were these plays a success by drawing crowds of all classes, they symbolized the freedom of a people that had been oppressed. It served as an invaluable tool of resistance towards the Anglophone Empire.</p>	<p><i>The paragraph now turns from legislative revolution to aesthetic revolution, what the writer calls “aesthetic warfare”, with Archie Lindo of Jamaica as an example. Here again, she is using Caribbean anti-colonial struggles to connect to Ghosh and the notion of imperialism. There is an extensive quotation from Erol Hill in this paragraph, the second quote from him that she uses. These words from Hill come from an article that was assigned to the class. “Aesthetic warfare” acts as a kind of metaphor and heuristic for the writer’s research project and exam essay based on Hill’s argument. Students are allowed to bring the exam readings with them to test and fully annotate it. LaDonna annotated her text with quotes about imperialism, planning all along to write her own essay along</i></p>

	<i>with a little of the institution's essay.</i>
<p>(6) Orwell's "Shooting an Elephant" also shows that the Anglophone Empire was also defeated. He states</p> <p>"I was all for the Burmese and all against their oppressors, the British. As for the job I was doing I hated it more bitterly than I can perhaps make clear...I had to think out my problems in utter silence as every Englishman in the East... I did not know that the British Empire was dying..."</p> <p>These words of Orwell, who served as a subdivisional police officer in Burma, clearly pointed to the oppression experienced by the colonizers. He was part of an army that was sent in to terrorize the people and soon developed anti-British sentiment. He saw all the ill-treatment inflicted by the British and came to reject the British treatment of the Burmese. This is obviously a sign that the Beast of the British Empire would soon fall. Orwell also states:</p> <p>"I was only an absurd puppet pushed to and fro by the will of the yellow faces behind. I perceived in this moment that when the white man turns tyrant it is his own freedom that he destroys."</p> <p>As long as there is tyranny, there will be resistance. Thus, the Anglophone Empire will never be able to rest. They will always have to be on their guard because the oppressed will be looking for an opportunity to strike back. Furthermore, like a criminal who has no friend to trust, the conquest of the Anglophone Empire has served to isolate it from the friendship and support of the rest of the world. These acts have only created retaliation from the rest of the world. The modern Anglophone Empire has now gone to war with Iraq. They clearly ignored the protests of other countries and violated the United Nations policies creating estrangement within the world community.</p>	<p><i>This paragraph and the last bring back the institution's interpretive requirement but the writer does this with a poetic/metaphoric flare:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A sign that the beast of the British Empire would soon fall;</i> • <i>like a criminal who has no friend to trust.</i> <p><i>More rhythmic expressions can also be found in this paragraph such as: "As long as there is tyranny, there will be resistance." It as if the writer has decided to incorporate a more metaphoric flare as a strategy to personalize and recodify the rhetorical requirement of the depersonalized, supra-objective summarization. Orwell, up to this point in the essay, is not a seminal component of her main arguments about psychosocial violence and the various mechanisms by which colonial subjects subvert domination. When the writer does discuss him, she uses figurative language to mark her sentiment on colonialism.</i></p>
<p>(7) It is clear that imperialism has negative consequences for both parties involved. Imperialism causes psychosocial and physical trauma in the colonized and the colonizer. Thus imperialism is not a beneficial process for anyone involved. It is detrimental, evil, and should be eradicated by any means necessary.</p>	<p><i>This is the conclusion which cycles back to the institutional trope deployed in the introductory paragraph: "Irregardless of status, oppressor or oppressed, imperialism is designed to harm all parties involved."</i></p>

Appendix C: DeShaun's essay with commentary

Numbered Paragraphs	Commentary
<p>(1) The United States of America has been expanding its territory by invading other countries for many years. Through the process of territorial expansion, the U.S. has claimed that its purpose is to only better those countries, such as Iraq, which it has now taken over. There are many people here in America, along with civilians from other counties, who definitely support what the high powers of the U.S have been doing over the years. They actually believe that America really wants to improve the welfare and safety of everyone living all across the world. They think that America's main goal is to give every human being freedom. The U.S. government acts as if that lack of freedom is the true reason behind its devastating war with Iraq. However, that is seriously not the case. The truth is that the U.S. only invades countries which it can gain useful resources from, in this case oil. Even more unfortunately, this territorial expansion has only decreased the rate of freedom for everyone living on this earth. Both texts, "The Anglophone Empire" by Amitav Ghosh and "Shooting an Elephant" by George Orwell, reveal the kind of damage that has been done to the world through colonialism and imperialism, a process that the United States is continuing with both innocent Iraqis and Americans alike.</p>	<p><i>In this first paragraph, the writer loads each sentence with a sarcastic list of beliefs that many believe about America's democratic impulses. The writer turns the essay by naming and centring "the truth". The writer then uses a type of feigned, pseudo-agreement that turns abruptly into opposition in order to create a rhetorical edge. He ends this paragraph with what the reader can take to be a thesis statement, thus appeasing this audience, who he knows make this a central part of an introduction.</i></p>
<p>(2) In Amitav Ghosh's text, "The Anglophone Empire" he gave his own personal history of imperialism with the British Empire from an Indian point of view. He does this by revealing that his life has been taken over by the British Empire while he is struggling against it. He compares his history of colonialism with America's current war against Iraq. Ghosh explained how many Americans feel that the U.S. does not need to be invading other countries. He states: "A substantial proportion of America's population remains unconvinced of the need to undertake a new version of a civilizing mission" (p. 2). Many Americans really don't want the U.S. to colonize Iraq because we already have enough problems of our own to deal with.</p>	<p><i>In this second paragraph, the writer begins by positioning Ghosh, an Indian, as an ally to his claims. He ends the paragraph by referring to "many Americans" who have other "problems" that they would like to see resolved. He doesn't introduce the problems and which of the "many Americans" he is referring to until he enters the next paragraph, so as to keep the reader with him.</i></p>
<p>(3) The U.S. government is so obsessed with colonizing other territories. It's as if the issues which exist in our country do not mean anything. These issues include racial profiling, immigrant harrassment, police brutalities, sexually transmitted diseases, tuition increases, mass layoffs, and the environmental problems of pollution. All these issues are being overlooked and ignored by the U.S. government. Then some Americans have the nerve to call Iraq an "evil empire." How can we call someone else evil when we have already taken so many lives in the past? We specifically killed plenty of innocent civilians in Hiroshima during World War II by dropping an atomic bomb on them. Hundreds of thousands of these civilians were either killed, injured, or completely disfigured. Therefore who are we to judge another country and call them an evil empire? Some even believe that God approves of us killing other people. Whenever we kill, it's a virtue. However all these false beliefs are due to the fact that imperialism has brainwashed many people, the colonized and the colonizers. As Ghosh stated: "Empires imprison their rulers as well as their subjects" (2).</p>	<p><i>The writer lists the issues that are most pressing for America. The writer is adopting this device as a marker of his usual style of rhythm patterning through listing. He also incorporates the conversations about Hiroshima that the class had. He then layers in a series of questions for a direct address to the audience and ends the paragraph with the same type of manoeuvre employed in the first paragraph. Americans' "false beliefs" about the necessity of a war in Iraq is the result of imperialism's brainwashing.</i></p>
<p>(4) There are many Americans who favour the U.S. government</p>	<p><i>Continuing to debunk the ideas</i></p>

<p>because they are manipulated into believing that America is only trying to help out other countries. The U.S. government is so overwhelmed with America's legacy invading other countries that many are also ignorant enough to believe that some of the things the U.S. is doing through imperialism is actually benefitting others. However, it's all wrong because America is not only expanding its territory but it's also expanding white supremacy and oppression. America continues to deprive more and more people of their culture and freedom just like the British did in Amitav Ghosh's life.</p>	<p><i>that many Americans harbour, the writer brings in the central argument that he always made to his peers: that this war is linked to white supremacy. He withholds this until the middle of the essay until he has taken specific steps to persuade the reader that the war is wrong and that support for it is based only on false premises. This "truth" has thus been revealed. Again, as a measure of keeping the reader at his side and fulfilling the demands of the assignment, he ends the paragraph again with a reference to Ghosh (33), as with the previous paragraph. He will then turn to Orwell in the next paragraph now that he has introduced the context of white supremacy.</i></p>
<p>(5) While Amitav Ghosh's "The Anglophone Empire" shows the effects of colonialism from the perspective of the colonized (which many Iraqis and Americans can relate to), George Orwell illustrates the effects of colonialism from the perspective of the colonizers in his "Shooting an Elephant." In this story, Orwell simply gave his history of colonialism with Indians. He ends up making a fateful decision near the end of the story. He must decide whether or not he should kill an elephant which has terrorized an Indian village and killed an Indian. He attempts to justify why he finally made his decision to kill the elephant. As a colonizer, Orwell really didn't like his job: "As for the job I was doing, I hated it more bitterly than I can perhaps make clear. In a job like that you see the dirty work of Empire at close headquarters" (570). Here Orwell is saying that he really doesn't approve of his job, so he's very aware of what he is doing. If he really didn't want to be a colonizer then why in the hell was he there? First of all, he's European. Therefore he most likely had the power of choice. He couldn't go to college or an all-white trade school and still make a decent living? I have to believe that he really enjoyed his job because he chose to be a colonizer; he chose to dominate and invade other territories. No one stuck a gun to his head and threatened him. He knew colonialism was wrong but he did his job anyway.</p>	<p><i>The writer uses a very conventional, traditional means of transition into the new paragraph as if to soften the blow of what he will say next. He even sets up the paragraph with the type of feigned agreement that has previously appeared in the essay. At first, he seems to perform a detached summary about Orwell and even quotes Orwell. Then the essay turns as this information is used to show that Orwell was very aware of what he was doing and is, thus, a much more devastating accomplice of British colonialism than he acknowledges. He ends the paragraph talking about how Orwell knew that what he was doing was wrong, signalling that his next interpretation will be even harsher, since the writer has already suggested, through his continual references to truth and falseness, that there is a social responsibility that comes when one knows that something is wrong.</i></p>
<p>(6) Orwell then gave a poor excuse for killing the elephant: "I was very glad that the coolie had been killed, it put me legally in the right and it gave me a sufficient pretext for shooting the elephant. I often wondered whether any of the others grasped that I had done it solely to avoid looking a fool?" (576). This ignorant statement just</p>	<p><i>The next paragraph opens with an upfront critique of Orwell by directly labelling his statement as a "poor excuse". The writer will then turn the essay again by</i></p>

<p>shows that many white people like Orwell feel they have to be on a higher level than someone else of another race. Since he feels superior he can't allow himself to look dumb in front of other pole. Orwell feels that just because of his skin colour, he can't afford to be embarrassed. He has this attitude that he's too good to be laughed at because he's the European and has the power of colonialism behind him. He also believes that when he kills the elephant, he's doing the Indians a favor instead of seeing himself as being there only to take over the Indians' territory. He was there to gain something from colonialism just like the American soldiers who are in Iraq to gain oil, not to help the people.</p>	<p><i>coming back to the theme of white supremacy and oppression. This time, however, it is Orwell who represents the power of white supremacy. The writer has no sympathy for Orwell and focuses his essay on what is central for him; debunking white supremacy and, thereby, imperialism.</i></p>
<p>(7) In another essay, "The Geopolitics of War," it was revealed that America's reason for currently invading Iraq was the gain of oil. Many of those U.S. soldiers were very proud of their so-called accomplishments. Therefore, in similarity, I would have to say that Orwell's only purpose in India was to help gain something for Britain, just like America's purpose for invading other countries is about material gain. Orwell is very proud of his job because, again, he believes that he is helping the Indians just as Americans believe they are doing in relation to Iraq. However all they're doing is depriving more and more people of their freedom and cultural history by attempting to make Iraq a more Americanized society. At the same time, they're stealing oil from them because they need the oil for future wars. All these false beliefs come from colonialism and imperialism. The colonizing nation not only controls other people but their own people are told what to do and think by their government. This is why people such as Orwell continue to participate, not because they are necessarily prisoners but because they are manipulated.</p>	<p><i>To substantiate his claim of colonialism and material gain in a modern day context, the writer employs a conventional, traditional method of discussing another source. He then ends by saying that Orwell is being manipulated into his role as a colonial agent, as opposed to being imprisoned by it. Here the suggestion is that Orwell is also manipulated into believing in his own white superiority.</i></p>
<p>(8) Both texts, "The Anglophone Empire" and "Shooting an Elephant," have definitely shown the damage that has been done to the world through colonialism and imperialism. It causes white supremacy and oppression to live on and expand internationally. As a result many have been murdered, slaughtered, and manipulated into believing that the white race is the most superior of them all. Even more unfortunate many people have been stripped of their culture and freedom. All these tragic occurrences are due to the effects of colonialism and imperialism that are not ending, but continuing.</p>	<p><i>In this writer's essay, imperialism is an ongoing brutal physical, psychological and cultural violence, that is sanctioned internationally, and that is intimately linked to rac(e)ism. This is what the writer was alluding to all along since the first paragraph.</i></p>