In This Issue

GOOD ADVICE

RESOLVED: TULANE DEBATE IS BACK

Excerpt: ROLL WITH IT: BRASS BANDS IN THE STREETS OF NEW ORLEANS

...AND MUCH MORE
From my window in Cudd Hall, I can see a handful of deciduous trees: relatively rare in New Orleans, they serve as a visual cue to the time of year. In this fickle climate, where the Great Polar Vortex of 2014 was bookended by beautiful spring-like weather, such seasonally appropriate flora can be a comforting way to ground oneself in the present.

The largest of these trees is a Southern Catalpa. It’s not the prettiest tree in winter; long, skinny seed pods sway on haphazard branches. But in a couple of months, tiny buds will develop into wide green leaves, followed by delicate orchid-like flowers.

This tree owes its existence to my predecessor, Sarah Doerries. During her tenure in Newcomb-Tulane College, she happened upon a crew that was beginning to cut the tree down to make way for some new landscaping. She all but chained herself to the trunk to prevent this from happening, and there the tree still stands…flanked by five smaller catalpa trees that were then planted to create a symmetrical grouping.

In October, I missed a phone call from my friend and former colleague (and former co-editor of this publication) Tom Moody, who now lives in England. The pleasant surprise of hearing from him soon changed to anxious apprehension when I listened to the message he’d left, telling me that he had some sad news about Sarah. I was unable to reach him until the next day, when he confirmed the worst: Sarah had passed away unexpectedly while visiting friends in France. This tragic news was compounded by another recent loss; less than a year earlier, another dear former colleague, Sarah Lockwood Mohl, passed away after a seven-month battle with cancer. We remember both of them in this issue, and we remember them frequently in Cudd Hall, where my Ethernet jack still bears a Post-It in Sarah Mohl’s handwriting (“keep ethernet cable connected to bottom left outlet”), and where the catalpa tree stands quietly outside my window, waiting for the spring.

Best,
Trina J. Beck
Assistant Dean, Newcomb-Tulane College Programs
The 2013-2014 academic year marks the last year in Scott Cowen’s presidency at Tulane. Since arriving in 1998, he has steered Tulane through a successful capital campaign, as well as leading the university through the challenges we faced as a result of Hurricane Katrina. Tulane has completed the search for our 15th president and selected Michael Fitts, the current dean of the law school at the University of Pennsylvania, to universal approval. The campus community is excited and energized by the selection of President-elect Fitts, and as I walk across campus today, I see an institution well placed for future success.

In the fall of 2013 we welcomed an exceptionally selective and qualified freshman class to Newcomb-Tulane College. Over the summer, under the auspices of the Tulane Reading Project, the class of 2017 read Michelle Alexander’s *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. This thought-provoking critique of racial disparities in incarceration rates as a consequence of the war on drugs exposed our students to an unfamiliar side of American life. Alexander’s analysis is particularly germane to New Orleans, since the city tops the state in incarceration rates, while Louisiana tops the nation. We were fortunate to bring the author to campus in the fall for a public lecture and conversation. In the 12-year history of the Reading Project, I don’t believe we have had as powerful a speaker as Michelle Alexander.

Nationally, higher education has come under increasing scrutiny, and universities need to address questions relating to the accessibility, cost, and value of the baccalaureate degree. As dean, I take these issues seriously, and the institution and college are working on strategies to address these matters as part of our strategic planning. Tulane has developed partnerships with three organizations—POSSE, College Track, and KIPP—that will help us open our programs to students from underrepresented groups. With each of these programs, our partners help with mentoring and guidance during the high school years, while Tulane fosters community and provides support and mentoring during the college years. We have just started working with KIPP and College Track, and our agreement with POSSE is now almost 5 years old. We have seen success with POSSE—virtually all participants are retained to graduation—and we expect similar results with students from the KIPP and College Track programs.

Career development and preparation is an area where I have focused much of my attention of late. On February 8th, we ran our second annual Career Wave event to help students think about life after Tulane. Keynote speakers discussed LinkedIn and other social media, showing students how to use these tools to build connections and to seek opportunities at less well-known companies. Alumni and parent panels also advised students on various approaches to career advancement. Approximately 900 undergraduates participated in the event. This spring, we piloted our first career development class, designed to reinforce and expand on ideas presented at Career Wave. This is just one of several new initiatives that I believe will be of significant importance to the education of our students. I encourage you to read the “Good Advice” article in this issue to learn more about our efforts in this area.

With best wishes,

J. M. MacLaren
Dean, Newcomb-Tulane College
As a high school student, Myron Shaffer received some unsolicited career advice from his calculus teacher: “she pointed out that I was really good at helping other students,” remembers Shaffer, “and suggested that maybe I should consider teaching.” At the time, Shaffer didn’t think too much of it. But as a student worker in the University of Arizona career center, he found himself helping his peers with their resumes, cover letters, and personal statements. And, sure enough, he eventually became a teacher, and earned a master’s in applied linguistics—with an emphasis on teaching English as a Second Language—from San Diego State. Once he embraced his talent for teaching, “It seemed really natural and I really enjoyed it,” he says.

Today, Shaffer is a Senior Academic and Career Advisor in the Newcomb-Tulane College Academic Advising Center; he also teaches a career development course through the School of Continuing Studies. He is one of the first advisors to integrate career development and academic advising in a pilot program designed to provide students with a more effective approach to advising throughout their undergraduate career. “I feel really fortunate to be in the position that I am, sort of blending the two—career and academic planning and advising—because they do go hand in hand,” says Shaffer.

Shaffer can thank Associate Dean Amjad Ayoubi for the opportunity to pioneer a fully integrated model of academic and career advising. Ayoubi was hired in 2006 to revamp and rebuild the Tulane Career Center after 25 years (including his undergraduate career) at Oklahoma State University. At OSU, Ayoubi was well accustomed to wearing two hats, having ultimately served as director of the main campus career center, as well as chief student affairs officer for the Tulsa campus. After two years of success at the helm of the Tulane Career Center, Ayoubi was tapped to rebuild the Academic Advising Center, while still overseeing the Career Center. Today, with the strong support of Dean James MacLaren and generous contributions from parents and alumni, the Advising and Career Centers are well on the way toward seamlessly integrating their services.

Prior to 2006, academic advising was decentralized, with advising services housed in each individual school and college as they existed at the time. When the university reorganization gathered all undergraduates under the Newcomb-Tulane College umbrella, advisors from Newcomb College, Tulane College, and the Schools of Architecture, Business, and Engineering suddenly found themselves united in the new Academic Advising Center. The AAC’s first home, in a cluster of FEMA trailers on the site of the former Doris Hall, was often referred to, somewhat less than affectionately, as the Doris Double-Wides. Staff and students alike were happy when the AAC relocated to the Richardson Building, where it remains today after a brief decampment to Stanley Thomas in 2010.

When Ayoubi took over the reins of the AAC, he focused on lowering the student-to-advisor ratio (from 430-1 to 250-1); implementing a new, more user-friendly online appointment system and making it easier for students to meet with advisors; improving the AAC website; scheduling regular advising staff meetings to ensure consistency and open communication; and creating new career opportunities for advisors to take on managerial roles within the AAC. He and his staff also developed informational brochures for the

“We have a strong, compelling desire to meet our individual students where they are, to understand who they are, and to help them accomplish their goals.”
70-plus majors offered at Tulane, called “What Can I Do with a Major In...?,” which encourage students to make the connection between academic and career planning from the early stages of their collegiate careers. At the same time, Ayoubi began encouraging his staff to make the same connection; academic and career advisors began to attend joint training sessions and meetings. Ayoubi credits Dean MacLaren with “encouraging experimentation and innovation, in addition to creating an environment of collaboration among units in Newcomb-Tulane College.”

Ayoubi has also set his sights on two groups that stand to benefit a great deal from advising services, but that can often be difficult to reach: undecided and at-risk students. In 2006, as head of the Career Center, Ayoubi collaborated with the AAC to assign two career advisors and four academic advisors to work with the unusually large number of undecided students. “This is a major retention tool, to have students choose a major earlier,” he explains. Soon, 900 undecided students became 400 undecided students, and all of the students were better informed about their choices.

Students who eventually choose a liberal arts major often spend a fair amount of time in the “undecided” category. Assistant Director Sarah Montès, who has been with the AAC since 2007, manages the team of ten advisors who work with liberal arts students. “One of the most challenging things is that liberal arts is seen as a default option for a lot of students, while it’s really such a vast field that can lead to so many interesting options,” she notes. Her team works to pair students with faculty advisors and mentors in the School of Liberal Arts to help students make informed decisions about their path. They also challenge students to think beyond the classroom and to seek out meaningful summer projects, internships, or experiential learning.

Such experiences not only help a student develop as a person but will also add value in the eyes of potential employers down the road.

At-risk students were initially targeted through a program called MAP (Maximizing Academic Potential), which functioned like an academic course, meeting once a week. In 2011, career advisor Michele Oelking approached Ayoubi about implementing a success coaching program at Tulane; with a master’s degree in social work and previous experience working as a life coach for college students, she envisioned a more all-encompassing approach to advising services. With the support of Dean MacLaren and President Scott Cowen, two success coaches were hired in spring 2012. Not long after that, Tulane parents Hilary and Peter Blum gave a generous donation to launch the Peer Educator Program, which trains students to provide supplemental instruction as well as tutoring, peer coaching, and assessment. In January 2013, success coaching, the Peer Educator Program, and tutoring services were combined under the umbrella of the Tulane Academic Success Center (TASC). Oelking now serves as the TASC Assistant Director, with two full-time, professionally certified success coaches reporting to her and a third managing the Peer Educator program. Oelking and her fellow success coaches combine academic, career, and personal development in their work with students, in a holistic approach similar to that used by life coaches. “I love what I do,” she smiles.
Student feedback for the success coaching program—which, like all of TASC’s services, is free for students—has been extremely positive. One freshman business major wrote: “[Success coach] Mimi [Hess] has made it possible for me to trust my abilities and not give up, allowing me to reach my goals of doing well in classes and getting through my first semester... [she is] the best!"

A sophomore psychology major reported: “I have gained a lot of confidence in myself—I am a lot more organized, manage my time well, [and] have a good method for studying and taking notes... Michele [Oelking] is the most helpful professional that I have worked with at Tulane.” Success coaching builds on the safety net that is woven through strong connections and communication between TASC, the AAC, and campus partners, from Student Affairs to Housing and Residence Life.

Another recent innovation at the Career Center is a career education pilot program, funded by Tulane parents Jeffrey and Susan Zimmer and Cory and Lisa Rapkin. Career educator-advisers teach one-credit career preparation courses and also meet one-on-one with students to discuss their personal career plans. The program built on the success of Career Wave, an intensive two-day career planning event that held its second annual workshop in February 2014. Dean MacLaren is currently working to build an endowment to support expanded career preparation services well beyond the two-year duration of the pilot program.
Each year, the Newcomb-Tulane College Office of Cocurricular Programs presents events that enrich students’ educational experiences outside of the classroom. Following are a few highlights from the 2012-2013 schedule of stimulating lectures, discussions, and activities.

Especially popular last year was the Tulane Reading Project, which creates a shared intellectual experience for the entering first-year class through the reading and discussion of a book. A committee unanimously chose the 2013 book selection, The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness by Michelle Alexander (pictured), based on its relevancy to current news-making issues, as well as the book’s particular resonance within New Orleans and Louisiana. Alexander, an acclaimed civil rights lawyer, gave a riveting lecture to a capacity crowd. A talk by anti-racism educator Tim Wise ’90; a panel discussion on Women and Incarceration, moderated by political science professor and MSNBC host Melissa Harris-Perry; and a screening of The House I Live In, a documentary about America’s War on Drugs, rounded out the Reading Project events.

For the Dean’s Colloquium Series, which features distinguished alumni discussing their post-Tulane careers, guitarist/vocalist Alex McMurray ’91 (pictured) returned to campus to show why he’s known as “one of the best young songwriters in the country.” McMurray performed songs and discussed how his love of New Orleans music began while he was a student at Tulane.

The annual Newcomb-Tulane College Lecture invites “great minds of our time” to speak on a timely subject, and 2013 guest speaker Paul Tough did just that, as one of the country’s leading voices on the topics of education reform, social innovation, and New Orleans’ post-Katrina school system.

Finally, the Lagniappe Program, which adds “something extra” to the Tulane experience by introducing students to the unique music and culture of New Orleans, returned with free concerts by the Ellis Marsalis Quartet (pictured), drummer Mike Clark, pianist/vocalist Nigel Hall, bassist George Porter, Jr., and drummer Chris Dave.
What I’ve Been Up To:
Choosing NOLA
BY LEA BOGNER

Every morning for the past month, I have watched the sun rise over Hollygrove, one of New Orleans’ most notorious neighborhoods, as I wait for one of my students and his brother to get their belongings together for school. This particular morning, the radio told me that it’s the coldest day on record in the city. It is my sixth year in the city and I have never been this cold. Ever. Of course, Tyrin and his brother picked this day to take their time—I’m left on the doorstep, dancing to keep myself warm. I may be regretting my decision to get out of the car and wait for the boys, but I have never regretted my decision to stay in New Orleans.

My senior year at Tulane, as the Chair of the Community Action Council of Tulane University Students (CACTUS), I had options of going to work for some of the non-profits we had partnered with, and had a job offer back home in New York. But something stopped me when Teach for America asked me to stay in the city and continue my work with the students I had come to love. How could I not stay for another Mardi Gras? Or Po-Boy Fest? Or Saints season?

Tyrin finally opens the door and lets me in. “You look like a fool, Ms. Bogner”, he chuckles at me, and goes to get his backpack. I sit down on their couch and high-five his young cousin who is watching television on the couch of the front room. Tyrin and his brother come to the front room and hand me their homework to check. As I go through each assignment, they put their ankle monitors on and hastily tuck in their shirts.

Everyone had an opinion about my choice to stay in New Orleans. Friends and family from home thought I was crazy to stay and join Teach for America. I got advice like, “New Orleans isn’t the place to build a career,” or “Do you know what types of kids you’ll be working with?” Worried family members talked about concealed weapons rates and murder. They asked me, “Haven’t you had enough of it?”

The simple answer is no. I haven’t had enough of this city yet, because it isn’t just about Mardi Gras, or the Saints (but the Saints are a very large part of it). It’s about feeling like every single day I make a conscious choice to do something important with my life. Every day, I make a choice to be part of this city and its growth.

This city is the embodiment of “do whatcha wanna.” We’re all doing what we want here, be it dancing in the streets or bettering the education of thousands of students. I see the city differently now as a citizen and not just a student. The laundry list of things to fix is long, but it is not theoretical anymore. I’ve bought in. It isn’t just Outreach Tulane and volunteer projects. The street lights that are out are mine; the murder rate is mine; the potholes are mine; the uneducated and homeless are mine. I am a true member

*Names changed to protect students’ privacy.
of a community that actually needs true members. It just doesn’t function like a machine, where young professionals can just come and go. New Orleans needs people to work, stay, and commit.

Tyrin needs me to work, stay, and commit, too. Committing to students in New Orleans as a teacher means wrap-around services that are incomparable to anything my friends in other cities in Teach for America do for their students. A teacher here is not only an educator but also a nutritionist, social worker, friend, mentor, and tutor. And, as Tyrin and Jay get my approval on their homework and their uniforms, I fill the final role that teachers in this city play: parent.

When we get into my car, I ask the boys about their upcoming court dates. They were just in the wrong place at the wrong time for the umpteenth time, committing the crime of being black boys in New Orleans. We talk briefly about it, as Tyrin goes through music on my phone and mumbles about how to make up his missed work when he’s out of school that day. I tell him not to worry about it, and that I’ll take care of it. We will find a way to be okay, despite his record being longer than some people’s resumes.

The system wants us to give up. My friends and family want me to move to somewhere “better suited” to my future career and family. But as Tyrin and I look at each other and pound fists to symbolize our agreement that we will find a way to be okay, I know that we won’t give up. New Orleans, and Tyrin, aren’t perfect. I’m not perfect. But, who wants perfect? We want that fire and heat that let you know you are alive. I see it in his eyes as he nods to me. I understand he is ready to make a choice to do better, to keep reading and working like I ask him to every day in class. He and I are both starting to understand that the joy is in the journey here. Just like you find hole-in-the-wall food and drink joints everywhere in New Orleans, you will find the joy in the work. You just need to search.

Searching is hard. We aren’t where we want to be yet, but we will get there. We can see it and taste the victory, but we know that victory is pointless without a little sweat. So, I choose to continue to sweat through the summers here, and at Tyrin’s football games, and over my lesson plans. I will sweat over who to vote for and sweat as I dance in the streets. I’ll sweat as I try to help build a better community and city. However, as Tyrin, Jay, and I sprint from my car to the school, we won’t sweat right now. It is unseasonably cold.
Resolved: Tulane Debate is Back  
BY ALLISON CRUZ

In three short years, the Tulane Debate Team has proven itself a force on the competitive college debate circuit. First place. Second place. Quarterfinalists at Nationals. Best speaker. These titles are among the team’s impressive collection of trophies and medals. While the accolades are exciting and well-earned, the ultimate victory the team has achieved is the strong bond between team members.

In 2006, the long-defunct Tulane Debate Club was revived as the Newcomb-Tulane College Debate Society. Under the leadership of Neil Conrad ’08, and with the encouragement of the Newcomb-Tulane College Office of Cocurricular Programs, the Debate Society sought to host campus debates, field a competitive debate team, and coach debate in New Orleans public schools. After a promising start, the society went dormant when its officers graduated. 2010 saw the creation of the Tulane Debate Education Society, a service learning project that fulfills the mission of bringing debate to New Orleans public schools. But Tulane still had no competitive debate team of its own.

As a freshman at Tulane, Thanh Lam “Lance” Tran ’14 had no prior debate experience, but thought it would be fun to join a debate team. Upon learning that Tulane’s team had fizzled, Tran hung fliers around campus to gauge interest, and soon after that the Tulane Debate Team was resurrected in its current form. Tran has now served as team president for three years. Despite the team’s success, and in contrast to the majority of their competitors, Tulane’s team does not have a professional coach. A core group of student officers runs weekly practice sessions, teaches debate skills, and plans travel to competitions—all tasks usually handled by a faculty coach.

Elise Matton ’14, team vice president, said, “[The team has] taught me a lot of leadership skills… we’ve learned how to deal with our weaknesses and get stronger as an organization.” During Tran’s tenure as president, the team has expanded its roster to over 20 regular members, volunteered as coaches and judges for local middle and high school debate teams (often in partnership with the Tulane Debate Society), and traveled to fifteen tournaments in six states. At a recent tournament in Pensacola, Florida, the entire team cheered on as Lee Parker ’15 and Timothy DeCotis ’16 debated for the first place trophy, eventually taking second.

To have achieved so much success in such a short time is a testament to the dedication of the team’s student leaders, but according to Tran, “While we’re competitive, I personally think one of our biggest strengths is how we’ve fostered a real team.” Reflecting on the Pensacola tournament, Elise Matton noted, “The tournament was a success in terms of our competitive abilities, but even more than that, it was a beautiful solidification of our organization. What struck me most was the affirmation of something I think we’d all felt and known for a long time: that we’re a family.” James Capuzzi ’17 added, “I have other good friends on campus, but the debate team is where I feel at home.”

The sentiment of “home” and “family” was echoed powerfully by Tran: “For a commuter who never had the chance to live among Tulane students nor to leave my hometown, the family atmosphere we have is my version of a home away from home.” With a newly elected set of officers ready to take the helm, we expect the Debate Team family will be making Tulane proud for years to come.
In Memoriam

SARAH RICHARDS DOERRIES, 1970-2013

After earning her BA from Newcomb College, Sarah “Sally” Richards Doerries ’92 completed her MFA in poetry at Louisiana State University, where she was an editorial assistant at the Southern Review. In 2001 she returned to her alma mater and joined the staff of the Tulane College Office of Student and Alumni Programs. She immediately took over as editor of the Tulane Collegian, the former incarnation of this publication. Over her six years in Cudd Hall, she bridged the transition to Newcomb-Tulane College, where she ultimately served as assistant dean for programs. She also taught creative writing as an adjunct professor in the English department. Her poetry and reviews were published in several literary magazines and journals, including the Cincinnati Review. Among her many friends, she was known for her sharp wit, unrelenting intellect, and joie de vivre.

Sarah’s editorial skills were outstanding, and in 2007 she was hired by the Historic New Orleans Collection to serve as their senior editor. She created and edited the HNOC Louisiana Musicians Biography Series, which launched with Unfinished Blues, an award-winning memoir by Harold Battiste Jr. with Karen Celestan. In October 2013, she traveled to Europe to represent the HNOC at the Frankfurt Book Fair and took the opportunity to visit friends in Strasbourg, France. While there, she suffered a brain aneurysm, and passed away shortly thereafter.

Sarah is survived by her mother, Penny Thomas Doerries; father, Ernest “Ben” Doerries III; sister, Patricia Doerries Cleeland; and husband, Jay Holland. She is deeply missed by all of her friends in the Tulane community.

SARAH ELIZABETH LOCKWOOD MOHL, 1985-2013

Sarah Lockwood Mohl ’07 only spent a year as Program Coordinator for Newcomb-Tulane College Cocurricular Programs before relocating to Illinois, where her husband Billy Mohl ’07 had been hired to coach baseball at Illinois State. But she teared up when she broke the news that she was leaving, and we were hard pressed not to follow suit; such was the connection that she forged with her colleagues in a short period of time. Sarah’s effervescent personality and sense of humor—not to mention her petite stature, which, combined with her Tulane email address, earned her the office nickname “smohl”—belied a keen intelligence and tenacious spirit.

Sarah and Billy were thrilled to welcome a son, Hunter, in December 2010. Less than two years later, Sarah was diagnosed with a rare form of cervical cancer. She approached her illness with her characteristic optimism and her favorite mantra: “Keep Calm and Carry On.” Tragically, Sarah passed away in March 2013.

Sarah is survived by her husband, William Thomas Mohl, and son, William Hunter Mohl; her parents, Charles and Nancy Lockwood, and brother, John Lockwood; and a loving extended family. Her memory lives in the hearts and minds of all who were fortunate enough to know her.
On a sunny Sunday afternoon in November 2006 I stand with a few hundred others outside a New Orleans barroom, waiting for the Prince of Wales Social Aid and Pleasure Club to start their annual second line parade. Prince of Wales is one of fifty or so clubs that organize these parades, in which the members dress in matching outfits and dance through their neighborhoods to the beat of a brass band. Throughout the year Prince of Wales holds meetings and fundraisers at a neighborhood bar called the Rock Bottom Lounge, in the Uptown neighborhood where I have lived since 2000, all building up to this day.

My eyes are fixed on eight men in their twenties and thirties leaning against the brick wall of the Rock Bottom, in a strip of shade underneath the roof overhang. They mill about, in no particular hurry, until the tallest of them picks up a street-worn tuba from the sidewalk and the others gather around him with their instruments: two trumpets, two trombones, a saxophone, bass drum, and snare drum. When the first note is sounded, the doors of the Rock Bottom fly open and the Prince of Wales strut out one by one. Men appear first in double-breasted red suits, gold fedoras, and matching shoes made of alligator leather, and then the Lady Wales dance out in contrasting gold pant suits with red berets, in each hand a large feathered fan with the words “PRINCE OF WALES, est. 1928.” The parade marshal blows his whistle, the musicians fall in step behind the club, and suddenly we are off.

The band and club members make up what is known as the first line, while the rest of us marching behind, and along the sides, make up the second line. The Prince of Wales take up the center of the street, flanked by rows of men holding rope to clear their path. Young boys and girls crawl into the open space to dance, and the crowd on the other side of the rope pauses to cheer them on.

The band plays one song after another without pause for several blocks; the groove will not stop, cannot stay put, is restless and elastic. The sound beckons people out of their houses, and as we make our way past my house the parade is expanding. What can appear to be a uniform mass of bodies is actually rather diverse: Janine, a black pharmacist who owns the fully renovated house next door, dances next to Rock, another neighbor who lives in a run-down house with no electricity; white and black anthropologists, professional photographers, and journalists intermingle with others here for the “free concert.” And these identifications with race, class, and occupation can tell only so much about where we fit in the collective. Gerald Platenburg, one of the most active and visible dancers at the second line, works as an executive chef at a hotel restaurant; he is also a member of a Social Aid and Pleasure Club called Nine Times and, along with his fellow club members, is the author of a book called Coming Out the Door for the Ninth Ward. Gerald’s dancing is a perfect analogy of his identity: he is always in motion.

The music draws us together. Our pace is set by the bass drum, snare drum, and tuba, and we determine our degree of involvement based on our proximity to the band. In the immediate vicinity of the Prince of Wales...
the action is more concentrated and intense. Gerald is dancing so close to the musicians that he has to duck under trombonist Jerome Jones’s slide to avoid getting hit.

When we turn onto busy Magazine Street, police on motorcycle and horse patrols have blocked off the traffic. Gerald makes use of the extra space to twirl and jump while tourists pour out of local shops to catch a glimpse. He likes to dance alongside the band in what he calls the “sideshow”: “dancing on the sidewalk, jumping on cars, or on the railing of the project, sliding on poles, and just going wild,” he wrote in his book. “The music just possesses me.”

Those of us whose dancing skills are more limited are also welcome as long as we participate: “Whatever you do, you just do it... You don’t have to have any talent or skill and you don’t have to ask permission. Just join in and try to stay on the beat.”

The second line is all about participation, and sound is organizing our movement, working to bring us into synchrony. The parade marshal directs the flow with rhythmic bursts of a whistle he wears around his neck, while a couple men hold cowbells or an empty bottle of Wild Irish Rose above their heads, banging out syncopated rhythms with a drumstick.

Underneath it all, forming the subterranean layer of the soundscape, is the music of the Hot 8 Brass Band. The Hot 8 switches to a new song, the tempo rises, and those of us nearest the action whoop and shout in recognition. When the procession turns onto Louisiana Avenue, the band is playing an original song from the 2005 album Rock with the Hot 8, and some of us chant the refrain:

It’s real
We ain’t talking no shit
Everybody jump when the Hot 8 hit!

Bennie Pete anchors the parade with booming bass notes. He is an imposing presence, six-feet-six, over 350 pounds. That is why he was chosen to play the biggest brass instrument, back in sixth grade when he was already wearing a size 9 men’s shoe and had a 38-inch waist. “I was just like I am now, I was sticking out,” he told me when we first met in 2006. The band director took one look at him and assigned him the tuba. Now he is in his thirties, and everyone recognizes Bennie for his tuba playing. “Hey, Big Tubal!” they greet him when he’s taking a break between songs.

Technically Bennie’s instrument is not a tuba but a sousaphone, and though the term tuba is used more often, the distinction is telling. In the 1890s the bandmaster John Philip Sousa commissioned the new instrument because the tuba was too cumbersome to march with. Because the development of the New Orleans brass band tradition occurred in dialogue with emerging styles of black popular music (traditional jazz,
swing, bebop, R&B, soul, funk, hip-hop) that increasingly emphasized the lower spectrum, the sousaphone came to be featured more prominently in musical arrangements and came to distinguish black brass band music in New Orleans from other styles and places. So while Bennie anchors the syncopated grooves of the rhythm section with short melodic fragments, or “riffs,” that are associated with funk and hip-hop, he can move people, literally, in ways that James Brown or Jay-Z could not.

The dense web of rhythm created by the adjunct percussionists is occasionally interrupted by a sputtering drumroll from Dinerral Shavers, a small man in an oversized white T-shirt with a silver cross medallion and a snare drum strap over his shoulders. Dinerral’s powerful arms are working overtime, but his eyes never look down; he is constantly scanning the action around him while keeping in step with Bennie and bass drummer Harry Cook to keep the crowd moving. The rhythm section—Bennie, Dinerral, and Harry—is responsible for maintaining synchrony and maximizing intensity, and even at leisurely tempos their rhythmic activity has a way of “up-tempoing slow music,” as Gerald described it to me.

About a month after the Prince of Wales parade, at a concert at the House of Blues nightclub, I witnessed Dinerral’s ingenuity in bringing together martial rhythms, the syncopated shuffle of traditional New Orleans brass bands, and hip-hop beats. Though the crowd was made up mostly of black New Orleanians familiar with brass band music, in any stationary setting the physical separation between audience and performer and the deafening sound system have the potential to limit participation and encourage passive spectatorship. Onstage Dinerral works to overcome his surroundings, augmenting his drum setup with a tambourine, cowbell, wood block, and cymbal in order to replicate the second line. This level of multitasking creates complex polyrhythmic grooves, broken up by short blasts, like the one near the beginning of Dinerral’s song “Get Up,” when a space is left for him to play a drumroll that doubles in rhythmic value and rises in volume before landing with a crash! of the cymbal. “Cold style. Like an octopus,” is how trombonist Jerome Jones summed up Dinerral’s approach.

Since seeing the Hot 8 at the Prince of Wales parade I had reached out to Bennie, asking if I could interview him for a radio segment I was producing. He obliged, appearing precisely at the arranged time, positioning himself in front of a microphone, leaning back in an office chair, and flashing a modest smile while no doubt sizing me up.

In a high, genial voice he spoke for two and a half hours, unraveling an epic narrative of nomadic connections between seemingly detached events. He spoke with gratitude about the pleasure he brought to audiences on the street and onstage. ("It’s just like a ‘feel-good’ music," is how he described the New Orleans brass band tradition.) He spoke with modest pride about the Hot 8’s original hip-hop inflected compositions that have expanded the traditional repertoire of brass band music. ("We try to mix it up a little bit.") He spoke with anger of the gap between the cultural capital of the brass band as an icon
of New Orleans culture and the economic capital doled out by nightclubs, festivals, and Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs. ("I'm just tired of being a damn good cheap act.") And he spoke with pain about the loss of three of his band members, including trombonist Joseph Williams, who was gunned down by police officers in 2004 at the age of twenty-two, and of the difficulty of performing at their funerals. ("I felt I had to play, no matter how bad I felt—sad, hurt, wanting to cry, crying—I had to play because I owed him that.")

What I could not have known at the time was that Bennie was leading me into topical areas—the power of the brass band to move people, the debates over tradition and innovation, the promises and pitfalls of the cultural economy, the power of music as a mediating voice in interpersonal and structural violence—that would provide the core themes of my book. I also could not have known that, within a few weeks, Dinerral would become the fourth member of the Hot 8 to die too young, when he took a bullet apparently intended for his stepson, Thaddeus, leaving behind a wife and a son, a mother and three sisters, and a band of young men who had grown up with him and loved him.

So it was that two months after first seeing Dinerral perform, I was watching Bennie Pete and dozens of musicians from every brass band in the city lead a funeral procession in his honor. In a New Orleans jazz funeral, friends and family of the dead march from the church to the burial site, their bodily movement and emotional state governed by the musicians. First, the procession moves slowly and deliberately to the sounds of sacred dirges; then, at a significant location, traditionally the place of burial, the band strikes up an up-tempo spiritual and the mournful march is transformed into a festive parade.

The intensity of emotion at a jazz funeral, especially for a young musician, underscores its status as the most sacred, profound, and traditional form of local black culture. That closely resembles mundane events of little consequence. Whatever emotional distress the various members of the Hot 8 were under after sending off Dinerral, they had to put it behind them and go about their usual business, playing a birthday party at a daiquiri bar before sundown.

The experiences of New Orleans musicians like those in the Hot 8 Brass Band say something about the vitality of local black culture. They also say something about the insecurities of life for many in urban centers across the United States at the start of the twenty-first century. There is much to celebrate here in the way that these young men use tradition to provide people with a sense of community through music, their success in reconfiguring tradition to resonate with contemporary experience, and their ability to accumulate status and earn a living by playing music in diverse contexts. But there is also much to condemn in the way they remain vulnerable to various forms of risk. Following these musicians as they mobilize across these two sides of the same coin, I learned the trick is to “roll with it,” as a song by the Rebirth Brass Band repeats over and over.

1 The Prince of Wales Social Aid and Pleasure Club was the subject of a Tulane University documentary project and an American Routes radio segment in 2009. See tulane.edu/americanroutes/pow/index.cfm, accessed June 12, 2012. Tulane professor Joel Dinerstein has written an article on the club, and his subsequent joining of the club indicates that black membership is not without exception.


3 Kalamu ya Salaam, 2008.

4 There are brass band traditions in many African and diasporic cultures, and evidence suggests that they developed in dialogue with recordings of American jazz and popular Caribbean styles. For an overview of brass bands in former colonial territories, see Flaes, 2000; Reily and Brucher forthcoming.
Psychoanalysis, Writing Pedagogy, and the Public: Toward A New Economy of Desire in the Classroom and in Composition Studies

BY T. R. JOHNSON

"I must mention it," said Sigmund Freud, near the end of his life, "because it’s so exceedingly rich in hopes for the future, perhaps the most important of all the activities of analysis. What I am thinking of is the application of psychoanalysis to education" (146). And Jacques Lacan, also fairly late in his career, said that he understood his work to be, finally, a contribution to the centuries-old discipline of Rhetoric (Schneidermann 169). Given the interest in pedagogy and rhetoric voiced by Freud and Lacan, respectively, one would assume that teachers of writing would have a lot to say about—and through—various concepts derived from psychoanalysis. They haven’t.

As Lad Tobin noted in the early 1990s, a number of scholars in Composition have pointed out the considerable parallels between writing pedagogy and psychoanalysis only to disavow the connection as ludicrous: James Moffett, Donald Murray, Thomas Carnicelli, Stephen Zelnick, and Laura Rosenblatt, among others, have all cautioned teachers away from a framework that in their view can only lead to trouble. Such a framework, they warn, only seeks to replace the rightful focus on student prose with volatile intimacies that are entirely inappropriate to the classroom. Taking a new tack, Tobin set forth a psychoanalytic approach to the teaching of writing that did not seek to engage the unconscious of the student writer but instead to instill in teachers the habit of reflection on how their own work is shaped by the unconscious. But Tobin’s essay may only have added to the difficulty psychoanalysis has had in finding acceptance among teachers of writing, because, as Tobin frames it, psychoanalysis would seem to compromise quite radically the teacher’s authority: even if everyone knows that teachers are not repositories of objective knowledge and standards (that is, that, in popular parlance, that they are “only human” and “just like the rest of us”), the institutional setting requires everyone to pretend otherwise; and, if unconscious desires and biases loom too far into the foreground, as, in psychoanalysis they will, then, rest assured, lawyers are soon to follow.

Thus, psychoanalysis and schooling would seem, in their deep structure, intrinsically opposed. However, when we modify our courses by linking them to projects of public service and publicly circulated student-writing, repositioning the economies of student and teacher around a third term—the public—we reopen the possibility of a rich relationship between pedagogy and psychoanalysis. More precisely, in our efforts to engage effectively with a public, we can find no better tools to do so than those we borrow from psychoanalysis. Why? Because, too often, the university’s relation to the wider community defaults to a highly problematic parent-child dynamic—a dynamic that psychoanalysis is singularly prepared to dismantle.

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or, perhaps less frequently, as an ignorant child venturing (usually through some sort of internship) into the real world to reap knowledge from the experts who supervise, much the way a parent would, the child’s vaguely entrepreneurial gambits there. Either way, the binary of classroom and “real world” is entrenched rather than dissolved, and much is lost. Psychoanalysis, I argue, can help.

**BEYOND PERSONAL NARRATIVE AND ACADEMIC CRITIQUE**

The psychoanalytic pedagogy I have in mind, rather than plunging both teacher and student into the domain of the intensely personal in ways that are messy, even dangerous, can provide us with powerful, conceptual tools for navigating and articulating the dynamic between our classrooms and a wider public. Specifically, I’ll suggest that our classroom should move not only beyond the expressivist rhetoric that awards increasing value to increasingly honest and authentic personal narratives; it must move beyond, as well, the approach that has presented itself as a corrective to expressivism, the pedagogy associated with David Bartholomae and Anthony Petrosky that would emphasize the project of bringing students into increasing mastery over a cluster of texts. Instead, we need to link our courses to the public through service-learning projects and by enabling our students to experiment with means for giving their writing a public meaning, a public life.

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continuously evolving dynamic with “formal or systematic beliefs;” the specific, always unique and ever changeful, internal relations of thought and feeling that would seem to be private but that in a properly psychoanalytic pedagogy are revealed to be thoroughly “social formations” (132-133).

Most specifically, I do not recommend that a teacher function as a psychoanalyst; rather, I suggest that we adopt psychoanalytic terms in our conversations with each other and with students for their power to help us articulate what unfolds as our work winds its way through public space. For example, consider the interpretation that Linda Adler-Kassner et al offer of Bruce Herzberg’s detailed account of a service-learning student who developed a “sharp disjunction between [her] attitude toward the individual she worked with and her attitude toward a social group that this individual represented.” Adler-Kassner et al borrow the Freudian concept of “isolation” to identify how a person can “hold contradictory ideas or attitudes, provided the ideas never come to consciousness simultaneously” (9). This uneasy suppression of contradiction, this particular “structure of feeling” is illuminated by the psychoanalytic concept of “isolation”—that is, the concept functions as a set of tongs for grasping and examining items that would otherwise be impossible to engage.

**USE-VALUE**

In the context of projects of service-learning, where strictly academic ways of knowing are explicitly pushed past their limits by the off-campus engagement in non-scholarly settings, my students become intensely conscious of who they are; more precisely, they can’t help but wonder quite pointedly about the various social positions that are coming into play around the project, quite concretely; they become immersed in rhetoric as what Paul Verhaeghe casts as a journey into the particular, a poetically charged language that can be richly supported by key terms drawn from psychoanalysis.

And when they must produce something that will exist outside the immediate confines of the class and the semester—say, a short video or a training manual for future students who enroll in the course and for the people in the community with whom they’ve worked—this link to the public, to a dimension that exceeds them, radicalizes their self-awareness still further. In other words, when a student creates a paper purely as an academic assignment, it has only exchange value—that is, it equals a certain amount of academic credit; as Evan Watkins argues in *Work Time*, that paper, much as it might enrich in subtle, personal ways the students’ understanding of some aspect of her life, never travels outside the university except as a unit within the larger unit that is her course-grade, which in turn constitutes a unit within the larger unit of value that is her diploma and which, in turn, circulates only in very abstract and increasingly unreliable ways in larger, more vague systems of exchange. However, when a student creates something that has use-value—when it is broadcast through internet or some other form of mass media to serve a purpose in some wider community—it becomes particularized in the way that psychoanalysis so prizes and that so energizes one’s relation to the unconscious, and the students themselves come to particularize these experiences, to set them apart from the stream of generalized exchanges that otherwise blur together as “the college years.”

An appeal for precisely such a move was mounted by John Trimbur in “Composition and the Circulation of Writing” (2000). He asked that we come teach the old rhetorical canon of delivery in a fundamentally new way. No longer a question of how a speaker gestures or modulates the sound of his or her voice, as in classical rhetoric, nor even the more recent way of thinking about delivery in terms of the physical design of one’s written document (typography, and what’s sometimes called “visual rhetoric”), Trimbur asks us instead to “devise delivery
systems that circulate ideas, information, opinions, and knowledge [more widely] and thereby expand the public forum in which people can deliberate the issues of the day” (190). Rather than narrowly code the scene of writing instruction as a sort of middle-class family drama, in which the teacher, as authoritative parent, demands that the student make an account of himself (either by narrating an experience as in expressivism or by demonstrating a command of assigned readings, as in Bartholomae and Petrosky’s well-known corrective to expressivism), Trimbur would instead link student work to worlds outside of the academy, to the public “circulation of cultural forms and products,” to lay bare certain volatile contradictions between, for example, the exchange value that organizes the economy of authoritative experts and the use-value that organizes the particulars of the economy of lay-people.

Again, Trimbur insists that simply “doing service learning” is not enough, for it can entrench what he sees as a false dichotomy between the real world and the academic world, especially when representatives of the latter are merely doing charitable works upon representatives of the former. Rather the key is to open economies that allow knowledge from both sides of this dyad to flow back and forth, an economy in which neither side imagines itself to be answering to a parent or helping out a child. For Trimbur, the primary direction of pedagogy must be into greater and greater historical specificity.

In such a pedagogy, we seek knowledge that is neither purely personal nor merely academic, but rather is articulated within a broader economy of desire, of self-other dynamics, that is always localized and particularized, with public use-value as its guiding ideal. The key, for Trimbur, is to set aside the powerful, parent-like figure of the teacher, which both expressivists and their detractors place at the center of the pedagogic enterprise, and instead bring the student into a dialogue with a public, drawing knowledge from and testing their ideas against an audience that, again, is not a form of parent, but ideally becomes increasingly an equal. Such radically egalitarian immersions in the particular, in use-value, is the stuff of the unconscious, an economy of desire that is always, by definition, new and surprising.

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WORKS CITED


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