Composition as Countermonument: Toward a New Space in Writing Classrooms and Curricula

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Introduction: Unleashing "Frankenstein's Monster"

In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Michel de Certeau looks out from atop a towering skyscraper where he gets a panoramic—and panoptic—view of New York from the perspective of urban planners, "voyeurs" who wield the strategic power of urban design ("Walking in the City" 27). At street level, however, pedestrians constantly subvert that gaze through their own "rhetoric of walking," a series of spatial articulations that defy order and authority. In much the same way, writing programs often face tensions in their curricula, as teachers work to locate themselves within the planning of administrative "architects" while simultaneously undoing that very planning through innovative teaching practices. At the classroom level, writing instructor-power brokers become the administrative enforcers, while student-pedestrians challenge their authority in still another new rhetoric of walking. While these tensions may suggest an impasse in the realm of writing program administration, the interdisciplinary idea of the "counter" or "negative-form" monument—what James Young defines as "self-conscious memorial spaces conceived to challenge the very premises of their being"—offers a different way to see the opposing forces at work in writing programs: as a process of reinvention through a kind of self-destruction. Indeed, if we assume that writing programs run the risk of becoming monolithic or static in their evolution, the metaphor of the countermonument suggests the productive value in revising program structures through continual self-assessment and change. As Young states, "By resisting its own reason for being, the countermonument paradoxically reinvigorates the very idea of the monument itself" (48).

In adopting the metaphor of the countermonument, I draw principally upon Young's idea that the very design of such a structure can call into question its purpose for being. For example, a countermonument might gradually sink entirely into the ground, leaving only a remnant or memory of its original form and defying the "relative fixity of location" that underlies most conventional monuments. Conventional monuments, according to Young, conflate time, memory, and location so that "the actual consequence of a memorial's unyielding fixedness in space is also its death over time" (47). The countermonument, by contrast, challenges the general rigidity of time, memory, and fixed location, becoming instead "a monument against itself [. . .] a self-abnegating monument, literally self-effacing" (Young 28). In his book *The Texture of Memory*, Young features several of these countermonuments. One, a tall cylindrical column reaching six meters into the air, slowly sinks and after several years disappears beneath the surface of the ground; another, a "negative-form" fountain submerged deep in groundwater, projects the mirror image, the antithesis, really, of its formerly visible grandeur.

In making the case for composition as countermonument, I argue that composition programs and curricula by nature demand the same type of self-abnegation: to flourish, that is, they must be willing to stand against themselves. While the basic purpose of the countermonument—to question the general effectiveness of, for instance, traditional Holocaust memorials—is different in nature from my use of this metaphor, both are similar in the sense that they involve the transformation of space through a collision of internal and external forces.[1] Indeed, the countermonument's function is to rethink the very nature of memorial structures, their origins, influences, purposes, and impacts upon the public. Like a countermonument, I assert, composition programs and curricula must take structural risks, welcome opposing voices, and be willing to examine their fundamental reason for being—even if doing that means giving up some control or stability as they assume a more protean and thus more viable shape. As Young explains, "When it begins to come to life, to grow, shrink, or change form, the [counter]monument may become threatening [. . .] to have a will of its own." In forming an identity, he adds, countermonuments "become a little like Frankenstein's monster, a golem out of the maker's control" (37).

The Countermonument at SUWP

To analyze the idea of composition as countermonument—a Frankenstein's monster with a will of its own—I point to the Syracuse University Writing Program (SUWP), a stand-alone writing program that in 2001 began a major effort to revamp its curriculum to focus on developing skills in analy-

sis, argument, and critical research. The program's previous emphasis on critical reflection and theorizing continued in some ways under the revised curriculum, but it is safe to say that this new incarnation, designed in part to reflect shifts that had occurred in the discipline, represented a significant change of direction at SUWP.[2] Before (and during) the transition, the writing program was subject to expressions of dissatisfaction from various elements of the campus community. In spring 2002, for example, Undergraduates for Better Education (UBE), a student group ostensibly serving as self-appointed watchdogs for academic quality at Syracuse, released the results of a campus-wide survey that listed the writing program's two introductory composition courses (Writing 105 and 205) as collectively one of the top three sources of discontent among the university's students. While members of the University Senate, including then-Chancellor Kenneth Shaw, raised questions about the methodological integrity of UBE's survey, the results received widespread attention when they appeared on the front page of Syracuse's student newspaper, *The Daily Orange* (Capozzoli). Another critique of SUWP—an article by the *Daily*'s opinion page editor published a year later after changes had been implemented in the writing program—reflects the persistent view of how at least some students perceived composition instruction on campus: "Ask any upperclassman," wrote Colin Dabkowski, "and chances are you'll hear a horror story about their WRT 105 experience—fragmented curricula, bogus teaching techniques or pointless exercises in the diverse and bizarre" (3).

Even the advent of the new curriculum did not protect against what Margaret Himley, director of undergraduate studies in Syracuse's writing program, called a "culture of complaint" (qtd. in Dabkowski 3). For instance, during the implementation of the new curriculum, a cartoon appeared in the *DO* parodying a WRT 105 assignment that asked students to analyze an artifact in their dorm rooms. Even though the assignment called for the use of analytical techniques outlined in Rosenwasser and Steven's acclaimed *Writing Analytically* and was complicated by Wendy Hesford's sophisticated rhetorical analysis of a family photograph in *Framing Identities*, the newspaper cartoon implied that the assignment was, at heart, simplistic. Indeed, publication of the cartoon perpetuated a public view of the writing program antithetical to what the curricular reformers had intended. When I saw the cartoon taped to the office door of a writing program administrator, I remember thinking that the process of internal reform had suffered a setback in its attempt to institute a more rigorous curriculum and reflect new disciplinary knowledge. As the writing program tried to move forward, it seemed, SUWP was instead losing ground in public perception. As one of

several instructors chosen to pilot the new curriculum, I found the attacks disheartening, especially after having developed what I considered a series of rigorous writing assignments for the course.

Against this backdrop of institutional criticism, the writing program made another important turn in its effort at curricular reform. Building upon the campus administration's focus on the university's five core values (see "Diversity at Syracuse University"), the program won two grant proposals in Spring 2003 and initiated the process of infusing its curriculum with one of those values—diversity—which the university defines on its Web site as "the ability to genuinely appreciate others for their differences and similarities." One of these two grant proposals, "Writing and Diversity in a Globalized World," states that the goal of "[w]riting in a globalized world requires starting from an assumption of difference, of limited knowledge, of perspective." As part of achieving this goal, the writing program instituted, among other initiatives, a series of diversity forums to which it invited campus representatives (including, for example, experts from disability studies and the university's LGBT Resource Center); the program also sponsored a diversity film series that took up issues of race, gender, sexuality, and disability; hosted a series of outside speakers on campus, and launched a Web site to begin the process of incorporating diversity as an integral part of the writing program curriculum. In this multifaceted undertaking, participation by several university constituencies inspired a series of dialogues about some of the most divisive issues on campus, including a blackface incident involving an SU fraternity *and* an antigay hate crime in which a student was beaten close to campus.

In my administrative role as facilitator of a coordinating group for instructors in the writing program, I attended many of these events and found they drew a broad cross-section of the university community. One event in particular, the "No Bull Diversity Summit," featured discussions among many campus groups—most notably a fraternity that had been disciplined because a former member had instigated the blackface incident. During the session, participants answered a number of questions about the appropriate role of students and teachers in promoting diversity discussions and projects in classrooms and the impact of campus events on the classroom, and of classrooms on campus events. Those attending joined a series of small groups, each comprised of various factions of the campus community and led by a predesignated faculty member. At the end of the breakout groups, a lively discussion ensued during which students spoke passionately about their views of campus life—with black, gay, and female students speaking up alongside white male fraternity students in an often contested and passionate expression of viewpoints. Today, I recall the courage of two students in particular: a gay student who spoke of feeling isolated on campus

and silenced in the aftermath of the hate crime and a member of the Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity who, citing concerns with the "tone" of some of the remarks made by audience participants, said he felt his position as the member of a majority group had not been addressed fairly.

In light of No Bull, it seems evident that the writing program's decision to open itself to discussions of diversity (and, in the process, to critiques of its program and teachers) renders the program to be much like a countermonument, a structure both undone and reshaped by various university constituencies. As Young asserts, "[The countermonument] forces viewers to desanctify the memorial, demystify it, and become its equal. [. . .] Ultimately, such a monument undermines its own authority by inviting and then incorporating the *author*ity of passersby" (33). How is it that a writing program facing institutional criticism and misunderstanding could actually become *stronger* by giving up some of its own authority and incorporating others' ideas—the *author*ity of outsiders and the elements of the countermonument? Perhaps unwittingly, with its traditional structure (the monument) in place, the writing program at Syracuse put itself in flux by inviting the kind of dialogic participation necessary to allow change (the countermonument,) to emerge from the bottom up. This countermonument was created in part through the forums in which students as well as other campus participants became the authors of ideas and, at least on an advisory level, of program- and university-wide policies. Young articulates the importance of the type of creative transformation set in motion by the writing program when he describes the purpose of the countermonument:

> [I]ts aim is not to console but to provoke; not to remain fixed but to change; not to be everlasting but to disappear; not to be ignored by passersby but to demand interaction; not to remain pristine but to invite its own violation and desanctification; not to accept graciously the burden of memory but to throw it back at the town's feet. (30)

While on the surface it might appear that the implementation of the new curriculum was the only crucible at work in the transformation of the writing program, I argue, instead, that the program's willingness to open itself to its own violation—to provoke discussion, demand interaction and, in essence, disappear in one form, only to reappear, stronger, in another––was the process that led to positive change. Put differently, the program allowed itself—perhaps unwittingly—to become Young's "golem out of the maker's control." At the No Bull Summit, with the program's new emphasis on anal-

ysis and argument intact and diversity thrust to the forefront of future curricular revision, a student commented on the importance of such "desanctification," noting that the dynamic interactions taking place in the room that night could also reinvigorate college classrooms. That could happen, he stated, if teachers "allow student discussion to open up, even beyond comfort zones. This might involve some periods of silence before students would move in to undertake and push difficult discussions beyond trite levels" (Lipson par. 1). As Carol Lipson, current director of the SU writing program and leader of a group at the forum, reported, "They strongly felt that students needed to be given the space to speak, encouraged to speak" (par. 3).

By inviting criticism of its curricular and classroom practices, the writing program arguably reframed the "burden of memory" that a monument accumulates over time, redirecting once negative perceptions through authors who contributed to the program's new meaning. Given that some countermonuments, such as the aforementioned cylindrical column, gradually disappear as part of their purpose—or at least change the way people think about their traditional memorial features—it seems clear that the SU writing program reconstituted itself in a new form. Criticisms of it (reflected in cartoons, surveys, and newspaper articles) suggested that SUWP had come to resemble Young's *conventional* monument. However, arguably the highly interactive efforts of SU's diversity initiative in combination with the writing program's new curricular emphases worked to reconfigure SU's writing program as a *countermonument*, thereby rendering its older form obsolete. In characterizing traditional monuments, Young states that "[a]n image created in one time and carried over into a new time suddenly appears archaic, strange, or irrelevant altogether" (47). Rather than becoming irrelevant, SUWP's diversity curriculum and the investment it demanded from the campus community helped transform a writing program whose image might indeed have seemed archaic to some. Through the process of initiating discussions about curriculum and diversity, however, the program unleashed a Frankenstein's monster, forcing itself to enter a new disciplinary space through catalysts at least partly "out of the maker's control."[3]

Countermonuments in the Classroom

In "Writing Classroom as A & P Parking Lot," Geoffrey Sirc uncannily evokes a similar counter-monumental space in the composition classroom when he challenges writing instruction that relies too much on the broader discourse conventions of the university. Just as Young contends that adhering too much to a traditional monument can cause its "death over time," Sirc suggests that mimicking conventions of academic discourse unneces-

sarily fixes those conventions in time and space, creating "straight jackets of formalist grammar and essayist prose, *the grammar of the monument* that will crush them and bury them" (66; emphasis added). In contrast to the grammar of the monument, Sirc proposes his own version of the countermonument: the palimpsest, or a space in which "allegory [. . .] allows us to speak of the one story written over the other" (67). In Sirc's view, the various layers of the palimpsest in the writing classroom—the subtexts or stories written underneath—challenge the "monument" to form a complete view of writing classrooms and curricula (67). In effectively calling for a countermonument in the writing classroom—an "A & P parking lot" that "insists on the loss and denies the monument"—Sirc seeks to subvert a panoptic view of writing instruction.

Sirc's admonition to undo classroom monuments suggests my own response to SUWP's artifact-based analysis assignment. While first-year instructors in the program were required to assign students this project, as a second-year instructor I was free *not* to adopt it. Instead, drawing from recent work on architecture, cities, and space, I asked students to analyze a building on the Syracuse campus and the way it invoked questions of authority, ideology, and power. In addition, I challenged them to complicate their analysis with characteristics of a city's bottom-up evolution (using Steven Johnson's *Emergence: The Connected Lives of Ants, Brains, Cities, and Software*); modern versus postmodern architecture (described in Mark Taylor's *The Moment of Complexity*); and the rhetorical collision of form (modeled after Frank Gehry's Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain) (Muschamp). Thus, as an instructor in the program, I reinvented some of the SU writing program's expectations, adding my own subtext to the assignment. But, in Sirc-like fashion, the palimpsest acquired another layer when some students said they wanted to analyze buildings with which they felt a personal connection or "history." Much like de Certeau's *Wandersmänner*, my first-year students were proposing a way to put their own footprints on common university monuments. To address their concerns, I urged them to think about how their personal scripts, like Wendy Hesford's, could be imprinted on buildings that had existed sometimes for more than a century. One student, Megan Stevenson, discovered the intersections of personal and public scripts when she compared her Syracuse dormitory, Lawrinson Hall, to an isolated structure—a prison in the center of campus. In a paper published in *Intertext*, the SU writing program's annual journal of outstanding student writing from its courses, Stevenson writes:

> I find it ironic that a building this tall can see so far across the landscape of the city and fail to become a part of it. From my thirteenth floor window, I can see a number of things: the campus and the Carrier Dome on my right, the city straight ahead and to my left, and the countryside beyond it all. As I stare at the many cars speeding down Interstate 81, I realize I am looking at a world in motion. Yet, Lawrinson, like a penal institution, is incorporated into neither the bustling campus nor the city. It remains on the outskirts: a forgotten and ignored structure. As a home to many Syracuse and SUNY-ESF students, the isolation of Lawrinson can dampen the growth of our social circles. (23)

For Stevenson, the social isolation of a cold, impersonal dormitory suggests the ways in which she and others are inhibited from growing as a student and person. Her observation of a "world in motion" from the vantage point of a structure that restricts and restrains her illustrates the dorm functioning as a *monument*. Stevenson implies, however, that the agency of individual students transforms the dorm itself into a *counter*monument, especially through acts of reappropriation (23–24). In this light, the panoptic power of the institution is subverted as students co-opt negative space to reinvigorate their lives. Architectural critic Jim Collins states the dilemma somewhat differently when he examines how "actual inhabitants make the landscape into their life-scapes" (39). He asks, "How [do] they develop what de Certeau refers to as the local 'ways of operating' in which they take place, developing their own geographies that make their environments legible in their own terms" (39)? Various geographies, according to Collins, "may be *learned* as they are *made meaningful* through appropriation by individuals who invest them with intensely personal meanings" (44). This is in fact what happened for Stevenson as she transformed her dorm through her own investment in it. She writes, "I believe we will all flourish in time. Every day I witness more and more students attempting to relate to the people around them in spite of Lawrinson's predisposition to interfere" (24). In my assignment on analyzing urban space, then, what had started as students' desire to gain more control over their own work—to etch their personal scripts into the impersonal stone of campus buildings—ultimately resulted in students devising countermonuments, not only writing over the physical spaces they studied, but uncovering new layers in the theoretical palimpsests opened up by de Certeau and others.

Despite the countermonument's ability to help us reimagine the role of change in the work of writing programs, I am not suggesting that the process requires programs or instructors to yield all authority to outside participants or forces. After all, whether viewed as a memorial entity or as a metaphor for composition programs, the negative-form monument must necessarily be considered in relation to the notion of "monument" itself. It is precisely this inextricable link between monument and countermonument that de Certeau frames in slightly different terms when he discusses "strategies" (the overarching actions associated with power in specific locations (like writing programs), a "*place* that can be delimited as its *own*", and "tactics" (isolated actions taking place outside organized or formal spaces "without any base") (35–36; 36–37). De Certeau is most interested in the disciplinary space produced by the *intersection* of strategies and tactics—what Henri Lefebvre calls "spatial practices" (38). Thus, for de Certeau, the importance of strategies and tactics lies in their collision, resulting in a "contradiction between the collective mode of administration and an individual mode of reappropriation" (96). In this sense, de Certeau's use of "spatial practices" mimics the relationship between urban planner and city walker, writing program administrator and instructor, teacher and student, or anyone who takes part in rewriting established structures:

> The long poem of walking manipulates spatial organizations, no matter how panoptic they may be: it is neither foreign to them (it can take place only within them) nor in conformity with them (it does not receive its identity from them). It creates shadows and ambiguities within them. It inserts multitudinous references and citations into them (social models, cultural mores, personal factors). Within them it is itself the effect of successive encounters and occasions that constantly alter it and make it the other's blazon. (101)

If we evaluate de Certeau's ideas of spatial reorganization in light of writing program administration, it seems clear that the relationship between program and participant, instructor and student, is highly symbiotic. De Certeau's "long poem of walking" does not obviate the need for strategies, for an overall, top-down plan for administration—either by the program itself or by teachers in individual courses. As de Certeau says, "[W]alking [. . .] can take place only within [spatial organizations]." It is clear, however, that de Certeau considers tactics crucial, acknowledging as he does that the perambulations of passersby have the power to change not only the overall structure, but the

walkers themselves (110). The same can be said of the forces continuously affecting the nature of writing programs. The actual practices of teaching, writing syllabi, or designing curricula are forces that necessarily change the relationship between teachers and students, administrators and instructors, irrespective of the strategies in place program-wide. As an example, I point to my assignment on analyzing urban space, which I see in part as a tactic, an act of reappropriation or manipulation of SUWP's spatial organization. Still, my emphasis on analysis and my use of certain textual readings owed a great deal to the writing program's overall philosophy and practices. The urban space assignment, in turn, was interpreted by students who inserted their own "shadows and ambiguities" (de Certeau 101) by developing original analyses, using sources in unexpected ways, or, in Megan Stevenson's case, inserting a personal script with universal applications. The students' use of tactics suggests how the process of change can work slowly from the bottom up, interacting with strategies at every stage to exert a push-pull influence on writing classrooms.

The interaction of strategies and tactics relates to the idea of "negative form" at the heart of countermonuments. While negative form may manifest itself in diverse spatial configurations, the overall idea remains remarkably consistent: any antiform, by working against the norm, can awaken a greater understanding of the normalized monument itself. One way in which the negative-form monument achieves this effect is by inviting—in fact, demanding—the participation of passersby. As Young points out, one job of a countermonument is to ensure that the public examines itself as part of the performance: "The viewer, in effect, [is] the subject of the work. Or, in Michael North's elaboration of this principle, 'the public *becomes* the sculpture'" (31). The result, in Young's words, is to "denaturalize [. . .] an artificial distance between artist and public" (31). Thus, the countermonument, like tactics, calls for a certain reversal: instead of imposing or dictating meaning, it essentially absorbs new meanings; the audience essentially creating a new monument as it reconstitutes the old one. An example of this phenomenon occurred at the No Bull Diversity Summit when students said they wanted teachers to reproduce the same ethos in their classrooms that had emerged from forum participants, one that necessarily made students a part of the diversity process. In a reversal of more typical classroom dynamics, student tactics initiated a dialogic process:

> Students expressed a desire for other students to take responsibility for not letting racist/sexist/homophobic remarks "pass" in class discussions. Teachers, they remarked, have the responsibility to facilitate student learning by creating and maintain-

ing the conditions for pointed, respectful discussion. Students in the group advocated for the value of writing in that it provides people the opportunity for reflection on their own words and the words of others; writing provides a critical distance that can give way to a more "reasoned" or "calm" expression of views. However, writing *does no good* if it remains on the page. Thoughts, feelings, views, arguments, etc., must be voiced in conversation. (Nentwick par. 3)

The shared responsibility of teachers and students is an example of how tactics and strategies can be mutually reinforcing. Instructors are not imposing anything from the top down; the very process of creating a good classroom environment through discussion and other means is negotiated between students and teachers. Clearly, individual tactics are viewed collectively as an overall strategy—the development of practices in specific situations that will eventually create a new ethos in individual classrooms and university-wide.

The integration of strategies and tactics not only alters the traditional hierarchy of relationships in writing programs, but yields an even more important result: changing the nature of writing itself. The process of change begins with the idea that a countermonument, which may disappear gradually into the ground or leave but a trace or memory of its former structure, defies the fixed location that Darsie Bowden suggests underlies our typical notions of texts. Bowden explains that texts are often thought of as "containers" with elements (e.g., paragraphs) that "contain" still other elements (e.g., words and sentences). Bowden writes, "This container-within-a-container concept further reinforces a spatial notion of locatedness, which confines and restricts movement within the text" (372). The countermonument, by contrast, envisions a hybrid space where ideas within texts are continuously negotiated and impermanent rather than rigid and inflexible. Thus, the idea of the countermonument—like the interaction of tactics and strategies—can help students realize that form, arrangement, and grammar are not rigid or *a priori* structures, but rather are emergent, continually pushing against—and sometimes breaking through—the boundaries of the container.

How is it that the notion of the countermonument, which defies traditional ideas of containment, might change the nature of writing in programs or classrooms? I suggest that it is through a careful interplay of counter- and traditional monuments, tactics and strategies. Under Sirc's configuration, the writing classroom seems to be seen as a Certeauian liberated space (105), one in which antitexts, like negative-form monuments, simply emerge from what de Certeau calls a "nowhere" or a place where words carve out an altered identity (105). Sirc suggests, for example, that a student's inter-

pretation of critic Allen Bloom as narrow-minded ("ITS (sic) because he was raised in the attic of a cheese factory") (45) reflects the kind of allegorical wordplay that would be impossible in a normal classroom setting. I contend, however, that Sirc's take on the countermonument is incomplete because the type of writing he advocates cannot simply emerge from "nowhere." Sirc's countermonument, in other words, cannot exist without the monument. In fact, if the student's allusion to the fumes of a cheese factory were linked to a specific phrase by Bloom or to an overall philosophy, it would arguably be more effective. For instance, in the manner of a countermonument, what if the student had started his remarks with a phrase Bloom had written—the "monument"—introduced his own witty aphorism, and then used it to make a larger cultural point, to produce an antitext that included reference to the original monument, the text from which it emerged? While it's true that the student has drawn a cultural parallel between the dangers of highbrow thinking and the dulled senses that ostensibly come from being raised in the attic of a cheese factory, does his writing ever become strategic? Can it ever be more than a clever rebuke of Bloom's ostensibly narrow ideas? Put differently, isn't the text that was once a towering monument or a fountain flowing above ground just as important as the empty space that now replaces it? Or could the cylinder in the ground even be possible without the cultural memory of its once-looming edifice?

This seems to be the challenge for the city walkers in writing programs, where the terrain is often slippery and the boundaries always changing. It is a terrain that negative perceptions about the nature of writing programs seem to carve out. De Certeau's adoption of "spatial practices" reminds us that the countermonument leaves a suggestion of the monument, taking into account the many views important to writing curricula and classrooms. It suggests that starting from the view on top, there is a great deal of room to navigate, appropriate, and change, while leaving an overall programmatic structure intact. What seems important is that this new hybridity is crucial to the survival of curricula and writing programs. Even though it may be tempting at times either to rigidly adhere to the monument or to abandon it altogether for the countermonument, it seems essential to recognize the role of both in writing programs and classrooms.

Finding Hybrid Spaces

Lefebvre suggests that the idea of space as a neutral form or container "designed to receive whatever is poured into it" denies the fact that space is "a social morphology" (94). This concept is important in the context of a writing curriculum's change over time, just as proper names, in the words of de Certeau, continue to hold meaning even after their initial value changes:

"Disposed in constellations that hierarchize and semantically order the sur-face of the city, operating chronological arrangements and historical justi-fications, these words [. . .] slowly lose, like worn coins, the value engraved on them, but the ability to signify outlives its first definition" (104). The phenomenon de Certeau describes is precisely what happened at SUWP to words like "ethnography," "reflection," and "theorizing." Over time, the meaning of the words changed and gradually lost the value that had accom-panied their original definition. Like a countermonument or Sirc's palimp-sest, these words ultimately became "liberated spaces that can be occupied" (de Certeau 105). Given manifold interpretations by various instructors, the words acquired a "poetic geography on top of the geography of the literal, forbidden or permitted meaning" (de Certeau 104). In the Syracuse writing program, the indeterminacy of these "liberated" or hybrid spaces invited criticism and may have brought about a lack of direction. In fact, the reason that "urban planners" initially decided to reroute the writing program cur-riculum is that the monument had acquired too many other geographies, its form moving further and further away from the needs of students and administrators and the meanings the names initially stood for.

Ideally, of course, names—for example, "analysis," "argument," "diver-sity"—should be starting points, and, as functions of the countermonu-ment, they are. De Certeau suggests that "[t]hese constellations of names provide traffic patterns: they are starts directing itineraries" (104). From the structured pages of texts, de Certeau suggests, the names "produce anti-texts, effects of dissimulation and escape, possibilities of moving into other landscapes" (107). It is in this context that social morphology benefits both planners and walkers. In other words, it is arguably the idea that the writing program at Syracuse has created such "liberated spaces" not only program-wide but within individual classrooms. At the same time, it seems clear that SUWP's countermonuments relate to the overall program monument. There is a certain order within the disorder, a kind of planned chaos. Adminis-trators should see this as part of the very nature of writing classrooms and programs. It can be beneficial to relax rigid constraints and allow ideas to emerge from broad participation. A golem is never that far out of the maker's control. Letting writing programs evolve through participation at every level helps keep those programs fresh, growing, and changing in positive ways.

Notes

1   By adopting the idea of the countermonument as a metaphor, I do not intend in any way to diminish the customary affiliation of the countermonument with the Holocaust and the vital memorial purpose it serves. I am using the metaphor because of the function of the countermonument—rethinking the very nature of memorial structures—and the parallels I see in writing program administration and curricula.

2   In my analysis, I am confining myself to curricular work completed during my time at Syracuse University, which ended in August 2004. I am not, for example, drawing upon new WRT 105 and 205 Outcomes enacted after I left.

3   I think it's important to acknowledge the extraordinary efforts of all those involved in the development of the Syracuse University writing program through the years, a process that continues today. While I have worked to ensure the accuracy of the facts presented here, the interpretation of those facts is ultimately my own, as are any inadvertent errors that may remain.

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