

2016-01-01

# A Rhetorical Theory of Institutions

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A RHETORICAL THEORY  
OF INSTITUTIONS

PAUL JAY VIERRA

Doctoral Program in Rhetoric and Composition

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Charles Ambler, Ph.D.  
Dean of the Graduate School

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To Irving A. Kelter, Ph.D.  
1948-2016

A RHETORICAL THEORY  
OF INSTITUTIONS

by

PAUL JAY VIERRA, M.L.A.

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at El Paso

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Rhetoric and Writing Studies, Department of English

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

August 2016

## Acknowledgements

This dissertation was made possible through the generous support of many individuals, both within and outside the classroom. I am especially grateful to my dissertation committee—Drs. Beth Brunk-Chavez, Kate Mangelsdorf, and Keith Erikson, as well as to the person who got me into this mess in the first place, Dr. Maggy Smith, chair of UTEP’s English department. In addition, I extend many thanks to the Graduate School at UTEP for funding much of my research on archives through a Dodson Research Grant.

Of course, there is my family who supported me every step of the way. This includes my dear mother, Junene, and my wife, Patricia, my mother-in-law, Davie Johnson, and the rest of the clan. I wish to extend a hearty thanks to my cohort, including the newly minted doctors of rhetoric and composition, which include Daliborka Crnkovic, Cassandra Dulin, and Melanie Salome; and to Lou Herman for use of the room. Special recognition must go to Marsha Hansen and Robert Stakes in Institutional Advancement for their encouragement to complete the darn thing.

Love to Alexis, for whom all things are possible.

## **Abstract**

How an institution remembers itself affects its practices and the ensuing knowledge produced. This is a result of the differences between truths and knowledge, which are based on beliefs. Beliefs are defined using either pragmatic language, which is based on observations and can be justified, or fictive language, which cannot be justified. The practices of an institution can be affected by the beliefs of the institution, which in turn affects scholarship. Modern research universities, such as the University of Texas at El Paso, must turn their research gaze not only outward, but also inwards in order to better serve society. Such examinations must negotiate the two cultures found within each research university that divides the humanities from the sciences. The tool to bridge this gap is found within the unifying field of rhetoric, an innate trait possessed by every human that facilitates the processing of belief into knowledge using pragmatic and fictive languages. Any examination of an institution, be it higher education, government, or economic, rests on four pillars. These pillars are place, belief, argumentation, and archives. Together they determine how an institution uses rhetoric to process belief for their own use.

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## **Abbreviations**

CIERP	Center for Institutional Evaluation, Research, and Planning
IPEDS	Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System
STEM	Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics
U.T.	University of Texas
UTEP	University of Texas at El Paso

# **Chapter 1**

## **A Rhetorical Theory of Institutions**

### **Introduction**

#### **Historical Sketch: First Day of Classes**

This project began a little past noon on Saturday, August 24, 2013. I had just received an email request from the director of University of Texas at El Paso's Centennial Office, Keith Erikson, asked me to help him determine the exact number of students who attended the first day of classes at the school, then known as the State School of Mines and Metallurgy.

For over fifty years, the narrative history of U.T. El Paso selected September 23, 1914, as the official first day of classes. As a researcher for the institution's Centennial Celebration, this date was easy to confirm given the number of primary sources that cited it. Previous anniversary celebrations, most notably the 75th and 90th, celebrated this date. On my first day as a volunteer researcher and editor with the Centennial Office, Erikson explained to me the major commemorative plans the University had organized for September 23, 2014, which was just over one year away.

Many primary sources that we had reviewed confirmed this date, making it settled knowledge. For instance, the June 5, 1914 issue of the *El Paso Herald*

contained an article with the headline, “School of Mines opens on Sept. 23,” citing as its source recently appointed first dean of the new school, Steve H. Worrell (fig. 1). This was followed by an advertisement on page 24 of the *El Paso Morning Times* on August 30, three weeks before opening, with the heading, “Announcement: The State School of Mines and Metallurgy Begins its Work Sept. 23d, ’14.” In the weeks that followed, several other newspaper articles included the September 23 date in reference to the school opening. The first published history of the University, *Frontier College*, written in 1964 by Francis Fugate, a professor of English at what was then known as Texas Western College, picked up on this date, writing, “The doors of the school opened on September 23, as scheduled.”<sup>1</sup>

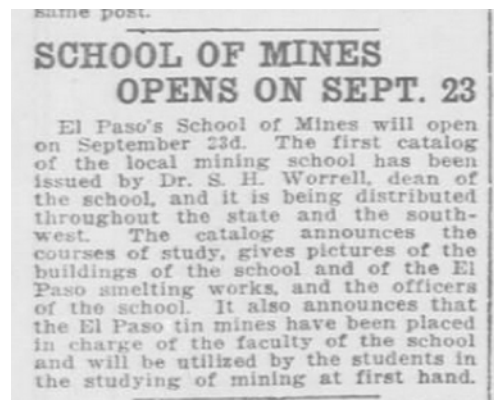


Figure 1. *El Paso Herald*, June 5, 1914.

The sourcing appeared impeccable, thus making the September claim unassailable. Fugate, as well as our Centennial Office researchers, had several primary sources that included written statements by or quotes from key players, which were readily accessible at the University in 1964 on print and microfilm, and today on digital newspaper databases. The fact that newspapers in El Paso made no

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<sup>1</sup> Francis L. Fugate, *Frontier College: Texas Western at El Paso, the First Fifty Years* (El



mention of the school in their September 23 or September 24 editions appeared to be more of an editorial decision than an anomaly.

There is an apocryphal quote which states that discoveries are usually made not with cries of “Eureka!” but “that’s funny.”<sup>2</sup> As I went through the sourcebooks, I searched for clues that would confirm first-day attendance. Page six of the *El Paso Herald*, published on Wednesday, September 30, 1914, made the first reference to the opening of the school, stating, “The El Paso School of Mines opened Monday for its initial session.” I was not the first researcher to come across this article, as many others had previously cited it as a source for the names and hometowns of the students. However, on this reading, I noted that the date of the article—September 30, 1914—was a Wednesday. September 23, 1914, was also a Wednesday. This article stated that the school opened on Monday, which would have been September 28, 1914. That is funny.

This discrepancy between the two sets of data and the original claim required reconciliation, as it challenged a claim that that before this moment belonged to common knowledge. At the least, the primary sources that were at our disposal required reexamining. A search also began for additional sources, many of which no longer existed in El Paso, to help clarify this disruption. The minutes of the Board of Regents for the University of Texas, the governing board of the school, made mention of reports and letters written at the time by the school’s dean, Steve H. Worrell. No previous historian or scholar, however, studying the school’s history

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<sup>2</sup> Generally attributed to science author and biochemist Isaac Asimov.

cited them in their research. The previous month I had traveled to Austin the previous month to search through the records of the U.T. Board of Regents at the Briscoe Center for American History, located on the campus of the University of Texas at Austin. While I found many fascinating and relevant documents related to U.T. El Paso's history, I did not locate the records mentioned in the minutes.

It was not until a few days after the uncovering of the discrepancy that I came across a footnote in a thirty-year-old article on the history of the school's architecture.<sup>3</sup> This article contained a quote by the school's first dean that I had never seen and cited as its source a letter contained in a collection at the Briscoe Center. Upon checking once more with the research librarians at the archive, they located a hardcopy of a forty-year-old finding aid that was not available in any digital database. This collection, entitled "U.T. President's Office Records," contained the early records of the school's history.<sup>4</sup> Many researchers, including myself, had overlooked them, as part of the narrative history of the U.T. El Paso at that time claimed that the first president of the University of Texas at El Paso was not elected until 1931, while the president of the University of Texas at Austin served more as a facilitator than executive leader. Rather than reporting directly to the regents, the dean of the school reported to the U.T. president.

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<sup>3</sup> Lloyd C. Engelbrecht and June-Marie F. Engelbrecht, "The Trost Touch: Henry Trost and the Bhutanese Architecture," *Nova* 16, no. 2 (December, 1980).

<sup>4</sup> University of Texas, "U.T. Presidents Records (4X)" (Correspondence and documents, Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin, 1884-1948); University of Texas, "U.T. Presidents Records (VF)" (Correspondence and documents, Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin, 1907-1968). Hereafter cited as U.T. Presidents Records.

On August 28, 2013, four days after our inquiry began, a reference intern at the Briscoe Center, Sarah Trugott, retrieved a box of records marked “College of Mines” from the archived president’s records. In it, she located the letter referenced in the minutes of the regents and written by Steve Worrell to the president of the University of Texas in Austin, Sidney Mezes, and dated September 22, 1914. The very first line of letter read, “Registration begins with us tomorrow.” September 23, 1914, it turned out, was not the first day of classes, but the first day of registration.

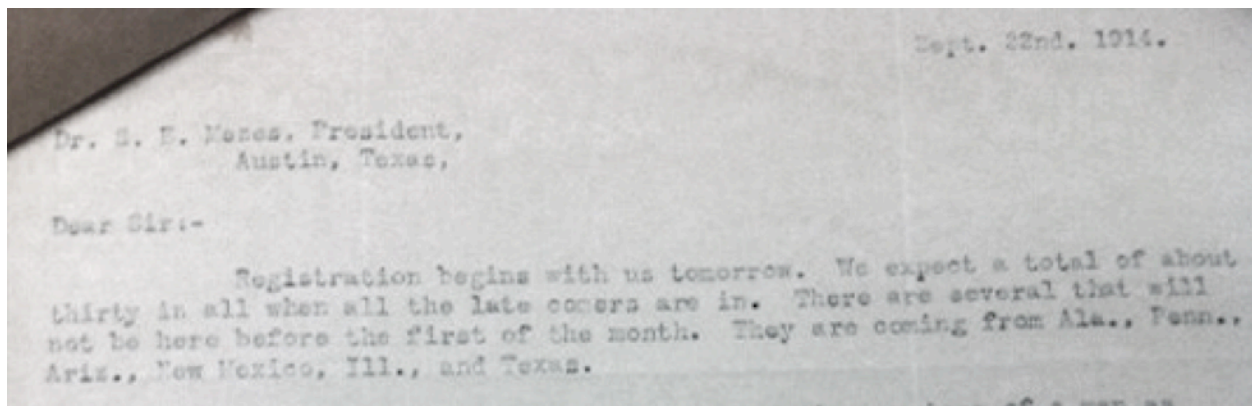


Figure 2. Detail from letter written by Steve Worrell to Sidney Mezes, September 22, 1914.<sup>5</sup>

Our new claim, that the first day of classes was September 28, 1914, and not September 23, 1914, now had the data to back it up. Erikson and I also noted that the academic calendar for the School of Mines mirrored that of the Main Branch of the University of Texas in Austin (as U.T. Austin was called then), which similarly began with registration on September 23 and held its first classes of the fall term on September 28. Erikson compiled this evidence into a summary report and presented the research to the president of the University, Diana Natalicio.

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<sup>5</sup> Steve Worrell to Sidney Mezes, September 22, 1914, VF8Aa, U.T. Presidents Records.

While I felt quite proud of this bit of research and the opportunity to contribute to the history of the institution, and though the president and her staff did not reject our claim, it was met with a degree of disappointment. There would be a “blanket,” according to Erikson, thrown over the claim. While we were free to publish the results of our research, the University found the September 28 anniversary date problematic. For several months, the Centennial Office, which Erikson himself directed, had proposed plans for a campus-wide celebration with classes suspended on September 23, 2014, which fell on a Tuesday. Unfortunately, September 28, 2014, fell on a Sunday, which ruled out any public celebration of the.

Quietly, over the course of the next several weeks, the anniversary date of September 23 disappeared from the campaigns of the centennial celebration, much in the way disfavored political leaders disappeared from official Soviet photographs. Without fanfare, websites were edited to remove the date, thousands of commemorative silicon wrist bands with “First day of classes, September 23, 1914” imprinted on them were mothballed, and volunteers used hole punches to remove “23” from packets of commemorative dip mix. It appeared that our claim, while valid, was not convenient.

### Institutions

The preceding historical sketch on research and its implications can be criticized in several ways. This deconstruction will highlight the intent and purpose of this dissertation, as it explores how institutions and the formal organizations that define them arise and evolve out of ever-emerging rhetorical situations and

how the tension between rhetorical concepts of truth and knowledge shape them. Rather than focusing on the world at large, I am examining “the institution” as a particular space existing in a particular time in which rhetoric is practiced. This allows for the emergence of a theory on how individuals within the institution write history and practice scholarship across disciplines under different constraints imposed by the institution, as well as by the scholar’s own making. These constraints affect how the institution sees and perceives itself in both its formal and informal histories.

With this dissertation, I assume the dual role of *institutional historian* and *institutional rhetorician*. The path taken by this dissertation is through the history of the University of Texas at El Paso, also known as U.T. El Paso.<sup>6</sup> It is the story of one institution of higher education and its collaboration in a society that does not always value the educational and research mission of universities. The journey begins with an exploration of the modern research university.

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<sup>6</sup> Within the University and surrounding community, the institution is more commonly referred to as “UTEP,” a name that while not its legal name is one protected by trademark owned by the University of Texas System. I make note of this for the convenience of future scholars, as style guides for publications outside of El Paso generally requires the use of formal names, the exception being for sports reporting. For example, a LexisNexis search of “UTEP” will generate a list of which 19 of the first 25 most relevant searches will be sports-related. A search for “University of Texas at El Paso” will include more non-sports hits, including legal cases affecting the institution. Neither the state of Texas nor the board of regents refers to the institution as “UTEP” in law or rules. Even the highway signs leading to the school refers to it as “U.T. El Paso.” Athletics, however, is an institution unto itself and set standards that news organizations will follow. For example, intercollegiate sports bodies refer to the name of the school as UTEP; therefore, the AP Style Guide follows their lead by allowing UTEP in first references. For the legislative history of the name, see Senate (Texas) Bill 14, Chap. 7, 60th Regular Session. (March 6, 1967), Legislative Reference Library of Texas; U.T. Board of Regents, Minutes of the Board of Regents (Austin: University of Texas System, 1881-present), 1967:1182-85, hereafter cited as Minutes.

## Writing Histories of Universities

Histories of universities do not always do justice when it comes to their dual mission of education and research. Lester Goodchild and Irene Huk (1990) note that the process of writing of histories of higher education have been under scrutiny beginning in the 1960s with Bernard Bailyn's study, *Education in the Forming of American Society* (1972 [1960]). However, when it came to examining the writing of histories of institutions, much work remained (201-202). Most histories remained at best "myopic" through the 1970s, despite the scholarly approach introduced by Frederick Rudolph in 1962, as most histories neglected to look at the social and cultural pressures outside of the institution that affected their establishment and transformations (202-203). Willis Rudy (1980), while examining the transformation of normal schools into comprehensive schools, noted the lack of external forces such as social, economic, and ideology in the transformation. Laurence Veysey (1982) compared the "antiquarian chronicling" against the "intellectual histories" he favored. This "contextualist" approach of historiography eschewed the chronological approach in favor of intellectual, social, and cultural examinations of institutional histories. House histories, to Veysey, were plodding and disjointed chronological narratives that served the promotional needs of the institutions but did little for higher education scholarship other than being one more primary artifact unto itself (In Goodchild and Huk 1990, 205).

The task of scholars researching histories of universities is more difficult today given the low amount of resources dedicated toward the preservation of

artifacts, noted John Thelin (2011). This has resulted, as Thelin argued, in the “loss of institutional memory” due to the lack of adequate staffing and proper monitoring of archiving of those documents that reflect the day-to-day life on the campus, especially as related to student culture. Placing reliance or faith in the digital age, in which somehow all emails will be available to future researchers without even taking into consideration the obstacles presented by constantly evolving technology is not realistic. After all, how many institutions still possess a floppy disk drive and the software to read digital artifacts created in the 1990s? Placing reliance in the “information age” of tomorrow is not the same as having a plan today (xii).

James Axtell’s recent biography of Princeton University (2006) in contrast avoided the placing of presidents and administrative officers at the center of its history, which Axtell highlights in his preface. Indeed, Axtell even managed to produce a 600-plus-page book on the university in which he scarcely mentioned its board of trustees—a board that fired one of its more notable presidents, Woodrow Wilson. Instead, Axtell set out to write a book not for alumni to display on their bookshelves, but instead “focus this history of an educational institution on *education*, not on the corporate or corporeal institution per se” (2006, xviii, Axtell’s *italics*). Axtell claimed, “One of the unfortunate features of most college histories is their lack of focus on what is most important,” given their tendency to rely mostly on official records that are easily accessible, rather on *how and why* the institution exists in the first place. In short, they lack any examination of exigence, and instead focused on “presidential plans, fund-raising campaigns, intramural conflicts, and

building construction” (xviii). Building on Laurence Veysey (1982), Axtell argued that most university histories fell into the genre of house histories, which served to commemorate an achievement. These histories often fail to provide the necessary context of the time and, as such, neglect “social, cultural, ... intellectual, regional, or national” forces at work during the times (xx). Axtell approached his subject as an outsider, an “ethnohistory” model, a practice used to explore ethnic cultures for the first time. This approach relied on putting aside biases to focuses on placing observations into context (xx).

U.T. El Paso was no different. While its written histories celebrated the 1955 court ruling abolishing segregation, little discussion was given on the affects segregation had on the citizens of El Paso prior to 1955. Biases also prevented the uncovering of notable firsts by the institution, such as the first Hispanic instructor to teach at a U.T. institution or the first integrated theatrical performance on a Texas public college stage.

There are many reasons why such terministic screens exists, one of which had to do with not wanting to share one’s dirty laundry with the rest of the world. Any casual reading of the school’s student publication, the *Prospector*, from its first four decades will uncover no shortage of disparaging remarks of a sexist or racist character. Even though the school admitted students with Hispanic backgrounds and actively recruited foreign nationals from Mexico and Latin America, these students still had to endure their share of “micro aggression” from the classrooms to the pages of the school’s publications. Though such prejudices existed, when placed



into a greater context with the rest of Texas and the South, an examination of El Paso reveals a more tolerant society, more in alignment with the social mores of the West and not with the Jim Crow South.

Access to archives aids in the telling of histories. Unlike U.T. El Paso, Axtell encountered one of the most complete university archives in America. So voluminous were Princeton's archives, even a fifty-year moratorium to certain documents proved to be no obstacle. He avoided interviews and relied on printed materials. When further information on a recent topic was needed, an email would suffice. However, by not relying on an individual's memory, Axtell could give equal weight to the written artifacts of recent history with those of past history (xxi).

Axtell used his critical or dramatic imagination to create a modern day encounter with Woodrow Wilson, as he imagined the former Princeton president taking a stroll through the modern campus.<sup>7</sup> How would Wilson react to the greatly enlarged campus and the modern architecture? Axtell imagined the former president would not be too shocked by what he observed, given that even the modern six-acre campus still had the "human scale" to it that Wilson preferred, where students and faculty could interact with each other. On the other hand, Wilson, Axtell argued, might find disturbing the diversity of the modern student body (5-7). Axtell took these liberties given the volume of writings that Wilson left behind, which provided him insight into both the exigencies and constraints encountered by Wilson as president.

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<sup>7</sup> For more on the critical/dramatic imagination, see chapter 3.

With the University of Texas at El Paso, we knew very little about the men and women who shaped the early history of the institution. However, the recent recovery of vast numbers of personal correspondence located in the archives of the University of Texas at Austin, a new understanding of U.T. El Paso is emerging.

The topics explored in this dissertation began in earnest during the spring semester of 2013 when I joined the staff of the Centennial Office. The Office coordinated the many activities surrounding the 100th anniversary of the first day of classes planned for September 2014. My initial role was as an intern for a service learning activity attached to my doctoral studies in rhetoric and composition. My assignment was twofold. The first was to design and build an online encyclopedia of U.T. El Paso's history, known as the *UTEP Encyclopedia*. The second project involved an examination of the existing narrative histories of U.T. El Paso. The school's published history up until this centennial celebration planning, which began in 2010, inhabited two texts that some on campus referred to as the bibles of U.T. El Paso history. The first was Fugate's *Frontier College*, written just prior to the school's 50th anniversary in 1964. The second book, which was an illustrated expansion of Fugate's was entitled *UTEP: A Pictorial History of the University of Texas at El Paso* and written by Nancy Hamilton, a member of U.T. El Paso's communication staff. Hamilton's book appeared before U.T. El Paso's 1989 diamond (75th) anniversary. In addition to these works by Fugate and Hamilton, numerous official histories appeared in the publications produced by the school. These included the catalogs, and in secondary sources that included the school's

newspapers, online media, and magazines. The authors of these publications often cited one another, beginning first with the school's catalogs, and then referring to Fugate and Hamilton.

Fugate, a professor of English at Texas Western College, as the school was known in the 1950s and 1960s, undertook the first scholarly study of the school with the assistance of researcher Linda J. Robinson. Relying on primary sources that now reside in UTEP Library Special Collections and oral histories of individuals present at the founding of the school, Fugate and Robinson's narrative portrayed the founding and establishment of a college from a distinctly El Paso perspective with few primary sources other than newspapers and other public records. What correspondence that did exist consisted of letters written to individuals at the school. There were, for instance, no references to letters written by the first dean of the school, Steve Worrell. Until the research by the Centennial Office, no one even had a specimen of Worrell's signature. Similarly in her book published in 1988, Hamilton as well did not include citations. Other sources from outside the region, such as the minutes of the University of Texas Board of Regents—the school's governing body located in Austin, 600 miles to the east—referred to many documents such as reports and letters that were not to be found in U.T. El Paso's meager collections.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Distance played a significant role in the establishment and transformation of the University of Texas at El Paso. Given this distance (the school is closer to California than it is to Austin) and its location on an international border, the school's very existence was threatened on more than one occasion.

With so many documents missing, the question arose as to how previous researchers filled the gaps. This included the possibility that not only were there misconceptions about the school's history, but also myths had emerged that were bolstered or exaggerated in an attempt to fill in some of these gaps.

The examination of myths, in turned out, played an important part in our centennial research. One area that intrigued Keith Erikson, the centennial project's director, was the relationship of U.T. El Paso's establishment to the exploits of the Mexican Revolution and of one of its more colorful actors, Francisco "Pancho" Villa. Erikson's research into the oral tradition of what came to be called the Midwestern Lincoln Inquiry focused on how "eyewitness evidence" collected in the subsequent years following the death of the sixteenth president came to be discredited by university-trained academic scholars who considered these accounts more myth than knowledge. These "positivist assaults" on oral testimony increasingly relied more on written artifacts over oral transcripts. (Erikson 2007, 50-51)

Many scholars, however, recognize that myths contain an element of fact. It is up to the scholar, be he or she a historian, rhetorician, scientist, or engineer, to discover the knowledge contained within myths. In this regard, Yale professor and classical historian Donald Kagan (2007b) informed much of my methodology when it came to analyzing written artifacts. Kagan followed what he referred to as the *higher naiveté*, in which a scholar by training should be able to recognize what can be accepted as informed knowledge and what can be assumed to be myth. To accomplish this, a scholar discarded anything in the text that is demonstrably self-

contradictory, absurd, or false. Nonetheless, as Kagan cautioned, “it would be reckless ... to just put them aside and not ask yourself the question, ‘Can there be something believable at the root of this?’” Some things may be impossible, but not necessarily improbable (para. 7-8).

## **Thesis**

What happens when a university as an institution cannot take an objective look at itself? Modern research universities, such as the University of Texas at El Paso, must turn their research gaze not only outward, but also inwards in order to better serve society. Such examinations must negotiate the two cultures found within each research university that divides the humanities from the sciences. The tool to bridge this gap is found within the unifying field of rhetoric, an innate trait possessed by every human that facilitates the processing of belief into knowledge using pragmatic and fictive languages. Any examination of an institution, be it higher education, government, or economic, rests on four pillars in support of scholarship or the dissemination of knowledge. These pillars are place, belief, argumentation, and archives. Together they determine how an institution processes belief for their own use.

Aristotle placed philosophy at the top of his disciplinary order. While philosophy represents the study of knowledge, much of its introspection weakens its ability to unify the disciplines. What is required is a field that allows or supports interdisciplinary, methodological studies that possessed a passport, so to speak,

which allowed it to cross the borders of disciplines. That field should have been rhetoric.

### Definitions

Given that this is a dissertation within the field of rhetoric, a few words are required on the nature of the discipline. For twenty-five centuries, scholars have argued not only the meaning of the term rhetoric, but also whether it was even a discipline worthy of study. Contributing to this issue was the reluctance of many current scholars who argued that not being tied down to a single definition or tradition enhanced the field by giving it flexibility (Enos and others 1997; Bizzell 2003). As rhetoricians, we owe it to our audiences to define our use of the term.

The term rhetoric, for the purpose of this dissertation, is defined as *the marriage of perspicacity and perspicuity to alter reality for an ethical good*. This dissertation began with an example of this marriage, which ended in scholarship with the production of new knowledge.

*Perspicacity* is the formulation of a claim within the individual based on a belief arrived at through the pragmatic observation of natural data. In the case of the first day of classes, the observation of data presented in newspaper articles led to the emergence of a new belief that challenged existing knowledge. This belief resulted in a claim that was tested, or justified, through the examination of other data validated by a practice, also known as a warrant, that belongs to a field of study. In this case, that practice was history.

*Perspicuity* refers to the individual's discovery of the best means of persuasion to share a claim with an audience. In this case, the claim that the first day of classes was September 28, 1914, and not September 23, 1914, was presented in a scholarly article that cited as sources the data justifying the claim. This method, which emphasized logos, worked for one type of audience. For others, it may be necessary to emphasize pathos, such as the importance of School of Mines' opening day coinciding with that of U.T. Austin's as a method of reinforcing the shared heritage between the two schools. Still with another audience the emphasis of ethos, or credibility would work. Such an example would be a speech delivered by the president of the University in which she mentions the date.

*Reality* denotes a common understanding using both pragmatic language and fictive language. Rhetoric, which relies on the use of pragmatic language, modifies *endoxa*, a Greek term for common knowledge. Poetics, on the other hand, refers to the use of fictive language to modify *doxa*, which is common opinion. Whereas *endoxa* consists of justified beliefs, *doxa* consists of unjustified beliefs that are still held to be true. Unjustified beliefs are also known as truths.

*Ethical good* refers to rhetoric's power to add to common knowledge (*endoxa*) in a way that perpetuates humanity. While rhetoric can change truths into knowledge, the changing of knowledge into truths constitutes an unethical act. Making the claim that the first day of registration is the same as the first day of instruction, therefore September 23, 1914, is the first day of classes would change the definition of the first day of classes. This in essence mythologizes the September

23 date. In this case, the agenda of the rhetor—the agent speaking—must be called into consideration. Some mythologies appear harmless, such as UTEP’s first day of classes, though it can impede the work of other scholars. Others, sadly, such as Nazism’s belief in racial supremacy, have led to far worse consequences.

## Method

Just how much of U.T. El Paso’s history could be classified as myth (truths) or as sound knowledge that could serve as a solid foundation for future scholarship? Building off Kagan’s higher naiveté, our research adopted the Russian phrase President Ronald Reagan was fond of quoting in the presence of Russian General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev in the 1980s, *dovorey, no provorey*, “trust, but verify.”<sup>9</sup>

To explore institutions of higher education—in this case, research universities as defined by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education<sup>10</sup> —I am combining theories and practices from several disciplines in a collaborative fashion to reshape Kenneth Burke’s terministic screen (1966), which filter what an individual sees and shapes their reality.

Many disciplines within the university that believe they are researching some form of communication through writing or oratory are in fact researching rhetoric. Those related fields include language studies, linguistics, psychology,

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<sup>9</sup> Ronald Reagan, "Remarks on Signing the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, December 8, 1987" (Speech, U.T. Austin, 1987), accessed Jan. 15, 2015, [www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1987/120887c.htm](http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1987/120887c.htm).

<sup>10</sup> Indiana University Center for Institutions of Higher Education, The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, accessed Jan. 5, 2014, [carnegieclassifications.iu.edu](http://carnegieclassifications.iu.edu). Hereafter referred to as Carnegie Classification.



sociology, speech, and symbiotics (Booth 2004, ix). All disciplines use rhetoric to some degree from the moment a scholar—be they a student, instructor, or researcher—has a belief relevant to their discipline, tests that belief, and then conveys it to others.

From this exploration, a more robust set of tools has evolved that incorporated a form of discourse analysis that combined Stephen Toulmin's argumentation model (1958; 2006) with Lloyd Bitzer's rhetorical situation (Bitzer 1968; Bitzer 1980). Evidence of rhetorical discourse in writing or oratory, explains Bitzer, is evidence of a rhetorical situation, where an actor is negotiating exigence, audience, and constraints (Bitzer 1968, 2). Toulmin's model is what others have described as "field dependent," where the traditions of a discipline determine the method or standard of establishing claims. In order to understand this claim, scholars "need to explore how these critical standards evolve, and how the most reflective and best-informed people in any area of experience refine those standards. ... Hence, we must modestly recognize that the best we can do now is the best we can do *now*; and that those who come after us will move beyond our ideas" (Toulmin 2006, 25). If someone at some point in history took the time to write or speak on some point, they are usually making an argument against some form of exigence to a particular audience under a specific set of constraints. Teasing these elements out provides context.

Not every rhetorical situation rises to the level of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, nor will every argument present itself in a manner where it is easy to

identify data and warrants that justify its claim. However, the conscious act of writing or speaking to an audience in order to generate change, be it to establish a university or to report on its first day of registration, provides a sharper understanding of a historical situation when placed into context.

In y example of UTEP, I found context within artifacts utilized a method that identified and isolated significant events in U.T. El Paso's history, including recurring narratives or items that appeared to be matters of fact, such as presidential biographies or histories of buildings. The discourse analysis involved six actions that were not necessarily followed in any consecutive order and were used to mediate Kagan's higher naiveté.

### **Identify the historical situation**

Related to the rhetorical situation, the *historical situation* is an event or moment on time where something happens that is of importance to the institution, which leads to exigence. It is typically the point where continuity meets change. As such, it is a function of place. The historical situation, however, is not always located within the institution. It can take place within another institution, such as when the Texas State Legislature passed a law requiring all grade school teachers to possess a college degree. This act had a profound, unintended affect on U.T. El Paso, as it resulted in the isolated mining school adapting its curriculum to assist El Paso teachers. The historical situation could also be rooted in seemingly unconnected historical events, such as when Francisco Pancho Villa attacked the New Mexico town of Columbus in March 1916. His cross-border raid led to

President Woodrow Wilson mobilizing the National Guard, which soon affected life at the School of Mines, then located adjacent to Fort Bliss, to such an extent that the school chose to relocate to its present site.

### **Isolate the actors**

Actors are as much a function of place as are the events they represent. Actors are not necessarily human, but can also be aspects of nature, such as climate or distance. Steve Worrell, as dean of the School of Mines, certainly occupied a position of power that allowed him to affect the future course of the school. One such act was his requirement that the school's engineering students study Spanish in order to prepare them for careers in Mexico and the Southwest. Thelma White, a valedictorian student from El Paso's segregated black high school, lacked agency and the legal right to enroll at U.T. El Paso, then known as Texas Western College, in 1954. Her attempt to enroll set off a chain of events that ended desegregation of higher education in Texas.

### **Locate the artifacts**

Locating the documents and other artifacts that make up the data or basis of a claim is vital in establishing the validity of the claim. On one level, it provides an opportunity to test the claim and replicate its warrant, which are the propositions that limit the claim. In this sense, the researcher needs to perform a type of *autopsy*, to see with one's own eyes, the artifacts and discover the context in which it exists. Another aspect of locating artifacts is the joy of discovering new ones that may not

so much as invalidate or reject a claim, but to extend or complicate it, thus leading to new knowledge. In the case of U.T. El Paso, one of the most important artifacts was the meeting minutes of the U.T. Board of Regents. These rich documents, which by the 21st century were made available online, contain tantalizing references to other artifacts, such as reports and letters from the institution's first forty years, that were not available in El Paso. A search of the archives of the Board of Regents at the Briscoe Center for American History at U.T. Austin failed to turn them up. It was a footnote in a journal article written in the 1980s about U.T. El Paso's architecture that revealed the existence of a collection of papers belonging to the presidents of the University of Texas—a collection that had no online finding aid—that led to the discovery of artifacts related to U.T. El Paso's early history.

Discovery of this collection was hampered by a common misconception held by earlier scholars that the institution did not have a president until 1931 with the election of John Barry. Any role played by presidents of the Austin branch was believed insignificant. As it turned out, the papers revealed that these presidents were indeed active administrators who guided and shaped the future of school. Not accepting the early role of the Austin presidents also prevented any serious exploration of the Austin archives.

### **Explore for exigence**

No historical situation exists in a vacuum. There are forces and movements at play that cause an actor or actors to make a choice. During U.T. El Paso's early years, there were several movements at the local, state, national, and even

international levels that affected the school. The mining school movement, for example, began during the eighteenth century in Germany and inspired nations to create what were essentially the first STEM schools. This movement arrived in the United States in the 1860s with the establishment of the Columbia School of Mines in New York City and eventually led to the establishment of over thirty mining schools and programs within the several states, including Texas. However, not all exigencies exist on such a grand scale. At the subjective level, actors deal with personal agendas, which are their public objectives based on knowledge, and credendas, which are their hidden objectives based on truths. Both agendas and credendas affect choice.

### **Ascertain the audience**

To understand the constraints an actor worked under, the researcher needs to isolate the audience they are addressing. Bitzer's constraints vary by audience in their affect on an actor, as they are forces that serve to influence or restrict the actions an actor can take (1968, 8). A speech given by the president of a university may identify the exigence of an issue that she is attempting to alter, but it will not identify the backroom processes or lobbying that took place to constrain her. This is why personal correspondence can be of greater value to a researcher than a published speech in understanding constraints.

## **Verify the warrant**

As Bitzer (1968) argued, rhetoric alters reality. As such, it is important from an ethical perspective that claims contained in rhetorical compositions consist of valid warrants. Warrants, as defined by Toulmin (1958), determine the validity and significance of a claim through grounding in common knowledge, what the ancient Greeks referred to as *endoxa*. In the case of the first day of classes, Steve Worrell did not write that the first day of classes would be September 23, 1914, only that the school would open on that day. It was later scholars that assumed the date was the first day, which was not warranted by any other factual data. Gaps between data and warrants result in rhetorical distances that call into question any claims arising out of the data. In this case, a claim that relies on a future event to occur cannot be considered knowledge until warranted with corroborating data.

## **The Pillars**

The historical sketch, which is a form of case study, is used throughout this dissertation. Its function is to explore four broad topics rooted in their own theory that is related to a single rhetorical theory of the institution of higher education and how it remembers itself. The exploration of these pillars using these methods will take us on a journey that began 70,000 years into the past and leads to the present day first-year composition classroom. All four pillars support scholarship, which requires rhetoric to disseminate knowledge.

As an institution of higher education, it should not be a surprise that the university, in this case, the University of Texas at El Paso would commission a

research project to document and disseminate its history. Scholarship is built on the examination and probing of previous knowledge to create new knowledge. All of these examinations of knowledge took place within an institution. The institution itself had an influence on the creation and dissemination of knowledge. By understanding place, belief, argumentation, and archives, a scholar within the institution of higher education can better navigate the systems that both aid and hinder the production of knowledge useful to the fulfillment of the institution's mission.

### Place

For fifty years, U.T. El Paso celebrated the first day of classes on September 23. With the discovery of new knowledge that posited a counterclaim to the date, the University's administration acted cautiously, while others still challenged the claim using the same data as before.

The institution, in this instance, U.T. El Paso, commissioned the research undertaken in order not necessarily to better understand its own history, but to celebrate an anniversary. It created a department that it placed within its organizational structure, funded it, staffed it, and directed it. Writing about the institution presented its own challenges as each author involved with the project became cognizant of a non-defined boundary between where history of the institution ended and where promotion of the university began. In this case, a discovery clearly disrupted an established narrative that had been celebrated in

that past and may have been seen as embarrassing to the institution. All aspects of the institution may not readily embrace knowledge for knowledge's sake.

A university is a unique form of institution whose very mission is typically rooted in the pursuit of knowledge. How does an institution of higher education differ from other institutions? How does an institution shape its own historical narrative? Does this narrative have an impact on the pursuit of knowledge or truths?

### Belief

A second topic is that of how knowledge differs from truths or opinions. At the core of both knowledge and truths is belief. Only one type of belief can be used to make a claim that forms the basis of scholarship and this belief can shift, as new data is uncovered. The claim made in 1963 that the first day of classes was September 23, 1914, is a valid claim based on the data presented. However, the data utilized to make the claim spoke of an event that was to take place in the future, which meant that the event had yet to take place. The claim as to the date of the first day of classes was, at best, an informed opinion and not knowledge, as no evidence was presented to confirm that the event had actually took place. The arguments for September 23, in hindsight, was never sound, as no evidence was ever produced to demonstrate that it opened (past tense) as opposed to would open (future tense).

How do we test beliefs to arrive at knowledge rather than truths?



## Argumentation

The third topic is how we make claims using belief through argumentation. Argumentation, for the purposes of this case study, is the process that led to the creation of new knowledge. The discovery of the discrepancy in the artifacts (the school opened on Monday) followed by the discovery of new artifacts was not enough to make the claim. In order for the new claim to be valid, some proposition was required to connect the claim to the data. Before that can happen, it is necessary for the scholar to identify the pragmatic language and the fictive language utilized in the argument. Warrants based on fictive language or those of common opinion (doxa) are not valid. Doxa poisons claims.

However, given the same set of data, it was still possible to arrive at conflicting claims. How is it that researchers can look at the same artifacts and arrive at different claims?

## Archives

Archives, or how scholars access to artifacts containing data, address the concept of how we embrace history using narrative and artifacts. Crucial to arguing histories of institutions is access to artifacts, which calls into question archival practices. In this case study, arriving at a valid claim as to the date of the first day of classes was hampered by the lack of access to documents in El Paso. A scholar in Austin, however, may have arrived at a different and equally incomplete conclusion than a scholar in El Paso. The Austin scholar would have known the first day of

registration, but not necessarily the first day of classes without several El Paso newspaper articles.

Universities are home to two archives. The first is the canonical archive, which provides the disciplinary foundations to scholarship. The second is the institutional archive, which provides the data required to justify claims. How the university processes these archives affects the level of scholarship at that institution.

### Summary

Uncovering the actual date of the first day of classes at the University of Texas at El Paso was an example of exemplary research, the type that should be celebrated everyday in our universities. It was also an example of, to borrow a phrase, an inconvenient truth, as it disrupted the administration of the institution. Even the previous sentence can be seen as a disruption of a disruption, as it failed to capitalize the “The” at the beginning of University of Texas, in clear defiance of style guidelines established by the University, the University of Texas System, and the legislature of the State of Texas. It probably upset other readers that I did not refer to the University as *UTEP* once up to this point.<sup>11</sup>

While this dissertation does present historical sketches of UTEP, it is not a history of the institution. Such an undertaking will be taken up later. This

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<sup>11</sup> Readers of this dissertation fifty years from now may wonder what the fuss was all about following El Paso’s voluntary annexation by New Mexico after the Greater Texas Republic successfully seceded from the United States, which resulted in UTEP being renamed The University of New Mexico at El Paso (UNMEP, or Uni-MEP).

dissertation instead examines how history when examined through the lens of rhetoric shapes an institution both from within and without. It is my hope that this undertaking will refocus some of the vast capacity for change that defines a research institution such as UTEP into examining the places within the university that shape a community and society: the education of first-year students in the English composition classroom.

### **A note on style**

This principal style used in this dissertation is Turabian 8th edition notes-bibliography system and utilizes RefWorks citation management software. One modification is the inclusion of parenthetical citations along side the use of footnotes. The use of footnotes designates a primary source reference (evidence discovered within artifacts), while a parenthetical designates a secondary source (evidence provided by other scholars). This hybrid approach acknowledges that the field of rhetoric is connected to both the humanities and the sciences.

## Chapter 2

### Places

#### Introduction

##### Historical Sketch: The Two Rhetorics

Emmet Drake arrived at the State School of Mines and Metallurgy in 1919, joining the one-person English department as an instructor of rhetoric and economics. A graduate of the University of Wisconsin, Drake had studied Latin and received his A.B. degree in 1884 followed by a master's degree in 1887. As a graduate student at Wisconsin, he taught rhetoric and oratory before accepting a position at the Missouri School of Mines after graduation. After four years at Rolla, he changed careers, accepting the position of manager with the Missouri Mining Company. Returning to teaching, he moved to Socorro in the territory of New Mexico and joined the faculty of the New Mexico School of Mines as a professor of languages. From 1908 to 1913, he served as president until dismissed by the school's board.<sup>12</sup>

In the interregnum years that followed his departure from Socorro and his hiring by the School of Mines in El Paso, Drake began investing in real estate, taking advantage of market uncertainty created by the Mexican revolution raging

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<sup>12</sup> Max Loeb, ed., *General Catalog of the Officers and Graduates of the University of Wisconsin, 1849-1907* (Madison, Wisc.: The Post, 1907); *El Paso Herald*, April 12, 1913; *Prospector* (El Paso), December 1919.

across the Rio Grande in and around Ciudad Juarez. Noting El Paso's rapid population growth since his arrival in 1897, Drake told the *El Paso Herald* his belief that once the situation across the border settled down, there was nothing to prevent the population of El Paso (then 39,000) from soaring past 100,000 residents, which the town eventually reached at the time of Drake's retirement in 1933.<sup>13</sup>

Instructors who taught both rhetoric and economics were quite common at mining schools at the turn of the century, as the schools often offered few liberal arts courses. When the School of Mines first opened in 1914, the only liberal arts course in the curriculum was Spanish, a course deemed practical for a school located on the border with Mexico. Students considered deficient in writing enrolled in correspondence courses through the Main Branch of the University of Texas in Austin. This arrangement ended in 1916 when Rabbi Maurice Faber, a member of the University of Texas Board of Regents, paid an inspection visit to the two-year-old school. Faber's report criticized the lack of a liberal arts curriculum at the engineering school, especially rhetoric, noting that the student's writing abilities were less than desired. Admission requirements of the time, which adhered to those at Austin, required students to have fourteen high school units from recognized Texas secondary schools. To deal with this deficiency, Farber wrote, "I would suggest that, at the least, a strong course in English be added to the present curriculum. ... The need of it is so obvious and selfevident [sic], that it is unnecessary to say anything more about it." All University of Texas students,

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<sup>13</sup> *El Paso Herald*, January 19, 1914;

including those training to be engineers, observed Faber, needed to be better writers.<sup>14</sup>

The school Drake joined in 1919 had grown to well over one hundred students. While still an engineering school, the majority of the students in attendance were classified as “irregular,” meaning that they enrolled not to study mining. Instead, these students of which more than a quarter were female found this tuition-free branch of the state university an attractive bargain. Rather than paying living expenses while studying elsewhere, most preferred to live at home and then transfer to other universities to complete their degrees. Others used their credits to become teachers following recently enacted compulsory education laws.<sup>15</sup>

Drake assumed the head of the English department in 1921. Within six years, the College expanded its curriculum by adding liberal arts, education, and business courses to meet the needs of the rapidly expanding population that Drake had predicted. Drake’s English curriculum followed the Progressive model of the University of Wisconsin, with a balance between rhetoric and literature, and an emphasis on problem solving. Working with John W. Kidd, the dean of the school and a no-nonsense Progressive himself who had attended Oklahoma A&M and Texas A&M, the two revised the graduation requirements for engineers by adding a second year of writing instruction. Kidd believed that engineers, as builders of a

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<sup>14</sup> Maurice Faber to Fred W. Cook, October 17, 1916, VF8Aa, U.T. Presidents Records.

<sup>15</sup> Frederick Eby, *The Development of Education in Texas* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1925)

new society, should possess above average writing abilities in order to persuade the public as to the value of their ideas and proposals.

Kidd stepped down as dean of the school in 1927, but remained as the head of the engineering department. His replacement, Charles Puckett, a graduate of Harvard University, went to work trying to attract instructors from wherever he could in order to meet the demand for classes, especially in English. By 1929, the department had grown to four faculty members. None of the English faculty, including Drake, possessed doctoral degrees in any field, which was typical for an engineering school. In 1931, the new head of the College, John Barry, a MIT-trained engineer and the first independent president of the school, sought and won approval to offer Bachelor of Arts degrees. He immediately began canvassing the elite universities in the northeast United States looking for “good men” with the necessary doctoral degrees to teach senior-level courses. (He even sent his “good men” solicitations to the Seven Sisters colleges, which earned him more than a few stiff rebukes from their female presidents.)<sup>16</sup> One of his searches paid off with the hiring of Charles Sonnichsen, a recent graduate of Harvard University with a Ph.D. in literature. By 1940, one-quarter of the College’s twelve full professors hailed from Harvard Yard.

When Emmet Drake retired from the College of Mines and returned to Wisconsin, Charles Sonnichsen replaced him as department chair. By the end of the

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<sup>16</sup> University of Texas at El Paso Presidents Records, 1917 – 2011, MS 001, C.L. Sonnichsen Special Collections Department, The University of Texas at El Paso Library, hereafter cited as UTEP Presidents Records.

decade, courses in rhetoric and composition had disappeared from the College's catalog, as English composition replaced the first-year writing course. In 1944, the College retitled the course "Freshman English," with its emphasis in "exercises and drills to promote to promote correctness in usage and grammar."<sup>17</sup> Intriguingly, the course in rhetoric and writing created by Drake and Kidd remained a part of the engineering curriculum. This course in technical writing with its emphasis on "expressing effectively the student's own ideas" remained a part of the engineering curriculum well into the 1960s before being dropped subsequent to the elimination of the mining program by the board of regents.<sup>18</sup>

### A Place for Collaboration

As demonstrated in the opening historical sketch, there can exist many forces that will affect the seemingly simple topic as the teaching of writing within a university. During the decades beginning with the 1920s, UTEP, small state-supported branch of the University of Texas, became a microcosm of a much larger debate dealing with the teaching of first-year writing. Two professors, one from the humanities and one from the sciences, united by a progressive ideology, collaborated together to create a writing program that they believed benefitted not only their students, but also society.

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<sup>17</sup> *Bulletin of the College of Mines and Metallurgy, 1943-1944*, (El Paso: Texas College of Mines and Metallurgy, 1944).

<sup>18</sup> U.T. Board of Regents, *Minutes* (Austin: University of Texas, 2014), 1963.09:36. Hereafter referred to as *Minutes*.



As the sketch illuminates, Harvard, which represented the epitome of higher education in America, drove much of the pedagogical practices utilized by universities (Kitzhaber 1990, 40-41; Berlin 1987, 36, 40-41). That the College of Mines ended up with a plurality of Harvard graduates in faculty positions by 1940 is remarkable. There is also no disrespect intended to Charles Sonnichsen, who went on to a long career at the school as not only a professor of English literature, but also as a celebrated historian of the American Southwest. However, it was his Harvard pedigree more than his scholarship in rhetorical theory that allowed him to influence how writing would be taught at UTEP following Drake's retirement.

UTEP's own transition within the English department from writing-centered courses to literature-centered courses emphasizing grammar and mechanics paralleled not only the philosophical divisions between public universities and private universities, but also how and where scholars of university histories chose to look for their sources. Once Sonnichsen assumed the chair of the English department, he replaced Drake's epistemic-based writing courses with the Harvard-inspired current-traditional rhetoric and its emphasis on writing as a formula, which better suited the use of adjunct instructors.

Albert Kitzhaber (1990), in his groundbreaking 1953 doctoral dissertation on the history of the teaching of rhetoric in nineteenth-century America, devoted over sixty pages of his research to one university—Harvard. In the case of UTEP's history, this would be informative. Yet, this influential book, on which other noted rhetoricians based their claims, including the venerated rhetorician James Berlin

(1984; 1985; 1987; 1996), neglected to identify the rise and fall of the teaching of rhetoric based on the progressive Wisconsin Idea, instead focusing on science-backed progressive education (Adams 1999, 48-49; Berlin 1987, 58). The differing educational pedagogies practiced by Drake and Sonnichsen had to represent struggles taking place on a regular basis in English departments throughout the United States given the rapid growth of open-access public universities in the twentieth century.

UTEP, like all comprehensive regional public universities of the time, was not the subject of researchers. Kitzhaber's devotion to Harvard and other elite Northeastern schools left little room for any examination of open-access public institutions. What pages are devoted to these schools are primarily concerned with the work of a single professor and rhetorician from the University of Michigan, Fred Newton Scott. Scott himself, as Kitzhaber documented, played an important role in the establishment of open-access universities with his theory on state-supported "organic" educational systems found in the western states versus the private "feudal" systems favored in the northeast (1990, 69-73). UTEP, however, like many of its organic cohort, still faced pressures to conform to the practices of the feudal elite feeder-school system.

Given their level of focus on elite institutions, much of Kitzhaber and Berlin's research ignored the schools that enrolled close to ninety percent of undergraduate students—the open-access universities. Despite the level of secondary-source detail contained in the research of Kitzhaber and Berlin, a very different picture is

revealed at the primary source level, not only on writing instruction, but the relationship of the university to writing instruction and that of rhetoric as an epistemic process.

To understand the role of the university and the teaching of writing as a heuristic process, a better idea of the origin of the university as an institution is required.

### **The University as an Institution**

The modern university is an institution unto itself. A university, as the name implies, is many things to many people. The root of the word, taken from *universe*, which is from the thirteenth-century French meaning the “whole of creation,” and, in the Anglo-Norman sense, a “community” or “corporation.” A university then can be seen as nothing short of an attempt by humanity to institutionalize knowledge of the cosmos.

All institutions, including higher education, share similarities. Where they differ has to do with mission and organization. Modern institutional theory posits that institutions can be both formal and informal. Societies create formal institutions through written laws, such as through a constitution, or they can evolve into existence, as with common law. Institutions are forms of social constraint that create rules that govern human interaction (North 1990, 3-4). Because they affect human interactions, institutions serve as a catalyst of historical change, which makes them of interest to the historian and rhetorician. The objectives of the organization center on governance and knowledge, as these acts cost money. If there

were no financial costs, the organization that defines the institutions would have no need to exist. To lower costs, institutions seek to find greater efficiencies with labor, which several scholars refer to using Marxist terminology of exploitation (Giddens 1984; Harré 1980; North 1990; Rawls 1971; Turner 1997). The pursuit of these objectives changes the organization by creating efficiencies, which through repetition, become routines (North 1990, 73-74). These shared routines delineate the institution. North (1990) argued that the objective of all institutions, not just those with an educational mission, is pure knowledge, which, in this case, knowledge being the efficient pursuit of an objective. Institutions provide incentives in the form of rewards, which includes not being punished. Society, however, still acts as a regulator for it may or may not tolerate advances. Both Galileo and Darwin conflicted with societal beliefs as they attempted to bring forth new knowledge (75).

The bureaucratization and commodification of the modern university referred to by William Clark (2006) is reflected in the transformation that began in the early twentieth century as the open-access public universities began to take shape across the United States (3-4). An early commentator on American institutions of all types, James Bryce, an English aristocrat and scholar, described America's universities in 1923 as not a particularly "well-defined class of institutions" when compared to European nations, excepting those elite schools concentrated in the northeast.<sup>19</sup> His two-volume compendium, *The American Commonwealth* (1923), divided American

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<sup>19</sup> James Bryce, *The American Commonwealth*, Vol. 1 & 2 (New York: Macmillan, 1923), 1:738.

universities into two classes: the privates, with their prescribed curriculum, tuitions, and discipline, and the publics, with flexible curricula, low or no tuition, and low discipline.<sup>20</sup> What set all American universities apart from their European counterparts was the lack of a federal agency or minister to direct or coordinate them.

### Origins of the Research University and Its Curricula

The lack of direction and coordination of American universities in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries meant that they were constantly in search of funding. It also meant that there was little incentive to adjust curricula to meet the needs of a society. This would change as universities recognized the advantages of engaging in research.

Higher education in the early nineteenth century adhered to the doctrines of universal education for all and that long-term reform of a society was best achieved through education rather than politics. By the end of the nineteenth century with progressivism firmly underway, education truly burst to the forefront of social progress, from the introduction of compulsory education at the state level to the Morrill Land Grant Act (1862) at the federal (Cremin 1988, 154).

Prior to the 1862 act, colleges and universities in the United States for the most part did not play a significant role in the daily lives of ordinary citizens. Frederick Rudolph (1977) pointed out that even given its late seventeenth-century

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 2:713.

origins, serious attention to the curriculum would not take place for another two hundred years given that most Americans were unlikely to attend a university. Fewer than two young adults out of every 100 sought admission to institutions of higher learning and those who did matriculate, fewer still adopted a scholarly interest that saw them through to graduation (1). Even Abraham Lincoln remarked that when it came to a college education, any individual who passed through his hometown that could read and write Latin was “looked upon as a wizard.”<sup>21</sup>

The colleges that existed before the Civil War bore little resemblance to the modern institutions of higher education prevalent today. There were no entrance requirements based on transcripts. Students were admitted when the head master deemed them of sufficient knowledge to be admitted, such as their working knowledge of Greek and Latin. Enrollment typically averaged 100 students with around five instructors. The fixed curriculum offered no electives and was a mixture of humanities and mathematics with a bit of natural sciences. The purpose, as Geiger (1986) pointed out, was more to produce a cultured mind with “balanced tastes and Christian morals” (4). For the most part, these American schools of higher learning hindered the growth of knowledge and the preparation for careers when compared with their European counterparts. An early harbinger of change came with the movement to replace the smattering of natural science courses with a stronger science curriculum. This occurred first at Harvard in 1847 with the creation of the Lawrence Scientific School, followed by the Yale/Sheffield Scientific

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<sup>21</sup> In William Henry Herndon and Jesse William Weik, *Herndon's Life of Lincoln: The History and Personal Recollections of Abraham Lincoln* (Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1949), 34.

School at Yale in 1854. Both schools came about as the result of not just internal pressures, but through external funding through sizable endowments. With gifts supporting research and not tuition, the German research tradition became more appealing. Evidence of this occurred at Yale in 1861 when it awarded the first American Ph.D. degree, representing a new tier of higher education, though it would be several years before other institutions followed (Geiger 1986, 3-4).

A distinctly research-driven American university emerged following the Civil War. American students traveled to Germany to study in tuition-free universities. Here they found a culture of the pursuit of knowledge based on the “principles of *Lehrfreiheit* (freedom of teaching) and *Lernfreiheit* (freedom of learning)” (Cremin 1988, 557). Those who returned to the United States buckled under the more parochial approaches of American schools and preached the ideology of *Wissenschaft*, which dictated the production of scientific knowledge by “disinterested scientific inquiry.” Aiding their cause, the federal Morrill Act and the largesse of private donors such as Johns Hopkins and John D. Rockefeller allowed new schools to freely adopt the German model (557).

The modern university curriculum is far less strict than that of early nineteenth century, which represented highly regimented programs with little room for variance. This changed with the introduction of the comprehensive university curriculum by Cornell in the 1860s, which encouraged universities to depart from a single curriculum and move toward curricula. Cornell was followed in the 1870s by Harvard’s elective curriculum and Johns Hopkins research university curriculum,

both of which varied emphasis between “core courses, interdisciplinary education, and competency-based learning” (Rudolph 1977, ix-x). Clark Kerr pointed out that curricula over time was one of constant flux given the myriad of outside forces that shaped them, many of which involved “conflicting and contrasting concepts” such as prescriptive versus elective courses or selective versus open enrollment. Without federal oversight, it was not until 1974 that a private concern, the Carnegie Foundation on the Advancement of Teaching, began an in-depth examination of the undergraduate curriculum and its evolution over time (Kerr in Rudolph 1977, ix-x).

Nonetheless, the American research university did influence society, for those who attended them would lead the charge to modify them while others who never attended a university, would seek to influence them.

### The Social Fabric

At the time of Bryce’s analysis of all American institutions, an American scholar from Johns Hopkins University began his analysis of the American universities as a single institution. Abraham Flexner would not only be one of the early and foremost commentators on the emerging modern research university, he would be, in the opinion of former University of California chancellor Clark Kerr (1968), one of its modernizers (vii-viii). Flexner (1968 [1930]) had defined a university as “an institution consciously devoted to the pursuit of knowledge, the solution of problems, the critical appreciation of achievement, and the training of men at a really high level” (1968 [1930], 42). He began by pointing out that universities, like other institutions, are a part of the “social fabric of a given era” (3).



By being a part of that fabric, educational institutions are an “expression of the age, as well as an influence operating upon both present and future.” While a world of knowledge had emerged from many great thinkers, noted Flexner, by the 1930s, “science, democracy, and other forces steadily increasing in intensity are creating a different world of which universities must take account.” All modifications to a university must be done with great care and with intelligence. A university is not a “weather vane, responsive to every variation of popular whim.” Universities therefore must give society what they need, not necessarily what they want (3-5). This “social lag,” as he named it, need not be interpreted necessarily as a weakness in an institution:

Universities are complex and organic institutions: their arms may be sound while both legs may be broken. They may lag fundamentally, even while superficially catering to whim or fashion; they may lag fundamentally at the very moment when at this or at that point they are as expert as newspapers or politicians in catching the current breeze. A proper amount of critical resistance, based on a sense of values, would ... save them from absurd, almost disastrous blunders. (6)

Thus the great universities, according to Flexner, possessed dual missions that served both society and scholarship.

Flexner, like Kitzhaber and Berlin to follow, confined much of his examination to the elite schools, which by the 1920s included several state-supported flagship universities. He dismissed the others, describing them as “doubtful contributors, when they are not actual obstacles, to the culture of the nation” (42, 45). Such widely held views kept the “doubtful contributors,” the regional publics and comprehensive schools from contributing to the conversation.

Later scholars on the university as an institution would take a more open and accepting view on universities, though without quite accepting or rejecting Flexner's claim. Thorstein Veblen (1957) emphasized the relationship of the university to the pursuit of knowledge. Every society through the ages, observed Veblen, maintained at least one institution, be it state-supported or privately held, that were designated as select keepers of "esoteric knowledge." These keepers, according to Veblen, ranged from clerks to clerics, scientists to scholars, and priests to shamans (1). Veblen pointed out that two "lines of work" define the university: the first being scientific and scholarly inquiry, and second, the instruction of students (12). The university itself consisted of a faculty, which are "mature scholars and scientists," and the plant in which they worked. Together they work in the pursuit of knowledge (13). John Lombardi (2013) described the university as consisting of two separate, but interrelated structures: an academic core and an administrative shell. Faculty guilds defined the academic core and the administrative shell provided the resources and governance. The legitimacy of the faculty guilds resides in its ability to regulate itself. This was accomplished by the guild defining its own standards of quality and having its members adhering to them with the threat of not validating their work. Of the two, the administrative shell most resembled a traditional business or corporate institution. It was hierarchal and provided the institution with governance and resource management. Like most support features, the administrative shell did not add value to the work of the university, as the guild was still responsible for the oversight and

management of faculty and researchers. The shell did manage interactions between guilds and sheltered them from adverse outside forces. Within an intermediary zone between the core and the shell were the deans and department chairs (2-8).

Society's insistence that aspects of the university be run like a business institution created tension that affected teaching.

The social fabric may constrain the university, but the university at the same time reweaved the fabric through the revision of curriculum. The chase for dollars and prestige moderated the reweaving, while student access influenced the pattern.

### **Modifying the University**

There is little doubt that universities underwent a transformation during the twentieth century as they embraced a dual mission of research and education. This change in its self was influenced by a series of modifiers that included rankings, money, and access. The excesses of the Gilded Age resulted in a golden age of charitable giving that benefitted the university, with business titans such as Andrew Carnegie and John D. Rockefeller emerging as exemplary representatives of giving during this period through their funding of institutions of higher education and the creation of foundations. It was their largesse and not some coordinated scheme provided by a centralized authority, according to Roger Geiger (1986), that ultimately gave rise to standards that improved the caliber of education throughout the nation in a time that lacked accreditation (44-45). The allure of foundation

monies, along with access and rankings, revolutionized not only institutions of higher education, but also the secondary schools that fed them.

## Rankings

At the turn of the twentieth century, an English gentleman named Alick Maclean published a book containing what he considered the 3,968 most influential men alive during the reign of Queen Victoria. Maclean's *Where We Get Our Best Men* (1900) examined places of birth, nationalities, occupations, and other aspects that provided him what he believed contributed to the success of each individual, including their education. Of the group, only 1,230 (30 percent) had attended a college or university. Nonetheless, by listing the colleges in order by attendance of "best men" in a table, Maclean had inadvertently stumbled onto the very first college ranking system. Number one was Oxford (424) followed by Cambridge (381) and Edinburgh (132). Before long, pundits were using this chart to brag about or downplay the reputation of each school. One such critic, Havelock Ellis, claimed that the Edinburgh number needed to be discounted, since the school had a much larger enrollment per capita than the other schools (Webster 1986, 24).

There were earlier lists of universities, though they did not necessarily rank schools. In the United States, the federal government's Bureau of Education, founded in 1867 as a part of the Department of the Interior, published compilations of colleges and universities in the United States beginning in 1870 (Rudolph 1977, 220). This list included at the time 372 institutions and compiled each school's location, president, library size, affiliation, enrollment, and tuition, as well as

student body demographics (Webster 1986, 29). While the information did prove useful later when it came to classifying schools, the bureau provided few other resources to institutions, such as guidance and financial support.

Without federal oversight, national and regional associations emerged to address on a voluntary basis standards and practices such as admissions, hiring, and degree requirements. The first of these membership organizations was the National Association of State Universities (1896), followed by the Association of Catholic Colleges (1899), the Association of American Universities (1900), the Association of Land-Grant Colleges (1900), and the Association of American Colleges (1914) (Rudolph 1977, 220). These early organizations provided a forum for their members that supported the sharing of knowledge and best practices. What they could not provide, not without financial assistance, was a way to standardize practices. That would be left to a new a new institution outside of education and the government: the nongovernmental organization.

## Money

Few individuals in the United States had more to do with the shaping of higher education than the Scottish-born American industrialist, Andrew Carnegie. After spending the last half of the nineteenth century building a substantial fortune from steel, Carnegie sold his holdings to fellow tycoon J.P. Morgan for \$480 million (\$33 billion, 2014 dollars). In 1905, Carnegie took \$10 million from that windfall and created what he called his “Ten Million Pension Fund,” which the rest of the

world came to know as the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (Nasaw 2006, 671-72).<sup>22</sup> Money would add a new dimension to rankings.

Such giving would not come without strings. While founded to provide retirement pensions to college professors, the Carnegie Foundation focused on the shaping of policy under the auspices of conferring qualified status to several professions that played increasingly important roles in the lives of Americans. The first president of the Foundation, the astronomer Henry Smith Pritchett, said it was as his duty to insure the proper education and training of scientific professionals “needed for social, political, and intellectual leadership.” To this was added the need for the proper professionalization of teachers along with some degree of standardization between universities at which they worked (Cremin 1988, 498-99).

Using the promise of subsidized faculty pensions, the Carnegie Foundation succeeded in getting every state-supported flagship university along with many of the private schools in the nation to provide detailed financial and operational data, including not only annual budgets, but also enrollment figures, tuition charged, and faculty size.<sup>23</sup> In 1908, the Carnegie Foundation saw it as a “public duty” for every university in America, public or private, to prepare and publish a copy of their financials and developed a set of standardized forms to assist them. These forms made it easier for outside individuals and groups to compare schools with each

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<sup>22</sup> While the Carnegie Foundation still exists today, its pension fund was spun off in 1918 and is today known as the Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association, or TIAA.

<sup>23</sup> Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, *Papers Relating to the Admission of State Institutions to the System of Retiring Allowances of the Carnegie Foundation* (New York: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1907), 22, HathiTrust.

other.<sup>24</sup> Yet, Pritchett went to great lengths two years later to reassure schools that the Carnegie Foundation “has carefully refrained from attempting to become a standardizing agency.” However, the Foundation still sought to use its influence to effect change by highlighting the differences “between the secondary school and the college, and between the college and the university.” Several private schools objected to releasing information, claiming that the public was only entitled to know so much about them and rejected the view of the Foundation that they were “public service corporations.”<sup>25</sup>

In 1908, the Carnegie Foundation produced a list of 434 higher education institutions throughout the United States and Canada organized by the amount each spent on faculty salaries. The list consisted of 36 levels with salaries expenditures beginning at \$5,000 – \$10,000, 92 of which belonged to this low range. Only those schools in the top nine levels, 22 schools in total, were mentioned by name. At the top was Columbia University with an annual faculty payroll of \$1,145,000. Next came Harvard University at \$841,000. Rounding out the top three schools by salaries was the University of Chicago at \$699,000.<sup>26</sup> Those 22 institutions comprised the first categorical ranking of universities in North America.

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<sup>24</sup> Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, *Standard Forms for Financial Reports of Colleges, Universities, and Technical Schools* (New York: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1908b), 1, HathiTrust.

<sup>25</sup> "Preface" in Abraham Flexner, *Medical Education in the United States and Canada* (New York: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1910), vii-ix, HathiTrust.

<sup>26</sup> Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, *The Financial Status of the Professor in America and Germany* (New York: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1908a), 5, HathiTrust.

While the Carnegie Foundation probed the institutions, another of Andrew Carnegie's charitable groups, the Carnegie Institution, awarded a grant to a researcher to take a closer look at America's faculty. J. McKeen Cattell began compiling a list of who he considered were the most preeminent scientists in the United States. Cattell's *American Men of Science* (1906), like the Carnegie Foundation lists of institutions, provided a wealth of data that allowed for the comparison of universities, his objective being "to secure data for a statistical study of the conditions, performance, traits, etc. of a large group of men of science."<sup>27</sup> In a supplement to his book published in the journal *Science*, Cattell demonstrated how his study could be compiled in various distribution tables. One table provided a ranking of the schools by the number of noted scientists at each institution, much as Maclean's list did in 1900. As with the Carnegie report on faculty salaries, the top three universities in this quantitative analysis were Harvard, Columbia, and Chicago. Of the top ten universities, two—Michigan and Wisconsin—were state-supported schools.<sup>28</sup>

Edwin Slosson continued the examination of universities when he published his guide, entitled *Great Universities* (1910). Slosson relied on a first person,

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<sup>27</sup> J. McKeen Cattell, *American Men of Science: A Biographical Dictionary* (New York: The Science Press, 1906a), accessed Jan. 2, 2016, HathiTrust, <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.hc2x9y>, v-vii, 24, 218, 252. Of the one thousand scientists in Cattell's work, three of them played prominent roles in the founding and the transformation of U.T. El Paso. William B. Phillips, a professor of geology, was one of the earliest supporters of locating a school of mines in El Paso. He served as a mentor to the school's first dean, Steve Worrell. Sidney Mezes was president of the University of Texas when the School of Mines was established, while Harry Benedict was president when the school transformed into a senior college.

<sup>28</sup> J. McKeen Cattell, "A Statistical Study of American Men of Science: The Selection of a Group of One Thousand Scientific Men," *Science* 24, no. 621 (1906b), accessed Jan. 2, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1632227>, 662.



eyewitness account by visiting each institution on his list of “great universities.”

Slosson visited nine endowed universities and five state-supported universities, all of which comprised the top fourteen institutions from the Carnegie Foundation table on faculty salaries.<sup>29</sup>

Although books published by Cattell and Slosson focused on great men or great institutions, it would be Andrew Flexner who would change the ratings game into something that not only reported on schools, it defined what they should be. In his 1910 examination of the nation’s medical schools, Flexner provided a template for evaluating universities that would be modeled over the next century. When the Carnegie Foundation originally hired Flexner following the publication of his first book, *American Colleges, A Criticism* (1908), Flexner protested that he had never studied medicine and thus would be unsuitable for the task. This was exactly the type of person the Foundation was looking for. His two-year examination, which documented weak admission standards, ineffectual laboratories, and poor pedagogical practices, led to the shuttering of nearly 120 of the schools after 1910 (Kerr 1968, ix-x). In his several chapters, Flexner established the history of medical education in the United States, proposed a standard for medical education (“proper basis”), and then described how current practices (“actual basis”) differed from the proper basis. He next proposed a curriculum that all medical schools should follow. Only after he had laid out his concept of medical education spread out over fourteen chapters did he begin his school-by-school comparisons. Flexner’s conclusion: that of

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<sup>29</sup> Edwin E. Slosson, *Great American Universities* (New York: Macmillan, 1910), vii, ix.

the 155 medical programs that existed in the United States in 1910, 124 of them should be “wiped off the map.” Texas for example, which had four medical schools, would be reduced to one—the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston.<sup>30</sup> The Board of Regents of the University of Texas took notice of the Flexner report in their May 1910 meeting, noting that the report portrayed the U.T. Medical Branch in such a favorable light that the number of applications for the fall term would be of “unusual size.” Regrettably, the minutes continued, there would be no additional funds to pay for more faculty and staff to handle the increase. In regards to admissions, the regents also noted that the report recommended that Texas require matriculating students have a high school diploma “in preference to a year of college work” the university then required.<sup>31</sup>

Another intriguing result of the list would serve to transform the institutions themselves. To create its list, The Foundation established the “Carnegie unit,” which it borrowed from the state of New York’s college system to define an acceptable college applicant. Under this system, a “unit” consisted of fourteen high school credit units with each unit equal to five classes per week in one subject over the course of one year. The impact of the Carnegie list had a profound impact on higher education, as institutions revamped themselves to make the list. The first change came from religious schools such as Brown and Rutgers, which dropped their church affiliations. However, at the state level, the impact was that

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<sup>30</sup> Flexner, *Medical Education in the United States and Canada*, 3, 151.

<sup>31</sup> Minutes, 1910:21.

universities across the nation immediately began accepting only those students with a high school education (Rudolph 1977, 221-23).

Rankings soon took on political overtones as those schools rated favorably supported them, while those who felt they had received unfavorable assessments ignored them or lobbied to suppress them. As director of the Bureau of Education's higher education division in 1910, Kendric Charles Babcock took on the request of the Association of American Universities (AAU) to create a ratings guide of graduate schools in the nation. Building off an earlier stratification system created by the bureau to evaluate women's schools, Babcock attempted to create a federal guide free of biases. College and university administrators, however, feared being presented in a guide that, in the words of the AAU members, would perpetuate "institutional, state, or sectional prejudices ... whose judgment would be accepted both here and abroad" (Webster 1986, 32-33).

Babcock's rating guide never saw public release. An early draft ended up in the hands of newspapers, which began to publish anguished cries of protest by deans and college presidents, particularly to the unintended notion that the classes represented academic quality. In the end, in 1912, President William Taft directed that the report not be published and that it be held over for the incoming administration of president-elect and former president of Princeton University, Woodrow Wilson, former president of Princeton University. The AAU lobbied Wilson to release the report. Wilson demurred. While the AAU believed that the rankings would be just and prove to be of value to the universities both at home and

abroad, they failed to take into account how a federally produced report would be received in the United States (Webster 1986, 37-38).

The use of lists and rankings, along with funding from nongovernmental quasi-accreditation organizations such as those established by Andrew Carnegie would continue to shape higher education institutions throughout the twentieth century.

### Access

Exclusivity plays an important role in defining the university. The less access, so the theory goes, the higher the ranking and the greater the money.

As enrollment grew at universities across the country, a time arrived when deans could not simply admit additional students given the strains being placed on their respective institution's infrastructure. Being able to do college-level work could no longer be the only admission criteria. In response to increased applications for admissions, schools turned to certification of high schools and entrance exams. Other schools, such as Harvard and Yale, turned to gatekeeping and began to practice selective admission in an attempt to shape the diversity of their student body. Private organizations, such as member clubs and fraternities, no longer shaped admissions, and ceded that authority to the admissions office (Thelin 2011, 196-97).

Even the earliest reports analyzing higher education in America observed that not only were there two classes of universities, they were confined to their own regions. The elite universities with the private endowments were clustered in the

Northeast region of the United States, while the public universities, which were controlled and financed by their respective states, resided in the Central and Western states east of and including Ohio.<sup>32</sup> The author of an early Carnegie Foundation report on public universities commented that the east-west dichotomy resulted from the methods the respective schools used to admit students. Eastern schools, labeled as “autocratic,” were disconnected from secondary schools and “not in harmony” with them. The western schools, on the other hand, belonged to a more integrated “democratic” scheme where the state universities represented the “crown” of the state’s education system. Even though they were private, several autocratic schools, which included Harvard, Yale Princeton, Brown, and Columbia, received some for of financial or logistical support from their respective state government. Attempts to make these schools state institutions typically ran afoul of the denominational influence over these schools or a fear by trustees of what would happen to endowments should they fall into the control of state legislators.<sup>33</sup>

Given their close proximity, the eastern schools worked together on the question of admissions. Harvard president Charles Eliot sought to influence the pipelines to the university in the 1880s by working with secondary and preparatory schools in the training of their students (Cremin 1988, 548). Public schools followed in working to coordinate efforts among themselves. One of these early organizations, the National Association of State Universities, came into existence

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<sup>32</sup> Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, *Papers Relating to the Admission of State Institutions to the System of Retiring Allowances of the Carnegie Foundation*, 19-20.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 19-20.

when educators in Mississippi realized that their state never applied for federal land grants to which the state was entitled. This oversight on the part of Mississippi in 1892 led to like-minded educators around the United States to inquire what else they might be missing during what they described as “the rapid development of state education in the last decade of the 19th century, and the urgent need for increased resources.”<sup>34</sup> The 1903 membership list of the association named 38 participating public institutions, of which only three were east of Ohio or north of the Mason-Dixon Line. Ohio itself had three members, more than any other state.<sup>35</sup>

The National Association of State Universities at first was skeptical of the efforts by the Carnegie Foundation, expressing concern in 1905 at what seemed to be emerging as a framework for a national system of higher education. The money offered by the Carnegie Foundation, however, carried great influence. The next year, the association was lobbying the Carnegie Foundation to accept them as members for the purpose of providing pensions to professors.<sup>36</sup>

Like Harvard, one of the early acts of the association was to investigate the alignment of college admissions requirements and high school graduation requirements.<sup>37</sup> The system of admitting students who possessed a high school

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<sup>34</sup> National Association of State Universities, *Transactions and Proceedings of the National Association of State Universities in the United States of America, 1903-1907* (Madison, Wisc.: Cantwell Press, 1907), 2:10, HathiTrust.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 1:8.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 3:69, 4:17.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 2:101.

diploma that represented twelve years of study at the secondary and elementary level became known as the “Western plan,” while admissions based on centralized examinations by a board was referred to as the “Eastern plan.” George E. MacLean, president of the University of Iowa, in 1905 described the western plan, which was adopted by the states west of Ohio, as based on the German model where inspectors from the universities traveled to local school districts to certify them. Out of these inspections grew a list of accredited schools that followed uniform standards and used common application forms. As a result, the western states took the lead in developing the concept of an education system with a state university serving as the crown.<sup>38</sup>

Access, along with rankings and money, began to determine the direction many universities would take in the development of their curriculum and their missions of serving society. While elite schools such as Harvard wanted to improve access, the lure of rankings and money reinforced the gatekeeping mechanisms designed to insure a unified student body.

### **A Universe of Differences**

The institutional focus on rankings, money, and access allowed universities to modify and differentiate in the eyes of the public. It also created and perpetuated an environment where departments within the same university sought to take advantage of the same modifiers. This internal focus on ranking, money, and access served to drive apart collaboration between disciplines.

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 3:65-67.

There is no single faculty of a university, but rather *faculties* of a university. English novelist and scientist Charles (C.P.) Snow, in a very well known tale, recounted the exploits of an Oxford don who attended a dinner at Cambridge. The don had attempted to engage members of the faculty in polite conversation. All he got in return for his efforts were grunts and a rebuke as one faculty member said to the other, “Do you know what he is talking about?” The president of Cambridge upon learning of the account set about to reassure the flummoxed Oxonian by telling him that this was perfectly normal behavior. “Oh, those are mathematicians! We never talk to *them*” (1965, 3).

There are two cultures within the university of C.P. Snow, the “literary culture” and the “scientific culture.” However, while those in this culture do share “common attitudes, common standards and patterns of behavior, common approaches and assumptions,” disciplines within each culture do not necessarily understand each other. Linguists differ in discourse from psychologists who differ from biologists who differ from physicists, and so on (9). Snow observed:

The non-scientists have a rooted impression that the scientists are shallowly optimistic, unaware of man’s condition. On the other hand, the scientists believe that the literary intellectuals are totally lacking in foresight, peculiarly unconcerned with their brother men, in a deep sense anti-intellectual, anxious to restrict both art and thought to the existential moment. (5)

Yet, half a century earlier in 1910, Edwin Slosson in his examination of the universities of America was prepared to declare, “The old warfare between science and classics is practically over” and both sides had reconciled their differences.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Slosson, *Great American Universities*, 509.



How did the university come to be at war with itself over whether humanities or science would reign at the top of the university hierarchy?

Social and histories, personal histories, and differing “mental activities” were only a few of the differences between the two cultures, noted Snow. However, there was one more. The birth of the gulf between cultures emerged when one culture refused to recognize the important discoveries or pillars of the other. In the case of scientific culture, they resented that literary intellectuals have not recognized the advances of the industrial revolution, hence the phrase, “natural Luddites” (22). Common culture, Snow argued, no longer existed in western society. Scholars from differing discourse communities could not communicate with each other as they erected walls that shut out interdisciplinary collaboration (60).

Such disintegration of a common culture can be identified in universities with the explosion of specializations. President William Lowe Bryan of Indiana University in a 1904 report to the National Association of State Universities, expressed that his exploration of curriculum led him to the revelation that the courses offered by most state-supported universities “did not reach civilization”—that is, they did not meet the needs of the community by offering too few relevant courses. For this reason, Bryan did not favor the “French system” being touted at the time, which provided for centralized oversight of admissions through a single agency. Instead, he argued that the states should be allowed to continue managing their own secondary and elementary schools, as long as they adopted a twelve-year

grade school plan.<sup>40</sup> Flexner echoed Bryan's concern when he wrote in 1930 that the primary influences on institutions of higher education were chiefly local. True differences between schools were "inconsequential," as all of the universities began to resemble one another. The good news for Flexner was that this makes them ripe for innovation. Unfortunately, he warned, there were too many "quacks" who wormed their way into the network of the institution, either by the creation of disciplines not worthy of the university or through administration. There was expansion for expansion sake and the machinery began to become unwieldy, resulting in "travesty research." The negative impact of the expansion reverberated down the line to primary and secondary schools (1968 [1930], 187). Specialization seemed to threaten education.

Flexner, however, rejected Cardinal Newman's vision of the university as one of undergraduate education and for the preservation of knowledge. Newman in *The Idea of a University* argued that research by universities meant the death of education. "I do not see why a [research] university should have any students," wrote Newman, arguing that research and "philosophical studies" do not belong at institutions of higher education (In Kerr 1968, xiii). Flexner argued that a modern university should only focus on upper-division and graduate teaching and should also be engaged primarily in research. Undergraduate education belonged to the secondary schools in Flexner's model, as did vocational studies, such as business studies and adult education (xii-xiv). Veblen (1957) shared this opinion arguing that

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<sup>40</sup> National Association of State Universities, *Transactions and Proceedings of the National Association of State Universities in the United States of America, 1903-1907*, 2:101, 106.

the combination within universities of both an undergraduate and a graduate college was what Veblen identified as “at best a freak of aimless survival. At the worst, and more commonly, it was the result of a gross ambition for magnitude on the part of the joint directorate.” With this scheme, the undergraduate college was no more than an appendage, held onto to pay for the graduate and research programs. This was reinforced when the faculty of the undergraduate college differed from that of the graduate, and was no more than glorified high school instructors (17).

Kerr in turn rejected both Flexner and Veblen’s claim about undergraduate studies by pointing out how universities of the late twentieth century had flourished under the umbrella of undergraduate education, advanced teaching, and research. Columbia, Harvard, Johns Hopkins, Chicago, and Wisconsin, which Flexner had dismissed as being true universities due to their undergraduate curricula, were by the 1960s recognized as exemplary models of public research institutions. Even Flexner’s claim that the Ph.D. degree, which he had derided as having lost its value, proved incorrect as the United States went on to dominate Nobel Prizes in research. Kerr pointed out that Flexner’s primary observations were of a “golden age” of the late 1800s, which were heavily influenced by Johns Hopkins and a German class-bound university model that disparaged merit (1968, xv-xvii). What Flexner did get right, contends Kerr, was the need for model universities and the proper place within society for these institutions, and that good universities were worth obtaining (xx).

The proverbial bridge between the secondary schools and the state-supported university remained a challenging quest. The idea that the public K-12 system could deliver students who were prepared for college work and absolve the university of this responsibility is still a “fantasy,” the child of “pleasant optimism,” noted Patty Limerick (2014). There was a time when university professors were generalists, who could converse across several discourse communities. Not so today, wrote Limerick, in this world of faculty specialization (81).

The twenty-first century model of the research university is a place of differences in need of reconciliation that extends beyond the divide between state-supported open-access universities and restricted-access universities, and the need to bridge secondary education with the university. With so much specialization within a university’s faculty comes a failure not so much to communicate, but to collaborate.

### **Summary**

Snow’s reflection on the loss of a common culture within universities highlights the challenges they face today as they respond to criticism regarding relevance. Hanging a university’s worth on rankings, money, and access only exacerbates the chasm between the disciplines.

The three modifiers of rankings, money, and access will not be going away any time soon. As such, today’s universities in a counterintuitive move must embrace them. The surest way to manage the modifiers is through collaboration.

Rhetoric, as the next chapter demonstrates, is collaboration. While there are scholars who may argue rhetoric is not a discipline, the opposite is true. It requires theory and practice that comes from research. Otherwise, it remains a philosophy unmoored from a sound theoretical base. The division of American doctoral research universities into closed access and open access institutions, along with the division between humanities and the sciences retarded the advance and acceptance of rhetoric as a tool of not only writing, but also scholarship during the twentieth century, as well as its place in the modern doctoral research university. This was an ironic development given rhetoric's natural role in the formation, operation, and structure within places of higher education.

Reconciling rhetoric's place within the university requires an understanding of not only what is the nature of belief, but also how it is processed to produce knowledge. Such an exploration requires an inquiry into the cognitive evolution of rhetoric as an innate trait only present in *Homo sapiens*. It requires an exploration that takes us to the origins of rhetoric. An origin located not in the academies of Hellenic Greece 2,500 years ago, but beyond, to a time 70,000 years ago when the first rhetorical species made herself known around the Paleolithic campfire, when early humans first learned how not just to cooperate with each other, but to *collaborate* with each other.

In the next chapter, I will examine how belief came to be not only the core of epistemic rhetoric, but also of the university.

## Chapter 3

### Belief

#### Introduction

##### Historical Sketch: The First President

Who was the first president of the University of Texas at El Paso? Common knowledge would point to John Barry, who, according to the two published histories of the University, was elected in 1931, seventeen years after the institution was established. As president, Barry reported directly to the board of regents in Austin and testified directly to committees of oversight within the state government. Before his election, the dean of the school handled the administrative functions, beginning with Steve Worrell in 1914, John Kidd in 1923, and Charles Puckett in 1927.

In his 1964 history of the institution, *Frontier College*, Francis Fugate stated that “the college acquired its first President, John G. Barry” in 1931 (23). In 1988, Nancy Hamilton, building off Fugate, wrote in her history *UTEP: A Pictorial History*, “The College of Mines entered a new era in its history on September 1, 1931, when John Gerald Barry became the institution’s first president” (47). Yet, in the preface to Hamilton’s book, Charles Sonnichsen, a professor of English at the school dating back to the 1930s and a published historian himself, discussed the pending election of Barry as signifying “the president [of the College of Mines] would no longer be the president of the far-off University of Texas at Austin” (9),

whom Sonnichsen referred to as “our chief administrator” (15). Even Fugate made sixteen references in his history to a president residing in Austin. Historians of UTEP may have inferred that there was an Austin president; none, however, ever made reference to the president of the University of Texas at Austin as the “president of the College of Mines.”

Relying on secondary sources makes understanding the role of an Austin president difficult. As was discussed in the first chapter, few artifacts of communication between El Paso and Austin existed in UTEP’s archives. This lack of documents made the context surrounding the election of Barry difficult to ascertain. Just how autonomous was the school and what role did it play in its own transformation into a regional college before 1931?

In April 1914, after the U.T. Board of Regents appointed him the dean of the School of Mines, Steve Worrell set to work turning the facilities of the former El Paso Military Institute into an academic branch of the University of Texas. On first-name basis with the president of U.T. at the time, Sidney Mezes, Worrell wrote Mezes often seeking advice on running of the school. However, it was not long before Worrell began developing closer relationships with civic leaders, many of whom he already knew from his time working for Mexican mining operations in the region several years prior. Worrell spent considerable time with the founders of the school, including Richard Burges, the state representative most responsible for establishing the school in El Paso. After the school opened, Worrell communicated less and less with Mezes. When Mezes resigned as president in November 1914, his

replacement, William J. Battle, spent little time if any on the affairs of the El Paso branch. As a result, Worrell communicated directly with not only the regents, but also the state's legislators.

Sensing a power vacuum, Worrell believed that he could run the school without oversight from the regents. On March 23, 1915, Worrell wrote a letter to his former mentor and head of the U.T. Bureau of Economic Geology, William B. Phillips, revealing his intention to administer the school as an independent branch of the University of Texas. Referring to the A&M College (now Texas A&M University), which was (and still is) a branch of the University of Texas under the state constitution, Worrell stated, "As it is we can of course play the role so often taken by the A&M people. We will be a part of the University when it suits and not when it is, if ever, to our advantage to do so. The later situation is not likely to arise, of course."<sup>41</sup> Phillips, concerned about this turn of events, handed over his copy of Worrell's letter to President Battle. Battle shared the rather audacious letter with members of the board, including its chair, William Hogg. "I think it would be well for the Board to consider carefully the methods of management of the School of Mines," Battle told Hogg. "By law, the control of the school rests entirely with the Board of Regents; but the Board has yet made no provisions for exercising this control."<sup>42</sup> Hogg replied in agreement to Battle on April 13, 1915. "Some members of the Board thought that the school ought not to have been established in

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<sup>41</sup> Steve Worrell to William Phillips, March 23, 1915. VF8Aa, University of Texas, *U.T. Presidents Records (VF)*.

<sup>42</sup> Minutes, 1915:436.



the first place,” and asked that a “thorough statement be prepared affecting this school.”<sup>43</sup> At their next regular meeting on April 30, 1915, the regents appointed Battle the president of the School of Mines directing that he be “given the same authority ... as he has over the Medical Department at Galveston.”<sup>44</sup> From that moment, all head deans of the School of Mines were to report directly to the president of the University of Texas and to cease interacting directly with not only the board of regents, but also with the state legislators. Full executive control of the school now rested six hundred miles away in Austin and for the next sixteen years, these presidents of the School (later College) of Mines provided strategic oversight. Battle’s successor, Robert Vinson, addressed issues relating to admissions and curriculum, as well as insuring that the architectural team of Trost & Trost received the contract to rebuild the School of Mines. Vinson also fired Worrell as dean in 1923 before his own resignation as president. Another president, Harry Y. Benedict, became an advocate of expansion and lobbied to allow the school a greater degree of autonomy. A mathematician as well as a legal scholar, Benedict provided the arguments that eventually transformed the College from an academic branch into the western branch of the University of Texas.

### Belief and Collaboration

This seemingly innocent oversight on the part of researchers regarding the presidency nonetheless had a profound effect on the examination of the history of

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<sup>43</sup> William Hogg to William Battle, April 13, 1915. VF2Ba, Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Minutes, 1915:434.

the University of Texas at El Paso. By not referring to the five individuals who held the appointed position of president of the School (later College) of Mines before Barry, many of the visionary acts that transformed the mining school into a four-year college went unheralded.<sup>45</sup> This unfortunate misunderstanding, rooted in *unjustified belief*, and probably supported by pride on the part of the school's scholars, resulted in the overlooking of vast collections of documents relating to the history of UTEP maintained in Austin archives that contained the papers of these first presidents.

It is easy to believe that John Barry was the first executive head of UTEP given the number of published histories that confirmed this belief. It takes more work to believe that William Battle was the first executive head, since he was commonly known as the president of U.T. Austin. Taking that extra effort, however, is far more rewarding, for it involves rhetoric. The study of rhetoric requires an understanding of belief and its relationship to claims, as it is the marriage of perspicacity and perspicuity. A belief, to borrow an analogy from the discourse of science, can be visualized as a singular particle on which the two separate and distinct elements of knowledge and truths are built. This begs the question: What is a belief and what is its relationship to knowledge and truths.

This chapter is a collaboration between the humanities and the sciences. It explores the cognitive origins of rhetoric that led to what I refer to as the Three

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<sup>45</sup> These presidents, as elected by the U.T. Board of Regents, were William J. Battle (1914-1916), Robert E. Vinson (1916-1923), William S. Sutton (1923-1924), Walter W.M. Splawn (1924-1927), and Harry Y. Benedict (1927-1937).

Ages of Rhetoric. The First Age of Rhetoric, which is discussed in this chapter, explores the first rhetorical utterances 70,000 years ago, which hallmarked the arrival of pragmatic language followed by a subsequent decline with the advent of fictive language 40,000 years later. The Second Age began with the advent of democracy in Hellenic Greece 2,500 years ago and the establishment of rhetoric as a field of study in the earliest academies, the precursor to the modern university. The Third Age recounts the recent revolution in the New Rhetorics that began 50 years ago. This journey is an examination of how we as humans came to use rhetoric to process belief to facilitate collaboration, and thus assured not only the survival of the *Homo sapiens*, but also human ascendancy over other species.

An anomaly in most modern theories of rhetoric is that they typically have a Eurocentric aspect to them, which makes it difficult to envision rhetoric as a form of natural behavior innate to humans. While some theories on the evolution of rhetoric do explore comparative cultures, they all inevitably return to the writings of Plato and Aristotle. The discussion of other cultures without using the vocabulary handed down by Greek scholars and those who followed presents a challenge—unless we come to a new understanding of how that vocabulary evolved before them, we cannot understand how rhetoric is innate or universal to *Homo sapiens*. For global rhetorics to exist, it must occur everywhere and at every time as well as having some sort of common origin. What becomes of them after that singular origin would make them the subject of regional and cultural forces, as is the case with other human traits, such as diet or tool making.

While rhetoric may not have originated in Greece, rhetoric as a field of study did, and before there can be a field of study, there has to be something to study. When exploring the universal origins of global rhetorics, it is necessary to travel not only farther back in time, but also farther away from Greece. The distance traveled takes us to a time and place where *belief*—an assured thought based on an observation using the senses—was limited to one’s immediate and apparent surroundings. Such a time and place would host early humans who possessed language and practiced crafts but not art linked to fictive beliefs. In such a time and place, it would be inconceivable for the belief of a human to work with a stranger from outside his or her immediate community, or *band*. The only beliefs that existed were those that could be formulated from interactions with nature and those in the band on whom he or she depended for survival. It is at this time and place in the past that we can observe the cognitive origins of rhetoric.

### A Caveat

While this chapter will examine the cognitive origins of rhetoric, it will not be an examination of what is referred to as *cognitive rhetoric*. Cognitive rhetoric, as defined by Linda Flower and John Hayes in 1981, described the theory for a cognitive process of writing based on empiricism and grounded in Janet Emig’s research into cognitive psychology (Berlin 1988, 480-81). Rather, this chapter builds off of an earlier use of the term that first appeared in a 1975 article authored by Dan Sperber, entitled “Rudiments de rhétorique cognitive,” and originally published in the French journal, *Poétique: Revue de Théorie et d’Analyse Littéraire* some six

years before Flower and Hayes. Sperber argued that while rhetoric may be related to linguistics, rhetoric as a field goes beyond the mere study of language. For Sperber, rhetoric was concerned with the *utterances* that comprised discourse, an utterance being the complete expression of a thought. A sentence, claimed Sperber, belongs to the field of linguistics and consists of the pairing of phonetic and semantic representations that rely on grammar to provide meaning. Rhetoric in addition to grammar, however, also requires for the emergence and interpretation of two more elements of discourse: an encyclopedia (knowledge of the world) and symbolism (knowledge of the encyclopedia). Rhetoric, then, is a pairing of phonetic and conceptual representations that relies on a cognitive understanding of previous utterances (362). Linguistics may aid cooperation within and between species; rhetoric, however, aids human collaboration by connecting bodies of knowledge. This concept will serve as our jumping off point to the First Age of Rhetoric (see Table 1).

Table 1. Timeline of Rhetoric

Years Ago	Event
2.5 million	Appearance of the genus <i>Homo</i> in Africa. First chipped tools.
2 million	Evolution of several distinct human species.
1 million	First use of spoken language.
300,000	Fire in common usage.
230,000	Evolution of <i>Homo sapiens</i> .
70,000	Human history begins. First Age of Rhetoric and the beginning of the Cognitive Revolution.
30,000	Emergence of fictive language. Birth of the poetics. First cave carvings and figurines.
13,000	<i>Homo sapiens</i> last remaining human species.
12,000	Beginning of the Agricultural Revolution and first permanent settlements.
5,000	First kingdoms and polytheistic religions.
2,500	Second Age of Rhetoric begins in ancient Greece. Beginning of the Knowledge Revolution.
50	Third Age of Rhetoric begins. Beginning of the Collaborative Revolution.

Source: Adapted from Harari (2015); Oxford Reference Timeline of Evolution (2012); Oxford Reference Timeline of Prehistory (2012).

## Rhetoric's First Age: The Cognitive Revolution

### Universal Audiences

If rhetoric is a natural behavior, innate to all humans, then it should be universal, and shared by all cultures around the world. Evolutionary psychologists John Tooby and Leda Cosmides (1992) pointed out that for a behavior or activity to be universal, it must be innate—that is, existing from birth. If a culture did not

exhibit the behavior, then the behavior could not be innate; rather, it would be socially constructed or learned (43). Understanding evolutionary psychology and physiology as it relates to behaviors that may have existed at one time in evolutionary history requires the use of reverse engineering to create a design based on observations that lead to a causal structure that explains current behavior. This rearward approach provides insight into the complex adaptations undergone by the human species (55). Complex adaptations are unique by species and are usually the result of elegant problems specific to evolution, which rules out chance. In other words, they have to solve long-standing problems that enhance survival of the species (62). Rhetoric then, if innate, should promote natural selection.

George Kennedy (1992) published one of the first examinations of rhetoric's possible evolutionary origin. Kennedy described rhetoric as an "energy" that propelled language and which may even extend down to the sub-atomic level. He provided examples of animals in nature that used language in order to generate cooperation, such as bees in a hive or canines that use scents to stake territory (13). While Kennedy did make an earnest effort to explore evolutionary precepts of rhetoric, it was his examples of interspecies communication that captured the imagination of a few scholars and numerous graduate students (Davis 2011; Hawhee 2011; Lee Mifsud and Johnstone 1998). His musings ignited more than a few seminar room discussions where at least one doctoral student would inevitably claim how smart his or her cat was. Even its title, "A Hoot in the Dark," prompted several scholars to question the sincerity of the article (Vitanza 1994, ix-x).

Many animals can be taught by humans to recognize symbols. What they cannot do is recreate that symbol to synthesize another form or object. While a duck or chimpanzee can be trained to recognize a triangle, only a human can transform it into a tool such as an arrowhead (Gowlett 1992, 71). From a cognitive perspective, significant differences separate humans from other species, with the use of languages being one. For example, as Yuval Harari (2015) observed, there is our use of poetics:

[Humans] can weave common myths such as the biblical creation story, the Dreamtime myths of Aboriginal Australians, and the nationalist myths of modern states. Such myths give *Sapiens* the unprecedented ability to cooperate flexibly in large numbers. Ants and bees can also work in huge numbers, but they can do so in a very rigid manner and only with close relatives. Wolves and chimpanzees cooperate for more flexibly than ants, but they can do so only with small numbers of other individuals that they know intimately. *Sapiens* can cooperate in extremely flexible ways with countless numbers of strangers. That's why *Sapiens* rule the world, whereas ants eat our leftovers and chimps are locked up in zoos and research laboratories. (25)

Humans have an amazing ability not only to imagine things, but also to imagine them collectively, which fosters unprecedented levels of cooperation. Cooperation, though, is not collaboration. This is where Kennedy, even if he were writing “beak in cheek,” as Victor Vitanza (1994) mused, came up short (ix-x). But, I come not to bury Kennedy, but to praise him, for he was able to begin a conversation about rhetoric as a universal behavior innate to all humans and not just those with Eurocentric heritages (and male chromosomes).

Assuming that rhetoric is, using the definition provided in chapter one, the marriage of perspicacity and perspicuity to alter reality for an ethical good, then we



would need to find examples of such a rhetorical behavior not only throughout history, but also before the advent of writing. This means exploring a period well before a language of rhetoric first appeared in ancient Greece 2,500 years ago. It means traveling back to a point during the birth of humanity 70,000 years ago, when *Homo sapiens* experienced what Harari described as the Cognitive Revolution.

The term *prehistory* is usually defined as that period before the existence of writing and inscribed artifacts. The search for non-inscribed artifacts and “shadow” artifacts (remnants) of the human experience, requires the collaboration of several fields of study, for there will be no concrete artifacts of the existence of the first rhetoric. Exploration of this theory in itself is a form of reverse engineering that necessitates an interdisciplinary approach borrowing from the fields of cognitive psychology, archeology, and evolutionary biology, as well as from classical and modern rhetoric.

The search for the cognitive birth of rhetoric involves the use of two modern foundational theories of rhetoric and one rather ancient one. The modern theories include Stephen Toulmin’s argumentation model (1958) and Lloyd Bitzer’s rhetorical situation (1968), both of which are discussed in the next chapter. The older theory derives from Plato and his theory on the relationship of truths and knowledge found in his *Theaetetus*.<sup>46</sup> Any quest for evidence of rhetoric from prehistory will possess traces of these theories in non-inscribed artifacts or shadow artifacts.

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<sup>46</sup> Plato, *Theaetetus*, trans. Harold N. Fowler, Vol. 12 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1921), accessed Nov. 20, 2011, Perseus Digital Library, 201c-202c.

Bitzer's rhetorical situation (1968; 1980) described rhetoric as a natural act, which makes it idea for testing. By recognizing an act from the past that involves the key components of exigence, audience, and constraint, then rhetoric would exist. Bitzer argued that rhetoric alters reality (belief) through the creation of discourse that persuades an audience to consider a course of action through collaboration (4). This collaboration differed from cooperation or manipulation in that it attempted to resolve an issue beneficial to a defined community, which would provide members a competitive advantage in nature (11). If reality was rooted in an unjustifiable belief, the rhetorical situation would be unnatural. Such beliefs would not lead to a collaboration that benefited the survival of the community.

The community, however, cannot be the only audience, which is a key requirement of Bitzer's rhetorical situation, as well as the theory of cognitive evolution. There must exist a *universal audience* outside of the community that would respond to the rhetorical situation. Bitzer's constraints when applied to the Paleolithic human mind must take into account the inability of a band of humans to engage in collaboration with those outside of the band. Therefore, for rhetoric to be present, the constraints dictate the existence of not just the Other (Said 1979), but of a *universal Other*. Under natural selection, any evolutionary advance that gives a species an advantage over others will improve their probability of survival (Darwin 2008; Dehaene 2014). In the case of Paleolithic humans, their inability to collaborate across bands kept them from advancing beyond being prey to other

dominant predator species. The acknowledgment of a universal audience would represent a significant step forward in human evolution.

### Cognitive Evolution of Rhetoric

Just what type of mind would a Paleolithic human possess before this evolutionary leap? Cognitive archeology went beyond cultural process and ecology to examine what was taking place within the early mind of humans. It is the study of the structure of the mind that relies on several disciplines, including evolutionary biology (Fagan 1999, 32). Having the ability to create labels that define things limits our ability to study ourselves as an evolutionary creature. Looking at our “deep-history,” we as a species have few artifacts to add to a checklist as to when and where exactly we became “human.” However, there are three items on the list of most archeologists: (1) the handaxe tool; (2) fire; and (3) language (Gamble, Gowlett, and Dunbar 2014, 117). Fire created more time for socializing by extending the length of the day, allowing the cooking of high-calorie foods, provides warmth, and offers protection from predators (138).

Small bands of individuals formed the social core of human existence since the first of several species of the genus *Homo* first appeared 2.5 million years ago. That is not surprising, as small bands make up the core of all primates. Yet somehow humans were able to increase the number of individuals willing to collaborate with each other by huge multiples beginning less than 100,000 years ago. This expansion represents the beginning of human history. It represents the advent of rhetoric.

The evolution of the human mind left traces of its 2.5 million year ascent in the form of artifacts, which are objects made or influenced by human activity and do not occur naturally. These artifacts range from tools to crafts to the blackened rocks that once comprised a fire pit to trash dating back at least 300,000 years ago (Dunbar 1996, 116). Since evidence of the existence of writing only emerged during the previous 5,000 years, that leaves a 295,000 year-gap in which to pinpoint the emergence of rhetoric. Writing, then, actually makes up a small fraction of the history of cognitive humans. We must look elsewhere according to archeologist Steven Mithen (1996) to a time before humans became cognitive in order to for evidence of language and intellectual development (7). Just what these artifacts would look like would become apparent by understanding the evolutionary process that the human mind went through. This is not something most rhetoricians are used to given our focus on writing. But then, the literal definition of the word *rhetoric* comes from the ancient Greek *rhētorikē* (ῥητορικὴ), meaning oratory or oratorical. Therefore, a researcher cannot always look for writing when examining the roots of rhetoric.

The modern human mind is a construct that took several million years to form, all the while leaving behind clues as to its origins. Mithen pointed out that researchers can reconstruct the early mind can be reconstructed understanding the architecture of mind and thought, and then deconstructing it through the use of cognitive psychology (33). While no single theory of the mind dominates research, all recognize that the mind is far more than a storage device for reciting facts. It

also processes those facts, comparing and recombining bits to arrive at new knowledge. This indicates that the brain is more than a sponge; it is a computational device with the brain acting as hardware and the mind as software (34).

To arrive at the concept of the brain as a computational device, it is important to understand that the early human brain presented downsides to our Paleolithic hunter-gatherer ancestors. At two percent of the total body mass, the human brain uses up 25 percent of the energy needed at rest, compared to only 8 percent for other primates. This added fuel demand meant that humans spent more time searching for food while the body atrophied, as it diverted more energy to fueling the brain as opposed to building muscle mass (Harari 2015, 9; Gamble, Gowlett, and Dunbar 2014, 209; Mithen 1996, 12-13). This trade off had to have provided some sort of competitive advantage to early humans. The evolving brain used tremendous amounts energy, creating a drain on the human body. This would make it a very expensive luxury if it provided no benefit for survival.

Brain size relates to the ability to cooperate with a finite number of individuals. *Sapiens* as social animals needed to know as much about the relationships between each other as we did about the location of predators. Even in a small group, the number of relationships to manage was complex. A band of fifty individuals would require the processing of 1,225 one-to-one relationships and the numerous social combinations. Grooming, which defined these early social relationships, required physical touching and limited the number of possible daily

interactions. Language, however, proved far more efficient as it facilitated endless talking, and talking enabled greater trust, which meant that groups could grow larger. Our language abilities evolved to facilitate gossiping, as gossip usually focuses on wrongdoings and negative behaviors (Harari 2015, 22-24; Hill and Dunbar 2003, 54; Dunbar 1996, 69; Gamble, Gowlett, and Dunbar 2014, 142). Language in the form of gossip thus began to improve group survival.

This use of language within the band afforded few benefits when it came to dealing with other bands. For all of its powers, gossip still relied on everyone knowing each other through familiarity. This could not be the case with other bands given the limited capacity of the Paleolithic mind to remember social connections. The role of evolution in forming the architecture of the human mind springs from the problem solving environmental conditions presented to humans during their hunter-gatherer existence. This adaptation required humans to not only have a spatial map of their immediate environs, but also a “social map” of their relationships (Cosmides and Tooby 1992, 163).

Human interaction before rhetoric was far from Darwinian, a term that reflects a brutish existence of everyone for him or herself. Barkow, Cosmides, and Tooby (1992) explained that there is more fiction than fact when it comes to evolutionary biology. Cooperation and altruism play an important part in the evolutionary process and is as normal to the human experience as self-interest. Solving mutual problems, the authors argued, “can emerge in the absence of a Leviathan [monster], and adaptations for the expression and regulation of

cooperation and altruism are expected design features of social organisms.”

Complex cooperation existed as a cognitive mechanism within humans, as it was a result of processing “certain complex information-processing problems.” This indicated that the brain had been hardwired to handle these complex processes (161).

It is the combination of altruism and complex cooperation that led to collaboration. Through its own algorithms, the human brain is designed to handle social discourse. The innate human trait of altruism and collaboration, which is a form of reciprocal altruism reside in specialized modules or domains of the human mind for problem solving, including from socializing to mating to avoiding threats. This nature does not preclude nurture in the development of the individual. Each human experience triggers an existing template within a specialized domain that is typical or recurring in the environment (Cosmides and Tooby 1992, 164-66).

Domains of the human mind provide the key to survival for a species with a large, hungry brain such as ours. Mithen (1996) described these domains as containers of intuitive knowledge. Each domain controlled a specialized function, such as natural history, technology, social skills, and language, as well as a general domain serving as sort of a common area. In the early human mind of 100,000 years ago, these domains were closed to each other, preventing what Mithen referred to as *cognitive fluidity*. Without cognitive fluidity, a belief processed in one domain cannot be processed in another (63-64). For example, Paleolithic humans used their natural history domain to recognize and remember the shape of a triangle that

occurred in nature. However, without cognitive fluidity, they lacked the cognitive ability to make the connection between the natural history domain and the technology domain that would allow them to conclude that the triangle might make for a better spear tip than the sharpened edge to a stick. This breakthrough would not occur until the evolutionary development of a passage between the domains.

Much of our understanding of cognitive evolution today relies on research into childhood cognitive development and the practices of hunter-gatherer societies and ape societies. Given that humans and apes shared a common ancestor dating back to six million years ago, our shared 4.5 million year common evolutionary period is observable in the minds of today's apes. These traits would also be present in *Homo sapiens sapiens* (who appeared 100,000 years ago), and our evolutionary cousins, *Australopithecus ramidus* (4.5 million years ago); *Homo habilis* (2 million years ago); *Homo erectus* (1.8 million years ago); and *Homo neanderthalensis* (Neanderthals, 200,000 years ago), who were the last of our human ancestors, disappearing a mere 30,000 years ago (Mithen 1996, 10).

That *Sapiens* advanced beyond other species, including within the same genus, can be traced to what cognitive psychologists refer to as a Theory of Mind, or *ToM*. Dunbar(1996) described ToM as the ability of “being able to understand what another individual is thinking, to ascribed beliefs, desires, fears and hopes to someone else, and to believe that they really do experience these feelings as mental states” (Dunbar 1996, 83). Daniel Dennett coined the term *intentional stance*, or mentalizing, to refer to the human capacity to “understand another individual’s



mind state, and particularly their intentions.” The intentional stance refers to the unique human ability to understand meaning through words. Children exhibit this trait at the age of five, “when they realize that for the first time that other people have minds of their own—minds that might even result in them believing something quite different about the world,” as well as discovering not only their ability to lie, but also to pretend (Dennett in Gamble, Gowlett, and Dunbar 2014, 50-51). The ToM of a five-year-old human child is akin to that of other primates, as apes too can be aware of another’s perspective and intentions (51).

Another analogy comes from our understanding of autism. Individuals with autism typically possess an impaired ToM (Dunbar 1996; Gamble, Gowlett, and Dunbar 2014). To varying degrees, those with impaired ToMs cannot imagine what someone else would have in mind. Since most conversations between adults typically involve the use of metaphor and imagery, such an individual would lack the capacity to interpret it in the context it was meant. Autistic individuals often cannot master second order ToM, with many remaining stuck in the first order, even though they may have what many consider to be normal or above average IQs (Dunbar 1996, 88-89; Gamble, Gowlett, and Dunbar 2014, 52). In other situations, an autistic individual finds it difficult to engage in social interaction, yet can excel by overcompensating in other domains of the mind. Through a form of “mindblindness,” the autistic individual appears unaware that others humans possess thoughts. At the same time, they appear relatively normal on other plains of thought and exhibiting well-developed skills that utilize other cognitive domains.

It is as if the path between particular domains had been blocked or are nonexistent, which can, in some cases, lead to *idiot savants* (Mithen 1996, 51).

Our ability to believe what others may believe through ToM is based on intuitive rules that allows each human to be not only self-aware, but to possess an awareness of the other's awareness, even if they are not present with us (Dehaene 2014, 251). The power to formulate thoughts and then share them is uniquely human. This two-nested evolution—the emergence of communication and then the language of thought—creates the environment that “allows us to formulate sophisticated beliefs and to share them with others” (253). Out of sight is not out of mind.

Mithen's exploration of this trait built on the theories of Nicholas Humphrey who in his paper, “The Social Function of Intellect,” described successful primitive groups as those who can better predict the behaviors of others in the group.

Moreover powers of social forethought and understanding—what [Humphrey] termed social intelligence—are essential for maintaining social cohesion so that practical knowledge, such as about toolmaking and foraging, can be passed around. In other words there are selective pressures for abilities to read the contents of other people's minds. We use a clever trick for this: it is called consciousness. (1996, 52)

Language allowed an expression of this consciousness. Consciousness, therefore, provided a useful function to the evolution of humans.

Darwin pointed out that with natural selection, there was no need for organs to evolve to fill a niche or design; they instead evolved to provide a reproductive advantage. The idea of *teleos*—that things evolved to fulfill an end—faded, leaving open the possibility that consciousness evolved as positive function, serving as an

adjunct function from the growth of the human brain that expanded in response to other environmental factors. Stanislaw Dehaene (2014) argued that this “functionalist” approach sees consciousness as a transformer of information into a code that the brain can later process (90-91). This code remained locked up in the evolving brain laying out the blueprints for future pathways between the domains.

Twentieth century philosophers such as A.J. Ayer (1977 [1956]), who explored the nature of logic, postulated that the knowledge requires reason, which is a conscious judgment. An animal such as a dog may know its owner, but it cannot make a statement that this is true. If it cannot be stated, it cannot be knowledge (12). There must be some form of collaboration, a sharing of claims, for knowledge to exist. This collaboration must extend outside of the band to other bands in recognition of the universal audience. This sets the stage for the advent of the Cognitive Revolution and the First Age of Rhetoric, as our ancestors would come to realize that they shared beliefs with others.

### The First Rhetoric as Justified Beliefs

In the world before rhetoric, out of sight really was out of mind. Like a child before the age of five or an individual with autism, early humans saw the world as it was and believed everyone in their band saw it that way as well (Dunbar 1996, 85). Beliefs did not need justification for truths did not exist; only knowledge of their immediate natural world existed. The key here is to understand that these early humans were not childlike; they were in fact highly functioning individuals relying on advanced and rather sophisticated intelligence domains that allowed

them to make sense of their immediate observable world through the processing of beliefs into knowledge that was shared by everyone within the band. This world, according to Dunbar (1996), changed abruptly when they came to understand that most everyone else in the world outside of their band held beliefs, as well (85). The imminent arrival of pragmatic language based on rhetorical utterances 70,000 years ago represented the beginning of human history. Before that, explained Harari, was biology (37-38).

Humanity, therefore, is based in part on the uniquely human attribute to collaborate. Collaboration, as opposed to cooperation or coercion, allows for the solving of mutual problems that could lead to conflict. This ability to collaborate is facilitated through language and symbols (Dunbar 1996; Harari 2015; Mithen 1996). Collaboration then is a way of making a claim to solve a rhetorical situation not to any audience, but a universal audience. The universal audience by definition includes not only the members of our own social circle, but also those who are classified as not just the universal Other, but the *Ur-Other*.

Prior to Harari, Mithen (1996) pointed out two major transformations in human behavior during this prehistoric period that represented a significant advance in cognitive ability. These transformations took place long after the modern brain had reached its maximum size some 200,000 years ago. Mithen pointed to a cultural explosion that took place 30,000 to 60,000 years ago, which is when the first art, intricate technology, and religious practices appeared. The second transformation took place 10,000 to 12,000 years ago with the advent of agriculture.

Neanderthals, however, whose brains were as large and complex as *Homo sapiens*, never experienced these transformations. This puzzled Mithen, who wanted to know what the prehistoric brains of both human species were doing with their processing pre-transformation powers, given the amount of energy in food they demanded. In addition to wondering when language and consciousness first arrived, Mithen explored wanted to know what happened between each transformation (12-13).

By focusing on this period 70,000 years ago, when Harari's Cultural Revolution began, a pattern emerges that can be better explained by our search for a universal audience. It is at this point in evolution that we can witness the birth of the humanities and sciences through the first rhetorical utterances when knowledge was shared beyond one band.

The next step in our search for the first rhetorical utterances requires us to use our present-day cognitive minds in a way that was not possible for our Paleolithic ancestors. It involves the use of *fictive language* in order to utilize our *dramatic imagination*. The dramatic imagination allows us to fill in blanks of theories much the same way Albert Einstein used thought exercises to explore relativity. The dramatic imagination builds on this form of creative use of the mind to explore both the humanities and the sciences. Robert Edmund Jones (1941), a professor of drama at Yale University and acclaimed twentieth century Broadway designer, first described this process as a tool to explore the Paleolithic origins of the theatre by imagining a reenactment of a hunt that took place around a campfire by a band of early humans. His theory is an old one in which he argued that to

understand some aspect of humanity today, “we must be humble enough to learn from [the past]” (45). The imagination used properly in the pursuit of understanding is one of the more difficult tasks a human can undertake, contended to Jones.

Jacqueline Jones Royster (2000) similarly described this method, which she labeled the *critical imagination*, “as a commitment to making connections and describing possibility” (83). A rhetorical scholar, Royster reminded us, must still do the hard work of grounding our claims in a well-grounded theoretical base (84). Both Jones and Royster recognized that fictive language could play a valuable role as a placeholder in the development of ideas.

Our exploration of the Paleolithic campfire using the dramatic/critical imagination predates Jones’ example by 40,000 years when a member of a band makes the first rhetorical utterance 70,000 years ago. It is night and the band, which numbers no more than twenty-five, has gathered. With improved linguistic abilities over successive generations, the band relies less on grooming and more on language to maintain and strengthen social bonds through trust. This trust, however, does not extend to outside of the band. Even though those in neighboring bands they may encounter from time to time in their nomadic wondering may be related, social intelligence prevents them from cooperating. The level of trust required to maintain band cohesion can only be achieved by keeping the band small. When a band grows too large to facilitate cooperation, individuals wander off to form the nucleus of a new band or to join an existing nucleus. Once these bands

form, there is no attempt to contact other bands. It is as if they never existed (Dunbar 1996, 149).

This particular night is different. A female member of the band addresses the group to describe an experience from the day. She says,

While gathering berries by the water with my child, I was in danger from a predator. Another woman from a strange band chased off the animal. We then went on gathering berries *together*, as we took turns watching the child. I believe we can trust her and that she believes that she can trust us.

Here, we have a rhetorical situation that involved exigence in the form of a mutual threat in the form of a wild animal. The female, our first rhetor, speaks by making a claim that is backed by an observation that can be reproduced, as any member of the band could observe the actions of the Other from the strange band. The rhetor expressed a belief that showed an opening between the social and natural intelligence domains using language. Because she expressed a belief that the Other holds similar beliefs, she demonstrated a higher Theory of Mind. This represents the first understanding of the universal audience and the Ur-Other.

This simple example of the first rhetorical utterance ushered in the beginning of human history, the Harari's Cognitive Revolution, and the First Age of Rhetoric. With this First Age of Rhetoric, a new species, *Homo sapiens sapiens*, appears in South Africa and the Near East.

Within 20,000 years of the first rhetoric, rapid changes in how humans lived appeared in the archaeological record. New technology represented by new tools emerged. Humans began long migrations from Europe into East Asia, which included adapting technologies to cross a vast body of water to reach and settle

Australia. Those larger bands remaining in Europe better adapted to an advancing ice age. The artifacts from this time provided with the evidence to recognize that this cultural explosion was the result of full cognitive fluidity described by Mithen. The walls between the cognitive domains came down which allowed for far more sophisticated social arrangements between human bands. Sapiens continued to produce tools similar to the Neanderthals and the archaic pre-rhetoric *Homo sapiens*. However, color appears to be used for the first time and tools now include materials other than wood or stone. By 40,000 years ago, there is clear evidence of blades made from flint involving a process as complicated as the construction of vocal sentences. This transformation with the use of advanced tools takes place not only in Near East, but in Asia and Europe as well. Even more remarkable, boats appear, allowing the first migration to Australia (Mithen 1996, 22; Fagan 1999, 92-93; Gowlett 1992, 55).

When exigence creates a rhetorical situation, the fact that I hold a belief in my mind that I may know what another knows creates a tension that needs to be resolved through an action. This action may lead me to satisfy my curiosity and inquire as to what the other person is thinking based on a belief created by their actions. Through this act of collaboration, misunderstandings are resolved and reality on the part of the rhetors is altered. I can never really know until I test my belief by engaging the other individual. "The inference," wrote A.J. Ayer (1963 [1954]), "is not from my experience as such to his experience, but from the fact that certain properties have been found to be conjoined in various contexts to the



conclusion that in further context the conjunction will still hold.” This “inductive argument,” according to Ayer, meant that I will not become the other person, but will be able to seek out knowledge through knowledge. Inductive reasoning into what a second individual may believe is a valid form of inquiry, which should not be discounted even if it is based on the experience of the first individual. Any strict definition of knowledge provided no way to counter the skeptic. In this case, it could be said that the first individual can obtain “states of highly probable opinion” (200). Some scholars, such as Stephen Toulmin, might see this answer as simplistic. However, it is here that I.A. Richard’s definition of rhetoric as clearing up misunderstandings between individuals emerges (1936, 3).

Once our first rhetor expressed a belief of the Ur-Other, representing a connection with the universal audience, there was no going back. Archeological evidence shows that the size of *Homo sapiens* bands began to increase 70,000 years ago. Originally, the size of such a cooperative group remained limited, as trust between strangers was nonexistent preventing coalition building. Beyond that, the group fractures and new, non-cooperative groups form. With rhetoric, the band found that it could grow to 150 members, which as it happens might be the effective limit of intimate gossip.

In our modern society, 100 to 150 is the typical size for organized units such as military platoons, businesses, and social networks, as formal ranks through hierarchy are not needed in order for the unit to function and cooperate (Harari 2015, 26-27). The number 150 also signifies the number of living descendants one

couple (great-grandparents) in a peasant or hunter-gather society could produce after four generations. This also represents five generations of collective memory. That means there is one person who can vouch for everyone in the clan of bands (Dunbar 1996, 71). Studies by sociologists demonstrated that groups that grow larger than 150 to 200 individuals require a strong hierarchy to maintain structure. Social groups only need social intercourse to maintain their integrity. Brigham Young organized his band of 5,000 followers into smaller independent groups of 150 for their Great Trek during the nineteenth century (72-73).

Dunbar and Harari both explained this cultural explosion first described by Mithen as originating from gossip. The reliance on gossip for building group size they argued, however, provided no theory as to how bands began to collaborate with each other. Since fictive language did not exist at this time as evidenced by the lack of art, there was no way to lie through the utterance of false or unverifiable beliefs. Gossip, therefore, is not the proper term. Rhetoric with its reliance on pragmatic language proved far more appropriate. Both *Homo sapiens* and Neanderthals existed alongside each other 70,000 years ago. Nevertheless, Neanderthals never developed the ability to collaborate using their beliefs. The ability to convey belief above a primitive level prevented more advanced cooperation, which would have allowed interaction with larger groups beyond the base group of the band (Fagan 1999, 82-83).

*Sapiens* through their sharing of justified beliefs with other bands held a distinctive evolutionary advantage over not only other animal species, but also

other human species. Once bands recognized that they could collaborate because they shared the same beliefs concerning their natural environment, they discovered new ways of controlling that environment through the sharing of knowledge. This recognition prompted great advances in the humanities and the sciences through the simple act of sharing. It is here that we begin to complicate the theories and claims of our brethren in the sciences, both natural and social. While doing so, we can begin to bridge the chasm between the two cultures of the university.

### The Arrival of Unjustified Beliefs

Both the sciences and the humanities are identical in the one aspect that they attempt to explain the world we live in. In many ways, science came before religion for humans had the capacity to justify their beliefs before they had the ability to imagine things that did not exist. With the appearance of fictive language, rhetoric began to take a backseat to poetics.

Fictive language appeared 30,000 years ago. In Germany, an early human using a piece of ivory carved out a figure that combined a lion with a human. This “lion-man” or “lioness-woman” provided the earliest evidence of the advent of fictive language. While Upper Paleolithic humans may not have created non-utilitarian works to be places on a pedestal, their artifacts certainly demand that treatment today (Mithen 1996, 155). The ivory statuette from Hohlenstein-Stadel in southern Germany, which was crafted about 30,000 to 33,000 years ago, is one of the earliest examples of representational art discovered. Also at this time are symbolic (not representational) v-shaped markings from southwest France. By 30,000 year ago,

these representational and symbolic works of art had spread from Europe, or emerged independently, throughout the world. Examples can be found ranging from southern Africa to Australia (155-56). Something that clearly did not exist in nature now existed only in the mind of a human.

Pragmatic language before this moment offered the ability to transmit information about dangers that lurked in the bush. Now fictive language afforded the opportunity to transmit information about things that did not exist at all. Humans no longer were restricted to describing things that could be observed with the senses. It was during the Cognitive Revolution that legends, myths, gods, and religions appeared. An individual within a band could now proclaim that a spirit that resides within the deer protects the band. Only humans use this fictive language. As Harari quipped, try convincing a chimpanzee to give you a banana in exchange for a promise to provide him unlimited bananas in the afterlife (23-25).

Despite the advances made by *Sapiens*, life during the First Age of Rhetoric was not a picture of rational bliss. Humans still occupied the middle of the food chain and had to be aware of other dangers that many modern humans no longer take for granted, such as infections or shelter from the elements. While the First Age allowed humans to collaborate in a way that brought advances through safety in numbers, it was still limited in its ability to produce bands of over 150 given to the effort required for cognitive reasoning. Hence we arrive at a *universal constraint* on the on the rhetorical situation's quest for the universal audience.

Our examination of the first rhetorical utterances allowed for an examination of the original, or Ur-constraints, that emerged with the first rhetoric. Constraints, as Bitzer (1968) defined, restrict the ability of the rhetor to propose a proper response to an exigence (8). The universal constraint emerged while the evolving cognitive mind processed belief in response to threats from the environment. Recent research into the nature of cognitive effort pointed out the clear evidence of high-effort and low-effort thought on the part of humans (Eidelman and others 2012; Hibbing, Smith, and Alford 2014). Early humans who engaged in rhetoric to unite bands—a high-effort activity—took on an increased risk by approaching a member from an unrelated band. Their liberal behavior led to unpredictable results ranging from acceptance to death. Low-effort thinkers in the band would then exhibit behavior that is more conservative and thus not approach others, which, of course, improved their survival rate (Hibbing, Smith, and Alford 303). This tension between the two factions within a band would both promote and restrict expansion for the next 40,000 years.

The universal constraint presented by cognitive effort both rewarded and penalized evolution. Over time, our nomadic ancestors continued to evolve in all domains of the mind as cognitive fluidity took hold. For 40,000 years following the beginning of the Cognitive Revolution, attempts to create larger bands continued, but remained capped at about 150. Their nomadic existence explains part of this. With a worldwide population of less than one million, many bands rarely encountered another band. All of the natural selective forces of adapt, migrate, or

die remained at work despite an increased ability through rhetoric to adapt through collaboration. Migration, however, still proved to be a fitting response to most encounters given the low cognitive effort that it required. To grow bands even larger, pragmatic language would have to evolve.

At the core of language, even pragmatic language, is a belief. Belief begins with an observation. Without *fictive language* to represent beliefs that cannot be proved, all beliefs are pragmatic. Such beliefs typically lead to warranted claims built on the accumulation of previous knowledge. This warranting process is a slow and deliberative one that affords few shortcuts when it came to processing beliefs. However, the chambers of the human mind were far from finished with evolution. Fictive language would provide the shortcuts needed to bring more bands together.

Syllogisms, primitive and modern, rely on a cognitive blank that demands completion. This is a foundation of the epistemic process. Searching for a warrant to justify one's belief in the immediate Paleolithic environment was not always possible. While the advances realized from forming larger collaborative bands led to a breakthrough in survival strategies through tool making and longer migrations, these rapid advances were still limited by the lack of an imagination that would facilitate greater cognitive fluidity.

It is the *collective imagination* as expressed through fictive language that turned out to be all-powerful, as it defined an imaginary world in a way that pragmatic language could not. While the use of pragmatic language requires a higher degree of cognitive effort, the use of fictive language did not. The lower

cognitive effort of conservative members of the band combined with fictive language, as it turned out, proved more efficient for organizing ever-growing bands.

Justifying beliefs through pragmatic language is a rhetorical process that required rhetorical utterances, while building beliefs with fictive language is a poetical process. The advantage of fictive language is that it provided a shortcut that aided the imagination. Rather than always relying on the dialectic, an individual could profess a belief as a claim without having to prove it. Its disadvantage is that it facilitated the emergence of doxastic thinking, which is the formation of common opinions at the expense of common knowledge. The immediate benefit of the advent of poetics 30,000 years ago was that it provided a way to quickly and more efficiently organize much larger bands of humans with lower cognitive effort. No longer did humans have to justify beliefs; it was simpler to make one up. Rhetorics and poetics entered into a delicate balance.

### **Summary**

Whereas rhetoric had once provided the tools to resolve conflict through collaboration, the limits of rhetoric proved difficult with the early emerging city-states that would arrive later. Poetics provided a far more powerful tool through the sharing of common beliefs established through fictive language. Imagined orders, which led to the establishment of common religions and common governments, emerged. What the ordinary individuals toward the bottom of these orders surrendered were their power to say “no” through collaborative governance, something they all shared around the nomadic campfire.

Harari placed the arrival of fictive language with the beginning of his Cognitive Revolution. This claim, however, does not align with the cognitive development seen today in children or in the practices of modern hunter-gatherer societies. Pragmatic language had to have existed before fictive language.

In a world with fictive language, it is difficult to claim that certain beliefs are true and others are false. Fictive language changes the rules of the ballgame and yanks reality out from underneath us. Fictive language makes for a fascinating placeholder for invention as it promotes creativity and gives language to that which cannot be easily understood. Yet, fictive language is a tool that must be used with great care. Fictive language is not always a deliberate falsehood or an attempt to deceive; it is a product of our capacity to have beliefs that we cannot prove. These beliefs can serve as the foundations of a hypothesis to fashion a claim. They may also be the cement of a faith. Nevertheless, in the end, beliefs based on fictive language resist justification. They maybe justified at a future date; until then, they must remain categorized as unjustified, and used very carefully in rational discourse.

Biologist Edward Wilson (2014) argued that the schism between science and the humanities existed as both disciplines continued an arms race to expand at great rates through increased specialization, a condition described by Flexner in chapter 2. Perhaps, reflected Wilson, this was due to the “nature of existence itself.” Liberal research universities, he continued, should teach the relationship between the two disciplines. For Wilson, this is a moral imperative, as it holds the key to the



crisis created by the “clash of competing religions, the ambiguities of moral reasoning, the inadequate foundations of environmentalism, and (the big one) the meaning of humanity itself” (39-40). According to Wilson:

Science and the humanities, it is true, are fundamentally different from each other in what they say and do. But they are complementary to each other in origin, and they arise from the same creative processes in the human brain. If the heuristic and analytic power of science can be joined with the introspective creativity of the humanities, human existence will rise to an infinitely more productive and interesting meaning. (187)

This origin traces back to the arrival of rhetoric 70,000 years ago when Paleolithic humans used pragmatic language for the first time to collaborate on new knowledge.

Just as the university is of two cultures (humanities and sciences), American society is of two ideologies (liberal and conservative). The possibility of bridging both schisms may be how we process belief, which is through argumentation and collaboration. The sciences need fictive language in order to resolve anomalies in their theories, while the humanities need pragmatic language in order to constrain their anomalies. Rhetoric, being a tool for processing belief, allows both worlds to bring about advances through collaboration. It is the bridge between the sciences and the humanities, and it explains how we can hold to opposing truths in our heads without going insane. It is true that John Barry was the first president of UTEP. It is also true that William Battle was the first president of UTEP. Which reality do you choose?



## Chapter 4

### Argumentation

#### Introduction

##### Historical Sketch: A Branch of the University of Texas

Did the people of Texas establish the University of Texas at El Paso to serve the mining industry? Or, did they establish it to serve the higher education needs of the Paso del Norte region as a western branch of the University of Texas?

Many of the primary sources from before UTEP was established 1914 clearly reference the debate regarding the need for a mining school in West Texas. The legislation establishing the school, Texas Senate Bill 183, stated that the purpose was to establish a school dedicated to the study of mining and metallurgy and even named the institution the State School of Mines and Metallurgy.<sup>47</sup> Another reading of the other primary sources from the period results in another set of beliefs—that the school was founded as a state-supported school of higher education for the benefit the people of El Paso.

Two years after it opened, the School of Mines held its first commencement ceremony on May 30, 1916. Of the cohort that enrolled in 1914, four advanced students of the original 27 with transfer credits from other mining schools received their Engineer of Mines degree. As for the remaining 24 classmates, eight of them

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<sup>47</sup> Actually, the final draft of the bill named the school the State School of *Miners* and Metallurgy. This error on the part of the bill's sponsor, El Paso state senator Claude Hudspeth, was later silently corrected.

would go on the graduate, bringing the six-year graduation rate for the first cohort to 41 percent. While forty-one percent would prove to be about average for a cohort's six-year graduation rate by 2014, as recently as 2000, UTEP's graduation rate has been in the low twenties, trailing the more recent statewide average of the low sixties.<sup>48</sup>

Was it really all downhill from 1916? Does focusing on the graduation rate, a measure of the number of students who graduate from a given cohort within a given period, hide another story?

In the years prior to the establishment of the School of Mines, civic leaders worked hard to present El Paso as a modern American city. El Paso's sudden rise at the turn of the century from a small, remote desert village to one of the five biggest cities in Texas in less than twenty years came as a result of the railroads, which opened the region to immigration, just as the first transcontinental railroad had done for the Midwest. In 1886, just five years after the first rail line crossed the parade ground of the old Fort Bliss on the banks of the Rio Grande, the El Paso Bureau of Information published a 90-page pamphlet that declared the region would soon rise "to assume among the great natural and political divisions of her own State, and of the busy world, the position and rank to which the laws of Nature

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<sup>48</sup> "Texas Achieves 60.5 Percent Six-Year College Graduation Rate, Up from 49.6 Percent Prior to Closing the Gaps Plan" (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, February 15, 2015) accessed June 15, 2016, [www.thechb.state.tx.us/index.cfm?objectid=CB3DFAD7-C143-8D55-42A48ED280BF706C](http://www.thechb.state.tx.us/index.cfm?objectid=CB3DFAD7-C143-8D55-42A48ED280BF706C).

and Nature's God entitle her.”<sup>49</sup> The pamphlet promoted the city’s many institutions—the hallmarks of a prosperous city—that included governmental, judicial, agricultural, capital, and religious, as well as educational. “If our schools continue to improve and prosper as they have begun,” wrote the authors, “El Paso will, ere long, be renowned for her educational advantages as she now is for business and other enterprises.”<sup>50</sup>

One of the city’s most noted advocates for higher education, Hughes D. Slater, publisher of the *El Paso Daily Herald*, publicly promoted in 1902 the idea of establishing a state-supported school in El Paso. “Making El Paso an educational center,” he claimed, “is one of the surest ways of attracting desirable people to make their homes here.” At the same time, civic leaders had been promoting the city as a mining center given its proximity on the major transcontinental railroads to the region’s mining industry. Slater made the connection between mining and state-supported higher education.<sup>51</sup>

Slater recognized the political realities of the time when it came to Texas higher education. Texans shared a passive-aggressive attitude toward higher education despite having a state constitution that called for the establishment of a state university dating back to its days as a republic in the 1830s. It took the elected representatives of Texans five decades to roundup the necessary votes to

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<sup>49</sup> El Paso Bureau of Information, *The City and County of El Paso, Texas, Containing Useful and Reliable Information Concerning the Future Great Metropolis of the Southwest, its Resources and Advantages for the Agriculturist, Artisan and Capitalist* (El Paso: Times Publishing Co., 1886)

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>51</sup> *El Paso Herald*, January 5, 1902; January 24, 1902.

actually establish the University of Texas in 1881—the same year the railroads arrived in El Paso. Given the politics of education at the turn of the century, if El Paso were to secure a state-supported school, the surest path was not as a state college or teaching college, but as a school of mines.

Throughout the United States and Europe in the nineteenth century, both national and state governments, as well as private concerns, embraced a mining school movement. After Columbia University established the first American school of mines in the 1860s, legislatures across the United States found it easy to justify these schools of “practical arts” given their curriculum emphasizing the extraction of minerals in the most cost-effective manner. Since most major universities of the nineteenth century focused on a more liberal arts curricula, few offered what would be regarded science and engineering courses, or STEM.<sup>52</sup>

When Slater presented his idea in 1902, state governments and public and private universities had already established 24 mining schools in 20 states and territories across America. His idea won support from the International Miner’s Association, which passed a resolution calling for the establishment of a school of mines in El Paso the following year. Ten years later El Paso had its state-supported institution. Within days of the announcement that the school would definitely open in the fall of 1914, the school’s first dean, Steve Worrell, a graduate of the

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<sup>52</sup> STEM, the acronym for the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics, did not exist in the nineteenth century university, as one did not attend a university to study these fields, sometimes referred to as the “useful arts.” Universities of the era typically produced graduates for one of only three professions: politics/law, medicine, or religion. See Christopher J. Lucas, *American Higher Education: A History* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994); John R. Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011).

University of Texas in Austin and later a chemist with the University's Bureau of Economic Geology, began fielding calls from interested El Paso parents. Not wanting to send their children off to Austin, the parents inquired about enrolling their children in the school to receive college credits that could be transferred to other degree-granting universities or be used to receive a state teaching credential. As an academic branch of the University of Texas, the regents granted permission and stipulated that the matriculation fee paid by students accepted to the School of Mines would apply to the Austin branch as well.

Civic leaders in 1917 piggybacked onto the state-supported mining school by establishing a nonprofit comprehensive college, the College of the City of El Paso. This nonprofit municipal school offered a liberal arts and education curriculum, which grew out of the need to provide public school teachers following the introduction of compulsory education by Texas in 1915. Both the dean of the School of Mines, Steve Worrell, and Robert Vinson, president of the School of Mines and the University of Texas, supported the piggyback plan, and, on May 31, 1917, the board of regents approved the affiliation.<sup>53</sup> Students who enrolled in the nonprofit school also enrolled at the School of Mines, where they could take any of the courses in the school's catalog. By 1918, enrollment had reached 100 students, up from 37 before the plan was implemented. Finances, however, proved problematic for the College of the City of El Paso. Without access to an endowment or local tax dollars, the school had to rely on tuition and donations to cover their expenses.

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<sup>53</sup> Minutes, May 31, 1917, 1917:46.

The cash-strapped College of the City of El Paso folded in 1921 and was replaced by the first municipally funded junior college in Texas, the El Paso Junior College (EPJC). Part of the El Paso school system, the EPJC set up shop on the top floor of El Paso High School and received its funding out of the district's general fund as well as modest tuition revenue, which provided greater financial stability. The only state support the junior college received was a promise by outgoing U.T. president Robert Vincent that he would support the junior college becoming a part of the University of Texas.<sup>54</sup> With Vincent's departure in 1923, the school searched for more funding and new facilities, since sharing space with the high school began to prove problematic.

El Paso's civic leaders in 1926 and 1927 once again began lobbying the U.T. Board of Regents and Austin for a new state-supported institution of higher education for the region. This time they asked the state legislators to consider expanding the mission of the College of Mines to include an arts and science curriculum that would not only allow the continued training of teachers for the region, but also provide for more transferable credits to the University of Texas. The college's dean, John "Cap" Kidd, one of the school's first engineering professors, under directions from the Harry Y. Benedict, the president of the University of Texas and the College of Mines, began preparing plans to transform the school into a hybrid degree-granting engineering school and a non-degree-granting regional

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<sup>54</sup> Robert Vinson to R.C. Semple, July 25, 1921, VF8Aa, U.T. Presidents' Records.



college. Kidd dutifully carried out his instructions and, following approval of his plan by the state legislature, promptly resigned as dean of the new institution.<sup>55</sup>

After his resignation, Kidd remained at the College of Mines as its dean of engineering. Despite his earlier acceptance of the school's long history of accepting "irregular" students, when the new cohorts quickly outnumbered the engineering students, Kidd playfully referred to these students as "peadoggies" or "peedoggies"—a corruption of the term *pedagogue* (one who is involved in teaching). Over the years, the engineering students rallied under the banner of "peasants" and used the peadoggie term to mock their fellow non-engineering academic students, as they embraced their mining heritage by creating traditions still seen at the University to this day.

Having been founded as a mining school, the people of El Paso quickly adopted the state-supported institution to address the region's higher education needs. Given the school's remote location in a major city, it was only a matter of time before it would transform into the western branch of the University of Texas.

### A Place for Arguments

The previous chapter examined the evolution of collaboration, which emerged as a natural function of rhetoric based on pragmatic language 70,000 years ago. When 30,000 years ago humans developed the ability to share beliefs through fictive language, collaboration between groups declined as cooperation through imagined orders replaced collaboration. The use of beliefs that could not be justified proved a

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<sup>55</sup> *El Paso Herald*, June 6, 1927.

far more effective method of organizing thousands and millions of individuals even if the end result was often the haves and the have-nots. The return of rhetoric as a tool of societal collaboration just needed to await the convergence of the right circumstances in an ancient world overrun by societies based on autocratic rule enforced by order made possible by fictive language.

This chapter explores the arrival of the Second Age of Rhetoric, when argument between individuals within a society returned to the forefront of governance. The use of argument moderated through rhetoric made possible not only our institutions of democracy today, but also our universities, the one place that preserves this tradition of collaboration. In order to arrive at this present day understanding of institution, this chapter traces rhetoric and collaboration from its renaissance in Hellenic Greece. The path begins with its embrace by the new academies, though its disruption by the Christian church after the fall of the Roman Empire, and its subsequent reemergence in the medieval university, though in a fashion not necessarily recognizable by practitioners in the ancient academies.

## **The Second Age of Rhetoric**

### **The Rise of Fictive City-States**

The arrival of rhetoric's Second Age also coincided with the beginning of the Knowledge Revolution. It began in a small, once relatively benign city-state known as Athens.

With the emergence of poetics as expressed through fictive language 30,000 years ago, not only did the first religions appear, so too did collective identities. The

labeling of the self and the Other created new opportunities to organize around something that could not be found in nature—an *imagined order*. According to Yuval Harari (2015):

Any large-scale human cooperation—whether a modern state, a medieval church, an ancient city, or archaic tribe—is rooted in common myths that exist only in people’s collective imagination. Churches are rooted in common religious myths. Two Catholics who never met can nevertheless go together on crusade or pool funds to build a hospital because they both believe that God was incarnated in human flesh and allowed Himself to be crucified to redeem our sins. Two Serbs who have never met might risk their lives to save one another because both believe in the existence of the Serbian nation, the Serbian homeland, and the Serbian flag. Judicial systems are rooted in common legal myths. Two lawyers who have never met can nevertheless combine efforts to defend a complete stranger because they both believe in the existence of laws, justice, human rights—and the money paid in fees. (27-28)

Visualizing one’s proper place in an order would offer simplicity and security at the expense of collective and collaborative decision-making. Rituals, which reinforced order, began to play a more important role in the daily lives of individuals as imagined orders facilitated the growth of fixed communities. The arrival of the Agricultural Revolution 12,000 years ago marked the beginning of the end of the nomadic way of life. While typically referred to as the birth of civilization, it also marked the decline of the First Age of Rhetoric.

Whereas rhetoric had once provided the tools to resolve conflict through collaboration, the limits of rhetoric became apparent with the early emerging city-states. Poetics provided a far more powerful tool through the sharing of common beliefs established through fictive language within common religions and common governments. What individuals toward the bottom of these orders surrendered were

their power to say “no” through collaborative governance, something they had shared around the nomadic campfire.

The first city-state societies appeared in Mesopotamia and Egypt about 3100 BCE, or 5,100 years ago. Brian Fagan (1999) described a state-organized society can also be referred to as a *civilization*. This name implies some degree of socially constructed norms that may be common to one or more urbanized city-state societies. These city-states also practiced a form of economics based on the centralized accumulation of capital often tied to social rankings. Other attributes included non-agricultural specialization of tasks, public buildings, state religion, and writing or recordkeeping (180-81). Modern theories regarding the evolution of civilizations revolve about changes in social and economic conditions. Rather than linear explanations, such as irrigation, trade, or warfare, modern theories rely on social approaches that incorporate power. All societies it was found involved individuals and groups who persuade others to follow their lead as they pursued their own agendas. The state, however, was not without a hierarchal factionalism that emerged from the new imagined orders, which, according to Fagan, benefitted a minority—the first oligarchs. As a state or empire grew, the ruler delegated authority to those close to him, often family or loyal allies. From these sub-rulers, factions emerged, along with rebellion, treason, and strife. With factionalism, the populace did not require persuading; simply the promise of more power to an individual who controlled followers was all that was needed (192-193). This *ideological factionalization* of early civilization pointed to “declining returns from

social complexity, and to the normal political processes of factionalism, social unrest, succession disputes, even civil war” (195). The rise of the city-state heralded the decline of pragmatic language in governing and the rise of fictive language combined with the surrendering of individual freedom for the promise of stability and security of an imagined order.

The birth of the city-states, though praised as the advent of civilization, represented the collapse of collaboration and collaborative governance with the abandonment of pragmatic language by the newly minted subjects. Increased stratification occurred precisely as the city-states reinforced of a concept of ownership that began to accumulate in the few. Explaining to members of a society why they had to surrender so much of what they produced was made far easier with poetics than with rhetorics.

### Why Athens

By 500 BCE, most city-state cultures around the world remained ruled by oligarchies and aristocracies, some despotic, others benign. Such governing systems, while they relied on a class of public and private servants using pragmatic language to better protect the material property of the ruling class and decree laws, had little use for a field of study that went beyond perspicacity, as few, if any, individuals within these societies possessed the agency to say no. Rhetoric, therefore, remained at an individual level and rarely, if ever, expanded for those cultures to a global level.

When it came to the transformation of civilizations, especially in what we continue to call the West, nothing was inevitable. Greek historian Donald Kagan (2007a) pointed out that there is no defined path or progressive order every civilization must travel to reach what is accepted today as democratic rule and individual rights. In the case of Athens and the other city-states on the Peloponnesian peninsula, it was the coming together of several factors that included geography and culture, which reintroduced pragmatism through rhetoric to governance. According to Kagan, “chance and accident” had as much of a role as deliberate thought when it came to the restoration of individual freedom over oligarchic, cultural, and religious hegemony. Much of that new thinking belonged to one individual—Aristotle.

Athens first instituted democratic rule toward the end of the sixth century BCE. What followed was an age of enlightenment with the emergence of many notable scholars who recognized that democracy was preferable in many ways to despotism, but was at best a work in progress. To many outside of Athens, oligarchical or tyrannical rule seemed natural. This gave rise to political treatises that emphasized stability and change over time of each system. Most notable of these works were Plato’s *Republic* and Aristotle’s *Politics* (Ober 2015, 40). Aristotle, however, recognized a natural element to democracy, something that had been lost in the many centuries since the advent of fictive language and the rise of imagined orders.

Aristotle, in addition to being a political theorist and moral philosopher, was an astute naturalist, one who observed animal behavior. Aristotle recognized that animals could be classified not only by appearance, but also by behavior. What set humans apart from other cooperative species was its ability to share not only goods, but also ideas. This elevated humans to what he described as a pinnacle of “political animals.”<sup>56</sup> Aristotle believed humans possessed “rational souls” that differentiated them from animals. T.H. Irwin (1980) highlighted this distinction noting that animals 1) lack reason, as they only had perception; 2) “lack of universal apprehension and have only perception and memory of particulars”; 3) “lack deliberation and decision (*prohairesis*)”; and 4) “lack rational desire or wish (*boulesis*), which belongs to the rational part of the soul” (44).<sup>57</sup>

Aristotle set about to craft rhetoric as a tool for rectifying the more unnatural aspects of democracy (Haskins 2004, 17). He accomplished this by claiming that there was wisdom in the masses (counter to Plato and Isocrates), by providing checks on dishonest orators, and by elevating political discourse to the level of best at being “able to confront the contingent and pursue the expedient.” Plato in contrast distrusted both the speaker and the audience, portraying speakers as deceitful and audiences as naïve (Timmerman and Schiappa 2010, 110-111).

The Hellenic states, as opposed to the other city-states in Greece and the world, were able to create decentralized collaborative societies without the imposition of force (tyranny) or influence (oligarchy). Aristotle addressed human

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<sup>56</sup> *Politics* 1253a.

<sup>57</sup> *De Anima* 414b1-9; *Nicomachean Ethics* 1147b3-5; *De Anima* 434a5-10; *De Anima* 432b5.

collaboration through his approaches to “natural and social sciences” where he described using Plato’s own somewhat tongue in cheek metaphor of Greeks as “social insects” to create a body of works that described (not prescribed) decentralized collaboration through politics. None of these works of rhetoric are as influential in describing this process than Aristotle’s *Politics* and the Pseudo-Aristotelian *Athenian Constitution* (Ober 2015, 46-47).

Aristotle’s theories on rhetoric and politics intertwine through several of his works.<sup>58</sup> Together, they defined how democracy worked. Following the thread, we see that Aristotle was outlining the role of pragmatic and fictive language in a democracy and in the academy. To understand this role, it is necessary to gain a better understanding of doxa and endoxa.

## **Doxa and Endoxa**

Aristotle saw both *politeia* (constitution) and *paideia* (education) as being necessary to democracy, as it brought order and united a multitude into a collective (Rahe 1997, 147). This required the citizenry to not only understand the difference between truths and knowledge, but also to embrace the pragmatic over the fictive.<sup>59</sup>

In order to prove a point about the enthymeme in rhetoric, Aristotle provided his readers with the following example:

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<sup>58</sup> The challenge for the modern scholar of rhetoric (or politics) is that Aristotle’s “books,” as we call them, were not books in a literal sense. His writings were organized and classified to fit another era’s concept of how they should be arranged. Hence the thread regarding rhetoric weaves through several works, not just a single eponymous volume. See introduction to Hippocrates George Apostle and Lloyd P. Gerson, eds., *Aristotle: Selected Works*, 2nd ed. (Grinnell, Iowa: Peripatetic Press, 1986).

<sup>59</sup> *Politics* 1263b36-37, 1276a8-15.



For instance, to prove that Dorieus was the victor in a contest at which the prize was a crown, it is enough to say that he won a victory at the Olympic games; there is no need to add that the prize at the Olympic games is a crown, for everybody knows it. (*Rhetoric* 1.2.13)

“Everybody,” of course, referred to Aristotle’s contemporary audience. Modern audiences, excepting those from certain discourse communities, might scratch their heads, puzzled by the reference, unsure as to whether this is a true example of the enthymeme, as few people today have ever heard of Dorieus.<sup>60</sup> For some modern scholars, they *know* this statement to be true; others, not privy to their situated discourse, will have to *believe* it is true, pending some acceptable method of verification. For the former, Aristotle has established the meaning of enthymeme through endoxa—common knowledge verified by a discourse community. For the latter, many may have to withhold judgment for they do not share they certainly do not belong to the class of “everybody.” This is an example of doxa—a shared common belief that is not justified. It was endoxa that led to new knowledge; it was doxa that led to unjustified belief for it often lacked established proof (warrant) and could easily be misrepresented as justified true belief (knowledge).

Doxa, a form of shared expectation, takes on several definitions in ancient Greek. Through semantic construction, it can range anywhere in contextual meaning from public opinion to stereotype. Ruth Amossy (2002) described Attic doxa as “all that is considered true, or at least probable, by a majority of people

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<sup>60</sup> Dorieus did indeed exist and was a well known Olympian at the time of Aristotle. Pausanias (fl. 160 CE) was a Greek traveler and geographer who provided much of what we know about ancient Greece. For more on Dorieus, see Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, trans. W. H. S. Jones and H. A. Ormerod (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1918), accessed Nov. 20, 2011, Perseus Digital Library.

endowed with reason” (369). In other words, doxa to the Greeks was a common belief in which one could be reasonably certain of the outcome. However, at least in Athens, not all could share in this common belief, owing to their conditions as slaves, women, or wayfaring sophists (371).

The sophists’ use of doxa exasperated Plato. The sophists created “false opinion” within their arguments through their use of common beliefs that threatened the legitimate value of doxa in what Plato saw as worthy causes when it should be deployed judiciously.<sup>61</sup> The sophist’s use created false opinion that constructed belief without knowledge, as opposed to “sure knowledge” and produced belief “not for instruction in matters of right and wrong.”<sup>62</sup> Furthermore, the length of time that a particular doxa existed did not make the doxa truer, for time was not a test of doxa nor did it transform opinion into knowledge.<sup>63</sup> Knowledge then, not opinion, benefited the polis, therefore knowledge, not belief, implies truths.

Aristotle, in an attempt to rescue rhetoric and give it purpose, addressed the issue of knowledge and truths. What drove one to do right in life is the knowledge of ethos after death, that ethos being preferable to professing a false belief while living. Likewise, Aristotle warned in *Rhetoric* that the rhetor must not act on probability, natural impulses or habit, but instead act on what was ethically right over necessity.<sup>64</sup> Thus, the rhetorical process was one where the orator gathered the

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<sup>61</sup> *Gorgias*. 438a; *Republic*. 431e.

<sup>62</sup> *Gorgias*. 454e-455a.

<sup>63</sup> *Theaetetus*. 158d-e.

<sup>64</sup> *Rhetoric* 1.12.14.

available doxa and premises from which the orator formulates proofs subject to rules that make them ethical.<sup>65</sup> It was important for the orator to recognize the difference between doxa and premises. Doxa, according to Aristotle, required an orator to tease it apart from premises. Whereas premises are required with dialectic, doxa will suffice with oratory.<sup>66</sup> It is through ethics that the orator will not attempt to manipulate the audience by selecting inappropriate doxa. Rather it was the “real things” (premises) that Aristotle found preferable to doxa, as doxa was “defined as those which a man would not choose if they were likely to remain unnoticed by others.”<sup>67</sup> Aristotle even went so far as to summon the poet Sappho to support his argument that ethos requires an orator to rally against doxa: “Hast thou desired what was good or noble, and had not thy tongue stirred up some evil to utter it, shame would not have filled thine eyes; but thou would have spoken of what is right.”<sup>68</sup>

For Aristotle, doxa only worked with prescribed audiences and through oratory. Knowledge that could not be adequately conveyed through oratory required the dialectical and tested belief, or endoxa. In his *Politics*, Aristotle worried about the “ordinary foolish people” who might influence a court case because they could produce more witnesses (who happened to be relatives) than the other side.<sup>69</sup> To avoid contradictions, Aristotle’s companion volume to *Rhetoric*, the *Topics*,

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<sup>65</sup> *Rhetoric* 2.18.2-4.

<sup>66</sup> *Rhetoric* 1.7.36.

<sup>67</sup> *Rhetoric* 1.7.36-37.

<sup>68</sup> *Rhetoric* 1.9-18-20.

<sup>69</sup> *Politics* 2.1269a.

described endoxa as a way to uphold arguments without contradiction. However, Aristotle only applied endoxa to the dialectic, his reasoning since to employ endoxa as a part of rhetoric would make it too difficult for the common people to follow. Hence, rhetoric employed the proofs of character and emotion (ethos and pathos) to allow doxa in the place of endoxa.<sup>70</sup> In the *Posterior Analytics*, Aristotle demonstrated the difference between knowledge (*episteme*) and doxa by showing that one cannot hold both at the same time regarding an object. What can be known (*episteton*) and knowledge (*episteme*) differ from what can be believed (*to doxaston*) and belief (*doxa*) because knowledge was universal and necessary; and what is necessary cannot be otherwise.<sup>71</sup>

A belief to Aristotle could be either true or false; knowledge, however, could only be true. Therefore, the use of doxa in rhetoric, unlike the use of endoxa in dialectic, must be used ethically, for it was a tool that allows the orator to persuade the many without the strict rules of the dialectic—a problem not typically found with the use of *endoxa*. Endoxa appears manifestly true to all, but only within well-defined discourse communities with wise counsel.<sup>72</sup>

No other form of government in the world at the time and since could compare with Hellenic democracy. Even the archon Pericles made reference to this in the Funeral Oration, claiming: “Our constitution does not copy the laws of neighboring states; we are rather a pattern to others than imitators ourselves.” But

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<sup>70</sup> *Topics* 8.11.

<sup>71</sup> *Posterior Analytics* 1.33.

<sup>72</sup> *Topics* 1.2.

the golden age that was Greece came to an end and so too did its empire. But its ideas lived on. While the Romans inherited this legacy and preserved the concepts through their schools, many of the ideas of rhetoric were challenged during the rise of Christianity.

### The Second Age and Christianity

By the third century CE, Christianity challenged the cultural supremacy of the Hellenistic Period. The schools established by the early Christians were primitive compared to the robust Hellenistic schools. Most schools taught the common doctrines of the religion, though this was strong enough to maintain cohesion and stability throughout Christendom. By the seventh century, few learning communities remained that maintained both Christian and Greek learning. In the eighth century, the church hierarchy exerted full control over education. Though this strengthened the network of schools throughout the Europe, the centralized authority closed elementary, grammar schools, and universities, as well as curtailing the tradition of public lectures made popular in Greece and Rome (Lucas 1994, 29-33).

With this religious oversight of education coinciding with the rise of rhetoric as writing, *doxa* began a shift in meaning, and thus began to alter previous understandings of rhetoric and its role in society. With the Christian scholar Augustine (354-430 CE), divinity entered into the doxastic equation, which affected the nature of knowledge. Catholic theologians, including Augustine, divided knowledge into categories and sub-categories that identified knowledge created by

man, and knowledge that is divinely inspired. Divinely inspired knowledge can be further subdivided into that which can be detected by the senses and that which belonged to reason. The theologians allowed a space for rhetoric, but confined it to a lower category so as not to interfere with the doxa of absolute truths that had to be accounted for within theology (Kennedy 1980, 82). The decline of doxa solidified under the ideology of both Kant and Descartes, where truths was knowable and could replace doxa. By then, according to Chaim Perelman, doxa had become tainted with dogmatic tradition and prejudice through “false knowledge” (in Amossy 2002, 373). Adhering to this radical departure from Aristotle, rhetorician Richard Whately (1787-1863) posited that the certainty of Christianity meant that there was no need any longer to seek possible truths when there existed absolute truth (Herrick 2005, 190). Even today, modern concepts of doxa see it as shared beliefs that prescribe human interactions. Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002) adopted doxa to refer to the “misrepresentation of the forms of social arbitrariness” that is taken for granted and beyond inquiry. What is arbitrary comes to be accepted as the norm by all (Deer 2008, 114-118).

Endoxa, too, shifted in definition under the Church. Conflicted with the idea of a body of knowledge that was not under its control and subject to its revision, endoxa in Medieval Latin translations of the Greek language began to define the term as a reputable opinion belonging to someone with ethos. This suited the Church, as few people during the Middle Ages were more reputable than those within the Church’s hierarchy.

This shift in terms ruptured the separation between doxa and endoxa making the two at times interchangeable during the medieval period. It would be up to later scholars in the university to begin to tease them apart and return them to their proper roll in mediating the quest for knowledge. This examination would herald the arrival of the Third Age of Rhetoric.

### **The Third Age of Rhetoric**

Rhetoric made a slow, but gradual return to the university curriculum following the Middle Ages, where it became once again a required field of study. After its manipulation during the Christian era to serve the agenda of the Church, the discipline focused more on style and arrangement than on invention and knowledge. Investigations of classical rhetoric beginning with Nietzsche led to a modern rhetoric that emphasized a greater focus on invention.

The Third Age of Rhetoric began quietly in the 1960s within American universities. Its roots were in England, and, like a prophet in his own country, it was promptly banished as being illogical. The idea of rhetoric as a process that arrives at knowledge took hold in the universities of America where it had never really left. Like the Greeks before them, the new rhetoricians did not invent rhetoric nor did they discover it; they merely recovered what had always existed within the human experience and provided it a new vocabulary. Three scholars from this period, Stephen Toulmin, Robert Scott, and Wayne Booth, each recognized that knowledge began with belief, which not only had to be justified, but also delivered to a defined audience. It was the marriage of perspicacity and perspicuity.

## Toulmin

British academician Stephen Toulmin published *The Uses of Argument* in 1958. While Toulmin's fellow British philosophers initially rejected his argument, scholars in United States from a diverse range of fields including disciplines related to rhetoric, such as speech communications, embraced not only his concepts, but also his method. *Toulmin's model* has found its way into fields that require "decision support systems" ranging from artificial intelligence research to medicine (Hitchcock and Verheij 2006, 3).

At the time he was writing *The Uses of Argument*, Toulmin did not consider that he was examining rhetoric. Much like Moliere's character discovering he was speaking prose, many scholars are surprised when they discover that they utilize rhetoric in their daily work. It was not long that other scholars began pointing to Toulmin's theory and its relationship to Aristotle. Aristotle's general topics dealt with similar things that could be described through metaphor and simile, while special topics, however, only applied to those topics that worked "within the framework of one activity rather than another ... [such as] rhetoric rather than aesthetics" (Toulmin 2006, 26-27).

Toulmin's *Argument* described a new system for both evaluating and creating arguments. Rather than rely on formal mathematical proofs—which had been the mainstay of epistemological philosophers for most of the twentieth century—Toulmin sought a more blended method that would apply to everyday life through the assertions that justified a claim. His recommended method, like that proposed



earlier by A.J. Ayer, another British philosopher working on reconciling knowledge with truths, eliminated skepticism by looking for what is probable rather than an absolute certainty. This process of “rational justification” creates not only an analysis of the claim, but also possible counter-arguments. This was how the argument becomes a means for discovering new knowledge (Hitchcock and Verheij 2006, 1). By making a claim, we rely on data, which is then connected to the claim through justification, provided by a warrant. Toulmin’s model for argumentation thus relied on data—claim—warrant (2). This argument itself was an epistemic process.

The brilliance of Toulmin’s model is that it is *field dependent*. That is, a discipline itself determined the method or standard of establishing claims. In order to understand a claim, scholars, explained Toulmin, “need to explore how these critical standards evolve, and how the most reflective and best-informed people in any area of experience refine those standards. ... Hence, we must modestly recognize that the best we can do now is the best we can do *now*; and that those who come after us will move beyond our ideas” (2006, 25). Building on previous knowledge leads to new knowledge.

Both Toulmin and Ayer belonged to the “knowledge theory” movement of philosophy, which by the 1970s had brought together scholars from linguists to existentialists in an exploration of the objective-subjective reasoning. Known as *linguistic empiricism*, the disparate field descended from logical positivism and had already established itself in the philosophy discourse community by 1960. In

addition to Ayer and Toulmin, the field included philosopher and mathematician Bertrand Russell, philosophical analyst George E. Moore, and moral philosopher Richard M. Hare (Fletcher 1970, 69; Inglis 1959, 384). Ayer himself was an admirer of science, but he challenged the notion of absolute verification, itself a form of capital-T truth, as a necessary condition to formulation of knowledge. For instance, Ayer argued that one did not need to see for herself that the world was round when she could rely on the expert opinion of others. Certainty at the level of empirical statements is not possible for to be absolutely certain, as in a the formal logic of a mathematical proof, robs them their “factual content.” Ayer (1977 [1956]) argued that all empirical statements must be “contingent” and that nothing, including a priori statements, are immune from doubt (41-42). Errors, therefore, will exist in every system.

Douglas R. Hofstadter (1980) described these errors in the mathematical paradox scheme introduced by Kurt Gödel known as the *Epimenides paradox*, or *liar paradox*. An individual who makes the claim “I am lying” or “This statement is false” creates a condition that seemingly resists justification. On the surface level, a scholar cannot assess whether the statement is either true or false as it “backfires” no matter which condition you assign to it. This is Gödel’s Incompleteness Theorem where all sets of numbers contain a self-referential statement that similarly fails (17). Numbers contained in a typical mathematical statement are not statements in themselves; they are just numbers. “A statement of number theory,” explained Hofstadter, “is not *about* a statement of number theory, it just *is* a statement of

number theory.” Here lies the paradox. It demonstrated in a world about to be equally confused with the new theories of quantum mechanics that whole numbers (0, 1, 2, 3, ...) were not what they appeared and could not be explained by axiomatic (self-evident) fixed systems (Hofstadter 1980, 17-18). The existence of errors to the scholar means that further inquiry is required.

This is the enduring potency of Ayer’s argument. The power to discover errors is the power to correct them. The quest for certainty may be a quest for knowledge; but relying on certainty prevents many claims of knowledge from being made at all. It is not necessary that a claim of knowledge be rooted in a priori statements known to be true. There must simply be reasonable certainty (41-44). This rhetorical situation became fertile ground, as it was heuristic.

Toulmin saw his model as a conversation between two individuals seeking a solution to a problem. Their dialog either resolved the issue or led to new knowledge through the evaluation of the claims of the first and the skeptical inquiries of the second. This description, James Klumpp (2006) pointed out, was seldom used when teaching the model despite its obvious description of the model as a collaborative process (104). The search for data by the two interlocutors (collaborators) added a degree of balanced legitimacy to the process. “The power of warrants,” to Klumpp, “thus lies at the intersection of two dimensions: the pragmatic and the social.” Any “unwise actions” that may arise from a faulty warrant erodes the authority through pragmatic use (109).

Toulmin provided a new way to examine an argument without relying on the absoluteness of mathematical proofs. Outside of the discipline of mathematics, there will exist a small degree of uncertainty in any justified claim. By advancing that only reasonable certainty as accepted by a discourse community based on endoxa is all that required, this actually benefited science and the arts as it banished capital-T truth and encouraged the exploration of why outliers exist, which only resulted in new knowledge. This provided the path to Scott.

### Scott

Rhetoric, unlike philosophy, does not seek capital-T truth, nor does it support any claim that demands absolute certainty. Such a requirement would poison rhetoric and render Toulmin's warrant useless, as it would leave large gaps for skeptics to prevail. The establishment of epistemic rhetoric as a field of rhetorics, which traces its origins back to the First Age of Rhetoric, did not begin in the English department of the university, or in a field that studied writing. It instead first appeared in the sister department dedicated to oratory, the communication department.

Robert L. Scott taught in the Department of Speech and Theatre Arts at the University of Minnesota. In his essay, "On Viewing Rhetoric as Epistemic" (1967), Scott proposed that the no view of truth is consistent with rhetoric, since using truths as a mode of inquiry or way of knowing means that there exists an a priori or universal truths. Knowledge, however, is constantly being tested as the situations humans face and the nature they observe keep changing. "Were all men able as

some men are to reason soundly from true premises [of knowledge],” wrote Scott, “then rhetoric would be superfluous” (10). Absolute truths are not required.

Scott built his argument on Toulmin’s model for processing beliefs and on Plato’s definition of truth and knowledge from *Gorgias*. Recognizing the “certainty” and knowledge are at odds with each other, Scott used Toulmin to examine the use of epistemology to arrive at knowledge through rhetoric. It is a combination of cognitive reasoning and an understanding of belief that allows for the recognition of true belief and justified belief (Scott 1967, 10). An individual was “deceiving himself” (Scott’s words) if she attempted to persuade others based on the preexistence of truths in nature. Rather the individual must recognize that her claims are among many claims, and that she must, as Toulmin argued, seek out “effective counterclaims” (15). We can rewrite Scott thus: Would fictive language not exist, only rhetoric would exist.

Recognizing that belief is the foundation of both truths and knowledge, much as particles make up matter, complicates Scott. One form of belief—knowledge—can be justified; the other cannot. Another scholar of rhetoric, Lloyd F. Bitzer, followed Scott by examining the application of rhetoric from a circumstantial viewpoint. Bitzer’s “The Rhetorical Situation” appeared as the lead article in the first issue of the journal *Philosophy & Rhetoric* in 1968. Though a professor of speech like Scott, Bitzer presented his theory as applying to both oratory and writing. The rhetor—an orator or writer—typically examines the audience, subject, and occasion of the composition. Bitzer introduced the concept of the situation to have the rhetor take

into account circumstances of reality that require alteration (1). Bitzer pointed out that while science may allow us to know reality, discourse arising from a rhetorical situation allows us to change reality (14). That is, belief must still be processed through argumentation, and that process must rely on the use of pragmatic language. Einstein, for example, conceived of his new theories of relativity using thought problems that used fictive language to imagine an elevator freefalling in space or a train traveling down a track at the speed of light. Nevertheless, his fictive language did not become pragmatic language until he was able to warrant his claims through mathematical formulas that in themselves could be tested. At that point, Einstein *changed reality* by pointing out that our previous beliefs about the universe, space, and time were not necessarily incorrect; they needed revision in the face of new justified claims. According to Douglas Hofstadter (1980), “fantasy and fact intermingle very closely in our minds, and this is because thinking involves the manufacture and manipulation of complex descriptions, which need in no way be tied down to real events or things” (339). Nevertheless, it is only through the differentiation of pragmatic language and fictive language. Changing reality with fictive language masquerading as reality defies both ethics and public safety.

Both Toulmin and Scott reconnected modern rhetoric with its roots in democracy. Together, with Toulmin’s field dependent argument and Scott’s understanding of the epistemic properties of rhetoric, the outline of a modern rhetoric as the marriage of perspicacity and perspicuity emerged. One further examination was required to put them all together.

## Booth

In 1971, Wayne C. Booth was among several new rhetoricians trying to expand the term *rhetoric* beyond “devices,” such as empty speech, gestures, or flowery language. Booth wanted to know when it was proper and ethical to change one’s mind. Contemporary assumptions about rhetoric’s role in shaping values cannot be correct, argued Booth in *Modern Dogma and the Rhetoric of Assent* (1974), as they would imply that rhetoric “is simply the art of winning.” Booth went on to describe a “postmodernist” view of rhetoric and its relationship to values (ix). As a professor of English and onetime dean at the University of Chicago, his inquiries into rhetoric were met with some bewilderment by his colleagues. One professor of philosophical psychology remarking that Booth’s line of inquiry “belonged to him,” while a professor of sociology pointed out the novel interdisciplinary approach Booth was taking lacked a “proper professional terminology” (Booth 1974, xii).

Booth’s explorations led to some of the earliest writings on the relationship of values to rhetoric, for it had an application in all disciplines within the university, as well as the university president’s office. Scholars since Aristotle recognized rhetoric as a discipline lacking substance, as it was seen as either irrelevant to other fields that determined the scope of their arguments, or as an art that emphasized declamation over substance, hence the phrase, “empty rhetoric.” This is where, as Socrates argued, the rhetor (or sophist) lacked ethical grounding as they could argue both sides of an issue (Booth 1974, xii). He laid much of the blame for

empty rhetoric at the feet of instructors of English literature for creating a vacuum that allowed “peddlers of various rhetorical nostrums” to fill it (Booth 1971, 94-95).

Rhetoric, according to Booth, differed from philosophy, as it did not seek a “certain truth.” Rather, rhetoric sought to advance knowledge. It was, as Booth described it, “the art of discovering warrantable beliefs and improving those beliefs in shared discourse.” Rather than using abstract methods to seek a singular capital-T truth or truths, rhetoric instead was a tool for “probing what men believe they ought to believe.” In this sense, the rhetorician, once again to the dismay of Socrates, worked with both sides of an issue in the form of a mediator, to seek common knowledge shared by all audiences (Booth 1974, xiii). Aristotle’s rhetoric worked fine with the dialectic, where there is agreement. His definition, however, failed to address the situation where argument cannot “penetrate what seems to be totally hostile circles” (Booth 1971, 97-98). Rarely is anything at stake in the use of dialectic.

Knowledge differed from opinion in another key way. Knowledge of a subject does not exist unless the scholar knows how the knowledge was justified from data (Booth 1970, 85-86). A fact *is*, while a value *ought* to be. During the Enlightenment, the *is* took prominence, with the implication that values arise from facts. “Norms” came from normative propositions and not descriptive premises, which meant that the noted thinkers of the time—Hobbes, Locke, and Kant—could not perceive of a world in which norms may be “irrational” or “nonrational.” The *ought* of the time meant that all humans should act in a rational way, dictated by the *is*, and to not do



so was irrational. This knowledge-value (is-ought) controversy is paralleled by the scientismic-irrationalist, which creates a *good – bad* dichotomy (Booth 1974, 14-15).

Reconciling knowledge and truths with rhetoric required the moving away from ideology and bias and toward recognition of all belief as belonging to either *doxa* or *endoxa*. For many in society, reasons are mere rationalizations or “wishful thinking,” as our values typically arise from experiences that lead to nonrational conditioning or hidden motives. Booth calls this dogma of agenda *motivism*. Polemic or rhetorical devices, or even abstract ideas or logical proofs, cannot reverse *motivism*; only a shared “philosophy of good reasons” can counter *motivism* (Booth 1974, 24-25). Partisan bias, whether it be through ideology or simply belonging to a group as one would through a party affiliation, exercises a tremendous amount of influence on the beliefs of those who identify within the group. At this point, a selective filtering process was introduced that produces both harmony within the group and the forwarding of an agenda or dogma (Bartels 2002, 120). Nevertheless, as has been seen with the recent presidential campaign of Donald J. Trump, followers of Trump were willing to abandon an established conservative agenda as long as the campaign was framed as us versus them, or conservative versus liberal. Traditional conservative ideology meant little to this segment of the base as long as the election could be placed into terms of a need to defeat a faction of Others. Partisanship for its own sake becomes dogma.

Booth’s understanding of Aristotle saw the Athenian scholar as one who recognized life needed rhetoric, even though the discipline cannot be defined by

sound rules. However, since the Enlightenment, many scholars who inherited the mantle of rhetorician sought to eliminate two of the three key elements of classical rhetoric first described by Aristotle—the emotional proof (pathos) and the ethical proof (ethos)—and only focus on the substantive proof (logos). Reconsideration of rhetoric would require a return to reason utilizing all three rhetorical elements (Booth 1974, 144-45).

Booth advocated for a unified theory of rhetoric that reconciled truths and knowledge. Booth sought not to create a new understanding of rhetoric, but to reconcile a “befouled rhetorical climate” that prevented the meeting of minds to pursue common knowledge. For Booth, “It need only be a revitalization of what we naturally assume as we go about our intellectual and practical business in the world: namely, that there are many logics, and that each of the domains of the mind (or person) has its own kind of knowing” (1974, 99). Facts *are*, and values *ought to be*.

Booth feared the disintegration of society through the increasing inability of citizens to listen to not only one another, but to their own conscious. In the individual’s quest to make sense of the world, there was an increasing reliance on fictive language that is based in beliefs that cannot be tested or is preserved by doxastic communities. Because rhetoric possessed the power to alter reality, the incorporation of fictive language leads to the unwarrantable claim. The damage, observed Booth, ranged from “unnecessary violence, to loss of potential friends, to the decay of community.” The only way to prevent such damage and to build rather

than destroy was through an understanding how we process beliefs at both the subconscious and conscious levels (Booth 2004, xi-xii). This meant getting an audience to recognize for themselves the difference between truths and knowledge.

Recognizing that there was no universal capital-T truth by which everything could be tested, Booth argued for *pluralism* and the existence of “domains of knowing.” These domains required “warrants of assent” to affect a change of mind, given the social constructs behind truths. Pluralism is dependent on values of vitality, justice, and understanding. Any quest for truths that violated these values becomes an ethical contradiction that degraded the discourse community (Antczak 1995, 5-7).

Man, according to Booth, is a rhetorical animal. Rather than persuading to win or to uphold some other dogma, the purpose of rhetoric is “to engage in mutual inquiry of exploration. ... The purpose of mental change is thus to fulfill one’s nature as a creature capable of responding to symbolic offering. The *process* of inquiry through discourse thus becomes more important than any possible conclusions, and whatever stultifies such fulfillment becomes demonstrably wrong” (Booth 1974, 137).

As with Toulmin and Scott, Booth embraced pragmatic language. At the same time, he recognized the role of fictive language in advancing knowledge. The differentiation of the two has never been more critical than today. The issue remains the recognition of doxa and endoxa using pragmatic or fictive language. Only one belongs in the public forum of civic discourse.

## Summary

### The University Today

Just as C.P. Snow in chapter 2 had his encounter with the Two Cultures of the university, so too did Booth within the English department. At a reception in 1960, Booth, who was then just beginning his exploration of rhetoric, introduced himself to a professor of literature. When the professor asked Booth his field of study, Booth replied, “Basically, it’s rhetoric.” The professor scoffed at the mere mention of the word and walked away (Booth 2004, viii).

Booth pointed out that many disciplines within the university believe they are researching within the field of communications are in fact researching rhetoric. Those related fields include education, language studies, linguistics, psychology, sociology, speech, and symbiotics (Booth 2004, ix). All disciplines use rhetoric to some degree from the moment a scholar—be they a student, instructor, or researcher—has a belief relevant to their discipline, tests that belief, and then conveys that belief in the form of a claim to others.

Disciplines within the university shed modern dogmas and embrace the rhetorics of assent, whether they use the word *rhetoric* or not. The purpose of a discipline is to detect error, rather than to “assent to truth.” This requires healthy skepticism applied in a pragmatic fashion (Booth 1974, xvi). The one thing the humanities lack is a systematic way of testing claims by its scholars. While scholarly publications go through the vetting process of peer review, few scholars take the time to recreate the research of others in an attempt to reproduce results.

The best most peer reviewers can hope to do is to ascertain the veracity of the data. Trust, but verify.

A university is not divided into spheres of doxa and endoxa representing sciences and the humanities. Of all institutions within a society, universities are the most successful at creating domains of knowledge based on pragmatic language. Fictive language plays an important role in society and in the institution of the university. It is, as Einstein demonstrated through his thought experiments, of great value in the STEM fields.

Recognizing the difference between truths and knowledge removes intentionality. It eliminates the urge to call someone a “liar.” If an individual holds a capital-T truth that cannot be translated into a justifiable claim, so be it. Truths, however, do not belong in rational discourse and argument, as these are heuristic processes for creating new knowledge. Truths have no place in rational discourse, other than to provide a personal foundation for the rhetor. If no justifiable claim arises from a statement, it can be set aside and removed from the present deliberative process. In a democracy, however, this presents a challenge when so many individuals choose doxa over endoxa when it comes to making political decisions. Without common ground established by endoxa, problem solving is not grounded in reality.

The University of Texas at El Paso was *founded* as a mining school. However, as a branch of the University of Texas, the residents of the region *established* it as an institution of higher education that could be shaped to meet their needs. The

rhetoric of Hughes Slater altered reality for the benefit of the people of El Paso. This would only work in a democracy.

The rhetorics gave rise to many standards within democratic deliberative processes. These include rules of order, parliamentary procedures, diplomatic protocols, and the decorum of statesmanship. Civility is based on the respect for each individual's rights. Those rights, however, must be based in some fashion of common belief based in endoxa, which can be justified by all, and not based just in faith. Doxa not only poisons rhetoric, but also participatory democracy as well.

## Chapter 5

### Archives

#### Introduction

##### Historical Sketch: The University Archives

On June 17, 1899, the University of Texas Board of Regents meeting for their regular session in Austin approved the expenditure of \$2,200 (today, \$64,900) for renovations in the Main Building of the Austin branch. University president George Winston reported,

In accordance with the instructions of the Board, I have made investigations and negotiations concerning the erection of a fireproof vault for the preservation of the University records and other historical materials. ... If the financial condition of the University will permit, it would be well for the vault to be constructed immediately, for thereby much historical material can probably be secured, which otherwise may be lost to the institution.<sup>73</sup>

The historical material Winston alluded to belonged to the County of Bexar, Texas. Lester G. Bugbee, an instructor of history at the university, had spent the previous summer examining two centuries of documents dating back to the early 1700s, and concluded that they would provide new understanding as to the early history of Texas under Spanish and Mexican rule. So valuable were these papers, Bugbee claimed, previous histories of Texas would have to be “thrown into the fire” once the contents of the collection were made available.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Minutes, 1899:280, 286.

<sup>74</sup> “The Archives of Bexar,” *San Antonio Express*, September 23, 1898.

Bugbee had arrived in Austin as a student in January 1887; just four years after the University of Texas first opened its doors. He graduated six years later in 1893 with his master's degree in history. The subject of his thesis, the Austin colony, inspired Bugbee to track down artifacts of the period then under private ownership of the family of Stephen F. Austin, which had previously never been used in histories of the 1824 colony. Failing to gain access to the Austin papers, he relied on documents held by the Texas Land Grant Office. His tenacity using primary sources in his research earned him commendations from the Austin faculty, which led to a fellowship at Columbia University under one of the noted political historians of the time, Herbert L. Osgood (Barker 1945, 10).

Herbert Osgood's research investigated the institutional underpinning of colonial America. His specialty, however, was the identification and interpretation of primary source artifacts, which he learned while studying in Germany. Osgood adopted Leopold von Ranke's method of using seminars rather than lectures, which placed a strong emphasis in the discovery, cataloging, and examination of neglected primary sources. Osgood's logical approach to documents provided him the opportunity to look beyond mere political forces and examine the social and economic forces at work (Boyd 1999, 889; Ross 1991, 267). The lack of reliance on primary sources led Osgood to chide his fellow American colleagues for not thinking like archivists. In an article published by the American Historical Association, Osgood noted that historians of the American colonial period lacked "training to the collecting, sifting, arrangement and presentation of historical materials," as well as



providing little context to the materials that they do present. Without context to the documents and of the world they reflected, such written histories by his colleagues, concluded Osgood, were “scrappy, inconclusive, and largely worthless.”<sup>75</sup>

After two years of study with Osgood in New York, Bugbee returned to Texas in 1895 at the urging of history professor George Garrison, and joined the faculty of the fledgling School of History, which recently had been spun off from the English department. Osgood, in recommending Bugbee for a post at Austin, wrote of him: “He has uniformly given the impression that he has a clear cut mind and a combination of qualities which leads one to believe that he will attain success in the higher walks of learning, both as an investigator and teacher” (Barker 1945, 14).

Bugbee would not disappoint Osgood. During the summer of 1898, Bugbee traveled to San Antonio to investigate the papers commonly referred to as the Bexar Archives. The collection, which contained over 300,000 pages, included the administrative records of Spanish and Mexican governance in Texas dating back to the early 18th century. In a newspaper article written for the *San Antonio Express* in 1898 and republished the following year in *The University of Texas Record*, Bugbee described the collection as a neglected source of valuable information. “Strange to say,” Bugbee wrote, “neither the State nor the county [of Bexar] has ever manifested any interest in this collection.” He added:

It is without classification of any kind; documents of 1835 and 1750 may be found together without the slightest connection or relation between them. If one goes to these papers to investigate any subject,

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<sup>75</sup> Herbert L. Osgood, *The Study of American Colonial History* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1899), p. 63, 66.

however small, he is forced to look through the entire collection, which is by no means a small undertaking.<sup>76</sup>

Bugbee believed it would take over three years just to read the entire collection without proper archival processing. “What would make it a working collection?” he wrote, “Money, scholarship, and such work as can proceed only from an enthusiastic interest in the history of Texas.” The next several years, he argued, should be spent classifying, binding, and translating the documents from Spanish.<sup>77</sup>

Bugbee enlisted the aid of Garrison to lobby the University of Texas into backing the transfer to Austin. What was needed was a proper archive room—described as a vault—in which to store and preserve the papers. At the same time, Bugbee secured the support of the new mayor of San Antonio, E.M. Hicks, an alumnus of the University of Texas, and of another Austin graduate, Frank R. Newton, who was serving as Bexar County’s deputy county clerk. On September 30, 1899, the Bexar county commissioners voted to transfer custody of the archives to the University of Texas after an agreement was reached in which the University would provide the county a translation of the documents.<sup>78</sup>

The history department maintained control over the contents of the vault, which now also contained many records of the University. The department appointed a series of graduate history students to maintain the collections. The first was Ernest W. Winkler, who graduated with a master’s degree in 1900. Following

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<sup>76</sup> *The University of Texas Record*, October 1899, p. 344; *San Antonio Express*, September 23, 1898.

<sup>77</sup> *The University of Texas Record*, October 1899, p. 345.

<sup>78</sup> *The University of Texas Record*, October 1899, pp. 356-57, 374, 376; *Dallas Morning News*, October 1, 1899.

Winkler came Ethel Rather in 1902 and Mattie Hatcher (née Austin) in 1903. By 1902, the archives included the papers of the late Governor O.M. Roberts, the Papers of the Texas Veterans' Association, and the subject of Bugbee's original research, the Austin Papers. Bugbee, who was promoted to adjunct professor of history in 1900, would not live to see his collections processed, having passed away from tuberculosis in the spring of 1902.<sup>79</sup>

In 1908, the U.T. Board of Regents approved the appointment of a dedicated archivist, selecting Mattie Hatcher. While generally recognized as U.T. Austin's first archivist, Hatcher left the position that same year and was replaced by Eleanor Buckley, who then spent the next four years processing in earnest the cataloging and translating of the growing collections—a detail not mentioned in published histories of the University archive. Hatcher, however, did return to the position in 1913 when Buckley left to pursue her doctoral degree at the University of Pennsylvania.<sup>80</sup>

Lester Bugbee launched the University archives by insuring the preservation of another fledgling institutional collection also contained within the vault—those of the University of Texas. This collection, when discovered more than a century later, would throw previous understandings of the founding of the University of Texas at El Paso into Bugbee's proverbial fire.

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<sup>79</sup> *University of Texas Catalogue*, April 1, 1902, p. 129; *Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association*, April 1902, p. 357-58.

<sup>80</sup> Minutes, 1900:275; Minutes, 1901:471; Minutes, 1902:555; Minutes, 1903:39; *Dallas Morning News*, July 31, 1902; *The University of Texas Record*, 1908, p. 79; Minutes, 1908:403; Minutes, 1913:329; "News Items," *Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association*, October 1913, p. 215.

## The Two Archives

Lester Bugbee's advocating for the establishment of a physical archive—a fireproof vault and the acquisition of the Bexar collection—at the University of Texas led directly to the recovery of U.T. El Paso's early history over a century later. That archive, now known as the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, like so many at institutions of higher education around the world, served two purposes: It provided for special collections to aid scholarship and it provided for a collection special to the university—the archive of official records related to the university.

The Briscoe Center belongs to a second broader archive; an archive that makes possible the justification of claims. This is the archive of traditions. This chapter explores these two archives in greater detail, while examining the use of archives by the University of Texas at El Paso.

### **What is an archive?**

An archive is a place for the preservation of humanity. Derived from the ancient Greek word for a public office or residence (*ἀρχεῖον*, Latin *archīum*), archives today take on two meanings as archives are also places in which claims are born that lead to the discovery of new knowledge. No place better models this than the institution of the university.

The university is an archive unto itself. Within its walls are found two separate archives that when combined create our understanding of the universe in which we live. The two archives allow for the uniting of data with warrants to

justify claims. The very data and warrants that justify claims of new knowledge reside in the archives. Thus, researchers are constantly probing both canonical archive of tradition and institutional archives of data in their pursuit of scholarship.

The university is the very sphere of respectful learning, even given the tensions that arise in the defense of one's ideas. This respect may be hard to grasp from time-to-time given the elite status hurled upon them in order to weigh them down or destroy their citadel status. Still, there is something civilized regarding scholarship given their rooting in endoxa. Good archives, be they canonical or institutional, create credibility. Just as ethos defines credibility, its root is *ethea*, which is ancient Greek for a form of "dwelling place" where "the haunts of the country in which one ranges" and the home of customs, behaviors and habits (Agnew and others 2011, 111). Proper archives provide a home for our common knowledge and the artifacts from which to build new knowledge.

### **Canonical Archives**

Canonical archives preserve the memories of a field of study. Canonical archives are often described as *traditions*, the body of works on which a field of study defines itself. While most traditions are published and maintained in libraries, memories play an important role in the processing of warrants. A scholar places herself within a discourse community defined and shaped by their discipline. That scholar's connection over time with their field's scholars shapes how they justify claims from data.

The field of rhetoric can lay claim to one of the oldest texts of scholarship related to its landscape. Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, published 2400 years ago, continues to inform the field today. However, as the earlier chapters of this dissertation have demonstrated, that tradition dates back more than 70,000 years with the advent of collaboration through epistemic rhetoric.

Collections of artifacts that inform a field of study create the *tradition* of that discipline. Every field of study that can rightly be called a discipline has a tradition maintained within a canonical archive. Canonical archives are the keepers of warrants germane to their respective disciplines. These memories and traditions provide the warrants that support claims developed within the discipline, making them situational and field dependent as Toulmin argued (Toulmin 1958, 15; Toulmin 2006, 25).

Before the written traditions, however, there was only memory transmitted through an oral tradition. Even with writing and digital collections of today, memory still plays an important role in the processing of new knowledge and in the formation of the university.

### Memories

The first canonical archives belonged to memory. Built out of pragmatic language, these archives of processed recollections provided early humans with a way of making sense of their world. While the evolving brain with its many domains may have provided members of a band with innate abilities to deal with nature, it

was memory that provided members with the tools to collaborate and plan for the future.

Humans shared memories with each other through an oral tradition. With the advent of fictive language 30,000 years ago, these memories could be attached to symbol and ritual. In our dramatic imagination of the tribal band in an earlier chapter, there existed no systematic body of knowledge or repository of memory other than through an oral practice. As it turned out, the perpetuation of knowledge had to be combined with fictive language and expressed as ritual. An artifact from this time, such as cave paintings of animals or a notched stick, then served a dual purpose of transmitting both fictive and pragmatic language, both truths and knowledge. It becomes the responsibility of the audience to separate the two. In an oral tradition, this is much easier, for context is provided in the delivery. The blending of pragmatic and fictive languages transformed bands into tribes. The key to understanding the past through its artifacts is by an analysis of the context that produced the artifacts. Representations of the past, like memories, are constructed in the present (Bridges and others 1993, 732). When we name an object or an event, we are defining it.

All beliefs begin with an observation. Observations of nature lead to truths, while documented observations of nature lead to knowledge. Here again dwells the key difference between the rhetorics and the poetics. The poetics imitates nature while rhetorics recreates it. As civilization advanced, there came a time and a need to separate proto-rhetoric from proto-poetics. This would not come until there was a

systematic process of study. This discipline with a distinct vocabulary first emerged in Hellenic Greece. Writing, it turns out, proved to be a more effective method for preserving knowledge and truths than memory.

While warrants can flourish in an oral tradition, data cannot. Data, unlike warrants and the knowledge that results from claims it establishes, requires its conversion into an artifact to document and transmit it. Memory, it turns out, is detrimental to data.

### Traditions

Every field of study that can rightly be called a discipline maintains a tradition that resides within a canonical archive. With the beginning of written scholarship 2500 years ago, the disciplines shared much of the same canonical archives. Specialization gave rise to divided traditions, which accelerated with the scientific principles of the age of enlightenment. With the increase in publications over time, a body of work began to emerge that gave these historical documents a rhetorical meaning in the sense that perceived them as universal and timeless. Such documents, noted Lloyd Bitzer, formed the body of a tradition (Bitzer 1968, 13).

In time, the universities became the home to the archivists of a growing number of traditions. Within the universities can be found the scholars who through their peer-reviewed publications preserve and defend their respective traditions. A discipline's scholars in turn became the canonical archivists to this tradition.



Scholars may rely on memory when constructing oral arguments, but not so with written arguments, the gold standard for the transmission of new knowledge. This requires the citation of sources.

## **Institutional Archives**

### **A Brief History of Institutional Archives**

The physical manifestation of memory and tradition is the institutional archive. It is both the home and keeper of warrants and data. The library, both physical and digital, maintains warrants, given that warrants represent a published and peer reviewed tradition within a field of study. A university's collection of artifacts, however, contains the data that backs claims. Wherever data resides, so too does the archives. This brings us back to the claim that the university is an archive unto itself.

The term *institutional archives* takes on multiple meanings. The traditional sense, as defined by archivists, describes various collections. There are materials, which are the noncurrent records of an institution; place, which is an archival repository; and agency, which is the program responsible for identifying, preserving, and making available "records of enduring value" (Hunter 2003, 2). Archival repositories hold records, while manuscript repositories hold handwritten documents, first drafts, or collections of individuals and families (Hunter 2003, 2-3).

Institutional archives are collections of datum in the form of artifacts. A naturally occurring object, such as a stone or fossil, becomes an artifact once

selected for inclusion in an archive. This includes the data from observations resulting from research that scholars have tabulated or compiled, but not necessarily made available to other researchers.

## **First Archives**

Since the time the first archives were established in the ancient world, archives have been “providing the stuff from which histories are constructed” (Ferreira-Buckley 1999, 578). Before the fifth century BCE, the ancient Greeks constructed their histories from cognitive memory and oral story telling. Once Herodotus began to commit his histories to paper, historical accounts became suspect. By the age of Descartes, mathematical certainty—the touchstone in the Age of Enlightenment—relegated history to the realm of fiction (578-79).

Medieval archives were churches, which kept financial or legal artifacts, along with relics of saints, as monarchs typically lacked permanent residences. Another location was the royal treasury. All documents in these archives were incoming—no copies of outgoing documents. Clerks began to keep registers to track the creation, purpose, and distribution of documents (Posner 1984, 3).

Our modern archives have their origins in the French Revolution. The French National Assembly created Archives Nationales to preserve not only their documents, but also the heritage of the revolution. By 1796, the archives were recognized a valuable for preserving documents, even pre-revolutionary artifacts. More importantly, the archives were opened to the public, establishing them as a vital component of democracy (Posner 1984, 5).

Archives function to preserve artifacts that are unique, have provenance, demonstrate a function, maintained in original order in collections, while maintaining context and connectedness with other collections (Bridges and others 1993, 738-39). The organizing manual for the national archives in France defines archives as the active process of collecting the memories of society, what Bolotenko describes as “the *summa* of the human past.” Archeologist Carl Nylander writing in *The Deep Well* reminds us “the past speaks with many tongues,” which requires an individual who can listen and interpret their diverse voices (Nylander quoted in Bolotenko 1983, 6). Who, then, should be the guardians of the artifacts?

### **University Archives and Special Collections**

Multiple constituents utilize the collections within the university archives. Once the exclusive province of historians and archaeologists, the management of archives itself has evolved into its own field of study. As a result, a scholarly debate emerged as to who is best qualified to serve as the guardians and gatekeepers of the data.

Archives differ from libraries in the type of and access to materials that they provide. Generally, the materials in a library are replaceable, while those in archives are not. An archive may exist within a library or a library may exist as part of an archive. A “university archive” typically contains documents and other artifacts related to that specific institution. The university archive might also contain special collections, which contains materials not related to the mission of the institution, but are of historical significance to researchers. Other archives

include institutions that maintain their own, including museums, historical societies, corporations, and religious groups (Schmidt 2011, 2-3).

As portrayed by this chapter's historical sketch, major universities across the United States that had a connection to the German seminar movement, including the University of Texas, began to take great interest in the curating of manuscript collections. These collections, however, were under the control of an academic unit, such as the history department. It would not be until late in the twentieth century that most universities recognized the need for collections. Two-thirds of all university archives were founded between 1960 and 1972. By 1972, sixty-two percent of universities reported that they had an archive with either an archivist or a librarian as the director, with one-quarter devoting less than 10 percent of their time to the archival work (Burckel 2008, 4). Fewer academic units managed the archives.

The success or failure of an archive all comes down to process. Process, as defined by Christopher Prom, consisted of "the arrangement, description, and housing of archival materials for storage and use by patrons." Process serves to connect the stakeholders with the contents (Prom 2008, 155). Those who recognize the university as a repository of data for all fields of study and for those charged with administering the institution will be best served by an archivist sees the university as a global collection. Archivists who recognize the entire university as an archive and takes steps to facilitate access to data wherever it may reside will do the greatest service to the institution.

## UTEP Builds an Archive

In 1900, nearly twenty years after its establishment in 1881, the University of Texas at Austin recognized the value of maintaining an archive to remember itself. Thirty years later in El Paso, Robert Holliday, a member of the board of regents, wrote to Harry Benedict, president of the University of Texas, at the expiration of his term. He informed the president of a filing cabinet that was “more than full of University papers and records,” and wanted to know if they should be in the “Archives of the University [of Texas].”<sup>81</sup> Benedict replied to Holliday that the archives in Austin needed his papers. “How much,” he wrote, “I do not now know. Maybe by the good ole summer time we can find time to pay a little attention to archival matters.”<sup>82</sup> After spending some time on “archival matters,” Holliday sent his papers to Austin where they eventually ended up in the collections of the Briscoe Center for American History, the official archive for the University of Texas at Austin and the U.T. System.

Within the Briscoe Center’s collections are many linear feet of documents related to the early history of the University of Texas at El Paso, dating from its founding in 1913 through the 1930s. None of these papers, however, were placed there by UTEP, nor can copies of them be found in El Paso. There is nothing in UTEP’s official history that explains what happened to many of its official records. Over time, some documents did end up in the personal files of school administrators

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<sup>81</sup> Robert Holliday to Harry Benedict, January 19, 1933, VF4Ea, U.T. Presidents Records.

<sup>82</sup> Benedict to Holliday, January 26, 1933, VF4Ea, U.T. Presidents Records. Those scholars interested in these early records had best remember this footnote, as no amount of online searching will uncover these manuscripts, nor are they to be found in published finding aids.

who went back to teaching. Others, including correspondence by John Kidd during the time he was dean, ended up in a manuscript collection entitled “Civilian Pilot Training Program.” These records ended up in the collections following the retirement of Eugene Thomas in 1967, the same year that UTEP established its first official archive. Interestingly enough, the documents never made it to the archive, but instead were stored in the offices of the engineering department until much later when they were transferred to UTEP’s revitalized Special Collections department in 1998 and examined in 2013 as part of the Centennial Office’s efforts promote awareness of documents throughout the campus.

At many universities, Roland Baumann (1988) discovered that the exigence for establishing official archives with a “historical consciousness” typically emerged from an approaching anniversary or commemoration of an event of significance to the institution. The point of origin may be scholarly, as in the case of a history professor who desires to publish; a retired faculty member who begins gathering materials; or administrative, in which a senior executive, typically the institution’s president, determines that there is merit in honoring the memory of the institution. Out of this sense of preserving memory, an archive may emerge (27). This is similar to what happened at UTEP in the late 1960s when it attempted to establish its first archive.

Shortly after the institution had celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 1964 and on the heels of its astonishing victory in the NCAA men’s basketball championship game in 1966, the school’s head librarian, Baxter Polk, believed it a

good time to establish an archives. Polk, who first joined the school in 1936, began acquiring rare books that he kept in his office. Many of these books came from faculty members, such as John H. McNeely, a history professor who contributed his collection of Spanish literature from Latin America.<sup>83</sup> With no official special collections department, Polk kept the books in his office.

The president of the university at the time, Joseph Ray, like Polk, possessed a sense of history of the institution. Ray kept a personal journal in which he recorded his daily activities using shorthand that only he and his secretary could translate. He designed a meticulous filing system that included files dedicated to preserving what he referred to as “exceptional letters”—writings by him and others that he believed worthy of preserving. He even had two rubber stamps produced, one of which designated files for preservation and another for letters that he did not write, but to which he objected to the writer’s argument. The stamp featured a man thumbing his nose in spite.<sup>84</sup>

After Ray authorized the archive in 1967, Polk approached alumnus and author Leon Metz to offer him the job as the school’s first official archivist. According to Claudia Rivers, director of UTEP’s Special Collections Department, Metz told Polk that he was interested in the position, but had to think about it. Metz excused himself and sought out Charles Sonnichsen, the chair of the English

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<sup>83</sup> Interview with Baxter Polk by David Salazar and Mildred Torok, 1973, "Interview no. 85," Institute of Oral History, University of Texas at El Paso.

<sup>84</sup> After leaving UTEP, Joseph Ray donated the bulk of his papers to the University in 1983. The collection included many fascinating internal documents that described the inner workings of the school and the constraints that he worked under. Unfortunately, he did not leave a key to deciphering his journal. See Joseph M. Ray Papers, MS 148, C.L. Sonnichsen Special Collections Department. The University of Texas at El Paso Library.

Department and published historian on El Paso and the Southwest. Metz, so the story goes, asked Sonnichsen, “What’s an archivist?” His curiosity satisfied, Metz accepted Polk’s offer.<sup>85</sup>

Following his appointment, Metz shared with the campus newspaper, “The University of Texas at El Paso should have the finest archives collection this side of the Mississippi in a few years,” and began work on seeking out collections.<sup>86</sup> Rather than serving solely as an institutional archive in which artifacts related to the mission of the University, Metz set about soliciting collections related to the Southwest. His artifacts augmented those of Polk’s own collection. His work resulted in some remarkable accessions. In 1969, Metz helped found a consortium of seven Texas university libraries, including U.T. Austin, North Texas State University, and the University of Houston. The consortium committed itself to preserving historical artifacts related to the history of Mexico by microfilming thousands of documents located in Mexican archives.<sup>87</sup>

Metz sought to learn all that he could about being an archivist. In addition to attending workshops, he used an article written by Clifford Shipton, the archivist for Harvard University, to provide him with a theoretical framework. Shipton (1968) had pushed back against government archivists of the time who claimed that university archives were too “chaotic,” resulting in uneven practices from university to university, which he believed hampered the establishment of more official

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<sup>85</sup> Claudia Rivers, interview by author, El Paso, May 25, 2016.

<sup>86</sup> *Prospector*, October 22, 1968.

<sup>87</sup> Walker, Dale E. “The Janos History Jinx.” *NOVA: The University of Texas at El Paso Magazine*. (Winter 1970): 4-7, <http://digitalcommons.utep.edu/nova/146>.



archives. While not necessarily chaotic, Shipton conceded that university archival practices were “young and confused.” Shipton even found Harvard’s archival practices not as advanced as those practiced in Europe, as Harvard, like most universities, treated archives like an attic in which to store memorabilia (395). Shipton justified his operation by becoming Harvard’s unofficial “records management service,” in which he collected, cataloged, and indexed documents for later retrieval by departments and offices. This service protected the archives from budget cuts as departments saw the work as a valuable task they did not want to do (396).

Metz successfully lobbied several faculty members to donate documents of interest to the university. However, within five years, it became clear that the University Archives was an archive in name only. The Southwest collections and oral histories expanded in accessions, while the collection of official records related to the institution only scratched the surface as no culture evolved that warranted the creation of protocols for the transferal of documents to the archives for cataloging and indexing. By the end of 1968, the focus of the archives shifted. Baxter Polk began referring to the primary role of his operation as specializing in the Southwest and Northern Mexico. No further mention was made of “university department records.”<sup>88</sup>

Without any official mandate, the University Archives exerted little effort toward documenting the University’s history through the compilation of its official

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<sup>88</sup> NOVA. “NOVA Interviews Baxter Black.” *NOVA: The University of Texas at El Paso Magazine*. (Fall 1968): 8-11, <http://digitalcommons.utep.edu/nova/136>, p. 11.

documents through the 1970s. Even special collections found itself little used. The bulk of the collections by the end of the 1970s ended up in a storeroom in the basement of the Administration Building.<sup>89</sup>

While the demand for access to official records and collections may have been low, faculty, staff, and members of the public had in their possession artifacts they believed of value to UTEP and were often willing to donate it to the school. In 1980, the Office of Alumni Relations created a volunteer organization, the Heritage Commission, to collect items that more or less celebrated the school's heritage. Their collection was stored in the Heritage House in 1994. The Heritage House functioned as the school's attic, a museum of sorts, and contained a variety of cultural artifacts ranging from pennants to clothing to mining equipment. The volunteers maintained a written inventory of the collections and documented provenance to the best of their abilities.<sup>90</sup>

Baumann (1988) explained that many institutions went through similar experiences with their archives that UTEP did. He noted that each institution produced what could be identified as "official records" and "official historical records." Institutions such as Oberlin College revealed that such a distinction could limit the effectiveness of archives. For instance, one opponent to the mission of the Oberlin's archivist, the assistant to the president of the school, took to labeling trustee meeting minutes as "official records" rather than "official historical records."

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<sup>89</sup> Rivers interview.

<sup>90</sup> "Heritage House," U.T. El Paso Office of Alumni Relations, accessed May 3, 2016, <http://alumni.utep.edu/heritage>.

This seemingly insignificant distinction meant that the minutes fell under the province of record management and not the archives. In this case, any vision of scholarly archives recognizes “today’s records” as “tomorrow’s history” carries little currency (33). The lack of openness and candor with the treatment of artifacts, the good and the bad, will defeat institutional histories. Most individuals fear the preservation of artifacts that may present them in bad light. There is also the instinct toward self-preservation. This self-preservation of reputation prevents openness and candor when evaluating problems by future generations.

Even at large research universities, stakeholders often saw the role of an university archive as preservation not of the of the current, but of the past. Since the past is of low priority, so too are archives. A university focused on student success and the managing of limited resources may see archives as a luxury. Administrators want to know how exactly does an archive contribute to the mission of the university (Baumann 1988, 34).

An institutional archive dedicated to the preservation of official records works best when there is a culture that recognizes the entire work of a university, from the classroom to the research lab to the president’s office as producing data for future scholarship. This includes everything the university publishes for public consumption to scholarly publications to memorandums arguing for change. The more that can be preserved, indexed, and shared, the better the university will be at fulfilling its mission and preserving its history.

## **The Ship of Theseus**

There is a Ship of Theseus at work when it comes to preserving the history of a university. Within Plutarch's tale of an odyssey, a wooden ship begins to lose its planks, which the crew replaces with other materials over the course of the voyage. The discarded planks, rather than being lost, are collected and used to build a second ship. Which ship is the original ship becomes an exercise in the nature of existence of the self (Rea 1995, 532). This puzzle perplexed the Sophists of Athens, as it did Thomas Hobbes a millennium later, regarding the nature of identity (Hobbes 1839, 135-38).

This question of individual versus body can be applied to the history of a university. At a given moment, all of the artifacts created at that time exist as components waiting assembly to provide a complete narrative of the university. However, only certain artifacts are used, while others are ignored, discarded, or undiscovered, and they are applied to an existing narrative framework that is defined by previous scholarship, myths, traditions, and even competing narratives. As the narrative ship sails, some artifacts are lost and are replaced, and a different, new narrative emerges. Sometimes, a part is replaced by material that never ever belonged in the ship, but now is preserved as it continues its voyage.

Universities today deal with fragmentary archives that provide glimpses of the past through eyewitness accounts. In other words, the narrative ship was never complete to begin with. These "archival fragments" are to Jenny Rice "archival wreckage" that like the flotsam and jetsam that washes up on the shore, can never

be reassembled to create the past (Rice 2016). A lot of times, the institution itself purposely creates the wreckage.

The narrative ship that represents the history of an institution at any given moment of its existence is an incomplete one. In its relationship with the writing of histories of universities using the two archives, the ship is more ephemeral. The artifacts that define the ship are constantly changing along with its appearance. The manifestation of the narrative ship varies from individual to individual depending on not only their physical and temporal perspective, but also from an epistemic perspective, which is defined by their familiarity with the two archives. The Ship of Theseus that was UTEP in 1955 appears one way to an engineering student from Texas Western College (as UTEP was then known) than it does to a linguist with a Ph.D. administering that same institution today. Depending on one's perspective, or place on the disciplinary landscape, the narrative ship may take on many appearances. However, other audiences may see the same ship as they refuse to or simply ignore new data. For them, their warrants shaped by doxa, they see the ship based on a memory that defies challenges. The duty of the scholar who both works within the university as well as writes about the university must constantly be aware of these perceptions.

### The Lacuna and the Apocryphal

Each year, the University discards a portion of its essence to be replaced by new routine and repetitive documents and artifacts. Archives and special collections capture some of these artifacts. Others end up in private collections of faculty or

other collectors. Others are destroyed, lost, or simply forgotten. Charles Ambler, dean of UTEP's graduate school, during a recent interview pointed to a filing cabinet in his office and recounted how he had once held the same position as dean several years earlier. When he moved out of the office, he left several drawers filled with files. When he returned to the position after an absence of several years, he discovered that the files he had left behind were still there, untouched by his successor or by the university.<sup>91</sup>

Ambler, as did other members of the University's senior staff, all shared that they did not know where their files would end up once they leave UTEP. Equally mysterious was what would happen to all of their digitally created artifacts on their computers. All believed that "someone," perhaps working for one of the many information technology offices, were responsible for archiving those documents. None expressed any understanding of where their writings, physical or digital, fit into providing a history of the University of Texas at El Paso.<sup>92</sup>

In a way, we know more about the University and how it worked from its early years than we know about its more recent existence. While pages of documents do exist in the warehouses of records management and online manuals of operations can be found at one's fingertips online, the day-to-day minutia of operations in which staff through memos and letters made arguments about taking one or another course of action is sadly missing.

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<sup>91</sup> Charles Ambler, interview by author, El Paso, November 25, 2015.

<sup>92</sup> For a list of those interviewed, see Appendix.

This was not the case with the University's early history. Given the school's president was located in Austin some 600 miles to the east, this distance created *epistolary management*, which produced vast troves of writing that both recipients and senders curated within filing cabinets by subject. These letters, in the words of Alastair Pennycook, were in themselves "densely documented histories of [their] times" (Pennycook 2012, 72). Each letter sent between El Paso and Austin had to convey a range of rhetorical choices in order to convey meaning to the audience typically without the benefit of a follow up phone call or face-to-face meeting. Epistolary management had to plan, organize, direct, and control within the framework of the institution and at the same time instill a personal connection between the writer and audience that incorporated the hierarchal business nature of the relationship.

Pennycook built on Hoy's (2004) theory of critical resistance, where the scholar needed to "think differently" about writing and distance, and about being out of place (Pennycook 2012, 29). This allowed them to share their own reasoning with their audience and justify their claims. For example, recent examinations of the letters from the time the University was founded in 1913 reveals that some of the greatest opponents of establishing a branch of the university in El Paso were alumni of the University of Texas. Two El Paso alumnus of the university, William Burges and Robert Holliday, both lobbied behind the scenes against the establishment of school. (The school later commemorated the two by naming buildings after them.) Other papers revealed that University of Texas President

Harry Benedict not only drafted long personal letters to individuals on how the school should be run, he also jotted down handwritten notes on the margins and backs of letters justifying the UTEP's existence.

Today, most individuals within the university do not take the time to sit down to compose five or six letters explaining their reasoning for one or more actions. An individual dealing with someone in Austin will use the telephone or Skype. If writing is required, it will be in the form of emails, which may or may not be printed out and preserved, along with text or instant messages.

Our digital age presents many unique challenges for researchers. Even when someone is conscious of the significance of their research and takes the effort to preserve it digitally, there are still obstacles to overcome. Many special collections departments contain analog and digital recordings that are no longer instantly accessible to researchers. When it comes to printed artifacts, the researcher may have to wait upward of a half hour or even a day if the material has to be retrieved off site. However, once it arrives, she can be confident that once she removes the lid to the box, she will be able to pull out a document and begin to read it immediately, even if the documents are over century old. Accessing a floppy disk of simple text files from the 1990s poses a challenge that will require significant time and resources. The technology behind today's libraries and archives are not designed to last. While a single book may disappear from the library, a library of books may disappear due to the failure or obsolescence of a single hard drive. One hundred years from now, any scholar may walk confidently into a university library, pull a



book off the shelf, and instantly access its content by opening the cover and turning to a page. The same cannot be said about a digital book.

Even the digital age of cloud storage presents researchers with a looming digital dark age. With the advent of personal digital devices, digital recordings are prevalent everywhere. Stored on the memory chips of these devices are photos, videos, sound and music recordings, which for all practical purposes are prisoners of the device. A few, relatively speaking, given the billions of recordings that take place each day across the globe, will be uploaded to social sharing sites. The vast majority of these digital impressions will be locked away in a digital shoebox. Upon the death of the owner, they will be lost forever, unavailable to family and researchers alike.

Within the institution today, individuals construct artifacts on a daily basis. Grades are recorded and diplomas are issued. Research is published and minutes of a meeting are transcribed. A student jots down in her notes the scribbling of a professor on a whiteboard, which all of a sudden made clear a concept. Not all of these ephemeral memories resist capture. Some rise to the level of becoming a significant event worthy of documentation by a communications office. Others of note rise to the level of official communication and are documented in emails or a now rare printed letter. Even then, those that rise to the level of official are not guaranteed preservation as they may be bundled up and shipped off to records management only to be destroyed at a later date.

While universities such as UTEP that lack a central coordinated archival effort make it hard for their own researchers, so too do the departments that produce scholarship, including rhetoric. Many researchers are not prepared to work in archives, let alone know how to seek out the hidden collections, and, if they do locate them, will encounter difficulties interpreting them. Ferreira-Buckley (1999) pointed out that most scholars who study rhetoric lack training in archival research. Given that only graduate history students receive such training, her claim may be universal across all disciplines (577). Glenn and Enoch (2010), while supporting the new archival research methods, warned that the research must be conducted responsibly and that resulting claims “must be based on facts, research, and primary materials” (25). The situation that Ferreira-Buckley and Glenn and Enoch highlighted was of the researcher not recognizing the distance between them and the data contained within archives must be bridged and was subject to misinterpretation without proper context. As Nietzsche (1980) wrote:

Only from the standpoint of the highest strength may you interpret the past: only in the highest exertion of your noblest qualities will you discern what is worthy of being known and preserved, what is great in the past. ... The genuine historian must have the strength to recast the well known into something never heard before and to proclaim the general so simply and profoundly that one overlooks its simplicity because of its profundity and its profundity because of its simplicity. No one can be a great historian, an artistic man, and a [shallow intellect] at the same time. However, one should not despise the workers who cart, heap up, and sift because it is certain that they cannot become great historians; and even less should one confuse them with those historians but rather understand them to be the necessary helpers and underlings in the service of the master. (37)

Not only do scholars ignore the archives at their own peril, they also risk misinterpreting what they do find. Such dangers require proper education on the

part of the researcher. The mason's take on the building of the cathedral can be just as important as the king's.

Efforts to train scholars to access the archives over the past five decades have paid dividends. Archivists by the 1980s recognized that they were dealing with new scholars who desired to write histories that went beyond "kings and battles," where writings focused on individuals and institutions. Scholars began to investigate society and culture to build "social histories," which meant that archives needed to provide artifacts that reflected the daily lives of ordinary people affected by prominent individuals and institutions, and vice versa (Miller 1981, 113).

With this new emphasis on archival research has come a new understanding of what the archives are and what they are not. With new understanding of how universities work, it is possible to see a much greater archive at work.

### Processed, Imperfect, and Hidden Collections

Universities, it turns out, are archives unto themselves. Despite the lack of a designated archivist or even a special collection, the university serves as its own collection of knowledge contained within both its canonical and institutional archives. Universities are vast archives of collections yet to be discovered.

There exist three collections within every university: the hidden, the partially hidden, and the visible. The act of processing and access define these archives (Ramsey 2010, 79). Therefore, the greatest difficulty facing any university is not so much the acquisition of physical space to hold collections, but simply identifying the

collections in the first place. Hidden collections are everywhere on the campus, if one knows where to look.

Ironically, hidden collections even lurk within designated special collection archives. Within UTEP's special collections, two-thirds of the manuscripts and images in their possession (484 out of 718 collections) have yet to be processed.<sup>93</sup> As for the vast collection of documents on UTEP's early history at the Briscoe Center in Austin, the finding aid for them is not available to the general public. You need to know what to ask for before asking for it. These hidden collections create scholarly barriers as they lack of adequate security, which makes them prone to loss, inaccessible for research, and increases the cost of research, as scholars have to travel to other institutions or seek alternatives (Ramsey 2010, 81).

But the most prevalent hidden collections on a campus are those within the offices of faculty and staff. These hidden treasures present a challenge if left unidentified for they are at the greatest risk of loss. Mounting an identification campaign would help in their preservation. The documents do not necessarily need to be turned over or even made public until a later date. The key is identification.

### Digital Preservation and Digital-Born

A solution frequently proposed is the use of digital technology to both preserve and make accessible archives and collections. Creating and citing digital artifacts, however, creates challenges. The publication of books and journals, along with manuscripts found in archives, all come with locator information that provides

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<sup>93</sup> Abbie Weiser, interview by author, El Paso, June 9, 2016.

for meaningful citations—the audience will be able to decipher the information and place their hands (or eyes) on the original content that the scholar relied on when justifying their claims. Digital artifacts can be frustratingly ephemeral. Not many organizations, including universities, have adopted a digital standard mandating the reliance on stable locator information, such as persistent URL's, for digital artifacts. As the *New York Times* reported in 2013, almost half of hyperlinks contained in Supreme Court opinions were found to no longer point to the original artifact.<sup>94</sup>

UTEP has a wealth of information that has appeared in digital artifacts dating back to 1996 when the University launched its first website. However, universities have often overlooked websites as their administration often falls under the control of informational technology offices or in-department technology personnel. Little effort is provided with an eye toward archival stewardship.

Around 2008, UTEP's news bureau, part of University Communications, began publishing news stories and press releases exclusively digitally using the domain newsuc.utep.edu, rather than to print. Before this time, many of the news articles uploaded to the web were reprints from paper newsletters and press releases, many of which ended up archived in a curated special collection.

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<sup>94</sup> Adam Liptak, "In Supreme Court Opinions, Web Links to Nowhere," *New York Times*, September 23, 2013, [http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/24/us/politics/in-supreme-court-opinions-clicks-that-lead-nowhere.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/24/us/politics/in-supreme-court-opinions-clicks-that-lead-nowhere.html?_r=0). The article contains an amusing reference to a digital document cited by an associate justice. A justice had cited an article on a domain that no longer existed by the time the opinion was released. The new owner of the domain uploaded the following message: "Aren't you glad you didn't cite to this Web page? If you had, like Justice Alito did, the original content would have long since disappeared and someone else might have come along and purchased the domain in order to make a comment about the transience of linked information in the Internet age."

Over time, more and more of this journalism ended up being digital born with no corresponding print source. While these articles themselves became available for use by anyone with an internet connection, they were, in fact, born-digital lacuna. A Google search of the domain newsuc.utep.edu revealed that 1,580 independent, non-UTEP-related sites linked back to stories posted on this domain. Of those links, four scholarly peer-reviewed journals and one scholarly monograph cited articles published by University Communications as data for justifying their respective claims. When University Communications retired the domain, these articles were lost. The scholarly articles and monographs that cited them, however, are still out there.

But the practice of not having a digital preservation policy does not end there. University Communications never adopted the policy of using stable or static datelines in their articles, instead relying on the use of dynamic “last updated” date fields. The result of using dynamic fields rather than static led to a number of articles with misleading publication dates, up to four years beyond original dateline. Even the “update” date is misleading; a new date is generated every time an article is moved from one server or directory to another with no actual change in content.

By relying on ephemeral cites (and sites), arguments are increasingly being built out of sand. The ship of Theseus sails on.

## **Summary**

When the University of Texas first authorized the creation of an official archive, little attention was paid to the theory behind it. Lester Bugbee, it turned

out, had studied with scholars who adopted the German theories of the time that archives provided access to sources required for scholarship. Bugbee thus advocated for two archives: one to contain physical documents and one to debate practices regarding those archives.

In “Archive Fever,” Jacques Derrida argued, “Whoever controls access to archives controls the institutional memory of a culture” (qtd. in Miller and Bowdon 1999, 595). Given the power of rhetoric to alter reality, including history, the value of archives lies in their preservation of artifacts that justify claims through data and warrants. Fictive language unburdened by the weight of warrants and data can be just as potent. The temptation to control through doxa alone is powerful. At the core of rhetoric is conflict, both internal and external. Making it the study of “power through communication” (Agnew and others 2011, 115).

The university, however, is an important bastion of critical discourse. For democracy to thrive, it must provide access to canonical and institutional archives. This includes recognizing that the entire university is an archive unto itself, and that the culture of the institution must include the preservation of its work, be it in the classroom, laboratory, or office.

Memories and traditions that make up warrants do come in conflict from time to time, as does the veracity of data used to justify claims. Gaps and spaces erupt between warrants and data that challenges the validity of previously justified claims and create rhetorical distances. Access to archives provides scholars with the materials to heal these rifts.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Scholarship**

#### **Introduction**

##### **Historical Sketch: Transformation of a University, 1927**

For over a decade, the School of Mines, later renamed the College of Mines in 1919, trained engineers in the field of mining and metallurgy. Despite its engineering focus and that it offered only two degrees, an Engineer of Mines and, later, a Bachelor of Science degree in mining, this did not stop “irregular students”—those interested in taking college-level but not majoring in mining—from enrolling in the first-year science and mathematic courses. The new students enrolling for the 1916-1917 academic year included the school’s first two females. By 1920, the College of Mines, included courses in English rhetoric and literature, history, political science, and sociology. These new courses attracted more students from the El Paso community who had no desire to relocate six hundred miles to Austin, eventually surpassing 100 students by 1919 and quadrupling its original 1914 enrollment of 27. More than half of the students did not study engineering and over a quarter of all students were female, making the College of Mines one of the more unconventional mining schools in the nation.

Enrollment rose steadily at the engineering school with “irregular students,” as school officials referred to them, outnumbering the regulars. Even with the creation of the first municipal junior college in Texas, El Paso Junior College in



1921, El Pasoans still enrolled at the College of Mines, with many transferring to the College from the junior college. As a state-funded school, the College of Mines did not charge tuition. The Junior College, however, relied on fees for courses paid by students given that it had few other funding options. The groundbreaking school was ahead of its time in Texas for it would not be for another several years until the state enacted laws authorizing the public funding of junior colleges.

Politics, not pragmatism, led to the first major transformation of the University of Texas at El Paso. By the fall of 1926, it had become clear to the El Paso School District that their tuition-funded junior college operated at a clear disadvantage to the state-supported school one mile to the west. The opportunity to address this issue came in the most unusual of circumstances. In late October 1926, just a few days following the regularly scheduled meeting of the U.T. Board of Regents, a member of the board of regents set into motion a series of events that would forever change the University of Texas at El Paso.

His name was Hiram Wroe, an Austin banker and nephew to the late George W. Littlefield, who had been another prominent member of the regents. Wroe was the trustee of his uncle's bequest to the University of Texas, which by 1926 included a sizable endowment that paid for buildings, libraries, and the installation of Confederate memorials on the plaza in front of the main building. Wroe had been a member of the regents earlier in the decade, his term ending in 1925. When another member unexpectedly resigned, Governor Miriam "Ma" Ferguson appointed Wroe to fill the remaining 90 days of the unexpired term.

Even before his return in the fall of 1926, Wroe had sparred with President Walter Splawn earlier in the year over legal matters concerning the handling of bids for a new girls dormitory at the Austin school. The Littlefield estate was to pay for and Wroe believed that the regents had handled the bids improperly. Splawn in turn questioned Wroe's management of Littlefield's legacy to the University, and the two remained at odds with each other right up to the next regents' meeting scheduled for October 19, 1926. Wroe arrived late but just in time for the agenda vote on the awarding of bids related to the dormitory. After his swearing in, Wroe immediately objected to the bid process by questioning the authority of the regents to award the bid. Following several motions and side meetings, the regents adjourned as acrimony filled the room.

As for the other items discussed at the meeting, only one concerned the College of Mines in El Paso, and that had to do with a salary dispute regarding the athletic director. One other item on the agenda discussed the possible relocation of the school of pharmacy from Galveston to Austin rather than rebuilding the school's recently fire-ravaged classrooms. The regents deferred discussion of that matter to a later date.

After the meeting, Wroe met with several members of the press to spin his position on the dormitory issue. However, in one interview with the *Austin American* on October 28, 1926, Wroe claimed that the regents had discussed relocating the College of Mines to Austin as a cost saving move. Wroe mentioned

that at the November meeting a majority of the regents were prepared to vote in favor of the move.

The *Austin American* buried the article inside its October 29, 1926 with no other comments from any other sources. When Wroe's remarks reached El Paso the next day, the matter became an above the fold, uppercase headline. "SCHOOL OF MINES IS STORM CENTER" roared the *El Paso Herald* on October 30, as if war had been declared. Front-page stories and editorials filled column inches in all three El Paso newspapers. Quotes from city leaders and business owners proclaimed that they were ready to fight any move to relocate the College of Mines. One of the most vocal supporters for the College of Mines was none other than the superintendent of the El Paso schools, Allen H. Hughey, who promptly volunteered to fall on his sword and close the junior college if that would save the college. He told the *El Paso Herald* at the outbreak of the scandal that "a School of Mines with academic courses added to take over the work of the Junior college [sic], in my opinion, is the solution." Hughey then laid out over the course of the subsequent week several well-crafted arguments in opinion pieces on why the two schools should merge. There was never a serious discussion or proposal by Hughey or any other civic leader on how to keep both schools.

For his part, John W. Kidd, the dean of the College of Mines, found the events perplexing. Taken off guard, he shared with President Splawn his take on the controversy, which he interpreted as an assault on his leadership. "Personally I know of no reason for the appearance of the articles mentioned," he confided. "I of

course deeply resent the two editorials that have appeared in the *Herald* as they both written [sic] for the express purpose showing my utter lack of ability to conduct the affairs of the institution.”<sup>95</sup>

Having a state-supported school had become a point of pride for El Paso ever since the school was established in 1914. One newspaper editorial commenting on the first commencement in 1916 noted that the institution made El Paso a “university town.” As a branch of the University of Texas in Austin, local residents of the Paso del Norte region enjoyed the benefit of taking college-level courses that provided transferable credits to not only Austin, but also other colleges and universities in the United States. In addition, the need for teachers by local schools fueled the demand for more classes. The El Paso Junior College, established by the city in 1922 at the behest of University of Texas President Robert Vinson with promises of the school later becoming a part of a proposed U.T.-controlled system of junior colleges, met this need for a few years. Vinson’s vision for a U.T.-controlled system of junior colleges never materialized, as the attorney general for Texas ruled that the University of Texas had no legal authority to operate junior colleges. As for the state, the legislature was unwilling to fund junior colleges and the city of El Paso found itself trying to convince a skeptical public that it could continue to fund the junior college without raising taxes. The students of the junior college, for their part, soon realized that they did not have to pay tuition for certain classes offered at the junior college if they took them at the College of Mines.

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<sup>95</sup> John Kidd to Walter Splawn, November 2, 1926, VF8Ab, U.T. Presidents Records.

Civic leaders in El Paso mobilized in the days following Wroe's statement. True or not, his claim that the regents were ready to close the College of Mines brought into the open the city school board's desire to get out of the junior college business. A "merger," as supporters came to call the move, would end competition between the schools, increase the College's enrollment to over 500, and end talk in Austin about relocating the College. Enrollment for the fall at the junior college fell to below 100 students while the College of Mines had increased by 31 percent to 136.<sup>96</sup> Without a building of its own, junior college students occupied a floor of the El Paso High School. School officials restricted their movements during the daytime to minimize interactions with high school students, including defining the time and place where the young adults could eat in the cafeteria.<sup>97</sup> Clearly, the College of Mines threatened the existence of the junior college; not the other way round as later authors would claim.

In July 1927, Harry Benedict, who would soon take over as president of the University of Texas and the College of Mines, arrived in El Paso to begin negotiations with Dean Kidd, El Paso civic leaders, and the school board on the logistics of the new college. "By maintaining highest possible standards at all times," Benedict told the public, "the El Paso branch of the University of Texas will have great possibilities."<sup>98</sup> Two years later, while examining enrollment data at schools of mines in the United States, Benedict arrived at the conclusion that

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<sup>96</sup> *El Paso Herald*, September 24, 1926.

<sup>97</sup> *El Paso Times*, September 16, 1926.

<sup>98</sup> Walter Splawn to Harry Benedict, outline, July 7, 1927, VF8Ab, U.T. Presidents Records; *El Paso Herald*, July 8, 1927.

mining was not the future of the College of Mines and that the school's plan for the future "ought not to put their money into Mining and Metallurgy only."<sup>99</sup> Benedict began making plans to give the school greater autonomy by giving it its own president and authorizing it to award Bachelor of Arts degrees.

Hiram Wroe never again made mention in public the relocation of the College of Mines following his interview of October 28, 1926. His interim appointment to the Board of Regents ended two months later in January 1927. The state senate declined to confirm his nomination for a full term, which had been submitted by outgoing governor Miriam Ferguson. Governor-elect Dan Moody, who owed a great deal to El Pasoans for his recent election, found it prudent not to resubmit Wroe's name.<sup>100</sup> That same legislature went on to approve an increased appropriation for the College of Mines, which transformed it into a hybrid engineering-comprehensive school. Enrollment increased by 200 percent that same year from 136 to 411. By 1931, when the College began offering Bachelor of Arts degrees, enrollment exceeded 600.

Did an opposition to El Paso having an institution of higher learning motivate Wroe's comment to the press? Perhaps. However, it would not be too difficult to imagine him in the role of provocateur, for he exhibited a prescience knowing exactly where to apply the match that resulted in the subsequent firestorm that led to legislative action resulting in the transformation of the College of Mines into the western branch of the University of Texas.

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<sup>99</sup> Harry Benedict to Charles Puckett, October 23, 1929, VF8Ab, U.T. Presidents Records.

<sup>100</sup> *San Antonio Express*, January 14, 1927; *Galveston Daily News*, February 3, 1927.

## Moneyball

The State College of Mines and Metallurgy emerged from 1927 a new institution with a new mission. In little more than a decade since the professional school awarded its first degree in mining engineering, the institution had transformed itself into comprehensive university that would soon be awarding undergraduate degrees in the humanities to students with little desire or resources to attend the Main Branch located six hundred miles to the east in Austin.

This would not be the first deliberate transformation of the University of Texas at El Paso. Over the course of the next eight decades, the institution would adjust to changing conditions of the remote and isolated binational region that it served. In all, U.T. El Paso over the century has passed through four epochs in which its mission had changed to address the needs of the region.

Table 2. Transformative Epochs

Years	Epoch	Description
1914-1926	Mining school	Single engineering degree
1927-1940	Comprehensive school and college	Undergraduate degrees
1941-1989	Regional college	Graduate degrees
1990-present	Research university	Doctoral degrees

The previous chapters of this dissertation addressed the rise of the research university as supported by pillars consisting of institutional identity (place), collaboration through epistemic rhetoric (belief), the coordinated processing of knowledge (argument), and the preservation of data and warrants that supports the

justification of new knowledge (archives). The purpose of this chapter is utilize these elements to provide a revised narrative of the University of Texas at El Paso by examining its history through a statistical lens. The objective of this exercise is to examine the university for relationship between retention the first-year composition (FYC) classroom using a common metric, and discuss the challenges the FYC classroom faces in its immediate future.

My argumentation claim is this: there is a relationship between the number of students that fail or withdraw from the first-year composition classroom and student retention. These failures and withdrawals, known as DFW, take on the appearance of a systemic problem when analyzed over the history of the university. Using data provided from our recreated archives, I can demonstrate the success of the university through its transformations and that the next major transformation will have to address retention at the first-year class level as defined by the DFW.

Over the past decade, a new term, *moneyball*, has entered the UTEP's lexicon. At the recommendation of Diana Natalicio, her executives were encouraged to read *Moneyball*, Michael Lewis's account of how the Oakland Athletics (A's), a down-market team with one of the lowest payrolls in baseball, discovered success during the 2000s. Despite a modest budget, the Athletics still managed to put together a winning seasons through late 1990s through the 2000s. While Bud Selig, the commissioner of baseball, referred to them as "an aberration," few attempted to explain how such a lowly team kept winning (Lewis 2003, xi). It was this ratio of dollars to wins, a redefined metric of success, which explains the moneyball concept.



The Oakland A's during 2001 spent \$34 million on 102 wins, which placed them in the top of baseball that season. Their wins, when applied converted into a metric, worked out to \$333,000 per win. The vast majority of their competitors, by comparison, were paying \$1 million to \$3 million per win. Clearly, the A's were doing more—a lot more—with less (Lewis 2003, xiii). Universities are increasingly turning to data to predict student retention to hiring of faculty (Chou 2015; Soland 2014).

Universities, regrettably, have poor memories when it comes to their histories through numbers. Sports, like baseball, have longstanding traditions of scorekeeping, which provides a memory. Newspapers dedicated pages to provide box scores of games that fans could interpret to give them an idea of what transpired in each game. Dedicated fans and others in the data, such as gamblers, compiled and aggregated these numbers to create their own data tables. Sports institutions have a long history of preserving and sharing these numbers. Educational institutions do not, at least not until recently.

In researching this chapter, I submitted requests for information to three universities under the Freedom of Information Act: Arizona State University, Harvard University, and the University of Texas at Austin. The data I sought were the annual enrollment and degrees conferred dating back to 1900. The result: none of these three top-tier research universities could comply with the request. All could provide data going back to the 1980s, when federal government reporting requirements related to Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)

as required by the Higher Education Act of 1965 were first tabulated by computer. Only Harvard could provide me with online access to annual reports prepared by their presidents dating before 1980 and which extended back to 1825. I was on my own to uncover the data.

Is it really that difficult for research universities to collect and retrieve data about their history? After all, enrollment and degrees conferred are two metrics often reported in newspapers of the time. Was there any data dating back to 1900 that prestigious universities such as Harvard, A.S.U., or U.T. Austin would have on hand for researchers? The answer was not too surprising: athletics.

### *Res ipsa loquitur*

When I requested the won-lost records of their respective football teams dating back to 1900, all three universities were able to comply, and quite promptly, with each directing me to one or more websites maintained by the university or a contracted party. Here was a veritable cornucopia of wins, losses, points scored, points allowed—far more data than requested.

The fact is, the won-lost record of a college football team is quite important to many individuals inside and out of the institution. The record when converted into a percentage does provide an important measure of a team's success against other teams over time. Such statistics allows alumni to wax nostalgic, gamblers to fix odds, and trivia masters to feel smug. Examining the winning percentage over time on a graph can often identify the hiring or retirement of a particular coach, or when the program was suspended due to infractions. It becomes a tool of inquiry. Of what

use is the enrollment and degrees conferred statistics of that same university?

Perhaps a better understanding of how universities have changed over time.

Is there an effective way to tell the history of a research university using numbers that would serve as a jumping off point for further research in the first-year composition classroom? If we define the model research university as one of access, collaboration, and retention, what metrics can we use to establish that a university is not only successfully accomplishing its mission, but also allow a comparison with other institutions of higher education over time?

### **Using Metrics**

Observing the transformation of a university, however, is not so apparent as it seems. Or is it? An earlier chapter explored the School of Mines as it served as both a mining school and a municipal college for students seeking credit at a state supported college. The number of engineering students numbered fewer than those seeking credits. The number of students earning a degree each year remained quite small, as well. Is there a relationship between these two numbers that could tell a different story about the University of Texas at El Paso?

Transformations of universities may not be easy to recognize, especially without the benefit of a single set of metrics translatable over time. Today, universities capture a myriad of metrics ranging from enrollment to demographics to grades. Much of this data is required for compliance with regulations related to federal aid and dates back to Higher Education Act of the 1960s. At the federal level, universities receiving federal aid submit data to Integrated Postsecondary

Education Data System (IPEDS), which is a part of the National Center for Education Statistics within the Department of Education. At the state level in Texas, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (T.H.E.C.B.) collects and disseminates much of the same data. At the university level, one office may be dedicated to collecting this data. At UTEP, this would be the Center for Institutional Evaluation, Research, and Planning (CIERP). In addition to addressing regulatory needs, such centers also prepare the Common Data Set (C.D.S.), which compiles routine information that may be of interest to other public and private organizations. College rating guides, such as *U.S. News & World Report* and *Washington Monthly* rely on much of the figures in the C.D.S. in preparing their annual rankings.

As mentioned earlier, many institutions have not devoted their resources toward collecting and digitally archiving data before the 1990s, unless it was related to intercollegiate athletics. But it is possible to uncover enrollment and degrees conferred, as these are two numbers most frequently touted by schools dating back over 300 years since the arrival of college education in America. Though the numbers become trickier to discover prior to 1825, scholars have undertaken the task of documenting every commencement at Harvard, beginning with its first in 1644, at which nine seniors graduated.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> See Albert Matthews, *Harvard Commencement Days, 1642-1916* (Cambridge: John Wilson and Sons, 1916), 384, accessed June 15, 2016, HathiTrust, <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/njp.32101068036050>.

UTEP is an exception among universities when it comes to posting its historical numbers. As part of its centennial commemoration in 2014, CIERP prepared a website page that posted its enrollment and degrees conferred by year since its establishment in 1914.<sup>102</sup>

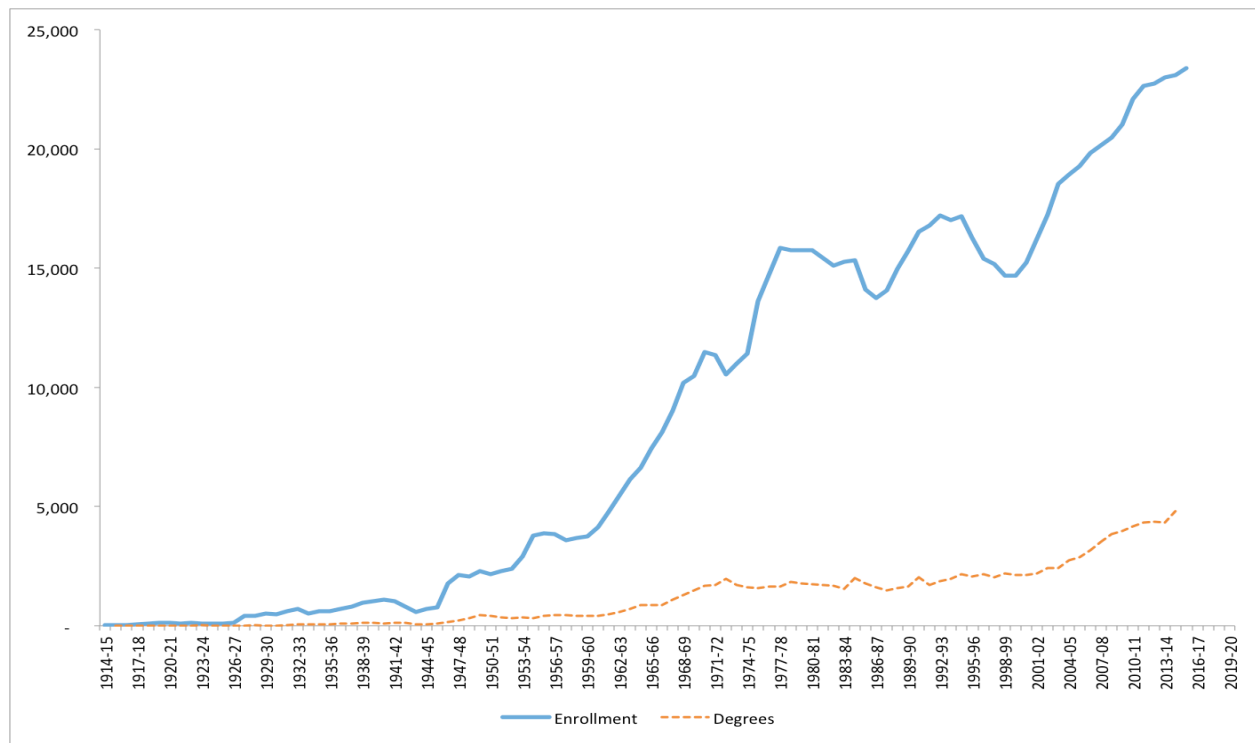


Figure 3. Annual enrollment and degrees conferred by UTEP, 1914-2014.<sup>103</sup>

Over the century that UTEP has been in existence, enrollment has risen steadily, as has the number of degrees conferred by the institution (see fig. 3). Beginning in 1914 with 27 students, enrollment today exceeds 23,000. The same goes with degrees conferred, with the first three Engineer of Mines degrees awarded in 1916 to over 4,000 awarded annually in 2014. At this scale, it is difficult to see a

<sup>102</sup> “100 Years of UTEP,” U.T. El Paso, accessed February 10, 2014, <http://cierpdata.utep.edu/UTEP100Years/Default.aspx>.

<sup>103</sup> CIERP.

relationship, if any, between enrollment and degrees conferred, other than as enrollment increased, so too did the number of graduates.

In 1927, the examined in this chapter's Historical Sketch, there exists a rise in enrollment over the next decade. However, while degrees conferred does show a slight rise, it pales in comparison to the bump that occurs around 1949-1950, when the first of the postwar graduations took place, which followed a significant increase in admissions in 1946 due to the impact of the postwar G.I. Bill. Would that not be a more appropriate period to look for the exigence related to transformation of the university's mission?

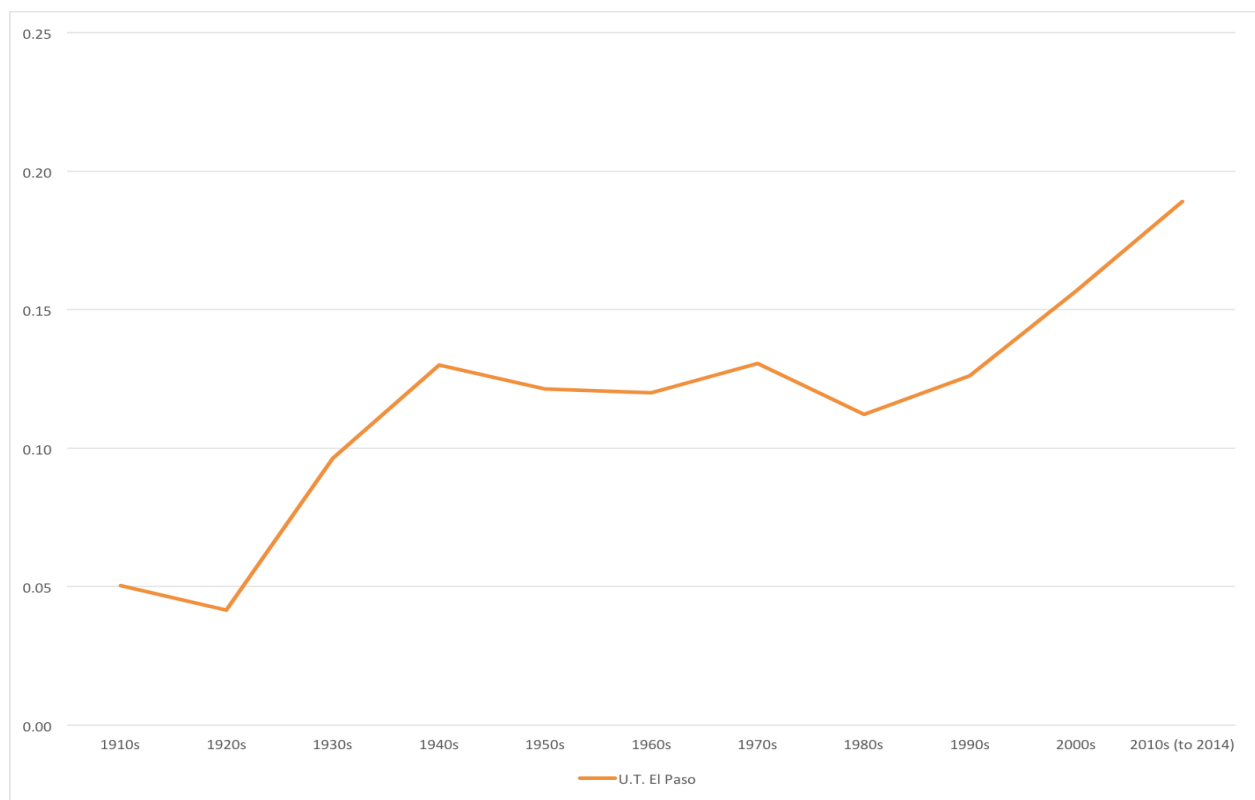


Figure 4. Ratio of degrees conferred to enrollment, decade.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> CIERP.

An interesting picture emerges by establishing a relationship between the numbers of degrees conferred to the enrollment averaged over decades (fig. 4). Dividing the number of degrees conferred over a period of time by the enrollment over the same period of time arrives at the *degrees to enrollment ratio* ( $D/E$ ). The closer the  $D/E$  is to 1.0, the more perfect the institution's retention rate. However, unless the school is a one-year program with a new cohort arriving and graduating each year, the  $D/E$  will not approach 1.0. Imagine a school with perfect retention with a total student population of 20,000 and four equally divided classes of 5,000 students each. In a given year, the senior cohort of 5,000 out of the 20,000 students would graduate. The  $D/E$  in the scenario of this hypothetical perfect university would be 0.25.

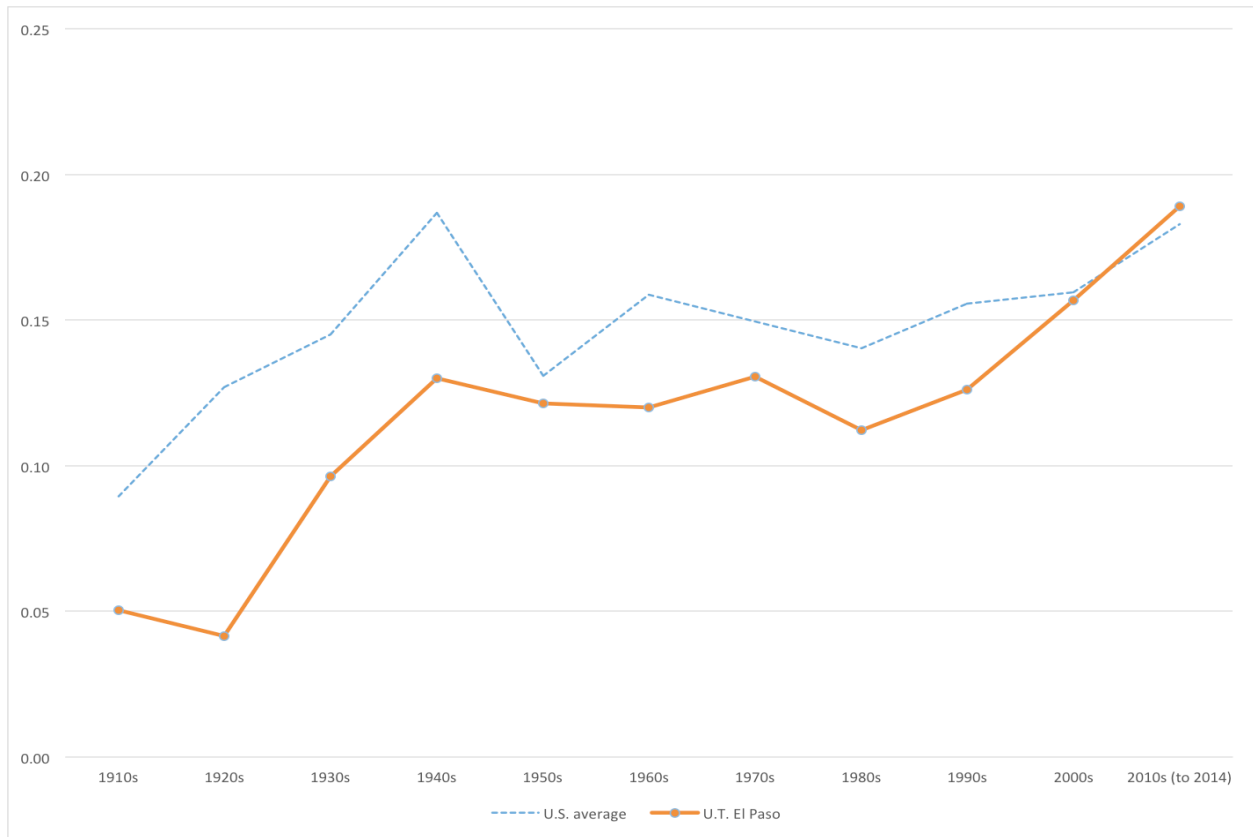


Figure 5. D/E ratio, UTEP and U.S. higher education institutions, by decade.<sup>105</sup>

Over the past five decades, the national average D/E for all universities in the United States is 0.16 (fig. 5). This includes both public and private institutions, and includes both undergraduate and graduate students. For most of its history, U.T. El Paso has lagged the national average, by as much as nine points during the 1920s. For the first two decades in UTEP's history, the institution's D/E averaged 0.04, which was less than half of the for all colleges and universities at the time (fig. 3). From 1914 through 1927, annual enrollment averaged 100 students with four Engineer of Mines degrees awarded on average each year. When the State School of Mines and Metallurgy first opened in the fall of 1914, the first cohort of 27 students

<sup>105</sup> CIERP; U.S. Department of Education.



arrived from across the United States and Mexico, with 12 (44%) from El Paso. In four years, with enrollment at 100 for the 1918-19 academic year, 67 percent came from El Paso and 20 percent of the total student body was female. Approximately one-half of the students enrolled attended to earn credits in order to transfer to another university or to fulfill their requirements for a state grade school teaching certificate.

With each substantial transformation of the university, the number of degrees conferred increases or decreases at a rate greater than the increase in enrollment. Degrees conferred are a reliable indicator of not only retention, but also student success. By the 1940s, the events of 1927 are evident as the College of Mines began awarding undergraduate degrees in the liberal arts for the first time in the 1930s and graduate degrees in the 1940s. Students attending the school no longer had to transfer to another school in order to earn a degree.

The D/E also provides a way for universities to not only compare themselves with other universities, either against the U.S. average or a cohort, but also allows it to check its own history. Substantial changes in the *D/E*, as demonstrated by UTEP, indicate a transforming moment in an institution's history that warrants further investigation.



Figure 6. D/E ratio of UTEP compared to U.S. higher education institutions and Texas public universities.<sup>106</sup>

In examining the D/E of the University of Texas at El Paso, the past four decades show a degree of transformation as remarkable as the 1927 event (fig. 6). U.T. El Paso in the 1980s still lagged the U.S. average (0.14), but was within a point of the D/E average for all Texas public colleges and universities (0.12). During the 1990s, all three groups saw increases. By 2000, UTEP had surpassed Texas institutions, eventually surpassing the national average the following decade through 2014.

<sup>106</sup> CIERP; U.S. Department of Education; Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

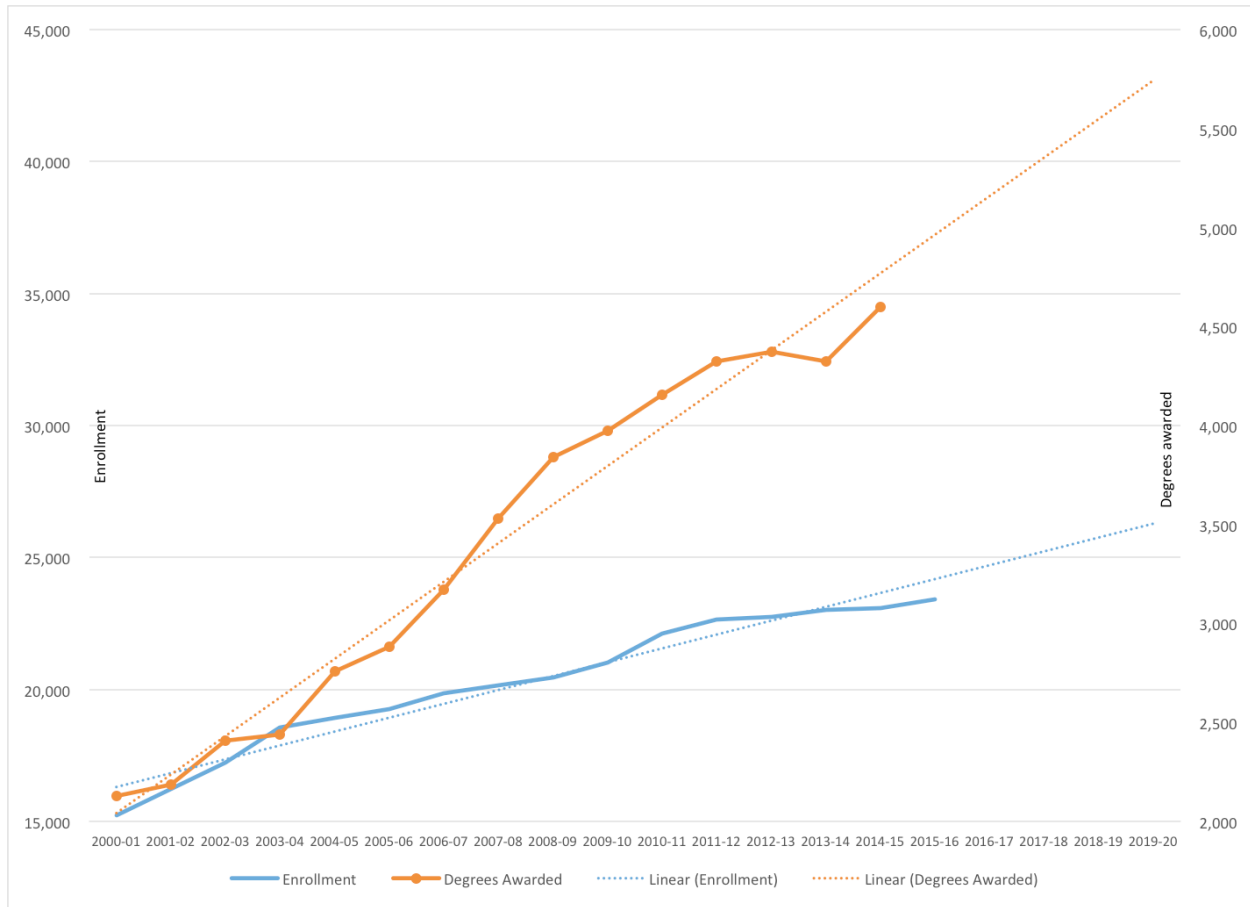


Figure 7. Enrollment and degrees conferred, 2000-2015.<sup>107</sup>

UTEP has undergone a significant transformation over the past three decades and the numbers reflect this (fig. 7). The reason for the growth in numbers is easy to identify: degrees conferred since 2000 have grown at twice the rate as the growth in enrollment. The reason why both enrollment and degrees conferred have increased requires further examination.

<sup>107</sup> CIERP.

## **The Modern Epoch**

### **Access**

The fourth epoch of UTEP's history began in the 1990s as the institution transformed from a regional college offering graduate degrees into a research university offering doctoral degrees. Doctoral degrees alone, however, do not explain the substantial rise in the D/E a decade later.

From a practical perspective, D/E allows a university to focus on improving aspects of retention that leads to an increase in the number of degrees awarded. Since the D/E eliminates the effects of enrollment and degrees conferred fluctuation due to transfers, eliminating the need for complicated data adjustments, universities can turn their attention to increasing retention where it is most needed: the first-year classroom.

By 1999, enrollment fluctuations declined and the University embarked on 15 years of uninterrupted growth in enrollment, increasing 55 percent, while degrees conferred increased by 100 percent. With the growth in degrees conferred doubling that of enrollment, UTEP's D/E by 2014 propelled it past the national average.

The seeds for the increase in degrees conferred were planted during the 1990s. In 1988, the regents elevated Diana Natalicio to president. Natalicio's appointment coincided with what would become a rather fortuitous event in UTEP's history. In 1988, the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) joined forces with the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF) to challenge Texas' higher education funding protocol. In a lawsuit

styled *LULAC v. Richards*, the Hispanic-rights groups accused the state of Texas of deliberating discriminating against Hispanic citizens by chronically underfunding southern and border universities. As evidence, one supporter of the suit pointed out the state spent more on landscaping and maintenance on the University of Texas at Austin than it did on all border institutions combined.

As the suit progressed into the 1990s, Natalicio chose to focus on the region by improving access to the University. This meant that the institution would consciously shed its Harvard on the Border promotional campaign and instead embrace all high school graduates, regardless of income or heritage, as potential students. Competitive forces led universities to address the concerns of first-year success in their students, seeing it as “critical” to their survival. First-year programs, argued Natalicio, must be rooted in the mission of the institution. If that institution is a research university, then it must “redesign itself as a new breed of research university” that address the preparation of novice scholars (Natalicio and Smith 2005, 155). Natalicio and Smith refer to UTEP as a “new urban research university” that must facilitate “the critical need to build a comprehensive approach to the first year of college and the research challenges of a traditional research university.”

The primary mission of most public urban universities is to offer quality higher education programs to residents of a particular geographical region, for whom the institution may represent the only opportunity for professional and personal growth and development. The human and economic development of the region is often closely tied to the success of a postsecondary institution in meeting the needs of the population it serves. (Natalicio and Smith 2005, 156)

Part of the definition of success for an urban research university is forming a collaborative partnership with the region's K-12 sector. There is a symbiotic relationship, as many students who attend the university come from this sector, while the K-12 schools rely on the university to train and graduate most of their teachers (Natalicio and Smith 2005, 162).

Natalicio first addressed this issue when she organized a meeting of the proposed El Paso Collaborative for Academic Success, which took place in the fall of 1991. Hosted by Region XIX Educational Service Center, the meeting gathered the superintendents from the area school districts, and representatives from the El Paso chamber of commerce where the attendees reviewed student achievement data and discussed what it would take to improve collaboration among the stakeholders. In 1992, the new Collaborative received a grant from the Pew Charitable Trust's Community Compacts for Student Success (Parra 2002, 118). According to Natalicio, the Collaborative was responsible for significant growth at UTEP. In the 1990, less than a third of area students were prepared for college. By 2011, approximately 90 percent of area students have benefitted from the program. The Paso del Norte region now leads all major metropolitan areas in Texas in high school graduation rates of Hispanic students with a 106 percent increase in undergraduate degrees awarded to Hispanics over the past 10 years by UTEP.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Diana Natalicio, "Collaborating with K-12 for Academic Access," American Council on Education, Spring 2011, accessed July 22, 2016, <http://www.acenet.edu/the-presidency/columns-and-features/Pages/Collaborating-with-K%E2%80%9312-for-Academic-Excellence.aspx>.

With better-prepared students, enrollment continued to grow, as did degree completion, from 2000 through 2013. Recently, as the numbers indicate, degree completion shows signs of plateauing. Roy Mathew, director of CIERP, recognized this as natural leveling, arising out of the correction of one set of problems. To grow degree completions to take the D/E above 0.20 will require another transformative move.<sup>109</sup>

### Freshman Mortality Rate

To this point, we have been using archival data provided by CIERP to argue a claim based on a belief that data could point to transformations of a university. Now, we will see how data from another institutional archive can support our claim by providing additional data from an unsuspecting source on retention.

Helping first-year students requires to a large degree the understanding that with open-access institutions, retention is lower. Much of the scholarship related to first-year retention dates back to the 1990s (Bowen and Bok 1998; Lundquist, Spalding, and Landrum 2002; Martin and Arendale 1992; McLaughlin, Brozovsky, and McLaughlin 1998; Noel, Levitz, and Saluri 1985). However, the issue of how to make sure that students remain enrolled to become sophomores dates even further back. Within the collection of the papers belonging to the presidents of the University of Texas at Austin, there is a folder labeled “The English Problem.” It belonged to Harry Benedict in the late 1920s and contains his research on why so many students were not only failing freshman English, but also dropping out of the

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<sup>109</sup> Roy Mathew, interview by author, El Paso, October 28, 2015.

university. It turns out that student retention in higher education caught the attention of many university presidents early on. They knew it by another name.

In 1911, the principal of the polytechnic school in San Francisco, James Ferguson, published an article in *The Western Journal of Education* entitled “Freshman Mortality in the Universities.” Ferguson took umbrage to complaints by universities of the time that preparatory schools like his were the cause of retention issues due to the lack of preparedness in the students they graduated. “Universities have not yet realized,” wrote Ferguson, “that they are in a measure to blame for the state of affairs which exists, and that it is their duty to find a remedy for the evil.” The universities, claimed Ferguson, were neglecting their original mission of teaching for that of research. Ferguson pointed out that as universities hired more researchers, fewer first-year classes ended up being taught by qualified instructors.<sup>110</sup>

Fifteen years later, the term *freshman mortality* was on the lips of university presidents and registrars across the nation. Scores of scholarly articles and conferences addressed the issue searching for a solution. (While all used Ferguson’s phrase “freshman mortality,” few took him up on his argument). For the first time, universities were preparing special reports on the topic. Ruth Augur, the registrar for the College of Mines, was directed to submit to President Benedict a detailed

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<sup>110</sup> James E. Ferguson, “Freshman Mortality in the Universities,” *The Western Journal of Education* 13 (1911).



report on mortality. Augur reported that of the 505 students enrolled in 1928, 98 (19 percent) left the school. Of those, 78 were freshman and 13 were sophomores.<sup>111</sup>

Benedict used Augur's data and that from the Main Branch to analyze the problem. Benedict believed that he located a connection between freshman mortality and first-year English courses offered by the schools. The Committee on Classification of Students in Freshman English, an ad hoc group appointed by Benedict, reported in July 1928 that 19 percent of students enrolled in English I previous year either failed or were classified as "doubtful" with a D grade. By shunting the failing students into "zero" classes—remedial English classes without credit—which removed them from the books. In other words, by funneling more students into non-credit classes, the freshman mortality rate would decline, not necessarily because the students would improve, but because the class would act as a gatekeeper to prevent them from ever enrolling.<sup>112</sup> The problem still proved intractable. A 1933 report reported that for the long session of 1932-1933, 36 percent of students failed their English classes.<sup>113</sup>

Benedict's solution was to tighten up admission requirements to the Austin branch. The new president of the College of Mines, John Barry, followed in lockstep with Austin. This created a deal of controversy that brought together two unlikely El Paso groups: school teachers who were looking to be admitted to the College of Mines in order to comply with new education requirements imposed on them by the

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<sup>111</sup> Ruth M. Augur, March 16, 1928, 4P273, U.T. Presidents Records.

<sup>112</sup> David Lee Clark to Harry Y. Benedict, July 6, 1928. VFD3a, U.T. Presidents Records.

<sup>113</sup> "Summary of Registration," report, n.d., VF4Da, U.T. Presidents Records.

state; and supporter's of the school's athletic program, who found it more difficult to recruit athletes for the school. Both factions united under the behind-the-scenes efforts of former regent Robert Holliday and successfully forced John Barry out as president in May 1934.<sup>114</sup>

For the most part, once university presidents like Benedict restricted access, they quickly got the problem off their desks, where the problem of mortality, now relabeled student retention, became someone else's problem within the university.

### Retention and Collaboration Equals Persistence

Conventional wisdom up to the 1990s placed the keys of success squarely on the shoulders of the student, who must exhibit "preparation, ability, and motivation" when they arrive at college. As such, educators often labeled students who drop out as "unprepared" (Ishler and Upcraft 2005, 27), a claim dating back to 1910 as demonstrated earlier. Today's research shows that while students do have considerable agency when it comes to their success, institutional and environmental variable exist as well. Within the environmental variable reside student interactions with their instructors. A study by Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) noted that quantity and regularity of interactions between the student and their instructor outside of the classroom had a positive effect on persistence. Lundquist, Spalding, and Landrum (1991) identified certain positive behaviors in faculty, such as responding promptly to emails, had a positive effect on students (Ishler and

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<sup>114</sup> For documents related to this incident, see the collection VF8Ab, U.T. Presidents Records.

Upcraft 2005, 38). While these seem like universal practices helpful to all faculty, Crissman Ishler & Upcraft did not address the impact, good or bad, of full-time or part-time instructors on persistence.

An examination of DFW data at UTEP provided by CIERP confirms to a degree the suspicions of Harry Benedict in 1928 regarding a relationship between DFWs and retention. In fall 2009, that year's first-year cohort was comprised of 2,598 who took first-year composition courses. Of these students, 1,567 (60 percent) had not graduated as of 2015. Of those who did not graduate, 35 percent failed or withdrew first-year composition. Overall, 21 percent of the entire cohort (both graduates and non-graduates) failed or withdrew first-year composition. This is only two percentage points higher than the first report prepared for Benedict in 1928.

It would be remiss to argue that there is a constant at work here, a bell-curve that follows every freshman class and every first-year composition course. Nevertheless, here is an area worthy of further research if the issue of persistence and degree obtainment is to be transformed.

## **Conclusion**

### **The Future from the Past**

Harry Benedict, who served as the president of the University of Texas from 1927 until his death in 1937, majored in civil engineering and received his Ph.D. in mathematical astronomy from Harvard. Having already published a legislative history of the University of Texas, he was writing a general history on the school when he died. His ten-year tenure as president of the University of Texas makes

him the longest-serving executive in that school's history. He also played an important role in the transformation of UTEP from a mining school into a comprehensive regional college and gladly supported the election of John Barry to replace him as president of the College of Mines. His legacy is preserved today in Benedict Hall on both the UTEP and U.T. Austin campuses.

He may have been a mathematician, but Benedict belonged to both cultures of the university. He was a man of letters who genuinely wanted to do what was best for the university and all of its students. That is why he took such a keen interest in the beginning regarding student retention. Without the benefit of modern computers or spreadsheets, he may not have established the relationship between students who fail first-year courses and retention, but he definitely saw a connection. He knew what data were important.

The search for empirical data that defines a university should not be difficult. Without access to basic records on the daily operations of an institution, researchers are often left with only the sensational or the traditional in which to draw conclusions. This leads to sometimes embarrassing situation where the school is off on its count of the number of commencements held, in dating the beginning of a tradition, or even determining the first day of classes.

The next epoch for U.T. El Paso will arrive with a substantial improvement in retention, provided that continued gains in access and collaboration are made. This progress would confer elite status on the school, not so much in the vein of a selective enrollment schools, but as a model research university serving its

community and insuring that students succeed in their education. New metrics will be required to compare the advances made with students who complete the undergraduate curriculum but elect not to complete a major by taking upper division courses. In these cases, the completion of an Associate of Arts degree needs to be recognized as an achievement.

Research departments such as UTEP's CIERP should take charge of the effort to recover numbers from both their own past and from other comparable universities. This legacy data can provide a picture of the university not available through qualitative narratives. They would also provide inquiries of their own.

As we ascertain new knowledge, our theories and practices change, which in turn influences the way we teach. By accepting that there is no universal truth waiting to be uncovered, researchers and our students can turn their attention to recovering and interrogating the vast amounts of data and warrants residing within the archives of the university.

### Rhetorical Institutions

Institutions of higher education, such as the university, are rhetorical institutions. They provide a place for the discovery of beliefs, the argumentation of claims, the repository of data and traditions in archives, and scholarship in the pursuit of knowledge is practiced.

Like other institutions in our modern world, the university may see itself as a place of pragmatic language, but that belief is held in balance by fictive language that defines an imagined order. The mission of a university, being one of

scholarship, could take under a tree in a lyceum, much as Aristotle did. No one would complain about parking spaces at that university, as Berkeley president Clark Kerr once mused. Universities today are more than their ideas. They are collections of buildings, classrooms, dormitories, restaurants, football stadiums, police forces, and parking lots. They are policies, rules, procedures, and practices, along with a number of myths that often get in the way of scholarship. Too often, it is the use of fictive language that dictates progress—dollars in an endowment, number of tenured faculty, or the height of the climbing wall in the recreation center.

Every now and then, those who are involved in scholarship at a university need to take the time to understand the institution at which they work. Both faculty and students would benefit from taking a retrospective look at the institution by accessing its archives and looking not only at the organization, but also the collaborative heritage we share dating back to a time 70,000 years ago when we realized that others have beliefs just like we do. Those “others” might be our colleagues in the sciences or the humanities, depending on which disciplinary landscape that you are standing. It could even be those on another floor of the English department.

Every department and every college within a university would do well to remember the two archives. At times, it seems that we may seem that each of us focuses too much on the canonical and not enough on the institutional. As well read as I may be on the theories of teaching composition, it was humbling to learn that

the issues that I face in the first-year composition classroom everyday dates back nearly a century. Retention, or as it used to be known, freshman mortality, confronts all who teach. Our approach to it could stand the benefit of history.

The key to success for the modern university is collaboration. The colleges and schools that make up the university cannot remain citadels to their own disciplines. Our world is far too complex and, as Michael Crow once said, “there is no efficient way to discover the origins of the universe” (Crow and Dabars 2015).

All scholarship begins with a single belief. As scholars, we are given the tools to test our own beliefs to arrive at new knowledge through argumentation. Turning a belief in knowledge requires archives. It also requires the ability govern our use of pragmatic and fictive languages. The best tool in our toolbox for that is rhetoric.

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## **Appendix:**

### **List of Interviews**

Charles Ambler, Ph.D., dean, UTEP Graduate School, November 25, 2015.

Gary Edens, Ed.D., Vice President for Student Affairs, December 15, 2015.

Donna Ekal, Ph.D., Associate Provost, Undergraduate Studies, December 2, 2015.

Roy Mathew, Ph.D., Associate Vice President, Center for Institutional Evaluation, Research and Planning, October 28, 2015.

Stephen Riter, Ph.D., Associate Vice President, Information Resources and Planning, December 1, 2015.

Claudia Rivers, director, C.L. Sonnichsen Special Collections, May 25, 2016.

Maggy Smith, Ph.D., chair, Department of English, November 19, 2015.

Robert Stakes, Associate Vice President, Institutional Advancement, January 4, 2016.

Dorothy Ward, Ph.D., Director, Entering Student Program, December 9, 2015.

Abbie Weiser, assistant director, C.L. Sonnichsen Special Collections, June 9, 2016.

## **Vita**

The author attended San Jose State University (B.A. Theatre Arts, 1984) and the University of St. Thomas in Houston (M.L.A. History, 2012). He is an instructor of rhetoric and composition in the Department of English at the University of Texas at El Paso, as well as a writer for the Office of Institutional Advancement.

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