# VIVA NUESTRO CAUCUS

*Rewriting the Forgotten Pages of Our Caucus*

*Edited by Romeo García, Iris D. Ruiz, Anita Hernández, and María Paz Carvajal Regidor*

# Viva Nuestro Caucus

Working and Writing for Change
Series Editors: Steve Parks and Jessica Pauszek

The Writing and Working for Change series began during the 100th anniversary celebrations of NCTE. It was designed to recognize the collective work of teachers of English, Writing, Composition, and Rhetoric to work within and across diverse identities to ensure the field recognize and respect language, educational, political, and social rights of all students, teachers, and community members. While initially solely focused on the work of NCTE/CCCC Special Interest Groups and Caucuses, the series now includes texts written by individuals in partnership with other communities struggling for social recognition and justice.

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# A Note on Terminology

In *Viva Nuestro Caucus*, we use CTE to refer to the Chicano Teachers of English. We also use Caucus (capitalized) to encompass the CTE, Hispanic Caucus, Latino Caucus, Latin@ Caucus, and Latinx Caucus of the National Council of Teachers of English and of the College Composition and Communication Conference. When referring to the Chicano and Chicana Movement as well as the Chicanos and Chicanas who were instrumental in this movement, we use both identity markers, "Chicano and Chicana." Similarly, when referring to the broader population of Latinos and Latinas, we also offer both the masculine and feminine "o" and "a." We don't negate the importance of the neutral purpose of the "x" in the identity marker, "Chicanx" and "Latinx," as is more common among the millennial Chicanx/Latinx populations, but we do recognize the debate is permanently changing Chicano/Chicano, Latino/Latina to Chicanx/Latinx. As such, we don't use "Chicanx" and "Latinx" until we begin talking about our Latinx Caucus at the present moment.

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INTRODUCTION

# An Impetus for Viva Nuestro Caucus

*Romeo García*

## NONETHELESS WE PERSEVERED

Almost fifty years have passed since the Chicano Teachers of English (CTE) formed out of dissatisfaction with their lack of representation within the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). Before this formation, conversations had already been taking place between CTE founders Carlota Cárdenas de Dwyer, Felipe de Ortego y Gasca, and Roseann Dueñas González since they had first "spotted each other a mile away" (See Dwyer, 2011) as fellow Chicanos. During this time, the social dynamics of the 1960s had sounded a call in and across the U.S. for equity and inclusion. For educators such as Cárdenas de Dwyer, Ortego y Gasca, and González, they recognized Chicano students were never represented in assigned textbooks and that there was little-to-no curricular or pedagogical support provided to enable their success. As Cárdenas de Dwyer recalls, for them, the challenges of meeting the call for action in the 1960's included finding, establishing, and/or creating literature, criticism, and textbooks to meet this need. Speaking of Ortega y Gasca and Dueñas González, Cárdenas de Dwyer recognized "We would be the ones to write the criticism and pedagogy." They would have to be the ones to create CTE.

Yet, they often faced resistance. Members of CTE had to reach out to textbook publishers who were not very interested in publishing Chicano or Mexican American literature. They were questioned by educators about the need to include Chicanos and Mexican Americans into the national curriculum. And scholarly venues, such as *College English*, were also resistant. Indeed,

Ortego y Gasca's 1970 "Huevos con Chorizo: A Letter to Richard Ohmann," is a reminder how difficult it can be to publish within an academic outlet whose editor and audience were predominately white. And though NCTE and CCCC accommodated CTE during annual conventions, neither organization provided strong support. "Nonetheless we persevered," stated Cárdenas de Dwyer. Working together, despite being geographically separated, Cárdenas de Dwyer, Ortego y Gasca, and Dueñas González would meet in hotel lobbies and hotel rooms at NCTE conventions, plotting and strategizing their next "guerrilla actions," intentionally, "rejecting the tactic of subtle sotto voce" ("Working for Change Founders Panel Part 1: 1960s-1970s").

As a result, the founders of CTE created literature, criticism, and textbooks, such as *Chicano Voice*s and *Chicano Literature* (Cárdenas de Dwyer), *Backgrounds of Mexican American Literature*, "Chicano Renaissance," *Selective Mexican American Biography* (Ortego y Gasca), and "Chicanos and American Literature" (Carrasco and Ortego y Gasca). They participated on the *NCTE Task Force on Racism and Bias in the Teaching of English*, the *Textbook Review Committee*, and "*Students' Rights to Their Own Language*" (SRTOL). They presented at NCTE conferences, speaking on the conditions and needs of Latino students during pre-convention workshops and individual presentations. Moreover, CTE would continually call attention to Latinx issues, advocate for curricular and pedagogical support for Chicanx and all Latinx students, and create an agenda with which Latinx educators could engage in social activism and advocacy within the spheres of classrooms as well as in organizations such as NCTE/CCCC. Such an agenda put students of color, and not NCTE or CCCC, first. A vision for social justice and social change, thus, did not simply emerge from NCTE and CCCC, but rather from minority caucuses such as CTE. Despite obstacles and many setbacks, CTE persevered.

"Nonetheless we persevered," is a fitting way to pay homage to the early founders of the Latinx Caucus, the latest incarnation of CTE. It also resonates with Cárdenas de Dwyer's statement, "I do not feel alone on this stage. I stand with Roseann Dueñas González, Felipe Ortego, Kris Gutiérrez, and numerous others from the past" ("Working for Change Founders Panel Part 1: 1960s-1970s"). The impetus for *Viva Nuestra Caucus* echoes that sentiment of perseverance and historical acknowledgement of collective labor. For as we write this partial history, we do not feel alone. We stand with past and current members of both the NCTE and CCCC (now titled) Latinx Caucus to tell a story to future caucus members and general members of NCTE and CCCC about how "we persevered." And we stand with those who recognize

that there remains an imperative to call attention to Latinx issues, advocate for curricular and pedagogical support for Latinx students, and advance an agenda by which to engage in social activism and advocacy within the spheres of the classroom and organizations such as NCTE and CCCC. *Viva Nuestra Caucus* thus gives the NCTE and CCCC readership a partial history of the agendas and activities of the Caucus from its formation to the present as well as a renewed call to action.

## AN IMPETUS FOR VIVA NUESTRO CAUCUS

Over the past 50 years, much has changed. The CTE is now known as the Latinx Caucus. Its membership has grown. The collective voice of the Caucus has become more significant within NCTE and CCCC where its members now undertake prominent roles. Two visions remain central to the Caucus, however. First, the Caucus is committed to Latinx issues writ-large; the changes in identity terms reflect this important mission towards coalitional building. Second, the Caucus keeps at the forefront the voices of our elders because without their words, advocacy, or commitment to better the educations and lives of Latinx people, there would be no platform for the Caucus to exist. As noted, these visions have led to the Latinx Caucus playing a pivotal role within both NCTE and CCCC.

But in 2011, when NCTE celebrated its 100th year as an organization, the identity-based caucuses did not have a prominent role in in this celebratory narrative. NCTE had established the *Task Force on Council History* for its 100th year celebration and the committee recommended a centennial volume documenting the history of the NCTE—their role in literacy education and their advocacy efforts in providing support for teachers of English. *Reading the Past, Writing the Future*, as it would be titled, focused on this celebratory narrative of progress. Yet, it failed to account for identity-based caucuses, such as the Latinx Caucus, and how catalytic such caucuses have been in fighting for social change and political justice alongside and within NCTE. Thus, *Reading the Past, Writing the Future* became a reminder of the work NCTE still had before it. The publication also demonstrated the need for caucuses, such as the Latinx Caucus, to remind NCTE of their central role within the national organization. Finally, it reminded many of how seductive and misleading a narrative of progress can be.

In response to *Reading the Past, Writing the Future* failing to account for the importance of caucuses and special interest groups, NCTE supplied initial funding for the *Working and Writing for Change* series, initially edited by

Samantha Blackmon, Cristina Kirklighter, and Steve Parks. The first publication in this series was *Listening to Our Elders: Working and Writing for Change*. *Listening to Our Elders* attempted to provide a platform for those NCTE and CCCC members who were pivotal in creating the caucuses and special interest groups, highlighting the need to preserve and expand the collective work of teachers working for equity and inclusion within and across diverse identities and languages. It was always understood by Blackmon, Kirklighter, and Parks that there needed to be additional volumes focusing on the history of each caucus and special interest groups and that there was still work left to be done to ensure that these histories were not forgotten. *Viva Nuestro Caucus* emerges from that effort.

*Viva Nuestro Caucus* is a historical account of the emergence of CTE as well as a celebration of the achievements of the caucus and its members. Echoing *Working and Writing for Change,* this volume includes interviews with founding and current caucus members who discuss the importance of the caucus to their professional growth as well as to the work of NCTE and CCCC. Here, we recognize the need to preserve and make visible a history, which until now has remained on the margins of invisibility. Indeed, if a history of the Latinx Caucus was not undertaken that history would be lost. The voices of founding members of CTE such as Cárdenas de Dwyer, Ortego y Gasca, and Dueñas González would not be recorded. Another impetus for publishing *Viva Nuestro Caucus* is our mindfulness of future members and leadership. However partial, preserving these voices and articulating our history, gives future members of the caucus a foundation on which to continue to build, whether that means new caucus initiatives or new roles within NCTE/CCCC. Finally, we continue to be mindful of the ramifications and implications the NCTE centennial volume had on the Latinx Caucus. The NCTE history relegated identity-based caucuses to the margins, as an afterthought. *Viva Nuestro Caucus* thus became a collective effort to recover and re-center our history, our accomplishments, and our vital presence in NCTE and CCCC.

*Viva Nuestro Caucus* was not completed without challenges, however. To move the Latinx Caucus to the central place which visibility affords would take time, patience, collaboration, and passion: We had to persevere. We began, then, so as not to allow invisibility to be the default. We began in the name of our past members, current members, and future members. One question we constantly contemplated throughout the development of the project was how to begin. The oral histories of the founders as well as

long-time members are slowly vanishing. With no official archive, a history recorded on notebook paper, conference booklets, and letters would deteriorate in individuals' houses. Indeed, we did not get a chance to interview or explore the personal archives of all whom should be represented here. Thus, we realize our reconstructed history could in no way be complete. *Viva Nuestro Caucus*, fundamentally, is a practice of listening—listening to our elders and continuing to breathe life into the history and future of the Caucus. And we hope this volume creates a call to continue to listen to the history of our caucus, continue to attempt to fully articulate its importance. For as stated above, we see this volume as just a beginning.

We intend that *Viva Nuestro Caucus* stands as a reminder of how collective voices engage in knowledge-making and meaning-making practices. We have tried to enact this collectively throughout this volume. The cover image for *Viva Nuestro Caucus* comes from Ortego y Gasca's bibliography of Mexican American scholarship. This bibliography reflected what was available at the time, which was not much. We conclude *Viva Nuestro Caucus* in a similar fashion by including a working bibliography that actualizes a vision Ortego y Gasca had of having more scholarship by Mexican Americans. This volume's title also pays homage to Cárdenas de Dwyer, who concluded a letter back in the 1970s with this phrase, "Viva Nuestro Caucus," which translates into "Our Caucus lives and may it continue to live vibrantly!" Indeed, this title reflects our own disposition, *Viva Nuestro Caucus.*

Finally, we understand there is a need to continue this historical work. Throughout *Viva Nuestro Caucus*, our work has been to consider what historical exigencies led to the formation of CTE, how initiatives undertaken by past and present Caucus members reflect the presence of discriminatory and sometimes racist practices within NCTE/CCCC, as well as how critical the Latinx Caucus has been and continues to be within both these organizations. We asked readers to consider the implications for *Viva Nuestro Caucus* as a working document that speaks back to a national education organization. We realize, however, that different emphases and frameworks will need to be articulated by other scholars and volumes to fully articulate our collective history. Our hope is that *Viva Nuestro Caucus* is a beginning to efforts to bring more visibility to the Latinx Caucus. We are more than just a brief mention in the history of NCTE and CCCC. This volume is a testament that the Caucus has indeed "been here before" and that nonetheless "we persevere."

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PART I

# Histories: The Story of the Caucus

CHAPTER ONE

# Sidestepping Radical Change: A Short History of NCTE

*Romeo García*

This chapter is dedicated to contextualizing the history of NCTE from the early 1900s to late 1970s. This contextualization of mission statements and goals by NCTE, as well as a discussion of social and political transformations both within society and NCTE, helps provide insight into the formation of Chicano Teachers of English (CTE) in NCTE. What will be argued is that when NCTE celebrated its 100th year anniversary with the publication of its centennial volume—*Reading the Past, Writing the Future*—it would not be the first time it had denied the significance of activist groups such as the Latinx Caucus. It reflects the ability of an organization, such as NCTE, to graft itself upon the politics of the CTE by adopting but never fully committing to the caucus goals. Therefore, while the Task Force on Council History sought out to accomplish three goals—(1) document the history of NCTE, (2) document NCTE's role in literacy and English education, and (3) document its role in advocacy—what becomes evident through the work of this chapter is NCTE's inability to initiate and sustain actual radical change or become a leader for social change.

## NCTE: A READING OF ITS RISE IN A TIME OF CHANGE

The idea of a national society of teachers of English percolated for some time. A growing concern about the differences between K-12 and college/university education,[1] coupled with the concern that there was not a true platform for K-12 educators, led to the NCTE being formed in 1911. In *A Long Way*

1 The history of Harvard and its grip upon education is well documented (see Pollock; Stewart; Brereton).

*Together: A Personal View of NCTE's First Sixty-Seven Years* J.N. Hook notes that in December of 1911, NCTE passed a resolution for there to be a "national society of teachers of English," a representative body "which could reflect and render effective the will of the various local associations and of individual teachers, and, by securing concern of action, greatly improve the condition surrounding English work."

NCTE would initially work to establish itself as a legitimate professional organization. One of NCTE's strategies was to speak on behalf of English teacher's conditions, presenting concerns regarding English education as a representative organization. NCTE would also demonstrate its abilities both by connecting English teachers within their particular states and across the country as well as by representatively vocalizing concerns of colleges and universities hands-on approaches of managing and controlling secondary curricula.

NCTE also legitimized itself through publications focused on student's backgrounds and interests. It also argued for the necessity to separate secondary schooling and higher education influences. This can be observed in publications such as *The Reorganization of English in Secondary Schools* (1917), *Experience Curriculum in English* (1935), "Basic Aims for English Instruction in American Schools" (1942), and *The National Interest and the Teaching of English* (1961). These publications would become significant for the teachers of English and the profession of English as it would not only justify curricula and pedagogical choices of teachers of English, but these publications would also offer support for teachers of English.

NCTE would acknowledge and respect the need for experiential learning and student-centered curricula. *The Reorganization of English in Secondary Schools* (1917) and *Experience Curriculum in English* (1935) are two primary examples of this. In *The Reorganization of English in Secondary Schools* (1917), a collaboration between NCTE and the National Education Association (NEA), it is noted that the creation of the committee is to bring about reform around such beliefs as:

- The college-preparatory function of the high school is a minor one.
- English is not a merely formal subject.
- Language is social in nature.
- The need for properly trained teachers (26-29).

What the report simultaneously does, though, is call out higher education's management and control of secondary schooling. For instance, the committee states, "The entire doctrine of 'preparation' for higher institutions is fallacious. The best preparation for anything is real effort and experience in the present (5). This is further discussed the section entitled, "The History of the Study of English in American Secondary Schools" (12). Under the heading, "The Aims of High-School English," the committee calls attention to the need for development of effective communication, the need to connect teachings and praxis to aspects of life, and the need for teachings and praxis to be conducive to "knowledge born of experience and reflection" (4).

The importance of *The Reorganization of English in Secondary Schools* (1917) is its care with considering the state of English education for elementary and high school and its provisions to making suggestions on topics anywhere from the aims of English education to grading. This is evidenced in the section, "The Aims of the English Course":

> Stated broadly, it should be the purpose of Every English teacher, first, to quicken the spirit and kindle the imagination of his pupils, open up to the potential significance and beauty of life, and develop habits of weighing and judging human conduct and of turning to books for entertainment, instruction, and inspiration as the hours of leisure may permit; second to supply the pupils with an effective tool of thought and of expression for use in their public and private life, i.e., the best command of language which, under the circumstances, can be given to them (30).

The report reflects much of what is now accepted as best practice within composition courses: combining lower and higher order concerns, relating education to student's knowledges and experiences, and demonstrating the centrality of reading, writing, and speaking to student's future endeavors. This is evidenced furthermore in the section, "The Organization of the English Course," in which the committee argues that the "subject matter of English consists primarily of activities, not of information" (33). The committee asserts that English studies is an "art, not as a science" that is meant to "be learned by practice rather than by generalization" (33). The rest of the report moves forward by discussing the role of English education within grade levels, weaving in their point of views on topics such as literature and grammar and including their suggestions for educators and administrators.

The concern for primary and secondary school students continues with a commissioned report by NCTE President Ruth Mary Weeks, entitled *An Experience Curriculum in English* (1935), which would build on *The Reorganization of English in Secondary Schools*. Reminiscent of John Dewey, report author W. Wilbur Hatfield reflects the sentiment of experiential learning:

> The place of English in this program is obvious; to provide the communication (speaking, writing, listening, reading) necessary to the conduct of social activities, and to provide indirect experiences where direct experiences are impossible or undesirable. An effective program in English must make provision for carrying the literary and linguistic activities beyond the confines of the English classroom (4).

Hatfield illuminates the role of English within the everyday in his publication and argues that English is essential to a student's education:

> Experience is the best of all schools. And experience need not be a dear school, if it is competently organized and conducted by a capable teacher who illuminates each situation in prospect and retrospect. The school of experience is the only one which will develop the flexibility and power of self-direction requisite for successful living in our age of swift industrial, social, and economic change (3).

For Hatfield, English need not be used for the sole preparation of students for entrance to college, but rather, should be "adapted" for the study and practice of everyday life. At the heart of any good education, as Hatfield discusses above, is experience. Hatfield asserts that in regard to experience and English studies, students "should be given experiences that have intrinsic worth" (18). Not everyone agreed, though, with the idea of experience. NCTE found itself in a predicament, that of supporting student-centered approaches and confronting criticism regarding skill-based practices.

In a 1937 publication entitled "An Experience Curriculum in English," Preston Farrar disagrees with Hatfield. Farrar agrees that experience is central and significant, but argues, "In many cases the preparation most needed is not an ordinary experience at all but a technical exercise devised by educators" (136). Farrar continues by taking issue with Hatfield's conversation of grammar, logic, and argumentation, and asserts that "if there is one thing that every experienced and observant teacher does know it is that average high school pupils do not read literature of ordinary difficulty with intelligence" (138). The whole argument presented by Farrar is that Hatfield's report lacks

guidance and that it is unreasonable in approach. Farrar concludes, "I have said enough to show the dangers of accepting a theory without sufficient thought and then riding it to death no matter how hard the going" (139). NCTE would foreshadow the resistance NCTE would face to its core values and missions as social, political, and economic shifts remade the United States landscape.

The effects of WWII and the affective culture it created within education is undeniable. The study and teaching of English was greatly changed during this period. Rhetoricians such as Kenneth Burke, Richard Weaver, and I.A. Richards all demonstrate in their works the influence of WWII and post-WWII America. But, it was changes within the educational pipeline that had the greatest effects on the study and teaching of English. For example, when the Victory Corps was established on September 25, 1942 by Commissioner of Education John Studebaker, its emphasis was on science, mathematics, and physical education, as well as the preparation of Americans for military service. In this context, English was deemed as not necessary and its future was threatened.

David England's "With Grammar on My Left" provides insight of this looming threat and how it led to English leaders gathering for an emergency conference in Washington. The result of this meeting would be a letter that would explain how English teaching could become an "effective instrument in the successful prosecution of the war, in winning the peace, and furthering the activities of the Victory Corps" (67). Amending "The Communication Arts and the High School Victory Corps," Commissioner Studebaker would recognize English as "an important contributor to the war effort" (68). England's conversation on one of NCTE's pamphlets entitled "Teaching English in Wartime" (and journals such as *The English Journal*) demonstrate the extent to which war dominated English instruction. NCTE would also step up efforts to demonstrate the need for English studies, the need for research regarding English, and English' role in society, by lobbying and advocating for the public and federal government to recognize and acknowledge its merits. However, this would come at a heavy price.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, English would be caught up in what was then known as the life adjustment movement, which started in the wake of WWII. Between the 1950's and 1960's, NCTE would align itself with the life adjustment movement and would publish works such as *The English Language Arts* (1952), *Language Arts for Today's Children* (1954), and *English Language Arts in the Secondary School* (1956), which reflected conversations

stemming from this movement. *The English Language Arts* (1952), though controversial, would place emphasis on growth, social identity, citizenry, and on "language arts." *English Language Arts in the Secondary School* (1956) provided a framework for language arts, grounded within the ideas of effective communication (in writing, speaking, and listening) and the world (the everyday) of 1956. However, as criticism continued to be carried out against NCTE for prescribing to life adjustment principles, NCTE began changing its focus. This became evident in a 1959 presidential address.

In 1959, NCTE president Brice Harris in "Act Well Your Part" argues that it is important to convince the public that English studies is vital as well as to consider the future of the discipline. Harris states, "The truth of the matter is that the public's idea of our function as English teachers if confused, hazy, uninformed, and oftentimes medieval and maudlin" (118). Harris makes two arguments thus: (1) "English teachers and the public are going to have to understand each other a great deal better in the years ahead" and (2) English teachers are going to have to work together more harmoniously" (119). What Harris' address does is call for a professionalization of the English profession. But amidst social, political, and economic changes in society, this professionalization of the English profession would graph and map itself upon education reform of the 1950s and early 1960s.

The 1950s and 1960s is of particular importance because social, political, and economic issues would impact NCTE which would translate into changes within its mission and role as spokes-organization for the study and teaching of English. Criticism on education, particularly the role and value of English education as compared to science by U.S. leadership (Dwight D. Eisenhower), political conditions (the Cold War, Sputnik), and the establishment of the National Science Foundation and National Defense Education Act, would lead to education reform. An emphasis on science education and science-based educators would result in a particular approach that focused on science, foreign language, and mathematics. J.J. McPherson in, "Let's Look at the Systems Concept of Educational Planning," refers to this approach as a systems approach, which McPherson described as: (1) the relationality of subjects in student's educational experience, (2) the establishment of student learning objectives and outcomes, and (3) the establishment of assessment and evaluation that would ensure curricula effectiveness (66-68; also see Lilienfield). Such a systems approach would reform curricula with science being the focal point and be justified and rationalized with the rhetoric of nationalism as well as national security (also see Rudolph). Cold War democracy

would have implications for NCTE, especially in regard to how they would garner the attention of the government to support the study and teaching of English.

The National Defense Education Act (NDEA), according to NCTE president Albert Kitzhaber in "Reform in English," subjugated English to a status of unimportance. Kitzhaber recalls in his presidential address, "We in English protested vigorously when English was excluded from the National Defense Education Act of 1958" (338). In his presidential speech, Kitzhaber talks about the legitimization of the English (and rhetoric) profession, the possibilities of the discrediting of the English profession, and the need for a moral wakening and collaborative undertaking between secondary and college English teachers. NCTE would begin to legitimize itself by re-articulating a definition of English as that concerned with content, skills, and college preparation. This is in contrast to its commitments in previous years. Again, NCTE would do so through congressional lobbying efforts and publications on the state of English teachers and English studies.

In 1958, NCTE, MLA, College English Association (CEA), and American Studies Association (ASA) collaborated together at the Basic Issues Conference which resulted in the 1958 publication, *The Basic Issue in the Teaching of English*. In the publication, the impetus for the study and teaching of English is provided in the preface:

- English has a practical value.
- English is more than a group of skills and has its own subject matter.
- English has a civilizing value.
- English can provide the opportunity for self-education and development (4-5).

Moreover, the publication highlighted the perceived state of the reading and writing skills of students, the pursuit of solving the literacy problem, and the problematics of the teaching of English (5-6). Indeed, this is undergirded in some of their concluding statements, "English teaching is a part of the educational system of this country, undramatized to date by the scientific and political crises which have aroused the interest and concern of the public" (15).

Beyond the preface, the committee engaged in a conversation of the goals, content, and teaching problems of English education. The committee

poses the question, "Has the fundamental liberal discipline of English been replaced, at some levels of schooling, by ad hoc training in how to write a letter, how to give a radio speech, manners…" (7). As the committee continues to pose various questions, thirty-five to be exact, the committee concludes with conversations on what the individual teacher can do, what English departments can do, and what the professional organization can do. Undergirding the posed questions and concluding statements by the committee is the idea that "There is as much reason to believe that English teaching can be radically improved, given the right approaches to the problems...as there is to suppose that we can strengthen education in mathematics, science, and foreign languages" (5). *The Basic Issue in the Teaching of English* would foreshadow NCTE's role in trying to garner the attention of the federal government to reconsider English as a necessary study of all students.

Cold War democracy would continue into the 1960s. The 1961 report, *The National Interest and the Teaching of English: A Report on the Status of the Profession,* is one such example, which echoed the 1958 report on *The Basic Issue in the Teaching of English,* which called for the need to increase the "extension of democratic rights and responsibilities to most of our citizens" (23). This is to say, as organizations such as NCTE attempted to establish a civic relationship between the instruction of students in English and national democracy, it also sought out to create an image of an English student as one who could, as a civic participant in democracy, carry on the struggle over democracy. Three points are made in *The National Interest and the Teaching of English*:

- Support all national efforts to obtain support for the teaching of English and the other humanities on a national scale.

- Direct its Executive Committee to inform the nation's leaders in government, business, and education of the Council's mounting concern over the neglect of English and the other humanities in current educational efforts; and furthermore.

- Direct its Executive Committee to inform the Congress of the United States and the United States Office of Education of the compelling need for an extension of the National Defense Education Act of 1958 to include English and the humanities as a vital first step toward improving instruction in English and of stimulating program development in this important area (n.p.).

The report would highlight what the NCTE referred to as the "National problem" (preserving human values, poorly prepared educators, deficiencies of English instruction, etc.) and the "status of English teaching" (better English teachers, better teaching conditions, better research in English). What NCTE effectively did was announce that English teachers, the teaching of English, and the state of English studies needed to be improved and reformed. For example, the committee writes, "Poorly prepared teachers of English have created a serious national problem" (27) and argues, "Teaching by persons who cannot meet this standard will not produce the communication skills or the sense of human values needed so urgently in our nation" (39). NCTE, though, suggests that it has solutions to these problems (e.g., standards of preparation) and argue that better research in English can help in resolving such problems as well. In 1965, NCTE would publish *The National Interest and the Continuing Education of Teachers of English*, which called attention to the education teachers received. The point is, NCTE would present itself as an organization that could usher in improvements and reforms.

NCTE would ultimately garner the attention from the Committee of the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) in 1964 as part of the NDEA reauthorization process. Acknowledgment by the NDEA would come, however, at the expense of conceding to criticism on English education. That is, NCTE would have to acknowledge there were problems with English teachers and with the teaching of English. Fighting on the front of establishing the discipline of English' vitality within this framework would have several implications. It would mean that 1) English could be taught as a set of skills, 2) English would be the keystone language to use and practice in the learning processes of students, and 3) fluency of English would determine the success of non-native English speakers (English could be taught as a foreign language). These three areas of emphasis would be proposed as an appeal for federal funding in the revised NDEA. Though NCTE's lobbying efforts at times failed, this did not halt efforts for governmental support. This becomes evident with the creation of Project English (coordinated by J.N. Hook) by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare for example. Project English (1964) would advocate for English curriculum within the profession of English, once more attempting to establish a civic relationship between the instruction of students in English and national democracy.

NCTE historically and presently continues to play an important role in the study and teaching of English. In this 100-year history, between 1911 and 2011, NCTE advocated for English teachers and the profession of English as

well as helped guide the profession throughout the eras. It truly was a leader in guiding the meaning of English during periods of social change. However, it is important to note NCTE irregularly took a stance on issues related to racism and discrimination. This is not only significant because of the rhetoric that surrounds whether or not NCTE should be involved in politics, but also because it reflects, as Deborah Brandt notes in her foreword for *Reading the Past, Writing the Future*, a legacy in which NCTE has fallen silent and thus has failed.

## NCTE'S EARLY STANCE ON RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION

In a post-100th-year anniversary, it is important to reflect upon NCTE's stance on racism and discrimination. In NCTE's centennial volume, *Reading the Past, Writing the Future*, Leila Christenbury concedes to two historical issues within NCTE: (1) equal gender representation and (2) racial inequality. Lindemann writes, "Though NCTE has not always been in the forefront of social change, it has had leaders who strongly objected to racial inequality" (23). This is a bit misleading. What Lindemann needed to say was that while NCTE has indeed been at the forefront of social change, as the above history demonstrates, those intentions have often been underwritten by various postulations (e.g., Standard English, Nationalism, Capitalism). These postulations hindered NCTE's ability to fully commit to radical reform. This is not to take away from the instances when NCTE advocated for racial equity. Rather, it is to suggest, or more specifically to argue, it has inadequately maintained a commitment to radical reform.

Returning to J.N. Hook's *A Long Way Together* it is true that NCTE had no representatives of minority groups. In fact, his choice words—"pure Anglo-Saxon"—is indicative of the type of organization NCTE was when it first formed and emerged. As Hook reflects on the 1922 Chattanooga NCTE Convention, he remembers thinking, "apparently no thought at all was given to the matter of segregation" (127). Hook also recalls an interview between Robert Pooley and Alfred Grommon about the 1932 Memphis NCTE convention:

> Now we did have a problem in Memphis. We had two Council meetings. One Council meeting went on in a hotel [the Peabody] and auditorium on one side of the street, and the black members met in another

> building on the other side of the street...there was really no joint meeting at that time and in that place. (qtd. in *A Long Way Together* 127)

Pooley, in 1941, as president of NCTE proposed the convention to be held in Atlanta. But, even in Atlanta, as Pooley recalls, African-Americans "could not stay as residents in the hotels" (128). There is no doubt that NCTE witnessed racial inequity at its conventions. It could have been an opportunity to be a leader in racial equity. Yet, it took nearly nine years, as Hook notes, for NCTE to take a firm stance on matters of segregation and adopt the following policy and resolution: "no council convention would thereafter be held in any place in which any Council member would be discriminated against in any way" (129).

Christenbury does mention initiatives thereafter by NCTE that attempt to combat racism and discrimination, but they are inconsistent. Perhaps, one reason for NCTE's inconsistency is its own history of complicities with discriminatory and borderline racist language. Indeed, Deborah Brandt foreshadows this in her foreword of the centennial volume by suggesting NCTE has fallen silent and has failed in some places. An example of such failure can be found within a 1917 statement produced by NCTE for National Speech Week:

> I love the United States of America. I love my country's flag. I love my country's language. I promise:
>
> - That I will not dishonor my country's speech by leaving off the last syllable of words.
> - That I will say a good American "yes" and "no" in place of an Indian grunt "un-hum" or a foreign "ya" or "yeh" and "nope."
> - That I will do my best to improve American speech by avoiding loud rough tones, by enunciating distinctly, and by speaking pleasantly, clearly, and sincerely.
> - That I will learn to articulate correctly as many words as possible during the year.
>
> (qtd. in *The Skin That We Speak* 33)

What is problematic is NCTE's conceit to nationalism, what it means to be a "good American," and what it means to "improve American speech." Moreover, the references to the "Indian grunt" and the "foreign" grunt is embedded with cultural logics that scream discrimination and borderline racism. Though not a stretch by any means, this type of nationalist rhetoric would be echoed in NCTE's 1961 report, *The National Interest and the Teaching of English: A Report on the Status of the Profession,* which would focus on how America is a major world power (136). The concluding statements in the report are short but important, because the idea of "national interests" is always embedded within the ideology of post-war capitalism/global power.

The social and political milieu of the 1960s and 1970s would offer new opportunities and demands for NCTE/CCCC to address racism in society. There would be the formation of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in 1960, The Port Huron Statement of 1962, the assassination of Malcolm X, the Watts Rebellion, the birth of open admissions at CUNY (and remedial education) in 1965, and the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. and the rise of the Black Panther Party in 1968.

The 1960s was a time of social change, but also a time of complicities. Indeed, in *The Black Campus Movement* Ibram Rogers' critical account of what changed in regard to the black community focuses on how black people questioned whether a "non-violent" platform was effective. What becomes evident is how student organizations on campus played a critical role in the rallying cry of Black Power. As a result, Massimo Teodori, in *The New Left,* argued, "The student, who had been raised to believe the myth of the great American democracy, found here—no less than in other aspects of their life—a contradiction between fact and principle" (21). The university, a microcosmic reproduction of society, Teodori notes, played a central role in the development of American society and power structures. What the New Left and other social movements stressed on campus was the idea of participatory democracy that could only create radical change through collaboration. This democracy focused on all elements of the university and society from economic to ideology to addressing a racist America—though alliances between white New Left organization and Black Power organizations failed to sustain themselves.

As a result of this social activism, there emerged conversations on the role of composition and rhetoric in regard to the political and social activity ongoing outside of the academy. Louis Kampf in "Must We Have a Cultural Revolution," for example, focused on the on the role freshman English courses play in

stratifying students. Kampf writes, the "responsibility of the Freshmen English Teacher seems to be to protect the class system" (248). An important question Kampf asks is, "Can we change the social context within which students are taught?" (249). Ultimately, Kampf suggests that the freshmen English course be a site of resistance culture and concludes by offering some words of wisdom, "there can be no revolution in the realm of culture without a revolution in the realm of politics" (249). These words echo Donald Murray's examination of what education revolution might look for composition teachers in "Finding Your Own Voice: Teaching Composition in an Age of Dissent." In this article, Murray ultimately argues that the teacher of composition should welcome dissent and teach effective and responsible argumentation (123). Another important conversation emerges from in "The Rhetoric of the Open Hand and the Rhetoric of the Closed Fist," wherein Edward Corbett traces the differences between "traditional" rhetoric and "new" rhetoric. His critique is that the closed fist "prompts" another "closed fist to be raised" rather than "moved" to take an ethical approach (295-296). Between the 1960s and 1970s there were critical conversations being had by scholars such as Mina Shaughnessy, David Bartholomae, Ira Shor, and countless others.

NCTE/CCCC responded in a variety of fashions to this new political situation. There would be the establishment of the Task Force on Teaching English to the Disadvantaged (1964), a Special Issue of *The English Journal* focused on the underserved and underrepresented (1965), and the Task Force on Racism and Bias in the Teaching of English (1969). The 1970s brought about a wider framework for the work to be done. In Geneva Smitherman's "CCCC's Role in the Struggle for Language Rights," she argues the period brought attention to the "academic exclusion of and past injustices inflicted upon Blacks, Browns, women, and other historically marginalized groups" (354). The inception of the CCCC (then NCTE) Students Rights to their Own Language (SRTOL) Resolution, thus, was significant. The resolution had three goals: 1) heighten the consciousness of language attitudes, 2) promote the value of linguistic diversity, and 3) increase effectiveness in teaching students of diverse languages. But, the resolution did not pass without controversy and resistance. Indeed, if one traces the archival correspondences in regard to SRTOL by members of NCTE and CCCC, the tension and resistance towards this resolution becomes evident—as discussed in Smitherman's article.

It was also during this period that the Black Caucus was formed. Between the 1960s and 1970s, within education, there was an increase in minority presence on campuses, but a decrease in minority teachers/scholars

presenting at NCTE/CCCC. In, *History of the Black Caucus,* Marianna Davis (1994) discusses the concerns with "instant scholars" who "grossly misrepresent the Black experience" (11). What Davis is referring to is a statement made from the Black Caucus, who in 1968 at the NCTE's Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin came together to discuss the absence of Blacks on the convention program and the problem with "instant scholars." The emergence of the Black Caucus in the 1970s would forever change NCTE and CCCC, as it was attentive to increases in minority presence and decrease in minority teachers, interest of Black issues without any Black representation, and lack of representation of Black literature or studies.

And it is at this point in NTCE/CCCC history that the CTE is formed in 1968. And unlike the NCTE centennial history, which erases our legacy, this volume intends to show "we" have always been here. We've been here in our struggle for securing civil rights (e.g., the Mexican American Movement of the early 1900s and the Chicano Movement of the 1960s); we've been here as organizations (e.g., The Orden Hijos de America, LULAC, American G.I. Forum); we've been here through conventions focused on issues facing the Mexican American population (e.g., El Primer Congreso Mexicanista, The Harlingen Convention, National Chicano Youth Liberation Conference); we've been here in the fight for desegregation in education (e.g., Del Rio ISD v. Salvatierra; Alvarez v. Lemon Grove School District; Mendez v. Westminster; Delgado v. Bastrop ISD); we've been here as social and political activists (e.g., Jose Thomas Canales, The Idar family, Hector P. Garcia, Reies López Tijerina, César Chávez); we've been here as academic activists (e.g., Cárdenas de Dwyer; Ortego y Gasca; Dueñas González); and, we've been here as student activists (MAYO, MASA, UMAS, MASC, MECHA). We've been here before!

And it is to redress the absence of that history and collective effort that this volume now turns to the following chapter by Iris D. Ruiz entitled, "Creating a "New History" within NCTE/CCCC: Civil Rights, The Chicano Movement, and Honoring Felipe de Ortego y Gasca." Moving initially outside of NCTE, only to return, Ruiz historicizes the Chicano Movement as well as the professionalization of Composition Studies to give further context to the emergence of the CTE within NCTE and CCCC.

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