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Assembly Line Americans: Labor, Language, and Literacy at Ford Motors

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ABSTRACT

Assembly Line Americans: Labor, Language, and Literacy at Ford Motors explores the significance of Henry Ford's and Ford Motor's industrial education project, which impacted the working-class life and educational development of migrants and US citizens alike. Ford's industrial education project emerged in its Highland Park, Michigan plant where Ford produced Model T's and in 1914 founded the Ford English School (FES). The FES engaged an Americanization curriculum as a way of preparing a largely migrant workforce for labor on the assembly line and to apply for US citizenship in the name of developing an industrial class of labor.

I begin by unpacking the historical and social conditions of labor at Ford Motors, including the spirit of standardization that not only influenced Ford's new assembly line system of manufacturing but also influenced the curriculum of the FES. Through its industrial education program, sought to mold laborers according to the image of The Ford Man, who puts the needs of the company before their own. As a response to the field, I describe the relationship between Henry Ford's industrial education project and histories of English and Composition. Thus, I argue that when we engage standardized English in our writing classrooms, we engage histories of industrial relations of power that Ford inscribed onto the body of working-class migrants over a century ago.

Through intuitional documents, I trace key moments in Ford's industrial education project, as well as how individuals and communities sought to maintain a working-class ethos within a changing laboring landscape of industrialization. Throughout, I focus on schools and initiatives that Henry Ford contributed to, as well as political and educational spaces that developed a counter-network to challenge Ford's project. Ultimately, I argue that at the heart of

Ford's industrial education project was an ideology of *linguistic economic ableism*, whereby English would act as the vehicle for the transmission of values and beliefs beneficial to Ford Motors, thereby readying the body, the mind, and the voice of the laborer for industrial labor.

ASSEMBLY LINE AMERICANS: LABOR, LANGUAGE, AND LITERACY AT FORD MOTORS

by

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The work for this dissertation began long before studying at Syracuse University. As a graduate student at California State University, Chico enrolled in the Master of Arts in English, I was also a research assistant for professor of economics, Dr. Michael Perelman. While working with Michael, I learned of the Ford Sociological Department, which was the administrative office that directed the Ford English School. Because we were researching on the political economy of war, I put the information on Ford in my back pocket. You see, Michael had offered me the opportunity to co-author a book manuscript on the political economy of war. I was certainly "unqualified" for the work in that I did not hold the credentials for the work he proposed. But throughout the process, Michael treated me as a peer, working together side-by-side. Michael set me up with an office in the Economics Department, across the hall from his, and we read and wrote together. And sometimes on the weekends, we revised together.

In these moments I would share some writing I had done, perhaps, for example, on the Suez Canal Crisis. Michael would read through my writing, perhaps a couple of pages worth and we would discuss where it might be added to the manuscript. Once we decided, he would whack my writing down to a solid two paragraphs, add it to the manuscript along with some new topic and transition sentences. The first time we did this work, I didn't like it. I felt like some if my work had been discarded. After a while, I realized that it hadn't been. Michael had simply got rid of the sentences that may have helped me scaffold the writing. Ultimately, Michael gave me a chance others would have likely denied me, teaching me the value of mentorship and community as twin foundations of the work of research and scholarship. Rest in Peace, Michael.

The research for this dissertation began in earnest in Patrick Berry's course on composition studies, "Composition Histories, Theories, Networks." In that class, we read Amy

Wan's *Producing Good Citizens and the Promise of Literacy*, which not only pointed me toward the importance of literacy and citizenship, but reminded me of the Ford Motors Sociological Department, which I first learned about working with Michael Perelman. Patrick helped me glimpse, perhaps for the first time, a dissertation project based on the Ford Motors English School. Lois Agnew's course on disability studies was also very helpful for this project. Reading and thinking about the ways in which bodies are labeled and categorized as "unfit" helped me imagine the ways in which laboring bodies, particularly the bodies of working-class immigrants, are labeled as a means of establishing and maintaining a hierarchical system of social class, which is reinforced through the power of standardized English and English Only policy within corporate and educational administrative spaces.

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Finally, this dissertation project would not have been possible without the archivists and the archives I visited in Michigan, including The Arab American Museum in the Southend of Dearborn; The Benson Ford Research Center in Dearborn, The Cranbrook Archive in Bloomfield Hills, Ford Piquette Avenue Plant Museum and The Detroit Public Library in Detroit. I would especially like to thank the archivists and librarians in each of these institutions who helped me locate archival materials, which helped me locate the empty spaces and unasked questions between materials.

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Preface: Where I'm Coming From

I have arrived at this dissertation several routes, including memories of Los Angeles, California where I grew up, as well as family history, educational history, and my labor as a teacher of first year writing. In this introduction to this dissertation, I will trace these routes as a way of building a framework based on my identity and my ethical considerations for the project. I want to start with Los Angeles, California, which, even though I currently live and work in Boston, is still my home.

Although Los Angeles is a city of linguistic and cultural difference, I grew up in Mexican Los Angeles, where the Los Angeles Dodgers are "Los Doyers," graffiti is written in English and Spanish, and cactus is both ornamental and culinary. As a child, I rarely moved outside the borders of Mexican Los Angeles. It seemed that nearly everywhere we went people looked like I look—brown skin, brown eyes, black hair—and spoke like we spoke—either English, or Spanish or a blend of both. At the same time, there were moments of linguistic norming, where the English language would rise and suggest in subtle ways that Spanish was not quite right. For example, when I was nine years old, I made the all-star baseball team in the Grant Rae Park baseball league. That year the league hired an announcer to call out our names as we came up to bat, which was new and exciting. I remember listening to him call out the names of my teammates thinking, there was something off with the way he was pronouncing their Spanish surnames. As I walked to the plate to bat, I heard him say in his perfectly un-accented English, "First baseman, Vincent Portillo." In Spanish, the double *l* of my last name sounds like a *y*, making my name sound: pour-tea-you. But this man, who seemed like he wasn't from around there, was way off base. He pronounced my double *l* as you would in the word ill, or pill: pour-till-o. The men in my family weren't having it. They stood up in the stands and yelled out, "Aye

man, what's wrong? It's Portillo!!! Come on!!" The men in my family are those kinds of men. The announcer spoke my name again, this time accented and with a bit of fear. In addition to these moments of tension between English and Spanish, I also experienced a comfort that came from the diversity of the cultural landscape. Mexican Los Angeles occurs alongside several ethnonational communities, including Vietnamese, Chinese, Cuban, Salvadorian, African American, and more. Within and between each of these communities, diversity was the norm. We embodied it. Accented English was also the norm. We embodied it. I carry this history with me.

My interest in the history of Ford Motors also emerges from this time and place. Popular narratives position American automobile manufacturing in the Rust Belt. Yet, Los Angeles, which is an industrial city, was a major hub of automobile production for much of the 20th century. By 1959, Ford Motors, along with General Motors and Chrysler, maintained five plants across L.A. County, including Ford's Los Angeles Assembly plant in the city of Pico Rivera, across the street from the home of my maternal grandparents. As a kid in the late 1970s, if I sat on the curb and looked down the street I could see the gates of the Ford plant, where the Thunderbird, Galaxie 500 and the Falcon were rolling off the assembly line. What I could not know as a child was that American automobile production was facing pressure from economic, political and environmental forces, including a stagnate US economy, OPECs oil embargo against the United States for its support of Israel during the Yom Kippur War, and tighter regulation of automobile emissions. By 1980, Ford closed the LA Assembly Plant. The factory itself was demolished in 2002, making way for the construction of a shopping mall—the Pico Rivera Towne Center.

In addition to automobile assembly plants, Los Angeles was also a home of American tire and rubber production. Although American tire production was centered in Ohio, the outsize volume of tire production in Los Angeles through companies such as Firestone, Goodrich, and Uniroyal, earned the city the nickname "Akron of the West." As early as 1930, the Samson Tire and Rubber Company opened in Los Angeles as the largest factory west of the Mississippi. Perhaps to denote economic strength in production, Samson factory walls were decorated with Babylonian princes and griffins, modeled after a 7th Century B.C. Assyrian palace. But in 1978, the plant was shuttered, and just like the Ford plant, it reopened decades later as a shopping mall—the Citadel Outlets. With the closure of the Ford Motors and Samson plants, opportunities for workers likely dried up.

The closure of Ford's LA Assembly plant and the Samson Tire and Rubber Company are evidence of a liminal moment in American manufacturing history, when the era of industrialization would begin its slow turn toward our current era of deindustrialization, with working-class laborers caught in-between. In *The Half-Life of Deindustrialization*, Sherry Lee Linkon points to the late 1970s and early 80s as the beginning of the end of the era of American industrialization, with factories closing and moving overseas or even just across the border with Mexico where they would reopen as a *maquiladora*, paying lower wages for Mexican labor. Yet, while the factories left, the social and cultural expectations that grew up around industrialization remained left industrial laborers in the lurch. Linkon states: "As working-class culture adapts to economic restructuring, the memory of industrial work and the cultural values and ways of living associated with it still have influence, as does the memory of deindustrialization itself" (7). Shifting labor conditions and industrial era cultural values likely resulted in compromises

laborers had to make as many may have had to turn away from the promise of prosperity to the reality of survivance.

Indeed, the "half-life" of deindustrialization has largely failed to account for working folks like those in my family. For example, my maternal grandfather Gustavo Traslavina maintained machinery at a food plant in Los Angeles where he met my grandmother Mary Torres, who worked on an assembly line, placing spices in pickle jars. Similarly, my paternal grandfather Severiano Portillo was a machinist in the industrial spaces of the city. When I was a child, my father Ramon worked for Southern California Edison, which powers the city. The labor of my mother Teresa and my stepfather Mario Jaimes, which contributed to global grocery supply chains, would more directly influence my early working life. My first full time job was in the grocery industry, where I worked my way up to a journeyman position after four years on the job. I was twenty-one years old and a member of the United Food & Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 1428. Throughout these years, the working lives of my family have been shaped through the labor of industrial manufacturing, global supply chains, and retail sales, speaking English and Spanish as US or Mexican citizens. And yet, the identities of these workers, including the languages and dialects spoken in these laboring spaces are not fully valued in our culture.

The English language is a dominant feature of the era of industrialization going back to Ford's assembly line system of automobile assembly in Detroit in 1913. To get his early assembly line system up and running, Ford hired migrant labor—mostly Southern and Eastern European men. To create safe and efficient laboring conditions, Ford instituted an English Only policy on the factory floor. As a way of making sure assembly line workers were learning English, he founded the Ford English School (FES), which sought to Americanize migrant

workers according to a nativist and ableist curriculum founded, I argue, upon an ideology of *linguistic economic ableism*, whereby English would act as the vehicle for the transmission of values and beliefs beneficial to Ford Motors, thereby readying the body, the mind, and the voice of the laborer for industrial labor. In this way, Ford's industrial education project also calmed nativists who shouted that American jobs should go to American citizens.

Narratives of overcoming are foundational to ideologies of standard English and English Only policy. At Ford, laborers were said to have overcome communist and socialist tendencies through English. In the context of this dissertation, I recognize these narratives as part of a process of Americanization. The Ford English School is part of a history of Americanization in education, whereby immigrant students are taught to acquire "our language, citizenship, customs and ideals" (Hill "The Americanization Movement 631; Samantha NeCamp *Adult Literacy and American Identity* 30). In short, Americanization is concerned with assimilating individual bodies to meet the needs of a national body. Americanization is also part of an archive of family history. In 2017, in Fresno, California, I was with my family at the commencement ceremony of Theodore Roosevelt High School to celebrate the graduation of my niece. As part of the ceremony, which was held at the Save Mart Center, the California State University, Fresno basketball stadium, administrators delivered portions of their statements across languages—in English and Spanish. During the ceremony, my stepfather, Mario, leaned over to me and said: "They [the school administers] shouldn't be speaking Spanish." My stepfather's comment surprised me.

Mario grew up in the predominantly Mexican and Mexican American community of El Sereno, in East Los Angeles. He attended UCLA, when affirmative action was bringing Mexican American students into such spaces of imagined equality and tolerance. Further, my stepfather is

bilingual, speaking Spanish every workday with customers, co-workers, and employers. His business life involves importing and selling foods marketed to Mexican American and Asian customers throughout the Western United States. Given the wider context of his personal and work life, I asked: “What’s wrong?” He said: “Students shouldn’t get the idea that Spanish should be spoken in these spaces.” Images of Ford’s Melting Pot flashed in my mind. My stepfather has always worked to make me feel comfortable to speak my mind. I reminded my him that at the start of the ceremony, we had pledged our allegiance to the American flag and that the school band had played the US national anthem. Not only that, but the school was named after one of the country’s most celebrated imperialist presidents. In short, the Spanish on the stage was occurring in a heavily nationalistic context. But, as I learned, my stepfather was concerned less with Americanization and nationalism and more with the administration of education, particularly the administration of linguistic difference within educational spaces as a jumping off point for laboring spaces. He asked me to think of Hmong students (whose families had emigrated to this region of California because of the campaign of genocide against those who sided with the Central Intelligence Agency during the Vietnam War, and whose languages were not being represented on stage. He had a strong point. There is absolutely a limit to the administration of linguistic difference.

Later, as I reflected on this moment, I considered the way that Henry Ford harnessed the power of English Only as an administrative solution to his labor problem, which was rooted in linguistic diversity. Today, English Only policy and practice is in tension with administrative questions and concerns rooted in cultural and linguistic diversity. Rather than producing cookie cutter Americans wearing straw hats and waving little American flags, today’s student, at least at Theodore Roosevelt High School, are conferred in such a way that linguistic difference is

recognized, valued, and echoed back, but only to some—Spanish and English-speaking—graduates and audience. But what of the Hmong students who are minoritized when their languages and dialects go unvoiced on the stage?

Ultimately, the Theodore Roosevelt High School graduation scene returns us to questions concerning the value of linguistic difference, the preferred (American) identities of the speaker and audience, including which bodies get to speak which languages in public spaces, and the role that English continues to play in the administration of education and the production of the next generation of Americans who are leaving high school, entering the workforce and universities, including our writing classrooms. Given the current context of hyper-Americanization, there is just as much at stake, both linguistically and culturally, for today's high school graduates as there was for FES graduates emerging from Ford's melting pot. Ultimately, this is only one narrative from a family archive of linguistic memory that suggests that we need to overcome our linguistic and cultural difference—winning the battle against foreignness to America.

The question of Americanization has been with me since my first experience teaching First Year Writing as a graduate student at California State University, Chico. For that class, I developed a curriculum premised on ideas of identity, including nationality, immigration, and citizenship. A few weeks into the semester, students and I were reading a few chapters from Luis Alberto Urrea's *The Devil's Highway*, which tells the story of migration and death in the Sonora Desert on the Arizona/Mexico border. Around this time, students and I were settling into the semester, getting to know one another. Conversations and small talk with the students before class were becoming more frequent. One day before class, I was chatting with two Hmong students—they were cousins—who asked where I was from. I have come to recognize this question, particularly from students of color, as a pivotal moment of future learning. I responded,

"Here, from California." They seemed relieved, saying, "Oh, good." I was puzzled with their response. For all the times I have been asked this question, no one had ever responded, "oh, good." So, I asked the students what "oh good" meant. They said, "Well, it's good you were born here since we're reading this." One of them held up their copy of *The Devil's Highway*. I was still a bit confused but was starting to get the picture. To clarify, I asked: "So if I had assigned this book and wasn't born here you wouldn't want to read it?" I hadn't realized that other students—nearly the entire class—were listening in. Just then, as one, they all roared out: "Nooo! No way!! We wouldn't wanna do it!" I was floored.

Later that day, I went to Tom Fox's office, who was my teaching mentor, and described what had happened. Tom offered to come with me to the next class. I said no and that I would handle it myself. I don't know that I handled it, honestly. In fact, I think I'm still practicing handling it. I do know though that I am thankful to these students. They taught me a lot that day. I learned that issues of national, ethnic, and linguistic difference, which are central concerns in the world, are also central concerns in writing classroom. I also learned that the identity of the so-called "ethnic" teacher can still be considered suspect when discussing issues of immigration, citizenship, and literacy—I felt the residue of this moment while researching the archives. Ultimately, my students also helped direct me toward issues of ethnicity, citizenship, and the politics of language—which are threaded through my research and my pedagogy. In short, diversity is a lived experience for me. Inclusion is foundational to my work as professor, researcher, and administrator during this age of xenophobia, where the writing classroom remains a space of Americanized (white and middle-class) literacy and citizenship.

This dissertation continues the work of scholarship in rhetoric and composition and literacy studies that have provided insight into literacy, citizenship, and the lives of working-

class immigrants. Through my study of literacy and citizenship, my work responds to calls for research into histories of immigration and industrialization with automobile manufacturers that describe the limits and possibilities immigrant laborers faced while engaging Ford's English language literacy programs. Important cultural and rhetorical work occurred at the Ford English School. Its pedagogy, curriculum, and lesson plans guided Ford's policy and intended outcomes as well as arguments to produce a monolingual and monocultural industrial workforce. Two questions guided this work. First, how do people learn to take on preferred American identities? What role does the English language play in this process?

Chapter One explores a history of English language education at the Ford English School (FES) form 1914-1919, demonstrating how Ford sought to Americanize "unskilled" migrant workers as part of the production of the literacy skills required for the modern American worker. Foundational to a nativist and ableist curriculum that identified the Ford Man as the ideal industrial worker was an ideology of *linguistic economic ableism*, whereby English would act as the vehicle for the transmission of values and beliefs beneficial to Ford Motors, thereby readying the body, the mind, and the voice of the worker for industrial labor. The chapter provides a foundation for a historical and archival look at forces of Americanization that continue to shape immigrant working class bodies through rhetoric of assimilation and efficiency as twin foundations of English-speaking, Americanized labor.

Chapter Two re-sees the FES within a broader industrial educational framework of Ford's English language education and manual training with an emphasis on Americanization, immigration, and race. Henry Ford's industrial education project was centered in the greater Detroit area. For example, Ford pulled engineering students from the University to Michigan in nearby Ann Arbor and created the Henry Ford Trade School with the goals of contributing to a

skilled workforce. But Ford's industrial education project drew people from far beyond Highland Park. For example, Ford welcomed graduates of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, where Native American students received a curriculum of Americanization and industrial training. Further, in Georgia, he funded the Berry Schools and the George Washington Carver School for Negroes, emphasizing a curriculum of labor and English language, respectively. This chapter also presents a countermodel to the Ford English School made up of private and parochial schools, colleges, and Polish education clubs for ethnic and immigrant students. Instead of aligning themselves with pro-capital ideology of corporations, these parochial schools, educational clubs, and political parties developed curriculum that created opportunities for workers to challenge and even resist corporate descriptions of industrial labor and literacy, while promoting the development of community- and ethnicity-based solidarity against capitalist exploitation.

Chapter Three turns to the industrial archives. This chapter traces the research labor of the project. A central concern in the search of archives is for Ford English School student voices. Yet, as much as Ford had kept extensive administrative records, the writing of the Ford English School student represents a minor voice of the Ford archive. Thus, the chapter describes the move away from Ford's industrial archives to small, private school archives in the form of The Cranbrook Schools Archive. In this way, I found gaps into which the voices of FES students complicated identity might emerge to determine the agency afforded to Ford worker-students. In these moments of analysis of FES student writings, I address the spirit of standardization that not only permeated industrial manufacturing at the turn of the last century, but the culture of Ford Motors as a site of labor for US citizens. Further, I engage these concerns with a view of the historical record of the archives, asking just when does the voice of the immigrant become

historical? The analysis of working-class voices in this chapter speaks to an ongoing project of producing and moderating the voice of an Americanized working class.

Chapter Four traces the legacy of Americanization that continues to impact the lives of immigrant working class communities. This chapter returns to Hamtramck, Michigan where large populations of Ford English School student-workers lived in the 1910s. Although Hamtramck remains a stronghold of Polish community, the city is also made up of more recent immigrants, largely from Asia. Through the study of four local sites—Women of Banglatown, Piast Institute, Hamtramck Public Schools, and Woodward Throwbacks—I trace the ways in which Ford's industrial project of producing Ford Men continues to influence the ways in which immigrant identities are shaped today. At the same time, in each of these sites, we consider the affordances residents have at their disposal and how they may struggle to negotiate their literate and working lives in the suburbs of Detroit, where the spirit of Americanization lingers.

Chapter five turns to the voice of Ford autoworkers today to think about the ways in which echoes of Ford's Americanization program can still be heard today. I attempt to record the actual voice of the worker either through oral history or creative writing. First, we consider the voice of Arab American autoworkers, who lived and worked in the shadows of the Ford Motors Rouge River Complex in the Southend of Dearborn. Next, we turn to the Twin Cities Ford Assembly Plant in Minneapolis, which is the site of a working-class writers group made up of an instructor of English from the local university and working-class poets who labored at Ford. In each of these sites, we hear echoes of Ford's Americanization project against the backdrop of deindustrialization as we consider more recent descriptions of working-class immigrants making their way at Ford.

I conclude this introduction with reflections on the implications of this history and analysis. The Ford English School is an example of curricular and pedagogical responses to Ford's economic power and systemic assimilation. The position immigrant laborers found themselves in at Ford Motors during the industrial era of Americanization has come to an end, but the response of labor colleges, political clubs, and parochial schools that countered Ford's industrial education project reaffirms the hope that English language literacy holds for immigrant communities. At the same time, this counter model also demonstrates that literacy across languages and dialects does not solve problems of inequality tied to nationality, ethnicity, or race. English language literacy is not a remedy. Yet, in this time of deindustrialization, the myth of the power of English Only policy and practice, which grew up during America's 20th century industrial age, remains. It is my hope that we can come to a greater understanding of the myths and the limits of English tied to industrialization in America.

Chapter One

Assembly Line Americans: Labor, Language, and Literacy at the Ford Motors English School (1914-1920)

> The immigrant is a powerful industrial, social, and political factor. All the forces of industry, society, and political wisdom are needed to accomplish his assimilation.
>
> Frank Cody, Assistant Superintendent of Detroit public schools, "Americanization Courses in the Public Schools" (1918)

> We ought to Americanize our factories and our vast material resources, so that we can make each contribute to the other and have an abundance for us under the form of the government laid down by our fathers.
>
> Senator Ellison D. Smith (D), South Carolina, "Shut the Door" (1924)

> How a nation defines, constructs, and produces citizens communicates not only the ideals of that nation, but also its anxieties, particularly in moments of political, cultural, and economic uncertainty.
>
> Amy Wan, *Producing Good Citizens* (2014)

Imagine a commencement ceremony in Detroit, Michigan in 1914 where a group of students celebrate the successful completion of an English language and US citizenship curriculum. As part of the celebration, which school administrators call "Americanization Day," graduates climb into a giant "melting pot" where cultural and linguistic impurities are "melted away." Newly minted Americans emerge cloaked in the English language, wearing brand new suits and straw hats, and waving little American flags. Indeed, Clinton DeWitt, superintendent of the Ford Motors English School describes the scene as "a pageant" of Americanization:

> where all the men descend from a boat . . . representing the vessel on which they came over; down the gangway representing the distance from the port at which they landed to the school, into a pot 15-feet in diameter and 7 ½ feet high, which represents the Ford English School. Six teachers, three on either side, stir the pot with 10-foot ladles representing nine months of teaching in the school . . . 52 nationalities with foreign clothes and baggage go in the pot. After a vigorous stirring by the teachers, out comes one nationality – American. (DeWitt 119)

Progressive Era Americanization pageants, such as the Ford English School (FES) melting pot ceremony, allowed for the rehearsal of "complicated [middle-class] feelings about immigration" as they "instilled the values, moral codes, and worldviews of the white elite" (White "The pageant is the thing" 520) into the bodies of the working class. Indeed, Ford's melting pot symbolized the forging of a new industrial laborer. For just as the melting pot "burned away" linguistic and cultural markers of the "immigrant," the newly instituted assembly line system of manufacture also burned away the skills imbued in the craftsman, who, until the advent of the assembly line, had built automobiles by hand (Meyer III *Manhood* 13; Crawford *Shop Class as Soulcraft* 40). As such, the new Ford laborer would be asked to undergo this dual transformation into not only an English-speaking American but also the idealized "Ford Man," [1] who labors on the assembly line in English and puts the needs of the company before his own. Thus, the Ford pageant drew together concerns about immigration, language, and labor, promoting a homogenous and monolingual English-speaking American factory and society, thereby alleviating middle-class anxiety about linguistic and ethnic difference during a time of mass migration and mass production.

Holding these elements together, I argue, was an ideology of *linguistic economic ableism*. Jason Palmeri used the term "linguistic ableism" in an analysis of Simi Linton's "Reassigning Meaning," stating that "conventions of the English language ultimately work to reinforce the ideology of normalcy" ("Disability studies, Cultural Analysis" 60). The concept of normalcy, which is central to Palmeri's statement and to disability rhetoric, is foundational to a system of ableism that "denotes the ideology of a healthy body, a normal mind, appropriate speed of

[1] Women did work on the Ford factory floor. At the Piquette Avenue Plant, women who fabricated flywheel magnetos for the Model T came to be known as Magneto Girls. Further, the wives of Ford workers could take the position of injured husbands while they healed to maintain income for the household. Yet, for all their contributions, because of gender, women workers would not have been promoted as the ideal worker at Ford.

thought, and acceptable expressions of emotion" (Campbell "Ability" 13). Building upon Palmeri's use of the term, this chapter is concerned with the normalizing force of the English language in the economic and laboring lives of immigrant industrial workers at Ford Motors. Within industrial manufacturing, measurements of normalcy speak to the spirit of standardization. But when applied to the body of the laborer, particularly those without English language or US citizenship, standards and measurements of normalcy contribute to "forms of human diminishments that position some humans on the edges of belonging" (Titchkosky "Normal" 131). Thus, to "be normal" and able-bodied is to do "what needs to be done" (132) through "an expected range of actions" (Campbell 12). On the assembly line, the ability to do what needed to be done—labor efficiently and safely—was dependent, according to Ford's view, upon the English language. At Ford, English language literacy not only represented "an ability, a skill, a knowledge" (NeCamp *Adult Literacy* 15) of a language user but was an expression of the preferred identity of the normalized and able-bodied industrial laborer.

Thus, on the assembly line, the intellectual and laboring abilities of this new American laborer were premised on a relationship to the English language, including the ability to speak the language, the specific way it was spoken, as well as ideologies of labor, citizenship, and hygiene that, according to Ford logic, enabled the body. Through *linguistic economic ableism*, English would act as the vehicle for the transmission of values and beliefs beneficial to Ford Motors, thereby readying the body, the mind, and the voice of the worker for industrial labor. As a result, an exploration of the FES draws together issues of social class, migration, and literacy into a productive model through which we cannot only understand the historic formation of an industrial working class during this time period, but also how those same forces are being deployed today to create a "new working class" largely in response to an ongoing concern with

the fitness of the body and the character of the immigrant according to middle-class American ideals. Then as today, within a xenophobic context of American labor, the body of the immigrant is subject to problematic ideals of language and identity that associates difference with disability, and American English and citizenship as perfection.

This study is built upon the desire to answer this question: If immigration is a foundation of the history of the United States, how do immigrants learn to take on a preferred American laboring identity and what role does English play in this process? Earlier studies have drawn connections between literacy and nationalism. Harvey Graff describes how industrialists and religious figures enacted value-laden processes of literacy onto the bodies of children and laborers in the 19th century (*The Literacy Myth*). Deborah Brandt describes how shifting literacy standards play out in the lives of generations of American students, workers, and citizens (*Literacy in American Lives*), particularly through technological advances during the industrial era of American manufacturing and warfare ("Drafting US Literacy"). Related to these studies are a history of English Only policies, which position English as the preferred vehicle of instruction for the composition classroom (Horner and Trimbur "English Only and U.S. College Composition"). Building on such work, this chapter is concerned with the role that an English language curriculum plays in the production of American working-class labor through the body of the immigrant. Specifically, I intend to draw on histories of immigration, race, and disability to shift our focus toward the ways that immigrant bodies are labeled unfit as a foundation of American labor as well as the process by which such laborers are "made fit" though *linguistic economic ableism*.

To do so, I will draw upon and situate disability studies and composition history alongside historical evidence of early twentieth century industrial education and labor practices

to construct a history of English language education of working-class immigrants. I will focus my attention on materials that correspond with the Americanization movement, which sought to improve the "fitness" of the linguistic and ethnic "other" through literacy and language (Wan; Dayton-Wood; NeCamp). Further, histories of immigration and immigration restriction, where disability and race are co-constructed (Dolmage *Disabled Upon Arrival* 5), describe how America has been inscribed onto the body of the culturally defined disabled immigrant. In fact, disability scholar Douglas Baynton notes the ongoing need for research into histories of immigration related to histories of industrialization, particularly related to automobile manufacture (*Defectives* 2). Thus, the history of the FES is central to understanding and interrupting a long history of working-class education, where the restrictive use of English is a foundation of the assimilation of the immigrant, who is imagined as unfit in the absence of a steady diet of English.

In what follows, then, I will frame Ford's sponsorship of English language education as one origin story in the ongoing project of producing "able-bodied" American workers through the acquisition of English. First, I describe Ford Motors' relationship to skilled and "unskilled" labor on the assembly line. Then I discuss the pedagogy and the curriculum of the FES as an intervention in the heritage languages and identities of Ford workers, focusing directly on FES lesson plans, which concretized these debates for worker-students. Here, I reveal *linguistic economic ableism* as the hidden component of the Americanization curriculum of the Ford English School. Finally, I will demonstrate how *linguistic economic ableism* still resonates in education today, ultimately charting out future work for those in our field committed to worker and immigrant rights in our writing classrooms—work that relies on identifying and teaching these problematic institutional histories.

Before the Melting Pot: Disabling Working-Class Immigrants through English Only Policy

Immigrant labor was a boon to Ford Motors. Prior to the assembly line, automobiles were manufactured according to the pre-industrial craftsman model, whereby highly skilled craftsmen, including machinists, iron molders, mechanics, carpenters, draftsmen, and other tradesmen, innovated and crafted parts and components. But the craftsman model was a time-consuming process of manufacture. On April 11, 1913, Ford introduced the newly innovated assembly line system of manufacturing. Instead of employing craftsmen for the assembly line, Ford hired immigrant laborers. This move allowed the company to sidestep processes of directly unmaking a deep history of craftsman knowledge, skill, agency, and pay often concentrated and valued by trade unions prior to early 20th century industrialization. Said another way, Ford's assembly line disabled the practices of automobile assembly, shifting craftsmen knowledge and skill to a managerial middle class. World War I aided Ford in his project. For example, in the run-up to war, masses of military-aged industrial workers quit their jobs to join the US armed forces. While these men were leaving factory jobs, refugees from World War I were arriving on American shores and in American factories. By hiring immigrant labor, however, entered Ford into national conversations about the identity, citizenship, and language of the industrial worker.

Ford initially sought to accommodate linguistic difference on the factory floor. For example, signage in the Highland Park plant was hung in multiple languages to reflect the linguistic diversity of laborers. Perhaps the most important signage spoke to the dangers of electrocution in the newly electrified plant. The responsibility to hang this signage fell on Robert Shaw, Safety Director at Ford Motors. At one point in 1915, however, the Italian language sign was not hung, bringing the attention of Henry Ford, which prompted an English Only policy.

Shaw states: “Mr. Ford heard of [the missing Italian language sign] and issued orders down through the organization . . . that there was to be only one sign and that was to be in English” (“The Reminiscences of Mr. Robert A. Shaw” 26-27). Thus, to address the complexities of communicating across languages, Ford removed signage in languages other than English and deployed a monolingual language policy. The move toward English Only was born of a spirit of standardization, which reinforced concepts and practices of mass production, efficiency, and, ironically, worker safety. In a recent study of the limitations of an English Only orientation towards language, Katherine Flowers describes the ways in which policies of standardized English make the language seem “more natural, normal, correct, efficient, or otherwise authoritative than other ways of communicating” (Flowers “Resisting and Rewriting English-Only Policies” 67). Yet, Ford’s English Only policy threatened to increase industrial accidents amongst workers who may have been unfamiliar with electrified machinery and who were not already English speakers even as it sought to normalize the language and the bodies of these laborers.

Yet clearly, this decision occurred within a context larger than just a particular Italian language sign. Ford’s English Only factory policy reflects a deeper, national history of protecting the labor of English-speaking citizens. Layli Maria Miron coins the term “Nativism-Ableism Matrix” as a way of theorizing the forces of nationalism and ableism at play in the lives of those who are not US citizens and/or who do not speak preferred forms of English, stating:

> nativism depends on ableism for nativism holds that some bodies (those “native” to a nation) are more capable of upholding the national good than others (those “outside” the nation). Nativism necessarily excludes immigrants and foreigners; their presence, especially their success, threatens to expose its contradictions. To neutralize this threat, it brands them as innately inferior to “natives,” foisting the stigma of disability on them. By idealizing a homogenous polity, the members of which supposedly all think alike by reason of their nativeness, nativism also contributes to the exclusion of those who think

> differently. That is, there is no space for variation, for neurodiversity, in nativism. ("Making the Nativism-Ableism Matrix" 458)

Miron's insight into the protection of the interests of native-born individuals helps put histories of exclusion of culturally defined "disabled immigrants" into perspective. For as early as the mid-nineteenth century, members of non-white races were categorized and labeled as disabled in the US (Baynton "Disability and the Justification of Inequality" 36). Indeed, two federal laws—the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and the National Exclusion Act of 1924—which sought to shape the working class in the US, framed the immigrant as emblematic of a national anxiety. During this period, immigrants were seen, for example, as a "dire threat to the nation" (Baynton *Defectives* 1), undermining the "American" home, workforce, and the US economy. Immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe, who were the largest population of immigrant laborers at Ford, were thought to represent a particular threat to American democracy (NeCamp 15). The logic was that, through "alien" languages, immigrants imported political beliefs, including communism, socialism, and anarchism. Thus, through the English language, Ford sought to resolve twin threats to industrial labor: worker safety and anti-capitalist belief.

Outside of Ford, immigrants faced a similarly hostile environment. US ports of entry were sites of examination of immigrant bodies for markers of disability according to race and ethnicity.[2] Federal agents relied on "snapshot diagnosis," made up of "first impressions, general appearance, and visible abnormalities" of immigrant bodies (Baynton *Defectives* 7). Notably, administrators looked to native or ethnic dress to contribute to "diagnosis." (Think again of Ford's melting pot transformations.) An ableist and nationalist rhetoric of assessment emerged,

[2] Of course, people looking to emigrate don't always pass-through national ports of entry. For example, around the turn of the 20th century, to sidestep northeastern US ports, some would first head to Canada, with the plan of crossing the Detroit River from Windsor to Detroit, Michigan, where ethnic communities had already established deep roots. Such savvy workarounds tie immigrant bodies to criminality and a lack of concern for the law (Bavery "Crashing America's Back Gate" 240).

which applied the labels “imbecile” and “moron” to immigrant bodies considered disabled and therefore un-American (Dolmage “Framing Disability”), who were then denied entry into the country. These federal immigration practices found theoretical grounding through the science of eugenics, which Jay Dolmage describes as “the ‘science’ of controlling who lives, who procreates, who thrives, and who dies, based on flawed ideas about genetic makeup” (*Academic Ableism* 11). The father of eugenics, Francis Galton, who was the cousin of Charles Darwin, imagined a thriving Western civilization through the immigration of “the better sort of emigrants and refugees from other lands” (*Hereditary Genius* 362)—likely from Westernized and already English-speaking countries. In short, Ford’s response to its labor problem is rooted in a national history of judging the fitness and abilities of immigrants according to the normative power of the ideal American (read: Protestant, Anglo-Saxon, native-born, English-speaking) citizen, i.e., *linguistic economic ableism*.

The transformation of the immigrant laborer into the Ford Man was measured through US citizenship. Given its preference for immigrant laborers to continue to enter the United States, Ford offered a road toward citizenship through the Ford English School. Indeed, according to Ford’s outsized political influence amongst local, federal judicial administrations, graduates of the FES could add their diploma to an application for citizenship (Lee 306), thus soothing nativists. According to conflicting reports, between 1,500 and 6,000 FES graduates obtained US citizenship in this way. In short, at Ford’s Highland Park plant, the technological precision of the English Only assembly line came to represent the ideal through which laboring bodies were normalized as US citizens. In this respect, the identity of the immigrant assembly line worker was tied to the promise of an American life, built upon a growing cultural belief in science and industry as a foundation of industrial progress, including the idea of bettering oneself

through a culture of "forward motion" (Baynton *Defectives* 66-67). Yet, workers did not always experience forward motion as progress.

Instead, laborers experienced Ford's assembly line system of mass production as a disabling shift in labor. Labor historian Stephen Meyer III, states: "the vicious speed-up, the endless fatigue, the absence of concern for health and safety, the abusive foremen and supervisors, and an uncivilized worker environment all revealed lack of concern for human and manly dignity" (*Manhood* 32). Due to these grueling laboring conditions, in the first year of the assembly line, Ford hired over 52,000 workers to maintain a workforce of 14,000. Further, "Six times as many employees quit as were fired. Absenteeism ran as high as 10 Percent daily" (Roediger and Foner 191). "Forditis" was a common nervous condition. To rehabilitate the reputation of assembly line labor, Ford developed a rhetoric that promoted the value of the assembly line, suggesting that workers who performed such "neck-down" or "mindless" labor would return home mentally rested after a shift. Workers were not persuaded. Perhaps as a result, the terms "neck-down" and "mindless" would come to be added to a list of terms applied to blue collar industrial laborers who were considered unfit (or simply unwilling) to perform such disabling labor. For example, in a move that echoed the labeling of bodies at US ports of entry, industrialists might label workers who would not rise to the cultural expectation of industrial progress as "handicapped," "retarded," "abnormal," "inefficient," "defective," or "degenerate" (Baynton *Defectives* 48). Trapped in such a confining rhetorical and laboring space, these newly constituted workers were subject to strict limits on possibility, despite the forced need to take on the English language, with the very real threat of dismissal from Ford if they failed to do so.

Here, we now can begin to see how *linguistic economic ableism* emerged as a solution for Ford's immigrant problem. Prior to arriving at Ford, immigrants experienced intense and

ongoing examination, which targeted, labeled, and categorized physical and intellectual fitness—a practice that paralleled eugenic thinking and federal immigration policy. Once at Ford, administrators and teachers continued this history of targeting, measuring worker ability (intellectual and manual) and worker safety on the factory floor through the acquisition of English. By both deskilling assembly line labor and labeling the "inferiority" of replacement worker bodies, Ford contributed to the disabling of an industrial working class.[3] As a result, a paradigm emerged where, without command of the English language, the immigrant laborer was judged as intellectually "unfit," or impaired in his ability to engage the technological innovations of the assembly line to do what Ford needed to be done. In short, *linguistic economic ableism* provided Ford Motors a rationale for "turning away" those deemed unfit or demanding that they be educated.

Entering the Furnace: Molding the Ford English School to the Peter Roberts Americanization Curriculum

The Ford English School operated under the umbrella of the Ford Sociological Department (FSD). The FSD was a complex personnel management system that monitored and assessed immigrant workers. The FSD regularly sent agents to the homes of Ford workers, noting living conditions, citizenship status, and language use. Agents also noted how workers made use of wages through preferred middle-class institutions, such as banks, savings and loans, and personal insurance. Indeed, motivated by a perceived un-American quality of the immigrant worker's definition of living standards, Ford sought to Americanize daily life according to hallmarks of

[3] Even as Ford promoted the ideal of the able-bodied Ford Man, he also created laboring opportunities for many types of worker bodies of various skill, ability, and disability. For example, Ford hired "thousands of disabled workers at full pay" (Rose *No Right to be Idle* 4; "The Reminiscences of Mr. William P. Baxter" 14-15). Thus, at Ford, emerging practices of industrial labor did not always require laborers "with intact, fully functional bodies so desired by most employers" Instead, Ford viewed laboring bodies as "interchangeable parts" (Rose 135-136) so long as they shared one thing in common—the English language.

the middle class, such as financial management, orderliness of the single-family home and the hygiene of the body. Labor historian James Barrett describes the work of FSD agents, noting the promise of incentive pay to assimilate immigrant workers, stating:

> [FSD] Case workers fanned out into Detroit's working-class neighborhoods, ready to fight for the hearts and minds of the immigrant auto workers. They investigated each worker's home life as well as his work record, and one could qualify for the Five Dollar Day incentive pay only after demonstrating the proper home environment and related middle-class values. Thus, the company sought to show workers not only the 'right way to work' but also the 'right way to live.' ("Americanization from the bottom up" 1003)

As Barrett notes, Ford used the promise of increased wages as a tool of assimilation. The Five Dollar Day was instituted in January 1914 around the time of the founding of the Ford English School, which was about ten months after the founding of the assembly line. Ford's Five Dollar Day reduced the working day by an hour, increased hourly wages, and created opportunities for profit-sharing. But profit sharing was only for sufficiently Americanized workers. According to William P. Baxter of the Ford Employment Department, FSD agents could disqualify "unfit" workers for profit sharing ("The Reminiscences of Mr. William P. Baxter" 10-11). At the same time, the Five Dollar Day was also a sticking point for already Americanized Ford workers. In June 1915, the *Ford Times* magazine published an article on the Ford English School titled "Assimilation through Education," in which one Ford worker is quoted as saying: "If the man who could not speak the [English] language . . . was to receive $5 a day . . . surely there was something wrong with the system" (407). In short, the Five Dollar Day, which was designed to produce a stable workforce, was a buttress against poverty wages, but only for some workers. Further, it also helped manifest xenophobia, which, at Ford Motors, traveled all the way to the top of the Ford administration. In addition to Henry Ford's well-documented anti-Semitism, Ford also attributed waste to ethnicity, not only through non-English languages and political worldviews, but also through the fear that un-Americanized workers would develop bad "habits,"

which at Ford was code for alcohol and drunkenness ("Lesson No. 15: Habits"). Americanization at Ford was also about sobriety as a means of generating efficiency and safely on the factory floor.

As with the English Only assembly line, the Ford English School had deep roots in the Americanization Movement. In 1919, *The American Journal of Sociology* published Howard C. Hill's article, which reported on the American Council on Education's survey of the Americanization Movement. Hill describes the central role the acquisition of the English language and American citizenship play in the movement, stating: "Americanism is defined as a process by which an alien acquires our language, citizenship, customs, and ideals" (631 "The Americanization Movement"). Similarly, within the field of rhetoric and composition, Samantha NeCamp more recently positions Americanization at the intersection of "English language teaching, citizenship education, and trade education" with the aim of teaching civic values (NeCamp 30). To put Hill's and NeCamp's descriptions of Americanization into perspective, Clinton C. Dewitt, superintendent of the Ford English School, states that Ford's goal was that "every workman must learn to speak the 'American'–not the English–language" ("Teach Loyalty to Foreigners" 4). [4] In short, Americanization is about assimilating working class bodies to meet the needs of industrialists according to the labor of educators.

It is not surprising then that the Americanization curriculum of the FES was founded on the work of Peter Roberts. Roberts was uniquely positioned as immigration secretary and education director for the YMCA and a leading pedagogical theorist of the Americanization

[4] DeWitt made this statement while giving testimony in defense of Henry Ford, who was suing the *Chicago Tribune*, which dared challenge Ford's American values, stating: "Ford is an anarchist." On June 23, 1916, the *Tribune* published an editorial piece on the Mexican Revolution, calling on industrialists such as Ford to contribute to the defense of the country. During that moment of concern for national security, Henry Ford stated that former employees who had quit Ford to join the National Guard to patrol the southern border would not receive preferential treatment if they sought to be rehired at Ford ("Henry Ford Files $1,000,000 Libel Suit"). Somehow, Ford's Americanization project, which sought to indoctrinate new immigrants against socialism, communism, and anarchy, was just not enough.

movement (NeCamp 32). As a director of the YMCA, Roberts shifted institutional goals from "humanitarian service to social control . . . to national efficiency" (Carlson 450) thereby aligning with Ford's Americanization project. To streamline processes of Americanization within and across immigrant populations, YMCA representatives sought to intercept migrants at US ports of entry, such as Ellis Island, as well as European points of departure. Perhaps out of its need to have such a broad reach, flexibility was built into the Roberts curriculum, which could be tailored to meet the Americanization needs of companies across industries (Roberts *English for Coming Americans* 22). In his work with the Ford English School, Roberts contributed to making Ford's Americanization curriculum the "model for other factories across the industrialized Northeast" (Ray "ESL Droids" 23) and for "other large industries around the country" (NeCamp 32), including the United States Steel Corporation and International Harvester. In short, Roberts' guidance of the educational mission of the YMCA paralleled that of Henry Ford's mission to Americanize immigrant labor through English language training.

In addition to his success in industrial education, Roberts also contributed to the Americanization efforts of public schools. In the Detroit area, Roberts' project overlapped with that of Frank Cody, assistant superintendent of Detroit public schools, through the Americanization Committee of Detroit, which they both served, along with Ford's John R. Lee, founder of the Ford Sociological Department. In the article, "Americanization Courses in the Public Schools," which the National Council of Teachers of English' *The English Journal* published in 1918, Frank Cody describes his pedagogy of Americanization, arguing that the role of public education was to engage the immigrant student according to a curriculum that promotes "common ideals, common language, and a uniform interpretation of citizenship" (620). Like Cody, Roberts viewed the immigrant as "a potential American" (*The Problem* 231). Yet, like

Henry Ford, Roberts also viewed the immigrant as "fertile soil to socialistic and anarchistic propaganda" (225). The pedagogy of the FES, as expressed by Samuel S. Marquis, who replaced James R. Lee as the head of the Ford Sociological Department, speaks to the hope of assimilating the immigrant through industrial education, stating: "as we adapt the machinery in the shop to the turning out of the kind of automobile we have in mind, so we have constructed our educational system with a view to producing the human product we have in mind" ("The Ford Idea in Education" 21). As we will see, Roberts' concerns with the power of language to shape the identity of the industrial worker as an English-speaking American, who "puts patriotism above partisanship, principles above personalities, country above creed" (Roberts *The Problem* 235), carry through the FES curriculum as a Procrustean solution to Ford's immigrant problem.

Turning to the FES classroom, the Roberts curriculum disabled the performance of linguistic difference. Using the Roberts' method of performative pedagogy, also known as the "dramatic" or "direct" method, FES teachers acted out lesson plans (Roberts *English* 24) in English, thereby limiting the need for a translator in the classroom (44). In this way, the FES curriculum mimics the "Direct Method" of educational reformer Francois Gouin, who stressed the use of the "target language in the classroom" (Ray "ESL Droids" 23), and who Roberts names as a foundation of his work (Roberts *English* 5). Unlike Roberts, who developed professional training programs for English teachers, English teachers at Ford were in-house transfers—engineers and foremen with "teaching qualities" rather than teacher training. Other times, FES teachers were graduates of the school (Lee 306). Here, Ford also goes against dominant thinking, which suggested that "ethnic teachers" were insufficiently Americanized to teach English (Blanton "The Rise of English-Only Pedagogy" 65). At Ford, FES graduate-teachers modeled the effectiveness of an Americanization curriculum on the able-bodied and

well-disciplined mind and voice of the immigrant. Regardless of national or ethnic heritage, the labor of FES teachers went unpaid. In this way, the FES teacher embodied the identity and the values of the Ford Man, with an emphasis on a selfless attitude and love of company (Ray 33) and country, where patriotic zeal stands in the place of the receipt of wages. In short, a group of ethnically diverse Americanized FES teachers delivered a curriculum of monolingual education as a curative to the imagined disability of the immigrant on the line.

FES teachers also closed the feedback loop between methods of labor and methods of teaching. Because they often held dual assignments in the factory and in the school, FES teachers embodied and enacted tenets of assembly line manufacture, including limited agency and the repeated performance of prescribed actions in the classroom. In "Teaching English for "A Better America,"" Amy Dayton-Wood describes the Americanization classroom as built upon learner passivity, including "memorization and repetition" (408). To put Dayton-Wood's statement into perspective, Ford produced instruction sheets that reminded FES teachers to "Drill! Drill!! Drill!!!" ("Instruction Sheet No. 1") lessons into the students. Thus, the FES teacher reinforced the needs of the factory in the classroom, ensuring that principles of labor and language, including efficiency and safety were instilled (in English) in the body of the worker-student.

The location of the FES itself further reinforced the connection between overlapping methods of labor, teaching, and learning. Ford's Highland Park plant was a laboratory of mass production. Consider the open floorplan of the plant, which was the result of the recent electrification of factory spaces that, in turn, gave rise to Ford's assembly line. The Highland Park plant was also a laboratory of industrial education. Twenty-eight FES classrooms were located amongst offices above the factory floors. Thus, at Highland Park, Ford industrialized mass production and English language education. Through revised methods of manufacturing

and pedagogy, Ford tied the physical architecture of an "unskilled" labor force to the pedagogical architecture of an untrained teacher force in the teaching of English. Working together, the assembly line and the English classroom framed immigrant worker-student bodies with a finite set of bodily movements, responsibilities, and possibilities. Ultimately, Ford streamlined and standardized automobile assembly, bringing the new able-bodied worker into focus. As much as Ford was producing automobiles, *linguistic economic ableism* was also producing Americans.[5]

Crucible of Americanization: FES Lesson Plans and the Production of the "US Worker"

The FES curriculum was delivered over thirty-four weeks. FES lessons were delivered in five steps: oral training (pronunciation), reading exercise, writing practice, review, and a grammar lesson. To help students practice penmanship, the alphabet was printed on the back of lessons in upper- and lower-case script. On one hand, penmanship activities helped students memorize concepts embedded in lessons. On the other hand, penmanship captures the spirit standardization as a foundation of industrial labor and industrial education. Historian of reading and writing practices Tamara Plakins Thornton states:

> In the early twentieth century, penmanship pedagogy aimed to make good workers, and it promised to do so by neutralizing the will and transforming the body into a machine. The thousands of ovals executed by penmanship pupils would one day translate into the thousands of bolt-tightenings executed by Henry Ford's workers. (*Handwriting in America* 165)

[5] In short, working hand in hand with the Ford Sociological Department, Ford and Peter Roberts sought to fit the immigrant worker to the laboring needs of Ford Motors and to industrial America more generally. Importantly, the Roberts Americanization curriculum may have worked to quell Ford's fear of the immigrant, which played out through an attendant fear of ethnicity, organized labor and threats of socialism. For example, speech in languages other than English might be viewed as worker resistance, which may, in turn, warrant greater surveillance. Further, pro-union discussion amongst workers was easier to monitor in an English-speaking workspace. Building upon the insight of Catherine Prendergast, who describes English as the first language of capitalism (*Buying into English* 2), I suggest that, at Ford, English made labor safe for capitalism.

According to Thornton, skill and drill exercises, which are built upon the belief that literacy and identity are developed through the labor of rote memorization, disciplines the body of the worker. The result, which Thornton describes and Ford perfects, is that FES worker-students are disciplined through English to perform the repetitive labor of the assembly line.[6]

The FES curriculum was delivered according to three themes: Commercial, Domestic, and Industrial. The Commercial Series focused on Americanizing ethnic neighborhoods. Stephen Meyer describes the Commercial Series as attempting "to break the economic power of immigrant bosses, who sold goods and services, who served as employment, travel, and shipping agents, and who functioned as bankers in the immigrant neighborhoods" (*The Five Dollar Day* 157). Encouraging workers to purchase land and houses also helped Ford accomplish overlapping goals. First, such purchases created avenues of investment, which, as far as Ford was concerned, helped to create more reliable workers, focused on life in the United States. Turning again to head of the Sociological Department, Samuel Marquis: "We encourage these men to buy homes, knowing that the ownership of property will lead to interest in local civic matters" ("The Ford Idea" 18). Second, investing in homes and property was also a way of shifting the balance of power in worker-employer relations. Creating worker debt develops a workforce dependent upon constant employment. But it wasn't only the land or the type of home that was important. Ford wanted workers to invest in and live in single-family homes. Returning to Marquis, who states: "Mr. Ford's idea is that the home in which there are roomers or boarders can never be a

[6] As much as Ford sought to perfect worker bodies through language training, the threat of industrial accidents, which maimed and disabled worker bodies, were an ongoing concern. Around the time of the founding of the FES, worker protections contributed to shifts in thinking about the body of the industrial worker. With the rise of workmen's compensation laws, for example, the "crushed fingers and other impairments" that had signified a history of industrial labor and even expertise, came to signify the industrial laborer as a liability (Rose *No right to be idle: The invention of disability, 1840s–1930s* 123).

real home" (14-15). Thus, the FES curriculum sought to Americanize not only workers, but worker neighborhoods.

Ford's commitment to the Americanization of worker neighborhoods included company lawyers, who counseled workers that sought to finance the purchase of property and homes. According to a statement attributed to Henry Ford: "Our lawyers will give each man help that he can be certain is sincere and honest. We will investigate the land he wishes to buy to see if the price is right and will supervise the contract" ("Squalid Homes Banned by Ford"). Ford's commitment to honesty in such dealings is evident in the FES curriculum, where FES students are reminded that "Honesty is the only policy" when choosing a real estate agent to work with ("Lesson No. 49: A Good House"; "Lesson No. 51: Buying a Home"); that gas and electricity are the markers of a desirable home ("Lesson No. 50: A Modern Home"); that the Ford man hires a contractor ("Lesson No. 52: Building a House"), who labors according to plan, using the necessary tools to do what needs to be done to construct a house ("Lesson No. 53: Building a House, continued"). In short, through *linguistic economic ableism*, Ford strategically disrupted social practices of ethnic identity, language, and community practices with the aim of instilling middle-class values and practices, thus transforming ethnic neighborhoods according to Ford's vision of an American way of life.

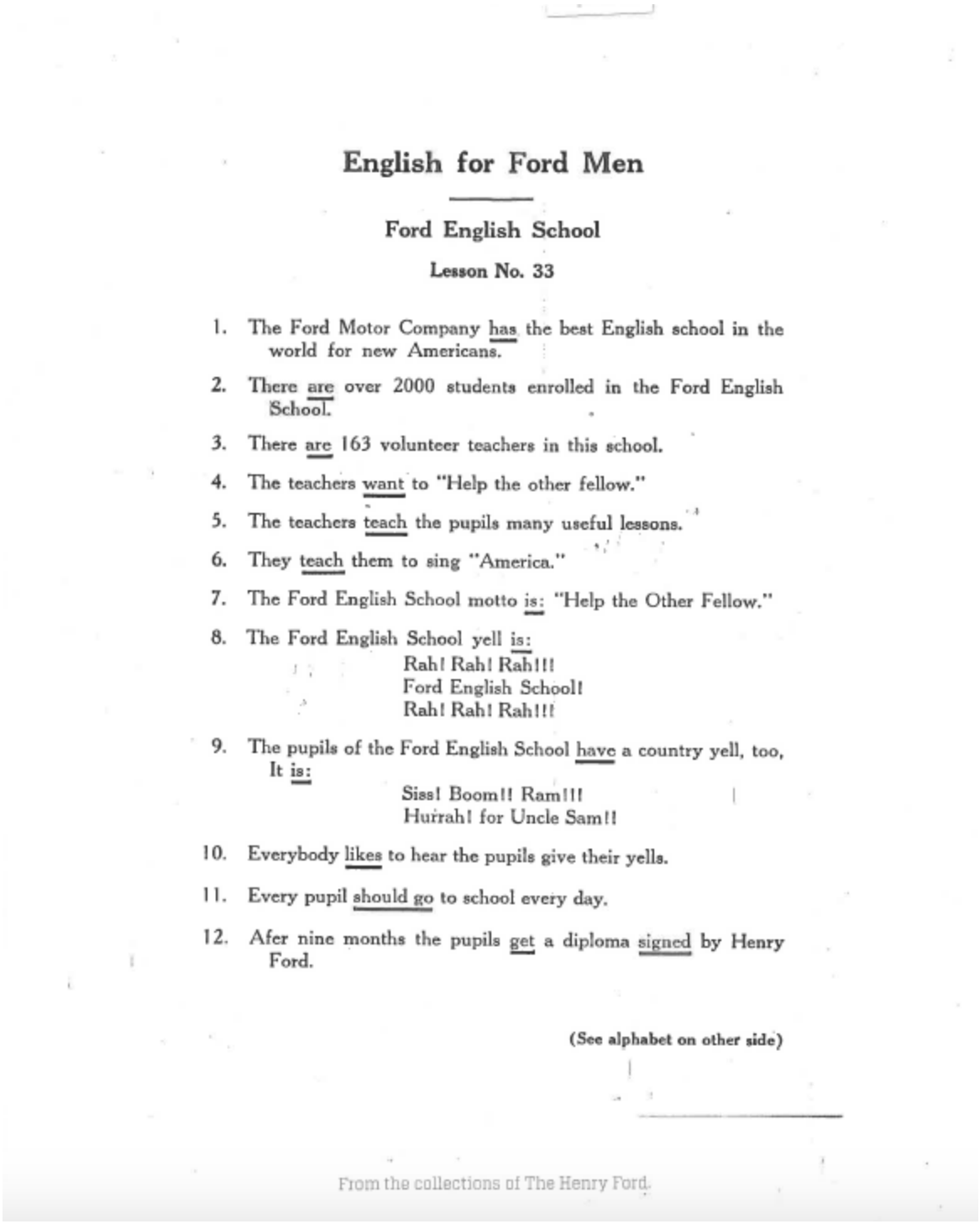
Next, the Domestic Series emphasizes the relationship between the factory and the home. In a keynote delivered to the National Education Association circa 1916, Samuel Marquis emphasized the relationship between industrial labor and domestic life, stating: "The welfare of the factory . . . depends upon the home" ("The Ford Idea in Education" 14). Marquis continues to describe the value of the laborer's family to the company, with an emphasis on industrial productivity, stating: "When the efficiency of a good workman begins to decline, we have come,

as the result of past experiences, to look into the home for some kind of domestic trouble" (13-14). From a pedagogical perspective, Marquis' concern with worker homes and factory productivity underlies a much deeper concern for industrial manufacturing on a national and even international scale. Similarly, Peter Roberts describes the rationale for the Domestic Series as rooted in experiences common "to all peoples reared in our customs of western civilization" (*English* 20). The concerns of Marquis and Roberts are distilled in "Lesson No. 9: Spending an Evening with a Friend at Home," which speaks to domestic social relations as a foundation of a healthy and happy laborer, stating: "The home is the foundation of our nation" ("Lesson No. 9"). Thus, the Domestic Series of lessons convey Ford's concerns with "right" ways of living in urban spaces as a project of Americanization.

But what makes a good family life? Time with family and a relationship with God are central tenets of the life and the spirit of the Ford Man. Lesson No. 11 states: "A good son takes his mother to church often" ("Lesson No. 11: Sunday"). Cleanliness is a related concern. For example, the home is where the Ford Man gets up early on laundry day to clean and "hang the clothes on the line to dry" ("Lesson No. 3: Wash Day"). Instilling literacy practices is also important. In the evenings, when not attending the FES classes, the Ford Man reads a newspaper "by the reading table," or reads "a good book" until bedtime ("Lesson No. 8: An Evening at Home"); he may also sit at a table "to write a long letter to a friend" ("Lesson No. 13: Writing to a Friend"). In short, as it is enacted through the Domestic Series of the FES curriculum, the fitness and the ability of the industrial laborer is tied to domestic relations and responsibilities, where family, friends and Christian God make up the foundation of productivity at work and community at home. With the worker's family values articulated, the Industrial Series focused on the communicative needs of laborers in English-speaking industrial spaces. These lessons

were concerned with subjects such as looking for work, industrial accidents, as well as safety in urban spaces (Roberts *English* 23). For example, “Lesson No. 35: Safety First,” describes the need for caution at railroad crossings and on Detroit streets given the threat of careless drivers of automobiles.

Given the limited number of lesson plans uncovered in the archive, let us now turn to “Lesson No. 33: Ford English School” (see fig. 1) for a glimpse into the structure of the school, the lessons, as well as methods of delivery. Lesson No. 33 occurs about halfway through the curriculum delivered over eight and a half months, perhaps as a way of checking in with students, reminding them of expectations and responsibilities, and the direction they should be headed.



English for Ford Men

Ford English School

Lesson No. 33

1. The Ford Motor Company has the best English school in the world for new Americans.
2. There are over 2000 students enrolled in the Ford English School.
3. There are 163 volunteer teachers in this school.
4. The teachers want to "Help the other fellow."
5. The teachers teach the pupils many useful lessons.
6. They teach them to sing "America."
7. The Ford English School motto is: "Help the Other Fellow."
8. The Ford English School yell is:
   Rah! Rah! Rah!!!
   Ford English School!
   Rah! Rah! Rah!!!
9. The pupils of the Ford English School have a country yell, too, It is:
   Siss! Boom!! Ram!!!
   Hurrah! for Uncle Sam!!
10. Everybody likes to hear the pupils give their yells.
11. Every pupil should go to school every day.
12. Afer nine months the pupils get a diploma signed by Henry Ford.

(See alphabet on other side)

Fig. 1. "Lesson No. 33: Ford English School." Benson Ford Research Center, The Henry Ford, [circa 1915].

As it was for all lessons, the header of the lesson declares "English for Ford Men," which helps the student imagine an emerging national and gendered identity as normative Ford Man. The

lesson is made up of twelve sentences that describe an orientation away from their home country and toward the United States. Given Ford's need to build a stable workforce, he did not want laborers to take their training back home once World War I had come to an end. To reinforce a commitment to the USA, students were taught to sing Samuel F. Smith's 1832 "America," which served as the de facto national anthem before the adoption of "The Star-Spangled Banner" as the official anthem in 1931. Students were also taught the motto of the school: "Help the other fellow." Presumably, "help" in this context refers to processes of assimilation. Further, students were taught the school yell, which echoes Ford's nationalism: "Siss! Boom!! Ram!!! / Hurrah! For Uncle Sam!!" The lesson goes on to address student attendance, which is rooted in Ford's policy of mandatory enrollment, stating: "Every student should go to school every day." Finally, the lesson ties the completion of the curriculum to material evidence of literacy: "After nine months the pupils get a diploma signed by Henry Ford" ("Lesson No. 33: Ford English School"). If it were up to Ford, all students would be heading to federal offices to be naturalized.

Indeed, the FES curriculum finished up with directions for applying for US citizenship. "Lesson No. 64" describes the step-by-step process of applying for naturalization. According to the lesson, the applicant must speak and write in English, must renounce allegiance to their home country, and must swear off anarchy and polygamy.[7] In *Producing Good Citizens*, Amy Wan asks: "why is citizenship a faithful goal of literacy instruction?" (17). When combined with literacy training, citizenship training acts "as a kind of credential with legal and cultural purchase" determining who is fit, who is not (6). To put Wan's insight into perspective, the FES diploma, as a form of official papers, is material evidence of literacy and national belonging that

[7] Anarchy was a political concern that spoke to the potential political instability of the nation rooted in industrial society. In 1901, Polish American anarchist and steelworker Leon Frank Czolgosz, who grew up in Detroit and labored across Rust Belt cities, assassinated President William McKinley. There is no evidence that Czolgosz was a polygamist.

enables, as Kate Vieira states, the immigrant as potential citizen "to move up, to move around, and to get by" (*American by Paper* 3) in industrial America. Building upon the insight of Wan and Vieira, citizenship, then as today, is a route away from the precarious conditions of undocumented labor. But there were limits to the value of Americanization. Ford's English language curriculum founded on the ideology of *linguistic economic ableism* did not open doors across social classes. Said another way, middle-class job opportunities did not simply materialize for Ford English School graduates. Instead, Ford maintained a sharp line between the Americanized assembly line worker and the managerial middle class. The immigrant worker could mimic the literacy of the middle-class, but not necessarily enjoy laboring opportunities afforded to middle-class engineers, foremen or managers. At Ford, English and US citizenship were markers of middle-class values that did not propel the Americanized immigrant into the middle class.

Through this overview of the FES, we see the inscription of *linguistic economic ableism* onto the body of the immigrant. Ford used English as the vehicle for the transmission of middle-class values and beliefs, thereby readying the body, the mind, and the voice of the worker to the benefit of the company and the country. According to Ford's plan, an English-speaking workforce engaged efficiencies generated by the assembly line, while making immigrant labor acceptable for otherwise leery Anglo-Saxon, middle-class industrialists that viewed ethnic and linguistic differences as "offensive or dangerous" (McBride 145). Thus, the assimilated immigrant emerging from the melting pot, having shed the cultural and linguistic markers that would otherwise label him disabled, presents instead as the clean, literate, home-owning, family-oriented, English-speaking, Americanized worker-citizen.

Despite Ford's massive investment in the Ford English School, this system of managerial control would not last. By the late 1910s and early 1920s, the Americanization Movement was suffering from critiques that described poor teacher training, an inability to meet the needs of students, and nativism. Further, the failure of the Americanization movement is rooted in a pedagogy that encouraged immigrants "to assimilate at the expense of their home languages and cultures" (Dayton-Wood 409). Ford's Americanization project took an even darker turn. Labor historian Barrett describes the punitive treatment of labor that signals the end of the Ford English School and the Sociological Department, stating:

> By 1919 Ford had traded its melting pot and elaborate welfare program for an extensive network of spies and a practice of firing workers for disloyalty to the nation or the corporation. Employers saw these programs as part of a broad effort to inoculate immigrant workers against the dangers of bolshevism and other forms of radicalism. They called their new offensive, which mixed lockouts, industrial espionage, and private armies and police forces with welfare plans and company unions, the "American Plan." (1019)

Despite the closure of the FES, an ideology of Americanization, with its attendant relationships to nationalism and ableism, continues to be threaded through conversations on the individual and national character of the American. For example, in September 2020, the National Archives Museum, a site of national memory, was used as a backdrop for the first *White House Conference on American History*. During this event, the twice impeached former president of the United States described an imagined need to develop a "pro-American curriculum" to "restore patriotic education to our schools" as a response to the diversity of voices that seek to account for racial oppression within narratives of American history (Trump "White House Conference on American History"). In short, the Americanization of the next generation of American worker-student is tied to an ongoing history of nativist and ableist ideology.

The Fire Still Burns: Worker Education Today

The industrial education materials examined here are over a century old. But the project of Americanizing laboring and schooling bodies continues, echoing Ford's concern with the body of the worker as a driver of the company and the economy. For example, business owners continue to lament the unfulfilled potential of the immigrant that may remain hidden "behind a language barrier" (Pfeiffer "For More Firms"). Further, forces of standardization that reach back to Ford's assembly line remain at play in the lives of today's workers. Min-Zhan Lu describes the ways that laborers seek to "correct" their bodies through surgery as a way of accessing the promise of English and its attendant ties to success in the global economy ("Living-English Work" 605). Even more, the YMCA continues its English education project for immigrant workers, built upon the legacy of Ford Motors and the Peter Roberts Americanization curriculum. Yet, unlike Ford's paternalistic education project, which was founded on early 20th century welfare capitalism, today's YMCA courses are built on a foundation of neoliberal austerity practices. Whereas Ford footed the bill for the FES, nine months of "Intensive English" at today's YMCA will cost the student upwards of $4,500. Thus, today, the economic responsibility for taking on English falls on immigrant workers themselves.

Descriptions of the body of today's worker still appear to be drawn from Ford's Assembly Line American project. Through the language of 21st century capitalism, the body of the worker is imagined metaphorically. For example, according to the model of the normative Ford Man, today's "flexible" (read: efficient) worker continues to be characterized by a willingness to assimilate to the needs of the company through the performance of multiple jobs (John Leary *Keywords: The New Language of Capitalism* 158). Further, the "nimble" hands of the automobile assembler have become a synonym for efficiency (222). Thus, the capitalist

rhetoric of today continues to describe the body of the English-speaking, Americanized laborer according to efficiency and assimilation as twin foundations of a healthy economy today.

In short, then as today, through a foundation of *linguistic economic ableism*, the English language is promoted as foundational to the promise of a normalized American life. But what about our own English Composition classrooms? What does the broad picture look like? I would suggest that writing programs and universities continue to be sites of Americanization. Very often, the logic is that students need grammatical correctness and perfect usage of academic English to succeed in the university and society. But what are we missing out on by engaging this logic, focusing solely on the embodied performance of successful writing in preferred forms of English? When we engage standardized English in our writing classrooms, we engage histories of industrial relations of power that Ford inscribed onto the body of working-class immigrants over a century ago. Rather than continuing to rely on corporations and universities with curriculums that echo Ford's Americanization project, we need a more ethical intervention that works to foster a broader sense of inclusion in the public sphere—an expanded definition of "American" and "citizen," concepts that are otherwise conflated with power and whiteness. Such an ethical intervention could play out in the writing classroom, where writing instructors may otherwise be subjecting students to nativist and ableist forces of Americanization that normalize student bodies, minds, and languages as a way of preparing them for a life of labor, rather than working to help students develop a critical view of institutions with an eye toward social justice.

In closing, then, I argue that professors of rhetoric and composition teach early 20th century industrial histories of English language education, with an eye toward *linguistic economic ableism*. Teaching such histories may help the writing teacher recognize institutional and systemic features of teaching writing related to the spaces in which we teach; the ways in

which our pedagogies and our assessment, particularly related to standardized English, may be designed according to nativist and ableist thinking; further, how academic literacy is tied to preferred expressions of American identity, thereby undermining current notions of the writing classroom as a site of diversity and inclusion. In short, teaching histories such as the Ford English School will likely foster communication and scholarship related to forces of assimilation, ethnicity, and linguistic differences that continue to shape the lives of students at school, at work, and in the world.

Chapter Two

Educating Students and Workers: A Ford-like network of industrial and academic education

> The road to American citizenship, to the English language, and an understanding of American social and political ideals is the road to industrial peace.
>
> Gerd Korman, "Americanization at the Factory Gate" (1965)

> Race and heredity may be beyond our organized control; but the instrument of common language is at hand for conscious improvement through education and social environment.
>
> John R. Commons, *Races and Immigration in America* (1914)

> No race can prosper till it learns that there is as much dignity in tilling a field as in writing a poem.
>
> Booker T. Washington, "The Atlanta Compromise Speech" (1895)

Ford's early 20th century educational initiatives are rooted in a longer history of industrial education. In the 1870s, an American industrial education movement emerged within public and private urban and rural schools. In the coming decades, public and private vocational and manual-training high schools were established across industrial centers of the country (Cohen "The Industrial Education Movement" 95). Often, the goal in these instructions was to meet the needs of industrial society. Further, growing populations of immigrant students as well as the migration of white and racialized laborers from the American south to industrial centers in the north spurred the growth of the movement, which also intensified tensions between social groups. On one hand, as it was at the FES, industrial education was considered the solution for those students described as culturally disabled, who were thought to be "academically inept" and "unscholarly" (100). On the other hand, the upward mobility of previous generations of immigrants to the US resulted in a growing apprehension amongst already Americanized citizens

and their families (109). The industrial education movement continued to develop up until the passage of the Smith-Hughes National Vocational Education Act of 1917, which "restricted federal aid to schools offering vocational training to persons over fourteen years of age," thereby letting the steam out of the movement. Yet, the legacy of the movement remains through the conviction "that in a system of mass education, the academic side of school work was inappropriate for a majority of the nation's [minoritized] children" (110). Fortunately for industrialists such as Henry Ford, immigrant, racialized, and students from lower social classes who were considered unfit for classical education could be ushered toward more useful industrial futures.

Industrial manufacturing, literacy training and public education go hand in hand. In *Now You See It*, scholar of cultural history and technology Cathy N. Davidson provides an overview of the disciplinary impact of public and industrial education from the late 19th century, with echoes of Ford's educational project, stating:

> Public education was seen as the most efficient way to train potential workers for labor in the newly urbanized factories. Teaching them control, socializing them for the mechanized, routinized labor of the factory was all part of the educational imperative of the day. Whether meant to calm the supposedly unruly immigrant populace coming to American shores or to urbanize farmers freshly arriving in the city, education was designed to train unskilled workers to new tasks that required a special, dedicated form of attention . . . In ways large and small, the process mimicked the forms of specialized labor on the assembly line, as well as the divisions of labor (from the CEO down to the manual laborers) in the factory itself. (72-73)

Davidson continues, describing the assembly line system manufacture as a driver of intended outcomes of public school pedagogy with an emphasis on efficiency, stating:

> With machines that needed to run on schedule and an assembly line that required human precision and efficiency, schools began to place a great emphasis on time and timeliness. Curriculum, too, was directed toward focusing on a task, including the mastery of a specified syllabus of required learning. "Efficiency" was the byword of the day, in the world of work and in the world of school. Learning to pay attention as directed—through rote memorization and mastery of facts—was important, and schools even developed

> forms of rapid-fire question-and-answer, such as the spelling bee or the math bee. This was a new skill, different from the elite models of question-and-answer based on the Socratic method; the agrarian model of problem solving, in which one is responsible for spotting a problem and solving it (whether a wilted corn tassel or an injured horse); and the apprenticeship model of the guild wherein one learned a craft by imitating the skills of a master. An assembly line is far more regular and regulated. One person's tardiness, no matter how good the excuse, can destroy everyone else's productivity on the line. Mandatory and compulsory schooling for children was seen as a way of teaching basic knowledge—including the basic knowledge of tasks, obedience, hierarchy, and schedules. (73)

As Davidson states, the goals of public and industrial education are to educate students according to the needs of industrial production, particularly the needs of the assembly line, with a dual emphasis on timeliness and efficiency as twin foundations of productivity. Such productivity is not only a corporate concern, but a national concern. Scholar of education David F. Labaree describes the production and maintenance of a workforce as an indicator of the economic health of the nation, stating: "The social efficiency approach to schooling argues that our [national] economic well-being depends on our ability to prepare the young to carry out useful economic roles with competence" ("Public Goods, Private Goods" 42). As Davidson and Labaree make clear, production in industrial manufacturing is the concern of the company, the laborer, and the country. In this way, the fitness of the Americanized industrial worker is a national concern. Chapter One focused on the Ford English School's processes of Americanization, which was founded upon an ideology of *linguistic economic ableism* with attendant concerns of worker safety and efficiency. In this way, the FES is tied to a wider history of shaping an industrial class of labor through the curriculum and pedagogy of industrial education.

This chapter will describe a wider view of a Ford-like network of opportunity within industrial and academic education. The goal of this chapter is to situate the Ford English School within a network of Henry Ford's education initiatives as well as a wider history of industrial

education and manual labor tied to *linguistic economic ableism*. Making these wider connections will help us think about the ways in which the English language—and Ford's impulse toward English Only policy—has been at the center of the education of worker-students as a foundation of producing an able-bodied American worker-citizen. Next, this chapter will turn to the Henry Ford Trade School where Ford sought to educate high school aged boys in industrial labor. Then, the chapter will turn to Ford's contributions to the Berry Schools and the George Washington Carver School for Negros—both of which were located near Ford's winter home in Richmond Hill, Georgia and that present a wider history of Ford's industrial education efforts. The chapter will then return to Detroit to describe Ford's work with the Engineering College at the University of Michigan, which invited "international students" (a term used to denote the middle-class status) to Ford Motors.

To complicate Ford's industrial education project, the chapter will then present a counter network of schools, education clubs, and colleges that resisted—to greater or lesser degrees—corporate descriptions of industrial education and English language learning amongst immigrant student populations. For example, the Polish Mission of the Orchard Lakes Schools taught a classical curriculum, whereas the *Polskie Uniwerstety Ludowe* (*PUL*) or the Polish People's University, taught a curriculum rooted in concerns of working-class Polish communities. The Proletarian Party, founded in Detroit, offered a political curriculum that sought to educate Polish worker-students according to pro-labor ideology. And Brookwood Labor College, which sought to develop labor activists through a curriculum that would play out in factories and on the streets amongst workers in pursuit of social justice within capitalist industrial workplaces.

Throughout this counter network, educational curriculum and labor organizing were developed not only in English, but across languages. The tension between these educational

initiatives will illuminate the struggle between working class students, administrators of industrial education programs, and factory owners, who sought to build an American industrial workforce made up of immigrant, native, and racialized workers from rural and urban spaces.

Rust Belt Education: The Henry Ford Trade School

In addition to Americanizing adult immigrant workers through the Ford English School, Ford also founded the Henry Ford Trade School (HFTS) to track high school aged boys into industrial labor. Two years after founding the Ford English School, the Henry Ford Trade School (HFTS) was founded. The HFTS was first established next door to the Highland Park plant at the St. Francis Orphans Home, which speaks to the intended student population. In 1927, a branch of the HFTS opened at Ford's Rouge plant, where the entire school was moved by 1930. Beginning in 1935, Detroit public schools accepted credits from the HFTS towards a high school diploma. By 1944, the HFTS became an accredited high school, which broadened even further Ford's ability to meet its labor needs.

The administration of the HFTS was made up of FES administrators—Samuel Marquis and Clinton DeWitt, who were joined by a third administrator, H. E. Hartman—all Ford Motors employees. The minutes of the meeting that established the HFTS speak to Henry Ford's goals of the school, stating:

> It is his [Henry Ford's] wish to take boys from fourteen to eighteen years of age, who for any reason are unable to continue their school studies, and place them in an institution where they can obtain an education and a mechanical training, at the same time, be receiving a living wage. He has therefore, conceived the idea of a Trade School to be operated at the Highland Park plant, closely connected with, yet entirely distinct from the Ford Motor Company. ("Minute Book" 4)

According to HFTS administrators, Ford ushered those students considered to be academically unfit—those "unable to continue their school studies"—toward industrial labor. According to

archivists at the Benson Ford Research Center, the HFTS sought to enroll local "low-income" students, including "orphans or breadwinners in fatherless families." The HFTS trained these students for future employment as draftsmen and technicians at Ford Motors. Students learned by doing according to an apprentice system of education, creating components for local factories, and performing maintenance and repair of the tools used in the Ford factory ("Q. What information do you have on the Henry Ford Trade School?"). In this way, students of the HFTS may have found greater opportunity at Ford than would have graduates of the Ford English School who worked on the line.

As the above examples show, like the FES, the HFTS and Ford factory were interconnected. Methods of labor informed methods of pedagogical delivery. The HFTS manual training curriculum focused on the skilled trades, including machining, drafting, and engine design. Courses included electricity, chemistry, metallography (the science of the structure and properties of metals), trigonometry, driver's training, and so on. In addition to manual training, the HFTS also taught a blended curriculum of academic and industrial labor courses, including public speaking, Foremanship, Human Relations in Business, typing, advanced mathematics, American history, and English.

Importantly, the HFTS curriculum also included a basic English course. At the time of this writing, the HFTS Basic English textbook is on display at the Henry Ford Museum of American Innovation in Dearborn, Michigan—one of but a handful of material references to Ford's English language project on display there. The introduction to the textbook explains the intended outcome of the curriculum: to teach general grammar rules so that students learn the "correct" use of language (*Basic English*). Unlike the FES, which tied employment to Americanization and the promotion of U.S. citizenship, English language education at the HFTS

was tied to an industrial education as a foundation of learning a trade. To this end, the Basic English course focused on sentence diagraming, which, in a sense, reverse engineers a sentence according to grammatical parts. Most methods of sentence diagramming can be traced back to the Reed-Kellogg Method. According to Alonzo Reed and Brainerd Kellogg, the goal of sentence diagramming was to help the student engage "a map" to discover the logic of a sentence (*Higher Lessons in English* 8). Reed taught English grammar and Kellogg taught English language and literature courses at the Brooklyn Collegiate and Polytechnic Institute, the second oldest private engineering and technology school in the US. Considering the link between engineering, technology, and grammar embodied in the Reed-Kellogg Method, is it any wonder that sentence diagrams resemble schematics engineers use to make meaning easier to grasp?

Through sentence diagrams, we also recognize the impact that the need for scientific "correctness" has on the importance of "correctness" of grammar over persuasion as a rhetorical art. When we consider the ways in which the students of the HFTD, who were often marginalized according to social class and family circumstance, the need for scientific and grammatical correctness come to be intertwined in the ability of the worker to make their way within industrial laboring spaces. Because they received wages for their labor, many HFTS students were able to support a life of subsistence as they made their way toward employment within industrial Detroit and often at Ford after graduation. In this way, the Henry Ford Trade School was founded upon an ideology of *linguistic economic ableism*—or the ability of the worker to make their way within the industrial spaces—designed to meet the laboring needs of academically "unfit" boys within industrial Detroit.

Beyond the Rust Belt: Henry Ford, the Berry Schools, and Manual Education

Henry Ford's industrial education project extended far beyond the borders of greater Detroit. In the 1920s, Henry and his wife Clara sought out a seasonal home to escape Michigan winters. They landed in Richmond Hill, Georgia, which created an opportunity for the expansion of the Ford industrial education project. While on an early trip to Georgia, Henry and Clara attended a luncheon hosted by Mina Edison, the wife of Thomas Edison, through a local chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution ("The Reminiscences of Mrs. Inez Henry" 14-15). Like Ford, the Daughters of the American Revolution were concerned with Americanization and the principles of "good" citizenship (Wheaton "Survey of Adult Immigrant Education" 63). At that luncheon, Ford met Martha Berry, founder of the Berry Schools, which were located near Rome, Georgia. That afternoon, Ford discovered that Berry's concern with the labor of students echoed his own—that a school curriculum should teach "the hand as well as the mind" ("Mrs. Inez Henry" 17). Martha Berry's concerns with the education and the labor of students must have piqued Ford's interest.

The Berry Schools, like the Henry Ford Trade School, were founded upon the logic of industrial manufacturing. In 1902, Martha Berry founded the Boys Industrial School, adding the Martha Berry School for Girls in 1909, which became the Berry Junior College in 1926. Ford's relationship with the Berry Schools is recounted through Inez Henry, who was interviewed for The Ford Reminiscences Oral Histories (FROH) project in 1952.[8] Inez Henry was first a student at the Berry Schools, then was an assistant to Martha Berry for over twenty years ("Mrs. Inez

[8] The Ford Reminiscences Oral Histories (FROH) were conducted from 1951-1956 to celebrate Ford's fifty-year anniversary. Oral historian Owen W. Bombard of Columbia University's Oral History Research Office (OHRC), which was founded by Ford historian Allan Nevins, headed up the FROH. According to Bombard, the FROH performed over three hundred interviews that were organized according to two groups: first, close associates of Henry Ford, including "friends, business and social acquaintances, and domestics," who could speak about the man in private or exclusive spaces ("A New Measure" 127). Second, workers who held "positions of responsibility"—in "operations, purchasing, manufacturing, and engineering" (128). Related to Ford workers, Bombard notes the promise of the FROH to produce Ford history from below: "For the first time the previously unknown technicians, tool designers, and engineers whose skill was responsible for the technological revolution of mass production have emerged from obscurity to take their proper place in the American industry" (131).

Henry" 35). According to Inez Henry, the Berry School curriculum was designed to meet the needs of students (5) according to a pedagogy of self-sufficiency. Henry states: "Miss Berry was teaching the boys and girls to take what they had, and to make what they need" (40). The Berry Schools curriculum was based on academic and trades courses, like the Henry Ford Trade School, with the addition of home economics and home nursing courses. In addition to the curriculum, Berry students performed labor to keep the school up and running, building school roads, growing vegetables, cooking meals and more. Given the workload, Berry students went to school four days a week and worked for two days a week (6). In short, the Berry Schools taught students the knowledge and skills necessary for life in early 20th century rural America, when students had to tend to their own needs rather than rely on supply chains that delivered goods and services to their dormitories.[9]

Like the Daughters of the American Revolution, which was a patron of the Berry Schools (Dunning "Educational Work of the Daughters of the American Revolution" 51), Ford provided financial support to grow the Berry Schools. Once Ford joined Miss Berry's project, Ford's banker, E. G. Leibold, took the lead in the financial relationship between Ford and Martha Barry, making several trips to the Berry Schools over the years. In his FROH interview, Leibold guessed that Ford may have gifted up to two million dollars to the Berry Schools ("The Reminiscences of E. G. Leibold, Part II" 1447), which, when adjusted for inflation, would be equivalent to about twenty-eight million dollars today. Ford's patronage is reflected through the construction and the naming of the Ford Complex of eight buildings, including Clara Hall

[9] Today, the Berry Schools is known as Berry College, a private liberal arts institution, which maintains a student work program based on Martha Berry's pedagogy of self-sufficiency. For example, Berry students today craft and sell their goods through various initiatives, including The Berry Farms Jersey Milk Enterprise, Berry Bees, Blue Hen eggs, Viking Furniture, and the Angus Beef Enterprise.

(Henry Ford's wife), Mary Hall (Ford's mother), Ford Auditorium, and the Ford Dining Hall. As a foundation of the Berry construction project, Ford also funded the construction of a brick plant, including a kiln ("The Reminiscences of W. Mr. M. Gordon Keown" 19-20), which helped to facilitate student labor and the future growth of the Berry Schools. Ford's relationship with the Berry Schools continued for the rest of his life. Henry and Clara continued to visit the Berry Schools at least once a year for twenty-five years ("Inez Henry" 22) until Henry's death in April of 1947. Yet, Ford's influence at the Berry School continues to be recognized today. In 2020, Architecture MasterPrize honored the restoration work of Berry College's Ford Auditorium.

In addition to growing the campus of the Berry Schools, Ford also contributed to Martha Berry's English language learning project. Ford donated copies of the *McGuffey Reader*—a popular primer of the time—to teach reading, spelling, and public speaking to students at Miss Berry's Sunday School, which was named Possum Trot. Shaping literacy practices of industrial worker-children through Sunday school literacy programs is rooted in histories of industrial education going back to the First Industrial Revolution (from 1760 to around 1840). Michael Pennell describes a history of managerial control of worker-children through company sponsored Sunday school literacy programs at New England textile mills. Beginning around 1795-1797, Slater Mill in Pawtucket, Rhode Island founded a Sunday school, which provided literacy and moral education to mold "good workers and good citizens" ("More than a 'Curious Cultural Sideshow'" 61), thereby shaping village civic life (62). The Slater Mill Sunday school system of managerial control, which anticipates Ford Motors' contributions to Possum Trot as well as methods of worker control at Highland Park, helps us place Ford's industrial education project, from the Berry Schools, including Possum Trot to the Henry Ford Trade School and the Henry Ford English School, within a larger historical project of producing workers—including adults,

high school aged students and children—through English language education and industrial labor.

In short, with Ford's sponsorship, the Berry Schools provided an academic curriculum alongside a manual labor project, whereby the character of the student was tied to the labor of the student as well as an ability to make their way in the world—whether that be rural Georgia or urban Detroit. It should be noted though that the education work at the Berry Schools occurred within the context of racial segregation of education, which was the law of the land at that time. Turning again to Inez Henry: "we haven't had any colored student at Berry" ("Inez Henry" 46). Despite Ford's interest in education and industry, he was not in the interested in the business of desegregation. In fact, back in Detroit, African American workers often labored in the foundry, not because the labor or the literacy was simple—in fact foundry labor is difficult and dangerous—but because black bodies were often tracked into the foundry, just as immigrant bodies were tracked on to the assembly line. Instead, Ford engaged hierarchical thinking that tracked minoritized bodies into forms and sites of industrial labor.

Turning again to Inez Henry, Ford "had very little to say about the race problems here" (46). Thus, Ford's funding of the Berry Schools supported the education of white students only and in this way took place according to hierarchies of race, language, and citizenship. Here we begin to glimpse the ways in which an ideology of *linguistic economic ableism* is tied to race alongside nationality, ethnicity, and language. An ideology of *linguistic economic ableism* is concerned with the delivery of a curriculum meant to bring about the body of the normalized English-speaking American citizen. Yet, in segregated America, particularly in the American south, where white students are enrolled in white schools, African American students were

excluded from an academic and manual curriculum that sought to instill and nurture self-sufficiency according to a literacy of middle-class industrial labor.

Collecting New Workers for Ford's Highland Park Plant

From far and wide, Ford's industrial and literacy educational initiatives fed back into the production of industrial labor in Detroit. For example, Henry Ford invited graduates of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School to train and work at the Highland Park plant. In an address delivered to the YMCA on May 17, 1916, FES administrator Samuel Marquis described how Ford invited graduates of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School to Detroit for training in mechanics and employment at the Highland Park plant (Marquis "Address delivered by Dean Marquis May 17, 1916" p. 12). Perhaps most importantly for Ford, Carlisle graduates had already undergone an English language curriculum of Americanization rooted in an ideology of *linguistic economic ableism*, which sought to make American Indian students fit for industrial labor within urban America. In "The Historical Work of Cultural Rhetorics" Sarah Klotz describes a history of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, painting a picture of the Carlisle curriculum as built upon settler colonial logic, which frames American Indian students as unfit for an American life in the US. Central to Klotz' study are tensions between linguistic purity and difference, which play out in the fitness of the body of the student related to national belonging (4) associated with the ability of the Americanized industrial worker to speak English. In this way, the curriculum of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School overlaps with that of the FES, making the graduate of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School a seemingly natural (or, in the rhetoric of immigration, naturalized) fit for future training and labor at Ford's Highland Park plant. Further, Ford's invitation to graduates of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School to come the

Highland Park plant may have solidified the intended effect of the Carlisle curriculum, which was focused on the cultural and linguistic erasure of the American Indian through the English language.

Given the masses of workers who migrated to industrial Detroit in the first decades of the twentieth century, industrial jobs were at a premium. Tensions between worker groups developed along racial and national lines. Thaddeus Radzilowski describes the complex scene in Detroit for us:

> Beginning with the First World War, white Southerners had begun to come north and to compete with immigrants for work in the auto plants. They brought their nativism and racial attitudes with them. The parallel stream of black migrants also began to threaten the immigrants' access to jobs. Ethnic workers started to identify as "white" in reaction, in order to get a leg up in the competition. Blacks, in turn, seeing desirable jobs held by immigrants who had arrived only shortly before them became increasingly nativist, arguing that work should be reserved for U.S.-born citizens and denied to foreign-born. The hunger, unemployment, and insecurity of the Great Depression exacerbated the grievances and sharpened the antagonism of the three groups at the bottom of Detroit's society. ("Introduction" 20)

Radzilowski's description of tensions according to racial, ethnic, and national difference may have been made even more complex with Ford's invitation extended to Carlisle graduates. Given Ford's adherence to racial hierarchies in education, tensions between worker identity groups may have been part of Ford's solution to his labor problem. Infighting amongst members of the working class occupies energy that might otherwise be used to address issues of wages, labor conditions, and other worker concerns. In this way, the managerial class of industrialists gain the upper hand as minoritized workers squabble amongst themselves. We must not forget the added tensions of linguistic difference, which on one hand complicate these squabbles, and on the other help Ford prop up the image of the Ford Man as the solution to infighting amongst workers. In short, the Ford Man, who reveals himself through standardized English, transforms the immigrant, the American Indian, and the rural African American and Southern white worker into

the ideal urban industrial laborer who values the company before their own identity, thereby signifying the trustworthy civil and patriotic status of the English-speaking (Horner *Rewriting Composition* 102) worker.

Ford's network of industrial education also engaged international engineering students and professors from nearby University of Michigan to the Highland Park plant. In "The Myth of Linguistic Homogeneity," which calls on composition teachers to reimagine the writing classroom in which language difference is the default (649), Paul Kei Matsuda points to the Engineering College at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, just fifty miles from Highland Park, as "the first English courses specifically designed for international students" (Matsuda 645; Klinger "The International Center" 1844). Four years before Ford founded the FES, J. Raleigh Nelson founded the University of Michigan English Engineering courses, promoting technical education alongside humanities courses through literature and freshman composition. In "English, Engineering, and Technical Schools," published in *The English Journal,* Nelson, describes English (literature) as "a symbol of the cultural values in engineering education" (494); he also argues that the study of English (composition) is foundational to the engineering student's chosen profession (496). Nelson's goal was to incorporate the universities' Engineering program within the fold of western liberal arts education with an eye toward the education of engineering students steeped in the liberal arts. To meet this end, Nelson added extracurricular activities to the curriculum, developing trips that would be of interest to international engineering students to make them more competitive with already Americanized, English-speaking engineering students. Ford Motors was at the center of Nelson's extracurricular activities. In addition to tours of Ford's Highland Park plant, where visitors may have visited the assembly line, the FES, and the HFTS, these University of Michigan international engineering students

also toured Greenfield Village (now called The Henry Ford Museum of American Innovation), viewing Ford's collection of industrial and cultural artifacts. As a way of tying these extracurricular trips back to the needs of the curriculum, students generated reports of their trips, which were then addressed in class (Klinger 1844).

In short, Henry Ford and J. Raleigh Nelson nurtured the education of middle-class international students of industrial engineering. Through visits to the Highland Park plant, Ford enabled students to glimpse his vision of an industrial future. Through visits to Greenfield Village, students were able to experience a history of industrial engineering that they were becoming a part of. There is no record that Ford English School or Henry Ford Trade School students made their way to Greenfield Village. Importantly, through his support of the industrial and humanities education of international students in the Engineering College at the University of Michigan, Ford contributed to the production of middle class English-speaking engineers, who would, presumably, either stay in the US or return to their home countries after graduation, and engage engineering projects that perhaps contributed to local or even national economies, thus reinforcing ideas of the dominance of industrial manufacturing and national prosperity tied to the English language and Americanization. Thus, the ideology of *linguistic economic ableism* enacted at Ford's Highland Park plant operated across lines of social class, race, and nationalities. In this way, Ford contributed to the spread of Americanization across international and middle-class borders.

African American Education and the Limits of the Ford Man

Although Ford worked within the confines of segregation, his industrial education project was not a Whites Only project. In Richmond Hill, Georgia, Ford helped found the George

Washington Carver School for Negroes (GWCSN). According to the oral history of H. G. Cooper, who was the first principle of the GWCSN from 1939 until 1946, when he quit in protest, Ford founded the school with the support of Dr. George Washington Carver and Dr. Patterson, president of the Tuskegee Institute ("The Reminiscences of Mr. H.G. Cooper" 13). To get the school up and running, Ford bussed African American students from seven area schools to the GWCSN (3), unfortunately (but perhaps purposefully) located at a former plantation. Like the Berry Schools, in addition to academic courses, the GWCSN offered manual training courses. In these courses, curriculum was tied to gender. Girls were tracked into a home economics curriculum, with courses on "sewing, cooking, family relations, home nursing, and consumer buying" (6). Trades education courses for boys included carpentry and farming (7). According to Principal Cooper, the intended outcome of the GWCSN curriculum was "to teach the boys a trade" so they could "build something for the home, keep a farm for the family" (7). In this way, the GWCSN curriculum resembled the curriculum of self-sufficiency enacted at the Berry Schools. Cooper continued, suggesting that Ford also had the goal of teaching boys "to be engineers" and "responsible citizens" (9), echoes of the Henry Ford Trade School and the Ford English School. In this way, GWCSN complimented Ford's industrial education project, perhaps even creating pre-conditions for some GWCSN students to migrate to the industrial north in search for jobs.

Ford also discovered the limits of the Ford Man in the GWCSN Adult Night School. As a foundation of Ford's industrial education project, the GWCSN engaged an English language curriculum for adult language learners. GWCSN hosted Adult Night School literacy and trade classes but closed only six years later for a perceived lack of student interest. Here again we return to Cooper's oral history, in which he describes tensions between Clara Ford, Henry Ford's

wife, who desired literacy training for African American students, and the students themselves who desired manual training and home economics courses instead. Cooper states:

> The men wanted to build cabinets, and the women wanted to sew and make quilts. We found that Mrs. [Clara] Ford didn't like that very well. She was primarily interested in their learning how to read and write. That in itself made it difficult for us to hold their interest in the night school. They were not interested in reading and writing. They were interested in making quilts, making cabinets, and doing something with their hands. ("H.G. Cooper" 5)

Principal Cooper's oral history gives us only a glimpse of the GWCSN Adult Night School history. As such, Cooper leaves us with more questions than answers related to manual training, literacy, and race according to the needs of African American adult students in rural Georgia at that time. For example, were African American students blamed for the closure of the school? If so, could this be part of Cooper's decision to leave the school in protest? Further, is it possible that an ideology of *linguistic economic ableism* that drove the FES curriculum may have been deployed at GWCSN's Adult Night School, thereby creating tensions according to the desires of African American students? At the same time, we need to acknowledge that some students at the Adult Night School may have wanted to learn English. Yet, it may be though that Clara Ford's vision for literacy training was problematic even for them.

What we do know from Cooper's oral history is that neither Clara Ford nor the GWCSN Adult Night School met the literacy needs of their students. Interestingly, the GWCSN Adult Night School, perhaps related to Clara's intervention, also seemed to disconnect English language learning from learning to make a way in the world. Back in Detroit, students made their way toward industrial labor on the line; at the Berry Schools, as Inez Henry stated earlier, students were taught to "take what they had, and to make what they need." It seems though that the GWCSN Adult Night School went against this model, which may have led to its closure only a handful of years after opening. Rather than tying the closure of the school to "ineptitude" of

students, I suggest that, nearly nine hundred miles from Detroit, the identity of the "Ford Man" simply did not translate to these students. Back in Detroit and other sites of Ford factories, the Ford Man was imagined as a way to organize and discipline laborers away from socialist and communist thinking to meet the needs of the company. Further, the ideal of the Ford Man also taught the worker to shape their own needs according to the needs of the company. Instead, these GWCSN Adult Night School students resisted taking on the identity of the "Ford Man" to retain their own cultural identity in their own local cultural context.

In short, the character of the Ford Man is built upon industrial citizenship. Taking up English, according to Ford, was an act of civic participation. According to an ideology of *linguistic economic ableism*, those considered culturally or racially unfit are blamed for not submitting to the institutional needs of education or labor. This was the case with the Ford English School and seems to have been the case at the GWCSN Adult Night school. In either instance, Ford workers who would not submit to the FES did not take a dip in Ford's melting pot. Similarly, those students at the GWCSN Adult Night School, who may have resisted English language training may have been viewed as not meeting the needs of the Ford model of industrial education and the attendant ideal of the Ford Man, whereby English language learning is a foundation of civic participation and fitness of the individual. In this case, we recognize the limits of the Ford model of industrial education, from which emerges the possibility of a counter model, which we will discuss next.

Countering the Ford Model: Educating the Polish-speaking student-worker

Despite Ford's influence and sponsorship, there were multiple sites that resisted or amended Ford's vision of industrial education. Given that Ford Motors was based in the greater Detroit

area, I want to focus this section on educational projects in Detroit. This section will discuss educational opportunities with an emphasis on Polish and Polish American students, which was the largest social group at Ford Motors. Like the Ford English School, many educational institutions were founded in response to immigration to meet the needs of a vast group of immigrant populations, many of which were drawn to the area for labor, and the promise of increased wages, though, for example, Ford's Five Dollar Day initiative.

The parochial schools of the Catholic church responded to the educational needs of Polish and Polish-American students who were emigrating to the US. For example, the Orchard Lake Schools, founded in the late 19th century and located about twenty-five miles northwest of Detroit, sought to educate Polish immigrants. From 1912 to 1928, three distinct schools—SS. Cyril and Methodius Seminary, St. Mary's College, and St. Mary's Preparatory—emerged at Orchard Lake. Importantly, the Orchard Lake Schools, which was founded by Polish immigrants, sought to preserve the culture and linguistic heritage of Polish immigrants. For example, through a curriculum of theology and divinity, the SS. Cyril & Methodius Seminary schools prepared foreign-born seminarians, primarily from Poland, to serve the mission of the Catholic Church in the US. Further, the curriculum of St. Mary's Preparatory School emphasized Polish Language, history, and culture.

Yet, perhaps in consideration of the growing dominance of Detroit's industrial society as exemplified by the Ford-like model of industrial education, the Orchard Lake Schools also placed a limit on heritage language and culture. Turning to Polish historian and co-founder of the Piast Institute, the national institute for Polish and Polish-American affairs located in Hamtramck, Michigan, Thaddeus Radzilowski describes the limits of the Polish language at the Orchard Lake Schools, particularly within the science courses, which were taught in English, and

were thought to be a foundation of modern industrial manufacturing that gave rise to Detroit as the Motor City, stating:

> Even at the Orchard Lake Schools, from the beginning the sciences were offered in English. Thus the student learned even at the Polish Colleges that "science" was not Polish. The education that Polish American Colleges offered gave its recipient mooring and a very important sense of identity so necessary in the protean world of the twentieth century but it did little to promote the idea that Polish culture had much to say to the problems of the work-a-day world of industrial society. ("Polish American Institutions of Higher Learning" 486)

As such, then, even as the Orchard Lake Schools developed a curriculum to maintain and promote the value of the culture, language, and religious traditions of Polish immigrants, Orchard Lake students also received the message that the Polish language represented limited possibility in the urban science-driven culture of 20th century American industrial manufacturing and production.

As stated above, the Ford Man is the model of the ideal, able-bodied worker—the laborer who puts the needs of the company before their own needs. Within realms of industrial technology and engineering, the image of the Ford Man can also be described as a "man of science." The man of science is a nineteenth century Anglo-American construct (White "The Man of Science" 159), composed of "highly gendered characteristics and virtues" (158), who came to embody "technical expertise," "broad interests," and "superior powers of the mind" (154). In this way, the Ford Man is uniquely positioned for a middle-class station within English-speaking industrial America. Further, according to the Orchard Lake School curriculum, if Polish immigrants were to play a role in a growing industrial society, they would have to do so in English—like a Ford Man. In this way, when it came to the science-based curriculum, the Orchard Lake Schools promoted their own version of *linguistic economic ableism* tied to early

20th century industrialization that contributed to the Americanization of Polish immigrant students.

But Parochial schools were not the only education option for adult Polish immigrants. Take for example, the Polish People's University (PPU), also known as the *Polskie Uniwerstety Ludowe*. The PPU was founded in 1908 as an education club for the working classes located in Polish communities throughout the Rust Belt, including Detroit, Chicago, New York, and Philadelphia. The PPU was modeled on the University for Everybody (*Uniwersytet dla Wszystkich*), which, back in Poland where it was located, contributed to the development of self-education and artistic movements, deepening social and national awareness among members of the working class. In the United States, as a progressive organization, the PPU helped students maintain sociocultural bonds within Polish American communities as it sought to deliver new ideas. For example, the PPU hosted "lectures and short courses on a variety of topics, from current events and contemporary economic questions to problems of philosophy, world history, and literature" (Radzilowski "Polish American Institutions" 477). Like the Mission at Orchard Lake, the PPU held classes on the history and culture of Poland. But unlike Orchard Lake, science-based classes such as mathematics and technical drawing were taught bilingually—in Polish and English. In this way, the PPU helped language-learning students engage scientific curriculum, thereby delivering the idea that the Polish language and the Polish language speaker could play a role in industrial American society. In this way, the PPU counters the Ford model of industrial education. And because language, identity and ideology are always intertwined (Scott "Writing Creates and Enacts Identities and Ideologies") it is also important to note that Polish American lecturers and teachers of the PPU were often members of the left wing of progressive American politics (Radzilowski "Polish American Institutions" 477) and in this way may have

worked to counter the political leanings of Ford model of industrial education through educational clubs and political organizations.

In 1920, as Ford's Americanization project was coming to an end at the Ford English School, the Proletarian Party was formed because of tensions between the Socialist party and the newly formed American Communist party. The Proletarian Party, which was headquartered in Detroit, Michigan, focused its energies on the education of industrial worker-students. Union organizer and political activist Margaret Nowak describes the Proletarian Party as an "educational society" (Nowak *Two Who Were There* 70) not unlike the Polish People's University. A goal of the educational arm of the Proletarian Party was the development of "a conscious and educated proletariat . . . prepared for the task of managing a humane and progressive industrial society." To this end, the party "committed itself to the massive task of the education of the working class through party schools, public lectures, political demonstrations, and publications of all kinds" (Radzilowski "Introduction" 16). The curriculum was founded on the study of economics and history, generally, including texts such as Karl Marx's and Friedrich Engels' *Communist Manifesto*, and Engels's *Origin of the Family and Socialism*, *Utopian and Scientific* (Nowak 70).[10] Proletarian Party teachers, many of whom were tied to the socialist movement, volunteered their time, much in the way FES teachers were asked to do. Some of them lived communally, sharing resources and labor (68)—practices that Henry Ford would have frowned upon. Homework assignments oriented students toward a critique of the world around them. For example, one assignment asked students to find news articles "and then seek data to either substantiate or disprove them, and then to stand before the class to express ideas" (69-70). In this way, the Proletarian Party sought to educate workers about the world at large through

[10] As of this writing, I have not been able to determine whether these texts were read in English or Polish.

history, economics, and a critique of capitalism with an eye toward values and concerns of the working class.

Like the Proletarian Party, labor colleges also sought to educate members of the working class. In *Reimagining Popular Notions of American Intellectualism*, Kelly Susan Bradbury turns toward the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs at Wayne State to provide an overview of the intended outcomes of labor colleges as a response to American industrial society, including Ford's network of industrial education, stating:

> Founded and supported by workers, labor leaders, and labor sympathizers, labor colleges were full-time, one- to three-year schools designed (1) to educate adult workers about the social, cultural, political, and economic factors affecting labor, and (2) to train them to be successful labor movement leaders and activists. To accomplish this, labor colleges implemented a curriculum with a balance of "informational" courses on subjects like labor history, economics, law, foreign labor, and modern industry, and "tool" courses teaching workers skills such as report writing, journalism, public speaking, organizing methods, and drama. The mission of labor colleges was, in fact, "not to educate workers out of their class," but to provide workers with the knowledge and tools to help enact social change, specifically to create a reconstructed social order under the control of workers (Report to the Second International Conference 8) (52).

As Bradbury states, labor colleges encouraged students to focus a critical eye on the social, cultural, political, and economic conditions of labor. Thus, labor colleges went beyond the manual training of the Henry Ford Trade School, the Berry Schools and the George Washington Carver School for Negros, making an ethical intervention in the laboring lives of students, with the aim of developing a critical view of the institution of industrial manufacturing with an eye toward social justice within a system of labor that might otherwise seek to normalize laboring bodies, minds and languages according to the needs of capitalists and corporations.

The Anti-Ford Man

Counter-models to the Ford-like network had significant impact on industrial education and industrial labor. Brookwood Labor College, which was founded in 1919 in Katonah, New York, played a central role in the labor college movement. Bradbury examines the literacy and learning practices of Brookwood College through the lens of intellectualism, challenging anti-labor critiques of this pro-worker education project, stating:

> American labor colleges like Brookwood used activist educational practices to inspire workers to be active, analytical learners and motivate them to educate others through their activist work. With the broadened view of intellectualism . . . one that values the intellectual import of the desire to learn and the work of engaging in the practice and process of inquiry, understanding, and critical thinking—the public (and particularly critics who today view labor unions as anti-intellectual) can recognize twentieth-century labor colleges like Brookwood as educational spaces that provided an intellectual core for laborers and the labor movement. (53)

Importantly, Brookwood's activist educational practices are rooted in a rhetorical awareness of diverse language practices that sought to meet the needs of student-activists. In *Activist Rhetorics and American Higher Education, 1885-1937*, Susan Kates describes the rhetorical education of Brookwood students, stating:

> Insofar as workers' education was concerned, these educators realized that they could not hope to be successful in union recruitment if their students utilized only academic discourse. Because Brookwood students were educated to serve the labor movement, they needed to reach many different audiences, audiences that included union and government officials, as well as other workers. To respond effectively to these rhetorical situations, students needed an awareness of language that would enable them to choose the mode of communication best suited to a wide variety of situations. Often rhetoric teachers at Brookwood urged students to write and speak in a vernacular that many academic institutions would have considered poor or incorrect English; however, those who attended Brookwood were encouraged to write and speak in a particular manner in order to reach specific audiences that might have found academic discourse less persuasive. (16)

To put Bradbury and Kates into perspective, the intellectual core of Brookwood College cannot be measured by adherence to standardized English language, but rather a commitment to social and political aims through vernacular language usage. This is

particularly important given the power of an ideology of *linguistic economic ableism* that undergirds standardized English, English Only policy, and the dismissal of an educational curriculum as unintellectual that does not conform and serve the institutional needs of industrial capital.

Counter-models to the Ford-like network produced the Anti-Ford Man. Members of Brookwood made significant contributions to the organization of labor within the Detroit automobile industry. For example, perhaps the best-known alum of Brookwood is labor leader Walter Reuther, who was amongst those United Automobile Workers union members that challenged Ford Motors and faced down Ford Motors thugs and Dearborn police in the Battle of the Overpass outside Ford's Rouge River plant in 1937 (the year Brookwood College closed due to financial difficulties). The Battle of the Overpass was a significant moment that contributed to the unionization of Ford Motors when in 1941 Henry Ford signed Ford's first agreement with the United Auto Workers. In this way, the Brookwood curriculum can be said to have played out in the streets of Dearborn and on the assembly line of Ford's Rouge River Plant.

Students at the Polish People's University also impacted industrial labor practices at Ford Motors. Stanley Nowak, another Anti-Ford Man, was perhaps the most prominent Polish labor leader in Detroit. He represented the emergence of a more culturally focused, pro-labor student and activist. Returning to Radzilowski, who describes Nowak as having "all of the characteristics ascribed to ethnic leaders," including "a broader education and more cosmopolitan outlook than his constituents, knowledge of the workings of the institutions of the ethnic community and the wider society, extensive contacts in both

worlds and the ability to broker between them ("Introduction" 14). In short, Nowak was Henry Ford's nightmare.

Nowak's early life was shaped through the Polish language theater in Chicago, where he attended performances and distributed flyers for shows. He attended the Polish People's University, where he learned to read and write Polish (Nowak 52). In the 1920s, Nowak "worked in a Chicago garment shop organized by the ACWA and held his first union office at the age of 19" (Cygan *Political and Cultural Leadership in an Immigrant Community* 136). Once in Detroit, he was also a member of the Proletarian Party (135). In 1936, at the suggestion of Leo Krzycki, labor organizer for the Congress of Industrial Relations (CIO), Nowak was put in charge of the recruitment of Polish auto workers for the United Auto Workers (UAW) (137). In that position, Nowak sought to appeal not just to Polish workers, but to the Polish community, especially in the town of Hamtramck, which was then, as it is today, a hub of working-class immigrant communities. Historian of immigration and Polish identity Mary Cygan describes the importance of the Polish language and public radio as part of Nowak's labor organizing work, stating:

> One of the actors Nowak had known in Chicago, Waclaw Golanski, had a daily Polish-language radio program in Detroit at the time. The program was enormously popular. Nowak remembered walking the streets of Hamtramck in the spring, during the hour the program was aired, and not missing a word as he heard it echoing back and forth across streets and yards, pouring out of the open windows of virtually every home. Nowak had the UAW buy a fifteen-minute segment on the program twice-weekly. Nowak . . . used the time to explain the union and its goals. (137-38)

Nowak not only took to the airwaves to challenge the idea that the worker had to align their needs with the needs of the company, but he also worked to establish worker walls. Cygan also points to ethnic and cultural halls as hubs of ethnic worker solidarity, which countered Ford's project of Americanizing ethnic worker communities, stating:

> Polish Trade Union Committee meetings held in ethnic fraternal and [Polish and Slavic] cultural halls allowed more open discussion than would have been possible in the plants and enhanced the legitimacy of the union in the community. Many Polish workers signed union cards at such neighborhood gatherings, establishing nuclei for later shopfloor activity. (138)

The response of immigrant workers to the work of Nowak's Polish Trade Union Committee made up a foundational force in the organization of automobile and industrial labor across the region. Turning again to Margaret Nowak:

> Polish and Slavic workers from shops all over the city flocked to the meetings of the UAW Polish Trade Union Committee and signed UAW membership cards. Applications from workers in shops where UAW locals had already been established were sent to those locals. Applications from those workers in shops having no UAW members would provide the nuclei out of which UAW locals could later be set up (80).

As a leader in Polish communities of industrial Detroit, Nowak "made the new union locals quasi-ethnic institutions during the early period of their existence" (Radzilowski "Introduction" 14). Nowak's influence was so great as to parallel the influence of the Catholic church. According to one Polish worker: "In religious matters I follow the pastor, in work matters I follow Nowak" (Cygan 139). Notably, Polish Trade Union Committee leaflets, which were distributed at factories, churches, clubs, and throughout the neighborhood, were written in both Polish and English (Nowak 78). Nowak's Polish language use and identity were strengths in Polish communities and amongst industrial organizers. In this way, ethnic union leaders such as Nowak lived a life between, where worker solidarity was built along lines of linguistic and cultural difference.

Yet, the ethnic and linguistic identities that enabled communication and organization amongst working classes also made Polish labor organizers vulnerable to attacks. For example, the Palmer Raids of November 1919 and January 1920, named for US Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer, which targeted leftists, including Eastern Europeans and anarchists, in Detroit

and other industrial cities, resulted in the deportation of labor organizers. The relationship between Polish workers and the unions in Detroit culminated in 1941 when the Ford Motors union drive, described earlier, concentrated union power.

About this time, as unions were gaining in size and strength, Nowak began to see an end to his work organizing ethnic workers. Nowak anticipated the end of the influence of the ethnic industrial worker within labor organizing, stating: "The unions, now with their own buildings and new bureaucracies and preoccupied with the work of consolidating their hard-won positions, no longer found close ties with ethnic organizations as necessary as earlier and had neither the resources nor the willingness to continue to develop those ties" (20). Thus, Nowak saw the ways in which successful practices of labor organization would align the power of the union with the power of the corporations themselves, suggesting perhaps the Americanization of union labor.

In short, Parochial schools, educational clubs, political parties, labor schools, and labor organizers sought to educate working class immigrants in a way that challenged Ford's network of industrial education that sought to produce industrial workers throughout the Rust Belt and beyond. To lesser or greater degrees, instead of aligning themselves with pro-capital ideology of corporations, parochial schools, educational clubs, political parties, and labor colleges developed curricula that created opportunities for workers to develop the Anti-Ford Man with a critical eye toward the conditions of labor, while developing ethnic and/or laboring solidarity against exploitation. In a sense, the Polish Mission at the Orchard Lake Schools and the Polish People's University met Polish immigrant students where they were. Both said yes to English and to Polish. The curriculum of the Proletarian Party sought to engage students with the political world around them, and Brookwood Labor College sought to prepare workers for labor activism across diverse rhetorical situations, which played out on the streets of Detroit, including Dearborn and

Hamtramck, where Polish immigrant workers lived, and where Ford, Dodge, and Chevy plants stood. At the heart of the counter-model to the Ford-like network was the tension between languages, identities, and politics of workers who inhabited American factories and the American imagination concerning who gets to speak what language, where and under what conditions.

Re-seeing the Ford Model

The description of this Ford-like network and its counter-model helps us re-see the FES within a broader educational framework of industrial and English language education. In the broadest sense, Ford's contributions to industrial education illuminate the economic and cultural stakes in the lives of different social groups of worker-students.[11]

Ford's industrial education project sought to Americanize those considered unfit according to ethnicity. The Henry Ford Trade School trained local Highland Park boys, largely the sons of immigrant industrial workers, and paid a wage as a way of preparing them for future work at Ford. Similarly, given that their Americanization curriculum overlapped with the FES, Ford also invited graduates of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School to Highland Park to train and labor. Like the Ford English School, the Americanization curriculum of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School positioned the American Indian student as culturally disabled according to

[11] The history of the discipline of rhetoric and composition is rooted in the promotion of middle-class American values. In "Freshman Composition as a Middle Class Enterprise," echoes the title of her article, Lynn Bloom argues that "freshman composition is an unabashedly middle-class enterprise." Bloom identifies aspects of social class, including critical thinking "and the maintenance of safety, order, cleanliness" as well as "efficiency" (highly prized middle-class values at Ford) that are enacted through composition pedagogy and curriculum, with the aim of producing future workers. Asao Inoue takes a cue from Bloom, who states that some students may be punished for not being "more middle class" (655)—that is, more able to perform in preferrable ways within rhetorical and laboring spaces, when he suggests that we be more mindful of our impact on students according to race and class, particularly through assessment, asking: "How do [we] ensure that students are not penalized because they are not white and middle class, yet still guarantee that they develop as readers and writers in meaningful and productive ways?" (*Antiracist Writing Assessment Ecologies* 284).

nationality, language, and culture, even as the manual training curriculum of the school sought to incorporate graduates of the school into a field of industrial labor at Ford. In each of these instances, Americanization was about educating the individual for blue collar labor on the factory floor.

Ford's industrial education project sought to Americanize students across social classes. International students at the University of Michigan, who visited Ford through extracurricular activities also participated in Ford's project of Americanization, through the sponsorship of the University of Michigan. According to the University of Michigan's J. Raleigh Nelson description, we recognize the international engineering student as welcomed into the fold of English and the humanities. These University of Michigan students engaged English steeped within the history of the humanities, studying aspects of Western society and culture. These students were also engineering students, whose knowledge and practice of mathematics and physics would likely make them eligible to contribute their labor to industrial projects that may be taken up on future assembly lines. Further, the fitness of the University of Michigan students may have already been assumed according to their social class. Afterall, these students were not labeled immigrants, but "international students," whose mobility across national boundaries may have been tied to social class in the way that the labor and language of the working class is tied to the discipline of the body. The economic and cultural stakes of education were, and are, high for working class and middle-class students, particularly in the context of race, labor, nationalism, which are tied to and displayed through the use of the English language. This reality is at the heart of an ideology of *linguistic economic ableism*.

Ford's industrial education project also sought to Americanize racialized students. Whereas Ford supported the manual training curriculum at the Berry Schools, which sought to

engage white, rural students in a curriculum of self-sufficiency, African American students at the George Washington Carver School for Negroes' Adult Night School, who reportedly desired manual training, found themselves the target of an English language curriculum, perhaps the result of an ideology that frames non-white bodies as needing to display their fitness for citizenship through English. This need for non-white bodies to perform labor and identity in English may be rooted to the development of racialized hierarchies of labor fitness that, in turn, are rooted in Progressive Era conceptions of expertise. In Forging a Laboring Race, Paul R. D. Lawrie posits the Black working body as "a site of inquiry, discipline, and knowledge production," which "affirmed race as an organizing principle of American labor economy" (170). In this way, the African American GWCSN student seems to have been subjected to a curriculum that sought to discipline the racialized, and therefore unruly, black student. Following from Lawrie, students from the Berry Schools, who may have migrated to northern urban cities such as Detroit, may have arrived at Ford with training similar to the students from the Henry Ford Trade School, whereas African American workers may have arrived at Ford, like Southern and Eastern European immigrants or Native Americans from the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, forced to display their fitness for the assembly line as workers sufficiently Americanized through the English language.

In the counter-model to Ford's industrial education project we recognize the limits of Ford's ideology of *linguistic economic ableism*. Immigrant and ethnic Polish-speaking students found their language and their labor the subject of concern within educational and laboring spaces. Like those at the U of Michigan, "international" students were welcome at the Polish Mission at the Orchard Lake Schools. Polish Mission students were educated bilingually, with an emphasis on Polish culture. Yet, as Radzilowski describes, the science-based curriculum was

English Only. Other schools though, such as the Polish People's University, sought to enrich Polish linguistic and cultural life as a way of creating a space for Polish immigrants and their descendants within the US. Similarly, the education arm of the Proletarian Party and the Brookwood Labor College tied their education curriculum to the empowerment of the student-worker, with the larger goal of producing an activist worker in support of organized labor across languages and rhetorical situations. Importantly, Bradbury and Kates argue for the recognition of labor colleges as intellectual educational spaces for laborers and the labor movement across languages according to the needs of students themselves. In this way, Brookwood College undermines an ideology of *linguistic economic ableism*, which is tied to the Americanization of laborers and the ideal of the Ford Man.

The description of the Ford-like model of industrial education came about through researching archives in the greater Detroit area, including the Benson Ford Research Center, which is the archive of the Henry Ford Museum of American Innovation (HFMAI). The HFMAI is made up of halls that contain artifacts central to American industrial and automotive history, and an outdoor museum—Greenfield Village—the site of schools, workshops, churches, and homes. Although I have made several research trips to the HFMAI, I have seen only a handful of references to the immigrant, non-English speaking worker-student that were the foundation of Ford's Highland Park factory. Instead, the museum focuses on "extraordinary" artifacts that speak to significant moments in US history. But what if the Americanization of immigrants, American Indians, and rural African American and white laborers were considered equally significant? What if the linguistic and cultural heritage losses as a foundation of Americanization were on display that we may witness and perhaps more closely be able to pinpoint those moments when we stopped being who were—linguistically and culturally—and started being

who we have become—American. In the next chapter, we will return to the archives, considering the ways in which issues of language, nationality, and labor play out in the voice of immigrant laborers at Ford Motors.

Chapter Three

Archival Representations: Searching for the Student in Ford English School Letters

> In some ways, the archive defines the nation, and participation in the archive is one gauge of democratization.
>
> Rodrigo Lazo, "Migrant Archives" (2009)

> Is it possible, then, that these uprooted men, women and children who left their homes behind for a new land—whether in search of more auspicious prospects or because they were fleeing a catastrophe—have some lessons to teach us . . .?
>
> Ariel Dorfman, "Coronavirus is Teaching Americans" (2020)

The Henry Ford Museum of American Innovation (HFMAI) in Dearborn, Michigan is devoted to the preservation of extraordinary industrial history. The goal of the HFMAI, according to the mission statement, is to shape "a better future" through "objects, stories, and lives" rooted in "America's traditions of ingenuity, resourcefulness, and innovation" ("The Henry Ford Archive of Innovation"). Central to the HFMAI's mission is the curation of artifacts "that represent significant technological advances as symbols of our scientific progress" ("The Rosa Parks Bus") within histories of industrial manufacturing. For example, the HFMAI houses a replica of Boulton & Watt's Rotative Steam Engine, produced in 1788 near the start of the British Industrial Revolution (from 1760 to sometime between 1820 and 1840). The collection also includes one of nine internal combustion/steam engines that powered Ford's Highland Park plant, contributing to the Second Industrial Revolution, also known as the American Industrial Revolution (from 1870 to 1914).

In addition to curating materials that speak to industrial histories, the HFMAI also seeks to curate "cultural innovation" through material objects that "embody some of America's most compelling cultural movements" ("The Rosa Parks Bus"). For example, the HFMAI collection includes a 1948 General Motors urban transit coach, also known as Montgomery city bus #2857,

which Rosa Parks rode on that historic day on December 1, 1955. Or the "X-100"—the code the secret service used for the 1961 Lincoln Continental 4-door convertible that carried President John F. Kennedy from Love Field in Dallas, Texas on the day of his assassination on November 22, 1963.

Certainly, these artifacts represent unique and extraordinary histories. But can you imagine if the HFMAI's commitment to cultural innovation and cultural movements also included the curation of histories of Americanization, and even more histories of workers? What if the HFMAI highlighted how Ford sought to assimilate immigrant labor through the English language, and just what that would mean for workers at the time? What would that mean for workers today? Historian of technology John M. Staudenmaier speaks to the central role of the museum in the production of historical representations of power—in this case corporate power—that might frame such a Ford Americanization exhibit, asking:

> But what of exhibitions that articulate—in the three-dimensional idiom that renders museums an irreplaceably unique form of public discourse—the essential ambiguity of every technical endeavour, that insist on raising questions of power and exclusion, of who wins and who loses, as technological resources are allocated according to some design elite's vision of the common good? ("Clean Exhibits, Messy Exhibits" 63)

Staudenmaier's question on the power of museum spaces helps me reimagine a central question of this dissertation: how do museums, and by extension, archives contribute to conversations on who gets to speak which languages, where, and under what circumstances? Museum curators might more generally state the question this way: "Who wants whom to remember what and why?" (Kurlinkus and Kurlinkus "Coal Keeps the Lights On" 94). At the time of this writing, the HFMAI only makes passing reference to Ford's Americanization project. At the bottom of a glass display case near the display of a Model T is a copy of a *Henry Ford Trade School Basic English* textbook, which I discussed in chapter two. Following from Staudenmaier's question on

technical power and exclusion, what might a curated exhibit that might include the *Henry Ford Trade School Basic English* textbook look like? How might it represent FES students in relation to Ford's industrial and cultural power? How might it display cultural and linguistic values important to workers? How might an ideology of *linguistic economic ableism* be incorporated into the display of artifacts? And what might the HFMAI invite an audience to learn of industrial and literacy history and perhaps of themselves from such an exhibit?

In *Museum Rhetoric*, scholar of museum studies M. Elizabeth Weiser asks: "How are individuals persuaded by exhibits to unite their identities with the civic identity, and how does that civic identity change when they do so?" (3). Weiser's question allows us to consider important choices of inclusion and exclusion happening right now at the HFMAI regarding immigrant worker histories. Her question helps us begin to imagine what a curated exhibit on Americanization within industrial manufacturing might say to us and about us. As a researcher of archives and libraries, I can imagine an HFMAI exhibit that seeks to represent a more comprehensive history of assimilation that shaped and continues to shape the lives and languages of working-class immigrants at Ford and across industrial spaces in Detroit and America more generally. An exhibit may include archival materials housed in Ford's industrial archive—the Benson Ford Research Center (BFRC)—which is located next door to the HFMAI. Such an exhibit might include FES lesson plans, diplomas as well as photographic images of Ford's graduation ceremony, perhaps even Ford English School student "Letters of Appreciation," which I will discuss in this chapter.

Particularly during this time of hyper-Americanization, staging an exhibit such as this would likely mean that the HFMAI and the BFRC would have to attend to histories of multiple, intersecting, and conflicting identities, languages, and dialects, which in turn might impact how

the identity of an "American" laborer is thought of, defined, as well as how civic society is built upon the answers to these questions. Not only that, I imagine the exhibit itself could be multilingual as a nod not only to Ford's impulse toward English Only factory labor, but to the city of Detroit itself as a city of immigrants. The upcoming one-hundred-year anniversary of Ford's assembly line system of manufacture would be a great time to stage this Americanization exhibit. Given what I have seen in the archives of the Benson Ford Research Center and the galleries of the Henry Ford Museum of American Innovation, I agree that Ford specializes in the curation and the preservation of the extraordinary. But what if histories of Americanization of immigrants and their testimony were considered just as extraordinary as an engine or a bus or a limousine?

Chapters one and two have provided a rich historical and cultural context for the Ford English School and *linguistic economic ableism* as a driver of industrial education more broadly. This chapter takes the reader into the archive to look at how this history of industrial education is reduced by the manner of its archiving, with the larger goal of offering a counter-reading to Ford's one-sided archival history of Americanization that privileges the managerial class of industrial labor, while largely silencing the voice of immigrant worker-students. This chapter will consider my own identity as researcher, while also describing the discovery and analysis of archival materials attributed to FES students through archival research at the Benson Ford Archive (BNFC) and the Cranbrook Archive, located in Dearborn and Bloomfield, Michigan, respectively. Drawing from of the archival work of Zosha Stuckey, this chapter will then explore what it would mean to privilege these FES student voices. This chapter will also turn to archival materials—Ford English School student "Letters of Appreciation" that Ford used to promote the value of the FES to educators and industrialists, considering emerging theoretical implications,

including worker pride and the imagined affordances of English literacy education through citizenship and family. Here, we will also consider whether the voice of the FES student can be recovered and understood more broadly through an analysis of the rhetorical work of translation that went into the publication of these FES student letters. Finally, the chapter describes a network of archives, including the Benson Ford Research Center and the Cranbrook Archive, where "Letters of Appreciation" circulate and where access may be conferred or denied.

Approaching the Archives

I want to tell you a story about researching archives for histories of immigration and *linguistic economic ableism*. In "Resisting and Rewriting English-Only Policies," a study of the repeal of English Only policy in Frederick County, Maryland, Katherine Flowers suggests that future conversations on English Only policy should be driven by "people of color, transnational migrants, and multilingual people, and less by monolingual white Americans" (79). I appreciate Flowers' ethical call for increased diversity in the identity of researchers questioning English Only policy. To Flowers' statement I add this: showing up to the archive as a person of color with research questions that counter foundational assertions about the power of English, the power of the United States, and the idealized character of the American during a time of hyper-Americanization produces a deep anxiety that is threaded through this document—an anxiety that her ethical call for diversity cannot account for. Thus, questions of access related to ideologies of *linguistic economic ableism* are not limited to archival materials, but are tied to my own literacies, which, in turn, are tied to questions of access to the archive itself.

Access to archives may be conferred or denied according to the literacies of the researcher. In "The Accidental Archivist," David Gold describes how, because he is not black, he

was warned against researching African American subjects and historically Black colleges—research that would make up his *Rhetoric at the Margins*. Gold describes his response to his detractors this way: "Subject position and identity are important, but they do not define us entirely" (16). As Gold points out, the character of the researcher is of utmost importance in approaching the archives. Gold continues, describing how ethos enables the researcher to move within the archive in the "faith that something will be found" (18). Thus, access will be conferred until it is not, materials will be found unless they are not, and we must continue our search elsewhere, and perhaps even reshape our project as needed. While making my way to archives, I was concerned with questions of access—that my ethos as a researcher, which is tied to my literacies, would be more important than my racial-ethnic identity.

In our field, race and ethnicity are thought of as defining factors of identity. Early in this project, I shared my ideas for research with members of my cohort in the Composition and Cultural Rhetoric (CCR) Program at Syracuse University. I got a bit of pushback, which I didn't expect. One member of the cohort wanted to know why I was interested in Polish immigrant workers in Detroit. On one hand, this was a fair question, as I have never been from Detroit, and I am not ethnically Polish. On the other hand, I also see this pushback as born of the silo thinking that resists sharing information and resources across race, ethnicity, and even geographic regions of the United States.

Just as important as my ideas about the project is my identity and relationship to Americanization. I grew up and attended public school in Los Angeles, which, like Detroit, is a city of immigrants with a deep industrial history. And like any American city of immigrants, Americanization is supremely important. I was raised and educated according to assimilation ideals of the English language. Thus, the history of the FES student is not unlike my own history,

where English was positioned before other languages, and student citizenship was a primary concern. Thus, the silo thinking that I came face to face with amongst members of my cohort clashed with the ways in which race, ethnicity, and histories of Americanization are written onto my body. Said another way, as much my life has been shaped by forces of Americanization, silo thinking within our field can reinforce ideologies of *linguistic economic ableism*, suggesting that I am unfit for the labor of this project without ethnic, regional, or linguistic credentials.

Given these tensions between identity, educational history and my labor as researcher, I remain concerned with how my body—brown skin, black hair, brown eyes—is read in archives. In some middle-class American spaces, my body may seem to betray my Americanized voice. For example, while at Syracuse University, I filled in and taught a class for a professor who had jury duty. I dressed for class that evening, putting on my flannel shirt that always reminds me of my grandfather. In some Mexican American neighborhoods of Los Angeles, this body wearing this flannel draws a second look from members of the Los Angeles Police Department and gang members, both of which are on patrol. In the writing classroom at Syracuse University, a student offered up this response at the start of class: "Are you even a professor?" Was this student responding to my clothing? My ethnicity? I can't be certain. Thus, my concern about my body and my language is a double bind.

Amongst audiences with whom I share a heritage but not a language, my English may seem to betray my body. Nicole Gonzalez Howell, a graduate of CCR at Syracuse University, who identifies as a monolingual Latina, describes a concern with how her body influences ethos, credibility, trustworthiness, and a relationship to power amongst those she shares a heritage but not a language ("Speaking from and about Brown Bodies" 234-235). Like Gonzalez Howell, I am very much concerned with my credibility and trustworthiness on the way to the archives. In

short, the toxic ambiance of this era of hyper-Americanization, which may prompt an equally toxic monolingual response in the promotion of either English (or Spanish, if the audience is primarily Spanish-speaking) means I must listen closely to who I know myself to be in those moments when others may seek to tell me who they imagine me to be. Thus, my identity, literacy, and ethos are foundational to accessing the archive in search of the voice of the FES student.

The Voice of the Ford English School Student

As I started to make research trips to archives in Detroit, I sought to uncover the voice of the Ford English School student. This search began with Ford Motors at the Benson Ford Research Center (BFRC), which is the archival branch The Henry Ford Museum of American Innovation (HFMAI), located on two-hundred-and-sixty-acre campus in Dearborn, Michigan.

On my first research trip to the BFRC I stayed at the Comfort Inn Hotel nearby. I was able to walk to the archive where BFRC archivists helped me access materials I knew that I wanted based on preliminary searches performed through Archive Grid, an online archive database search engine. While at the BFRC, I also let the archivists know I was interested in uncovering FES student writing. Sitting at a desk in the BFRC Reading Room, pouring over archival documents, I imagined the FES student sitting at a table in their home, or at a desk at the FES, or maybe in a public library. On the desk before them they had pencil and paper, preparing to work on a writing assignment. Perhaps, as is common today, the assignment was to write a letter to a prominent person they have likely never met—perhaps Henry Ford. While drafting their letter, the student may have considered how upon the delivery of the letter their language skills and their identity would be on display. They may have considered how the words they

wrote on the page would speak to the "good work" of their English teacher as well as the FES and would likely signify their fitness as English-speaking American citizen. It may also be that while drafting their letter, the student considered the impact of their words on their employment as well as future with Ford Motors. As described in chapter one, Ford workers tapped for the FES faced the real threat of being fired if they chose not to attend classes. While drafting their letters, FES students may have considered the needs of their audience who may have been reading for evidence of Americanization as a way of keeping their job. In short, a lot was at stake for FES students when they put pen to paper.

Despite the ways that I have imagined uncovering FES student writing in the archive, my search for the voice of the student has not played out like I thought. Most of all, I had hoped to find the writing of FES students, which I would have liked to analyze, perhaps to describe what they say about (or for) labor at Ford from the perspective of recent immigrants. Notwithstanding the extensive documentation of Ford Motors, including the many administrative and personal communications between Henry Ford and notable cultural, industrial, and political figures, or his own son Edsel's writings from his youth, FES student voices are nearly undiscoverable in the Benson Ford Research Center. Instead, I have found the Benson Ford to be an archive of administrative history of Ford Motors. For example, according to its own records, there are over fifty thousand linear feet of documents in the BFRC; the linear feet dedicated to immigrant workers amounts, I would estimate, to be around one foot. At times I have discovered documents *about* FES students. But the near absence of the voice of the FES student was not enough to halt this project. Instead, I had to figure out how to continue the project in the absence of FES student voices.

I began to search Ford's archive as a way of engaging the absence of FES student voices. (The question described earlier is important here: Who wants whom to remember what and why?) Accounting for absences and the institutional framing of worker voices allowed me to focus attention on what the Ford archives want an audience to see, while also analyzing the histories, people, and voices that have been excluded in Ford's preservation process. In the archival study of the New York State Asylum-School in Syracuse, New York, Zosha Stuckey takes up the question of the absence of a subject, asking: "How do we historicize what seems to be silent and absent? (*A Rhetoric of Remnants* 97). Further, what is to be the response of the researcher in the face of "anonymity and silence" that seems to dominate historiographic reality (124). As a way of analyzing letters written by and circulated amongst parents, administrators, and students of the New York State Asylum-School, Stuckey develops a research method of looking at "the gaps in the discourse in order to reconstruct what was not recorded" (13) where "meaning is made and gaps are filled through generating a sense of the fact of "being" whether or not we know the particulars of the story or the particulars of the lives and histories we are trying to recover" (100). Stuckey describes this method as an ethical concern for the voice of the underrepresented as well as for the future production of history, stating:

> If we fail to collect remnants and thus bring presence to what is seemingly silent in the historical record . . . we fail to do justice to historical erasures. My point in doing this work is that we do not have to *know* the exact experience in order to acknowledge its existence and power. Rather, we have to recognize that something happened—that remnants of experience exist—and that we will not necessarily be able to precisely recreate experience from the language that remains. However, if we cannot easily access the points of view and evidence we desire, we still at least must try. (126)

Given the near absence of the voice of FES worker students, I decided to take up Stuckey's method in the analysis of FES letters, which enables me to think about how Ford wielded power within the narrative of Americanization and even through institutional protocol in relation to

access to the letters in the archive. Thus, given Henry Ford's relationship with archival preservation, museum curation, and with American history more generally, an analysis of FES student letters seeks to describe narratives of Americanization attributed to the voice of the FES student, as well as the role that FES letters play in the production of historiography.

The archival materials at the Benson Ford Research Center represent, as Stuckey describes in her project, a "a one-sided historical record" (97). In addition to the vast administrative record stored in the BFRC, Ford also produced and distributed significant amounts of printed material to build corporate identity and reputation as a way of shaping the needs and desires of American industrial society. In "Paving the Way to Prosperity," Timothy Johnson explores the Ford Motor Company's Motion Picture laboratory and the development of economic space in the United States between 1918 and 1945, arguing that as a spatial rhetor, Ford rearranged "lived spaces," such as roads, villages, and national parks as manifestations of markets, [social] classes, and consumers, through the display of social life performed by individuals representative of industrial or corporate identities (435). Further, in "Creating Industrial Citizens," Tim Strangleman describes the corporate image-making of "company magazines," such as *Ford Times*, which were "designed to fill the growing gap between the employer, employee and consumer brought about by increased scale of business" (38-39). Even more, in the hands of management, these company magazines "structure the narratives that are told about the company and the workforce. In their use of photography and text, magazines mediate and construct a range of understandings about work and its meanings" (41). Indeed, within the historical record, there are multiple instances in which Ford engaged rhetorical projects to persuade industrialists, stakeholders, and consumers that Ford's method of

Americanization was central to the development of the needs and desires of American industrial society.

Ford produced a rhetoric of Americanization. According to Johnson and Strangleman, in addition to manufacturing automobiles, Ford was deeply engaged in the production of textual and visual rhetoric designed to shape perceptions of America as an automobile driving county and American laborers as Ford Men. To this end, in April 1914, Ford films were distributed nationally and internationally beginning with public schools and local YMCAs (Johnson 436), whereas *Ford Times* were distributed to Ford customers at Ford dealerships and Ford workers at Ford plants beginning in April 1915. In yet another example of the way the Ford promoted preferred worker identities, in November of 1914, Ford Motors published, in cooperation with the *Detroit Evening News,* a pamphlet entitled *Ford Motor Company's Work with Profit Sharing*, which contains a handful of "Letters of Appreciation" written, we are told, by Ford English School students. Along with films, magazines, and the profit-sharing pamphlet, Ford built a comprehensive public relations program, the role of which is to manipulate "the organized habits and opinions of the masses" (Edward Bernays *Propaganda* 37) to suit Henry Ford's needs. For this *Work with Profit Sharing* pamphlet, Ford sought testimony from members of the community beyond Ford Motors, including clergymen, police, and policymakers from the greater Detroit area, and from FES students themselves, all of which spoke to the value of Ford's sociological initiatives, profit-sharing, and the FES.

Throughout Ford's *Profit Sharing* pamphlet, immigrant workers at Ford are framed in demeaning ways or as if they could not have succeeded in the US as workers or potential citizens without Ford's intervention. The "Comments by Clergymen" section of the pamphlet opens with a statement attributed to Reverend Steven Borrsos of the Hungarian Church, who engages a

common trope of framing immigrant workers as unclean as he speaks to the value of Ford's intervention in the lives of immigrant workers, stating:

> One of the greatest evils that we have to contend with is the dirty living conditions of many of our people. The Ford investigators have changed it by showing them [the FES students] how to live in the proper way, and the Ford-Profit-sharing Plan, with the increased income for the employes, has enabled them to make a distinct showing for the better. (23)

Borrsos seems to echo Ford's rationale for the Americanization of immigrant neighborhoods. Even more, we all know that when a reverend says that you are dirty, he is also concerned with your soul. Further, the Ford pamphlet also turned to the voice of Detroit police, who, like clergymen, framed un-Americanized immigrants as unfit. In the section of the pamphlet titled "Comments by Police Officials," Superintendent Downey of the Detroit Police Department and Chief Charles Seymour of Highland Park Police point to Ford's labor-making initiatives as foundational to the reduction of lawlessness and arrests of Ford workers. Further, according to Barney Whalen, Chief of Police in the Polish settlement of Hamtramck, because of Ford's influence and investment, the immigrant neighborhood made up of Ford workers and their families was beginning to take shape as an Americanized community (24). In short, Ford used the voice of the clergy and the police to offer evidence of the success of the FES and its own institutional authority over workers. However, throughout this process, Ford framed FES students—according to its own rhetorical needs—as lacking, which makes Ford's intervention in the "proper way" of living an ethical concern. The pamphlet concludes with a section entitled "Letters of Appreciation from members of the Ford English School," which is made up of seven FES student letters, which we will now turn our attention to as we consider the voice of the FES student.

"Letters of Appreciation": Praise for Henry Ford and Worker Pride

In 1914, shortly after the opening of the FES, Ford Motors published a series of FES student letters in the *Profit Sharing* pamphlet. These FES letters are part of a small collection of rhetorical actions of FES students uncovered in the archive. When I first uncovered these letters, I wondered just how they came about. (Consider again the popular academic assignment genre, which asks students to write to a person of note.) For example, the BFRC houses student letters written to Henry Ford from the William Penn School in Minneapolis, Minnesota, around 1924 in which one student praises Ford as a friend of the working class, stating: "You make good cars, but sell them cheap so the people that can't afford high priced cars can buy your cars" ("William Penn School"). As it was at the William Penn School, the FES student letters may be the result of a writing assignment, perhaps from a teacher at the FES. When we consider the FES letters, which we will do next, it seems that Ford's goal with the publication of the letters was to persuade industrialists and educators of the legitimacy and success of the FES's Americanization curriculum, thereby creating and satisfying Ford's imagined need within immigrant worker communities.

FES student letters featured in the *Profit Sharing* pamphlet depict points of view valued by Ford, including the agreeable nature of the Ford Man. For example, FES student letters convey an overwhelming sense of thankfulness and worker pride. One FES student expresses a "deep appreciation" of Henry Ford, stating that no man ever "did so much for his employes" as Ford (*Ford Motor Company's Work with Profit Sharing* 27). The same student also places Ford's treatment of immigrant workers in tension with the student's peers as a way of describing a dark individualism within ethnic communities, stating: "I am glad there is some one who thinks for my future . . . This is more than even some of my own countrymen who have been successful

here [in the US] are willing to do for me." While heaping praise on Henry Ford, the voice of the student emerges through self-reflection on the impact the FES has had on their sense of themselves as Ford workers, stating: "I am proud to be a workman in this plant" (27). In short, FES letters describe students as the thankful recipients of the good works of Henry Ford and Ford Motors. And in this way, the letters describe Henry Ford as embodying the empathic motto— "Help the Other Fellow" —of the FES. More than that though, the student statements chosen for publication echo the Americanization curriculum of FES, promoting a narrative of cultural disruption, which positions Ford as something of a capitalist savior within an immigrant community fragmented through selfish (American?) individualism as a foundation of worker pride.

The development of worker pride was a central concern at Ford. From an institutional point of view, worker pride translated to efficiency. In 1917, the head of the FES Samuel Marquis delivered a keynote at the Seventh Annual National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) conference in Chicago, Illinois. Marquis' talk, which reportedly drove conversation throughout the conference ("The National Council of Teachers of English: Proceedings of the Seventh Annual Meeting" 39-40), was titled "Efficiency: what it is and how to get it." During the talk, Marquis identifies three pillars of efficiency, including vision— "to see what may and should be done"; knowledge— "to select the means and use them" and "desire, the will to do" [12] (39). Marquis continues, describing the "will to do" comes from the partnership between

[12] The "will to do" is foundational to a much longer history of automobile manufacturing. Decades later, it would be a cross-company collaboration between Toyota and General Motors (GM) that would nurture the will of the assembly line worker. In 1984, in Fremont, California, Toyota and GM joined together to form the New United Motor Manufacturing, Inc. (NUMMI). The NUMMI autoworkers, who had been GM workers, were promptly sent to Japan to unlearn the American assembly line system. Upon returning to the NUMMI plant, assembly line workers actively participated in creative methods of production, looking for solutions to problems, thinking through new ways to cut costs and increase efficiency. Greater autonomy on the assembly line included increased pay, which in turn impacted worker pride. One worker reported going to a local dealership to look at the Chevy Novas, which were produced at NUMMI. "He didn't tell anyone he built them, or that he worked at NUMMI. He just liked seeing what the cars looked like, sitting there on the lot" ("NUMMI").

industrialists and English teachers, which plays out in the working lives of students, stating: "When the employees themselves became partners in the business, hearty good-will took the place of much indifference, and the results were highly satisfactory" (40). Through his keynote, Marquis reinforces to a national audience of teachers of English that the English language, like industrial manufacturing, is about efficiency, vision, knowledge, and desire. In short, this small collection of published FES letters establishes an idyllic narrative of English language learning at Ford without any sense of push back from the workers themselves, which seems to suggest the power of an ideology of *linguistic economic ableism*. However, when we look closer at the archival representation of immigrant student workers, we recognize a more complex picture than that displayed through the institutional rhetoric of Ford Motors.

Affordances of English Language Education: Belonging, Citizenship, and Family

Alongside expressions of worker pride and gratefulness for Ford's educational efforts, FES letters use the language of deficiency to rhetorically position the immigrant as the culturally disabled antithesis of the English-speaking worker. One FES student states: "Simply because I cannot talk English I am often looked down upon, because when I go into an English store down town I cannot tell the clerk what I want" (*Ford Motor Company's Work with Profit Sharing* 27). The student continues, applying terms used to label the immigrant as culturally disabled described in chapter one to himself as a language learner, stating: "without a knowledge of the English language I am handicapped" (26-27). Although this student does not explicitly state their position on Americanization, they clearly articulate the threat of being an outsider in the US as a springboard toward assimilation through English. In this way, the student very clearly understands that English language literacy is not only about getting by in daily life, even in the

grocery store, but, as Tabetha Adkins states in her research of the language and literacy communities of Amish communities, is necessary for "survival and acceptance in the United States" ("The Amish Effect" 41). Said another way, the absence of English, whether in urban industrial spaces or in rural communities, is central to the identification and description of individual members of non-normative populations as culturally deficient, thereby complicating the ability to get by in daily life.

FES letters also use the rhetoric of nationalism to position students as becoming English-speaking Americans. One student describes the hope for English "[e]ver since I have been in America" (*Ford Motor Company's Work with Profit Sharing* 27). Another student describes English as something as a property of the nation, describing his appreciation of Henry Ford for teaching FES students "the American language" (25). Similarly, another student describes the intelligence of the language-learning immigrant in the US as a national concern, first describing the US as the "Mother Country of all the people" (25), then qualifying their description of the US as nurturing the lives of immigrants: "America . . . does not run [immigrants] to the earth, but tries to lead the intelligent in the right way" (25). As some students praise Henry Ford and America, still others praise FES English teachers "for working so hard . . . in order to develop our minds" (26). Through a description of literacy practices, another student turns the conversation toward the practice of Americanization through literacy training, stating: "Every night when I get home I practice writing on a piece of paper and try to say over the new words which the teacher told me in the afternoon" (27). Here, these "Letters of Appreciation" describe opportunities for English literacy as tied to merit-based ableist descriptions of intelligence as a foundation of the American Dream, which positions the United States as the ideal nation, welcoming immigrants willing to work hard, sacrifice, and take risks as a foundation of the

promise of social mobility. In short, FES students describe English as a route toward an American identity. Yet, unfortunately, FES letters do not include a description of a criteria for fitness—or intelligence—leaving us to wonder just who is deserving of Ford's sponsorship and who is not.

Student letters echo the goals of the curriculum of the FES, tying the English language to American citizenship as a foundation of nationalism. Perhaps as a way of overcoming thoughts and feelings that emerge from a curriculum that positions the student as unfit, one student expressed a desire to "become a citizen of the United States" (27), whereas another student further qualifies this desire to become a "good citizen" (27). Still another student expands on the theme of literacy and nationalism in a turn toward US governance and administration, stating: "I want to learn something about the United States Government after I have mastered the English language sufficiently well" (27). FES letters also place a concern for nationalism within the context of conservative political worldview, using the metaphor of the family as a way of describing the route of the immigrant into the family of Ford and America. In *Thinking Points*, cognitive linguist George Lakoff describes the power of the metaphor of the Strict Father Model, which describes the family and the nation as twin pillars of a conservative political worldview within American life. The FES student, who earlier described the US as the "mother country," describes Henry Ford according to an American kinship structure, stating: ""Father" Ford helps his men to live in clean homes and better surroundings by giving them more money" (25). In the description of the Strict Father metaphor, which might also be used to describe Henry Ford, Lakoff states: "The strict father is the moral authority in the family; he knows right from wrong, is inherently moral, and heads the household" (57). The FES student continues, anticipating the Strict Father metaphor, self-reflectively positioning himself as the child in the Ford family,

stating: ""Father" Ford wishes his employes only the best, just as a father would for his own children" (*Ford Motor Company's Work with Profit Sharing* 25-26). As if responding to the FES student, Lakoff likewise extends the metaphor, which may serve as a foundation of the need for the curriculum of the FES built upon an ideology of *linguistic economic ableism*, stating: "Children are born undisciplined" (*Thinking Points* 57).

In short, through a concern with nationalism, FES student letters tie English language literacy, labor, and citizenship to larger concerns of nation building, positioning FES students as Ford-sponsored members of an American family of workers, who attain the English language through self-discipline, which involves turning away from heritage language and culture. Now that we have a sense of the narratives within the FES letters published in the *Profit Sharing* pamphlet, as well as intertextual connections, the next section will consider questions of translation that went into the FES student letters.

Translating FES Voices

FES student letters portray a narrative of Americanization through translation. Not even Ford thought Americanization, which is the process of evoking a new sense of self within a new cultural and linguistic context, to be an overnight process. This section, which analyzes how these "Letters of Appreciation" came to be, is a way of slowing down this process. As much as this section is concerned with how these letters came to be written and preserved in English, I am also interested in the stories their preservation and use tell us. While researching, I uncovered the FES letters in two archives. The BFRC houses a collection of about twenty FES student letters. Each letter is typed up on one sheet of paper. According to archive notes in the BFRC, the FES student letters were written in the students' first language, although these drafts have not been

uncovered. They were then translated into English, which is how the letters are preserved in the BFRC.

On a subsequent research trip to Detroit to the Cranbrook Archive located in the suburbs of Detroit, I uncovered Ford's *Profit Sharing* pamphlet, which contain a handful of FES student letters. The letters in the pamphlet do not name the students but identify them according to their heritage language. The letters in the pamphlet were written in Armenian, Greek, Roumanian (Romanian), Russian, Servian (Serbian), and Syrian. That the letters seem to only have been preserved in English, FES students are identified only according to an assumed proficiency in English. Despite multiple and ongoing attempts to uncover drafts of FES letters written in students' heritage languages, I have never found them, nor have I found any documentation that they exist. Except through translation, the voice of FES students does not exist. Thus, more questions than answers remain about the heritage language drafts and just how the translation happened. I am left to wonder, for example, who translated the FES letters, and under what laboring conditions, according to what rhetorical purposes? Further, why are English language translations privileged, while FES student writing in heritage languages, if it exists, is invisible in the archive? These questions, and more, speak to the concerns of the archive researcher laid out earlier in Zosha Stuckey's description of gaps in the historical record.

To account for these gaps, we can look to what we already know of Ford to think more critically about the translation of these "Letters of Appreciation." For example, according to the analysis of the FES in chapter one, we know that before Henry Ford issued the English Only rule for the factory, translators published signage in multiple languages throughout the Highland Park plant. Further that translators were present in the FES classrooms, where at least some of the FES instructors—those who graduated from the FES, and perhaps others—were also bilingual. Given

that translation work was happening inside the Highland Park plant, it is possible that FES teachers may have taken on the work of translating these letters.

As a way of slowing down the Americanization process of English language learning, it may also be that the students who wrote the letters were involved in the translation work. This would be a way for Ford to acknowledge that some FES students might have wanted to learn English. In this way, the "Letters of Appreciation" trouble narratives in working-class rhetorical traditions that speak to the agency of laborers, who are framed as pushing against capitalist concerns in the name of ethnic working-class solidarity.

Although the translation work may have taken place as part of the work of the FES, it may also be that the translation work occurred within administrative spaces at Ford. If so, this would suggest that FES student letters, from the very beginning of their drafting, were always meant to be published by Ford. In this case, it may be that the publishing arm of Ford Motors, described earlier, may have contributed to the translation work. The translation work, like the engineering work at Ford Motors, would have been transferred from blue collar labor to the intellectual labor of what may have been imagined as a more literate class. In this case, it is not difficult to envision translators who may have imagined themselves as more knowledgeable about the intended communications of an immigrant English language-learner, in which case FES students would not likely be involved in the translation work. Ultimately, because we don't have untranslated and likely handwritten drafts of the FES student letters, we cannot know with certainty how these translations came about. But we can use what we know about translation as a rhetorical act to think about the impact the translated FES letters has on our understandings of language and literacy at the FES as well as the production of the history of English language literacy through archival preservation.

Translation is a complex rhetorical process that impacts writers, readers, and texts across languages. In *Sites of Translation*, a study of the work of translation of the writing of multilingual student writers within digital spaces, Laura Gonzales turns to the work of translators, asking: "What do communicators do as they translate information across languages?" (6). Gonzales develops a framework for analyzing translation work "grounded in the notion that language is a culturally situated, embodied, lived performance" (3) made up of three pillars "that directly speak against traditionally held notions of language as static, isolated, and culturally neutral" (57). Pillar one states: "Translation is a culturally ~~neutral~~ situated process." That is to say, translation is not merely the one-to-one substitution of words, but "community-based rhetorical contextualization," which features linguistic transformation (58). Although we cannot analyze the moments of translation that went into FES letters, we can point to the FES curriculum as a curriculum of transformation whereby the FES student may arrive at a new sense of self according to Ford's project of promoting a monolingual and monocultural society. To complete the translation work of the FES letters for publication, translators would have had to navigate the ideological components of Ford's Americanization project, with the intended goal of interrupting immigrant literacies and community life. Thus, a "successful" translation of FES letters for publication contributes to an imagined history of the dominance of English as a foundation of Ford's industrial education project and industrial labor in the United States more generally. The translation of the FES letters with this goal does not seem to consider the desires, interests, or knowledges of the student. Or, if it does, it frames them as the positive impact Ford has had in worker lives. In short, although FES students were forced to take English courses (or lose their job), the only rhetorical acts preserved in the archive position Ford and the English language at the center of representation. In this way, translation becomes a mechanism of

erasure—of the migrant laborer, their heritage languages, and communities, as well as their work experiences on the Ford assembly line.

Translation moves communication across languages. Pillar two of Gonzales' revised rhetoric of translation states: "translation is a ~~linear~~ cyclical process" (59), which helps foreground the rhetorical labor of translation "rather than dismissing this work as a means to an end in language transformation" (60). Surely the FES student letters would have gone through multiple rounds of translation to reflect the success of Ford's Americanization curriculum, although we cannot know how many rounds or under what conditions. We also cannot know how translators landed about meaning. While working on this dissertation, I also worked as a writing consultant in the Graduate Editing Center (GEC) at Syracuse University, editing manuscripts and professional documents—peer reviewed articles, dissertation chapters and job materials—of PhD students whose heritage languages are not English. Central to my approach to this work was the idea that linguistic difference, which can often show up as unexpected or unfamiliar syntax, does not equate to deficiency (See Matsuda and Cox "Reading an ESL Writer's Text"). Approaching texts from this perspective, I often found that my understanding of the student's intended communication evolved as I learned the logic of the student's sentence structures. Once I understood the logic, I was often better able to ask more meaningful questions and make more meaningful suggestions as a way toward helping the student revise their text. Working with academic English as a writing consultant is, I imagine, not unlike the work of the translator working across languages, in which the intended message of the writer and the grammatical structures on the page are in tension with the readers' expectation concerning syntax, the student, and the power of English in academic spaces. In this way, translated meaning

on the page is a process of negotiation between writers, including translators, and readers within and between Englishes and a broad range of global languages.

FES translators helped produce typewritten drafts of FES student letters for an English-speaking audience. But what did this work look like? In these moments, how might the syntax of the student letters been re-structured to meet the anticipated needs of this audience? Did translators confer with other translators, perhaps while using utilizing dictionaries or other publishing guidebooks? Given that the *Ford Times* magazine was published in Dearborn, Michigan, did the translation work take place there? Further, was there a negotiation of meaning between translators and typists who may have typed up student letters? Foregrounding the work of translating FES student letters highlights the recursive rhetorical processes that go into moving FES student communication across languages, across audiences. Yet, translation in the archive is rendered invisible, thereby building upon a view of English as part of a larger network of concerns resulting in industrial efficiency, unconcerned with the processes by which linguistic and cultural diversity are lost along the way.

Translation was a central laboring concern at Ford Motors. Through FES student letters, we see translation not as a problem resolved in a shift toward a monolingual workspace, but as a foundation of Ford's effort to promote Americanization education amongst industrialists and teachers of English. Gonzales' third pillar states: "Translation is a ~~mechanical~~ creative act" during which, translators, who are providing the labor to redesign information, make "intellectual contributions to the information being disseminated across languages" (60). But just who made intellectual contributions to translated FES letters? Ford's administrative control was a top-down process. Similarly, concerning the question of editorial control, what agency were the workers given in approving the translation work? Opportunities for creative acts were not likely

extended to FES students, who, as discussed earlier, were subject to skill and drill activities on the assembly line and in the classroom. Given this history, asking FES students to contribute to the translation of their own letters may have, in the mind of Ford, been a way of promoting bilingual literacy, thereby undermining the formation of an industrial class of workers Ford was working to create. In *Literacies en Confianza*, a study of the literacy practices of bilingual students, Steven Alvarez describes the logic of monolingualism as a foundation of Americanization: "From the monolingualist perspective of official English, bilingualism hinders unity and sows the seeds for a polyglot nation, something that is seen as negative" (60). Yet, foregrounding the labor of translation lays bare the ways in which multilingual communication, not unlike multilingual manual labor, was likely distributed along lines of social class. Ford's managerial middle class likely performed intellectual labor across languages, while working class laborers were subject to a disciplining English language curriculum.

In addition to thinking about the translation of FES student letters, I am also wondering how these letters contribute to histories left behind. The Ford pamphlet discussed above included testimony from local clergy, but not all church leaders blamed the working class for not adhering to middle-class notions of daily life. For example, Reinhold Niebuhr, head of a German-speaking congregation in Detroit at the time, addressed the limits of working-class consciousness, stating: "We all want the things which the factory produces and none of us is sensitive enough to care how much in human values the efficiency of the modern factory costs" (*Leaves from the Notebook of a Tamed Cynic 6*5). Niebuhr's critique of social class and industrialization went even further, particularly when it came to the automobile industry. As an outspoken critic of Ford, Neibuhr invited union organizers to his church to promote the message of worker rights. This is not to say though that every heritage language communication had the needs of the

working-class at heart. Local Polish language newspapers echoed Ford's Americanization project. For example, Detroit's *Dziennik Polski* (*Polish Diary*) targeted Polish-speaking Ford workers, known as *Robotnicy Forda*, in advertisements that sought to promote Ford's vision of Americanized life (*Dziennik Polski*, 8 July 1916). As much as these newspapers have driven home the idea of Americanization, I wonder to what degree the publishing of these student letters may have done the same.

How might have these published letters been received in multilingual working-class communities of greater Detroit at the time? Said another way, could have the publication and circulation of these translated letters contributed to the loss of confidence in communicating in heritage languages? Returning to Gonzales: "For some students, losing confidence in their heritage languages comes as a result of the educational system that they experienced, one that consistently favors the use of normed standardized American English" (71). It may have also been that FES students were already learning English in spaces outside of Ford. The FES wasn't the only English language school in Detroit. In my research of newspaper archives at the Detroit Public Libraries, I found numerous advertisements for English Schools in Polish language newspapers, such as *Dziennik Polski.* It may have also been that FES students also found themselves in classes hosted by the Proletarian Party or working to organize labor alongside Stanley Nowak, both of which we discussed in chapter two.

These translated FES letters also have implications for archival preservation with an eye toward politics of language. In "Migrant Archive" Rodrigo Lazo describes tensions between language users, languages, and questions of language difference in the archive. On one hand, translated archival holdings "can integrate marginalized and forgotten people into the authorized archive." On the other hand, translated archival holdings also contribute to the erasure of

language difference (38). Said another way, including the Americanized voice of the FES student in the archive, which does not make a space for non-English languages, does not make much space for the experience of the migrant laborer. Thus, Ford's archival project, like its Americanization project, is tied to national concerns related to language difference, then as today. Given this history, as well as this current historical moment of hyper-Americanization in the face of calls for diversity, it may be that multilingual materials may remain undiscovered. Lazo continues, speaking to the possible erasure of documents written across languages, stating:

> Materials in languages other than English written in the past face the possibility of disappearance and annihilation because historically the United States has not established official channels for study and archivization. With the din of a call for English as an "official language" persistently in the background, the papers of multilingual America remain in the obscurity of archival vaults, if we can assume they have been gathered and kept. (42)

On one hand, the translated FES letters do help integrate FES students into the archive, albeit not on their own terms, nor in their own voices. On the other, following from Lazo's concern for marginalized, multilingual voices in the archive, the preservation of translated FES letters speaks to institutional history that reinforces the value of English as a foundation of Americanization imposed upon working-class immigrants at Ford. In this way, these FES student letters diminish the value of cultural and linguistic diversity, personal history, and worker identity amongst immigrant labor in the administrative records of Ford Motors. In short, translation speaks to the potential of community across languages. But in the context of the archive, the preservation of translated FES letters does the opposite—valuing communication in English. The next section will turn our attention toward the act of tracking down the letters in a network of archives in the greater Detroit area and summarize the chapter.

Archival Control in the Dark Archive

As I have stated, I uncovered the FES "Letters of Appreciation" in two archives—the Cranbrook Archive and the Benson Ford Research Center. The Cranbrook Archive is part of the Cranbrook Educational Community, outside of Detroit, which includes the Cranbrook Academy of Art, Art Museum, Institute of Science, as well as a college preparatory academy. The "Letters of Appreciation" found their way to the Cranbrook Archive through the papers of Samuel Simpson Marquis, who directed the Ford Sociological Department and who was the Rector of Christ Church Cranbrook after leaving Ford Motors. The Marquis papers include a significant number of administrative documents from Ford Motors, including speeches, as well as the *Profit Sharing* pamphlet where the FES Letters were published. I should note that other than the FES letters, no other documents in the Marquis papers contained the voice of the FES student.

Additionally, the Benson Ford Research Center contains a large cache of "Letters of Appreciation,"—more letters than were published in the Profit Sharing pamphlet. But the BFRC also maintains a strict protocol of archival control. I was able to view the FES student letters at the BFRC, which are part of the Sociological Department administrative records, but only after signing a document stating that I would preserve the confidentiality of FES student documents, meaning I could not record the letters in any way, nor could I publish on the letters. This practice is not unusual. According to archival practices, the term "dark archive" is applied to repositories of archival materials that are accessible only to its custodian. Because I was able to gain limited access to these materials, I suggest that some light is being shed on this dark archive. In "Documenting the Lives of the Laboring and Unlettered," Heather MacNeil speaks to the limits of the administrative practices of archives, stating that archivists must balance "the right to know" with "the right of privacy" (114) when granting access to unpublished materials. As a researcher, I share MacNeil's ethical concern. I cannot know the extent to which an FES student

considered the possibility of their voice being recorded in the archive, let alone this dissertation or future publication. Yet, given that this dissertation is concerned with the silence (and silencing) of marginalized voices, I felt that I must write on these FES student-worker letters—but how could I do so ethically? Given the BFRC's concern with confidentiality, had I not uncovered the Ford pamphlet in the Cranbrook Archive, the search for the voice of the student may have gone on and I would not have likely written this chapter in the way that I have. Yet, uncovering FES letters at the Cranbrook Archive allowed me to ethically sidestep the Benson Ford's protocol of limited access in the dark archive.

The BFRC's architecture of control is also tied to an ideology of *linguistic economic ableism*. The BFRC's architecture of control, which limits the ability of researchers to publish on "culturally disabled" immigrant workers, reinforces "the implicit assumption that sources from people labeled "defective," "incompetent," or "insane" are inherently "invalid" (Richards and Burch "Documents, Ethics, and the Disability Historian" 162). Said another way, "stories told by superintendents and policymakers often shout louder than the versions [so-called] disabled people might tell" (166). Marc Greuther, who is Chief Curator at The Henry Ford Museum, echoes this preference for the voice of the Ford administrator, whose "staid exteriors . . . belie their modernity" ("Present at the Creation" 122) as a foundation of their currency as ideal historical subject. In short, limiting access to archival documents of FES students amounts to a passive form of resistance to preservation of and research into Ford's one-sided history of Americanization, which is on display on the FES letters. In this way, the BFRC reinforces the narrative of the idealized Ford Man, built upon an ideology of *linguistic economic ableism* developed by Henry Ford.

The Benson Ford Research Center, along with Ford's Museum of American Innovation, were founded to house and catalog Henry Ford's collection of industrial history. According to its website, the BFRC contains over 26 million artifacts that speak to US and global industrial history. As an archive, the BFRC is tied to ancient Greek concerns for documentation and recordkeeping, which is the responsibility of the *archon*, or the patriarch—in this case Henry Ford himself. Thus, in the archive, the archivist manages the official records and accounts (See Jacques Derrida's *Archive Fever*) of the household. In a more modern industrial sense, archives are "specialized kinds of libraries that usually contain materials specific to one institution or activity" (Robert Connors "Dreams and Play" 20). Following from Derrida and Connors, the BFRC represents what archival researcher Malea Powell describes as the "deliberate institutional cataloging of memory" ("Dreaming Charles Eastman" 116) of Ford's vision of industrial history. Following from Lakoff's Strict Father metaphor, archiving institutional history is the moral responsibility of the archivist, whereby access to archival materials is issued according to the needs of the archive in tension with those of the researcher.

What Do We Learn from these FES Student Letters?

The FES letters have a great deal to teach us. As much as we get to glimpse the rhetorical ways in which Ford Americanized workers, catching a snippet of FES student voices through self-reflection and worker pride, these letters may also be a way of understanding why so little material on the FES student seems to be housed in the archive. Archival materials on the FES student are deeply embedded in the bureaucratic rhetoric of Ford Motors, making the will of the worker largely undistinguishable from the will of the company, which is at the heart of the identity of the Ford Man. Yet, it is highly likely that FES students composed original texts for

their own purposes. But what might they have written about Ford's labor initiatives, or the assembly line more generally? How might have FES students writing challenged Ford's autonomy within the realm of cultural production? How might the discovery and circulation of these yet uncovered writings impact the history of the labor movement? Or histories of the English language in education and labor?

In the meantime, the FES "Letters of Appreciation" show us that FES student writing was preserved to display the success of the FES. Through FES letters, Ford labor initiatives are described according to a utopian ideal through increased pay and literacy as dual foundations of the development of an Americanized workforce. It may even be that Samuel Marquis brought along the Ford pamphlet to speaking engagements where he promoted Ford's labor projects. For example, in a speech delivered in 1916 to the YMCA's National Conference of Charities and Corrections, Marquis spoke on Ford's industrial practices, including investing in payroll, profit-sharing, and reducing the hours in the workday from ten to eight ("Address delivered by Dean Marquis May 17, 1916" 3). Further, to the Indianapolis Branch Efficiency Club, Marquis described Ford's profit-sharing initiative according to a religious and humanitarian standpoint, stating that profit sharing is a way for the worker to develop not just physically and intellectually, but morally ("Meeting of Indianapolis Branch Efficiency Club" 8). Working at Ford enabled Marquis to combine a concern for the working class with the church. As early as 1903, as rector of St. Patrick's Memorial Church, Marquis was concerned that the Episcopal Church was allowing the working-class "to drift away, through, perhaps, lack of familiarity with their wants and needs" ("Not in the Church" 12). Marquis described his interest in working with Ford as rooted in industrialization, employee-worker relations, and the "desire to know the working man better" ("Dean Marquis to Leave Cathedral for Ford Plant" 3). As the head of the

FES and the Ford Sociological Department, Marquis was the moral voice of the FES and the Sociological Department, who embodied and amplified the message of Ford's public relations program.

The FES student letters are also written as petitions that appeal to Ford—the man and the company,—as a power higher than that of a community of workers. Instead of representing organized workers resistant to Americanization, these letters underscore the precarious conditions in which working class immigrants labor. Precarity of laboring conditions are represented textually, in which students may be asked to convey ideas about themselves as the thankful benefactors of Ford sponsorship. In this way, FES students were caught in a double bind, with one foot in precarious laboring conditions, and another perhaps holding on to the promise of profit sharing and citizenship as dual foundations of an American life.

In 1973, as the US manufacturing economy was cracking, the *Detroit Free Press* published a series of articles on the history of "Poletown," one of Detroit's oldest Polish neighborhoods. Looking back to the age of the FES as a foundation of Americanization, journalist Marco Trbovich speaks to the alluring power of the metaphor of the melting pot, stating: "Many poles opted for the Melting Pot and all it represented." Father Matlenga, pastor of St. Albertus in the Forest Park neighborhood of Detroit, echoes Trbovich, stating: "They [working-class immigrants] were under the false impression . . . that they would be more quickly advanced. Some of them working at Ford or the old car shop [perhaps Dodge Motors] figured they'd get betters jobs for better pay" ("Poletown") if they submitted to assimilation. According to the statements of Trbovich and Father Matlenga, although Ford made enticing promises for advancement and inclusion according to a vision of an Americanized middle-class life, this promise, like a lot of public relations programs, often go unfulfilled. Here again, we recognize

the importance of the counter-network of industrial education described in chapter two that may also counter Ford's promises.

Finally, since we do not know the details of the translation work, we cannot know when the voice of the student ends, and when the voice of the translator begins. But these moderated student voices and the FES school tell us that over a century ago forces of Americanization were threaded through English language education as a foundation of a curriculum for migrant students.

Today, we might think of English within educational spaces as academic English. The logic is that students need grammatical correctness and perfect usage to gain success in the university, at work, and society. Given Ford's impact on the preservation of histories of monolingual and monocultural education, which plays out through archival materials that contain the Americanized voice of FES students, this chapter has sought out to piece together a history of absence of FES student voices—an absence brought about through translation according to the needs of Ford's English-speaking audiences, likely industrialists, and English teachers. In this way, Ford promoted these FES student letters as successful student writing. Instead, what might we discover about ourselves if we were to engage a wider view of successful student writing that engages and values multilingual communication, particularly amongst populations of students and workers who are already multilingual?

For example, in my own first year writing classrooms I have one-on-one consultations with students while they are drafting their essays. During a meeting with one student, I asked her about a particular passage in her draft where meaning just sort of fell away. She read the passage and responded quickly, stating that she knew what she wanted to say in Mandarin, but that she didn't quite know how to convey meaning in English. After some discussion, I proposed that she

might write across languages if a moment such as this came up again. At first, she seemed upset that I would make this suggestion—almost as though I was saying something negative about her. I hadn't expected that. Given the power of English within educational spaces, I should have. I was able to get some buy-in by telling the student that because she was still only working on a draft that she could include Mandarin as a way of scaffolding meaning, and that if she wanted to, she could edit it out before turning in the final draft. Happily, the student used Mandarin to scaffold communication, and she left it in the essay. Throughout the semester, she continued to make this move without any future prompting by me. Further, her final essay included a personal narrative about her time working in an insurance agency in Las Vegas, Nevada, where, because of her language skills in Mandarin and Korean, she came to work with several Asian customers, who felt comfortable with her given their shared language. Working with this student helped me to recognize that it is our responsibility to create the classroom conditions for students to develop their own agency as writers.

Chapter Four

Deindustrial Hamtramck: The needs of English and labor in a city of new immigration

> We live in neighborhoods, and neighborhoods live in us (2019)
> Carlo Rotella, *The World is Always Coming to an End*

> Every time the question of language surfaces, in one way or another, it means a series of other questions are coming to the fore: the formation and enlargement of the governing class, the need to establish more intimate and secure relationships between the governing groups and the national-popular mass, in other words to recognize the cultural hegemony.
> Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (1971)

The decline of industrial activity in Detroit, Michigan in the 1970s has led to a new era of deindustrialization. In *The Half-Life of Deindustrialization*, Sherry Lee Linkon describes deindustrialization not only as "an event of the past" but as "an active and significant part of the present" (2) in the lives of workers across social classes in the US. To theorize the ongoing shift from the era of industrialization to this liminal moment of deindustrialization, Linkon engages the concept of "half-life," which, in physics, is the time it takes for an isotope to lose half its original value. Applying the concept of half-life to the era of industrialization in the turn toward deindustrialization, Linkon states:

> "[I]n social and cultural terms, the transition from one economic period to another is not immediate or absolute. Rather, in the half-life of deindustrialization, as in the beginning of the industrial era, expectations and ideas from the earlier era continue to shape people's responses to emerging conditions. As working-class culture adapts to economic restructuring, the memory of industrial work and the cultural values and ways of living associated with it still have influence, as does the memory of deindustrialization itself. (7)

Linkon argues that industrialization is a social process, where cultural expectations and ideas from a previous era continue to shape expectations across social classes in the current economic era. For example, the performance of factory labor is something of a mirror that reflects the image of the worker to themselves. For example, at Ford's Highland Park plant a century ago,

the institutional goal was to reflect the image of the Ford Man—Americanized in monolingual and monocultural values and ways of being. Given Linkon's critique, how do expectations and ideas concerning language and culture from the industrial era play out in the current era of deindustrialization? Said another way, the shuttered factory, unemployment, and lost pensions reflect a bleak image of the self to the industrial worker.

This dissertation has sought to trace the processes of erasure of ethnic and linguistic diversity amongst working-class immigrant populations through ableist and nationalist pedagogies and disabling laboring practices at Ford Motors. Although the Ford English School came to an early end in 1919, the image of the idealized Ford Man continues to stand in for the idea that industrial labor in the United States is the realm of the white, English-speaking, citizen worker. In 2016, in their look back at the history of working-class studies as a discipline, founding members Sherry Lee Linkon and John Russo acknowledge the central position this industrial worker, who has been "marginalized and demonized on the basis of class" ("Twenty years of working-class studies" 6) has played as subject in the field. More recently, at the 2019 Working-Class Studies Association Conference, Satnam Virdee echoes Linkon and Russo, stating that in the US, "working-class" is often code for "white workers" ("Satnam Virdee on "Race, Class and the Politics of Solidarity") that marginalize histories of ethnic, multinational and multilingual industrial labor.

This era of deindustrialization has not put an end to the legacy of Ford's Americanization project. With a nod to William Faulkner, Ford's Americanization project, like the automobile industry itself, is neither dead, nor past. Instead, Ford's idealized American worker may continue to haunt conversations about work and class in the US, resulting in inaccurate and frustrating conversations about labor and laborers. Even more, workers who do not fit the mold of the Ford

Man may find themselves, not unlike FES students did over a hundred years ago, subject to exploitation, oppression, as well as linguistic and cultural violence. Building upon Linkon and Russo, as well as Virdee, who voices a need for "a multiethnic coalition" for class understandings that can push against limited and limiting notions of the working class as the realm of the white worker, I argue that class and race be brought together in the field of rhetoric and composition in the recognition of the working-class in the US as multilingual and multinational.

Conversations about the working-class that account for difference can speak to difficulties of making a meaningful working life in the US. Such conversations also situate the Ford English School within real world situations that challenged and continue to challenge immigrant workers. At work, at school, and in public, the voice of immigrants in the US are subjected to forces of Americanization that target ethnicity and heritage language. Additionally, immigrant workers today must contend with forces of deindustrialization, wherein the values of industrialization, including English only and US citizenship, remain culturally significant. The Ford Man was born of a time of major shifts in mechanical production, when it was possible for some English-speaking, US citizen workers to aspire to and even attain middle-class lives through union pay, pensions, vacation time. But in today's era of deindustrialization, when pay scales and benefits have shifted to the advantage of surviving corporations, members of migrant working-class communities may not even be able to hope to aspire to a middle-class life for themselves or their children. Said another way, the value of industrial history is diminished in this era of deindustrialization, particularly in communities "where people live every day with the tangible evidence of the past, in buildings where people once worked and in empty lots where

neighbors' homes once stood" (Linkon *The Half-Life* 4). In short, memories of the industrial era may haunt immigrant members of the working-class today.

Industrial history haunts residents of deindustrial Rust Belt cities. But what does it mean to experience this haunting? A recent special issue on deindustrialization in *The Journal of Working-Class Studies asks: "*how does deindustrialization feel, what does it sound like, and how does it continue to hold meaning in its absent presence, long after the factory has closed? What are its affective remnants, vibrations, sights, smells, and how do they assert an affectual presence?" ("Special Issue: Social Haunting, Classed Affect, and the Afterlives of Deindustrialization" 3). To aid in the exploration of the haunted sites of deindustrialization, authors in this special issue engage Avery Gordon's concept of "social haunting." In *Ghostly Matters*, Gordon describes haunting as "the domain of turmoil and trouble," where "the harm inflicted or the loss sustained by a social violence done in the past or in the present" registers (xvi) amongst people today. Further, that haunting raises specters or ghosts—not of the dead or the missing—but as social figures through which "something lost, or barely visible, or seemingly not there to our supposedly well-trained eyes, makes itself known or apparent to us." Thus, investigating ghosts "can lead to that dense site where history and subjectivity make social life" (8). As much as English and US citizenship represent opportunity, they also raise industrial era specters, such as the Ford Man, that may haunt future generations of working-class immigrants, particularly within deindustrial centers of the US.

Deindustrialization and social haunting directly speak to the Americanization experience of multilingual and multinational populations of working-class immigrant communities. Like Gordon, I am concerned with ghosts that continue to occupy urban public spaces. Like Linkon, I see industrial ruins not only as evidence of decline, but as potential sources for critique.

Although the Ford English School was shuttered nearly a century ago, the legacy of the Ford Man as the idealized industrial worker continues to circulate and flow in greater Detroit through the absent presences of the automobile industry in a complex entanglement of historical, national, economic, and languaging elements that play out in the lives of immigrant residents of greater Detroit. Given the decline of the Detroit automobile industry, it may be argued that the social figure of the Ford Man, which stands for the idealized white, native born, industrial worker, haunts working-class immigrant spaces of Hamtramck. In this way, this chapter seeks to bring the ghost of the Ford Man out of the shadows, to think about the ways in which the linguistic and cultural values of Americanization, which arose during the industrial era, are playing out in the lives of working-class immigrant communities within deindustrial Hamtramck today.

In a sense, the research for this dissertation seeks to correct this absence through a focus on literacy and citizenship amongst working-class immigrant populations. As I stated in the previous chapter, my research has included a handful of trips to archives and libraries in the greater Detroit area. On my most recent trip, I wanted to stay nearer or even in Hamtramck, which was the home of Polish workers that Ford tracked into the FES. But as I found out, Hamtramck has no hotels and only one hostel, so I stayed in an Airbnb on Caniff Street, which bisects the center of the city. From the front porch of the house where I stayed, which was built as a two bedroom home in 1920, I could see the Hamtramck Fire Station to the east, the Hamtramck Public Library, and the Jurkiewicz & Wilk Funeral Home just across the street. Nearby schools include Hamtramck High School and Kosciuszko School. Like so many spaces in the city, these institutions and the surrounding areas were caught between the memory of industrialization and reality of deindustrialization. Storefronts were boarded-up, repurposed, or

in shabby states of repair. Sitting on the porch of the Caniff Street house began to lay bare the effects of decades of deindustrialization that I was yet to glimpse as a child sitting on the curb of my grandparents' home across the street from Ford's Los Angeles Assembly plant.

The City of Hamtramck: A brief history of immigrant settlement and industrial labor

In *The World is Always Coming to an End*, Carlo Rotella offers the analysis of a single neighborhood—Chicago's South Shore, where he lived with his parents as the city was shifting from a mostly white neighborhood to a predominantly black neighborhood—as a microcosm for urban neighborhoods. Rotella's study speaks to important truths about race, social class, and community, with an emphasis on *neighborhood*, which he describes as

> both a place and a quality of feeling, a physical landscape and the flows of population, resources, and thought moving through it. The infrastructure of streets and parks and buildings may be there for the long haul, but any particular order—any particular way of life and the material basis for it—housed in this container is always taking form, in the process of disappearing, or both at once. (5-6)

In the spirit of Rotella's project, I want to turn our attention to the city of Hamtramck, Michigan, the site of the Ford English School, to consider the impact of deindustrialization on ethnic and immigrant neighborhoods within the city today.

The city of Hamtramck is tied to a long history of industrial manufacturing, immigration, and the laboring and languaging lives of the working-class of greater Detroit. Hamtramck, Michigan is a small suburb surrounded by the city of Detroit, except for a corner of the western border, which touches the city of Highland Park, where the Ford English School was located. As a feature of industrial manufacturing, Ford's Five Dollar Day contributed to a population explosion in Hamtramck from 1910 to 1920. By 1922, Hamtramck had 49,000 citizens, mostly

Polish immigrants.[13] Automobile manufacturing was at the core of working-class Polish life. Through Ford's own internal documents, Polish workers were listed as the most numerous ethnolinguistic group at the Highland Park plant ("Language and Citizenship"). Further, Polish workers also held the absolute majority at numerous local automobile assembly plants, including the Dodge Main plant and the Plymouth Assembly plant (Radzilowski "Exhibit as Mirror" 5). Given the dominance of Polish workers on the industrial factory floor and the limitations of Ford's English Only policy, a Polish pidgin became the "*lingua franca* of the assembly lines" spoken not only by Polish and Eastern European immigrants, but African American and Italian workers as well (6). Building upon the description of union organization in the Polish language described in chapter two, Polish pidgin on the factory floor undermines the narrative of the value of a standardized English language in the laboring and languaging lives of working-class immigrants who lived and worked in the area.

Hamtramck was also built by language politics within the Detroit automobile industry, which played out against the backdrop of national policy on labor and citizenship. The 1924 National Origins Act established federal immigration policy upon a quota system that effectively throttled immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe, Africa, and Asia, while widening the door for immigrants from Northern Europe. Later, in 1965, federal immigration policy was restructured, with a focus on the reunification of families and worker skill. The 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act opened the door to migrants from Asian, Latin American,

[13] In a keynote at the Organization of American Historians, Dr. Thaddeus C. Radzilowski of the Piast Institute of Hamtramck provides a brief history of the influence of Polish immigrants in the construction of the cultural landscape of greater Detroit. From about 1880 to the Great Depression of 1929, Polish Americans "created thirty-one new Catholic parish communities and four national Catholic parishes." Further, Poles created a "network of fraternal halls and other institutional buildings, three hospitals, two colleges, two settlement houses, an orphanage, a summer camp, athletic fields, a veterans home, a dozen theaters and numerous businesses in the Detroit area." In short: "Poles defined the structure and meaning of neighborhood for much of Detroit in the first half of the 20th century" (Radzilowski "Exhibit as Mirror" 5).

African, and Middle Eastern countries. Despite the shift in policy, Americanization continued to be threaded through national policy. At the signing of the 1965 Act, which took place at the foot of the Statue of Liberty, President Lyndon B. Johnson spoke of the value of ethnic and national diversity as foundations of Americanization, stating:

> Our beautiful America was built by a nation of strangers. From a hundred different places or more they have poured forth into an empty land, joining and blending in one mighty and irresistible tide . . . The land flourished because it was fed from so many sources—because it was nourished by so many cultures and traditions and peoples. ("Remarks at the Signing of the Immigration Bill")

Johnson's concern with the assimilation of peoples of "many cultures and traditions," when coupled with a description of the continent as "empty" reflects a colonial worldview as parallel to Americanization. Further, Johnson's rhetoric echoes the pageantry of the Ford melting pot, which extolled the virtues of the English language as a force of Americanization.

Although the 1965 Act continues to be the law of the land, the worldview surrounding the rhetoric of immigration has changed. For example, in the run-up to the 1965 Act, the term "chain-migration" simply described the social process of "movement in which prospective migrants learn of opportunities, are provided with transportation, and have initial accommodation and employment arranged by means of primary social relationships with previous migrants" (MacDonald and MacDonald "Chain migration ethnic neighborhood formation and social networks" 82). Today though, as part of a nativist lexicon, "chain-migration," along with terms such as "anchor baby," "passport baby," and "birth tourism," push against immigration, targeting workers and families US federal policy was meant to reunify. According to the logic of this xenophobic rhetoric, immigration today would be subject to a national and racial hierarchy, whereby immigrants from Northern Europe were granted preferred status, thereby enacting a version of Francis Galton's ableist vision of Western civilization.

Despite the popularity of current ableist and nativist visions of America, immigration today, particularly from Asian countries, is as high as during the time of the Ford English School (Tavernise "U.S. Has Highest Share of Foreign-Born Since 1910, With More Coming From Asia"). Interestingly, this national trend is echoed in Hamtramck. Although Hamtramck remains a deeply Polish community, it is also a settlement for new immigrants from Southern Asia, including Yemen, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. As of the 2010 Census, Bangladeshis made up 19.1 percent of the population, whereas Pakistanis made up eleven percent. Of course, conditions of immigration are much different today than during the industrial era of the Ford English School. Whereas industrialization created individual wealth and a national economy through the exploitation of natural resources, life in today's era of deindustrialization is built upon the scraps of industrialization, leaving workers and their families a narrow margin for success and failure.

Diversity and deindustrialization are features of public and private life in Hamtramck today. For example, the business district of Hamtramck is located on Joseph Campau Avenue. Many of the shops on the avenue, including the American-European Market, the Polish American Federal Credit Union, and the Islamic Center of Hamtramck, as well as the Al-Islah Mosque & Islamic Center, reflect an ongoing history of immigration. In a recent celebration, eighteen national flags, which represent the ethnic and transnational diversity of the citizenry of Hamtramck, were hung along Joseph Campau. Participants in the flag raising ceremony wore clothing native to their country and culture ("After years of non-use, Jos. Campau flagpoles come to life"). So much for Ford's melting pot. But the backdrop of this celebration of internationalism is a local history of deindustrialization, whereby residents live amongst the ruins.

It is within this framework, then, that this chapter will turn toward descriptions of education, labor and literacy within more localized spaces within and amongst blue collar and immigrant communities of Hamtramck. In these spaces we will see how the ideology of progress and the promise of an American life is in tension with ongoing histories of deindustrialization, with an emphasis on how more recent immigrants to the city are involved in processes of negotiation, dealing with the past, envisioning the future, wherein they cannot afford to fail, nor can they afford to succeed. In particular, I will explore three sites of literacy—Women of Banglatown, a community arts organization that speaks to concerns of recent immigrants to Hamtramck; the Piast Institute, a research center of Polish and Polish American affairs, which speaks to the largest ethnic group present at Ford during the time of the FES. These two sites of literacy compliment the work of public education through the third site, Hamtramck High School, which serves a largely Asian student population. Finally, the chapter will turn to Woodward Throwbacks, which refurbishes reclaimed wooden fixtures plucked from the ruins of greater Detroit. Together, these sites speak to the ways in which the imagined ideal of a white, industrial working class is reinscribed upon the bodies of recent immigrants and workers in Hamtramck. My goal is to describe the ways in which the expectations and values of language and citizenship from the era of industrialization continue to shape the response of immigrant and ethnic students and workers during this era of deindustrialization.

Language and Education: Teaching and learning across ethnic communities of Hamtramck

Women of Banglatown on the North End of Deindustrial Hamtramck

Women of Banglatown (WOB)[14] is a community arts organization that serves local school age residents from the Bangladeshi community at the northern edge of Hamtramck. To get the organization off the ground, WOB received grants from Detroit Future City, New Colossus, and the Ford Foundation the year of its founding in 2014 and the next year as well. More recently, in September 2018, WOB ran a successful Kickstarter funding campaign, raising over twenty-five thousand dollars. During this time, administrators at WOB have joined a coalition of businesses, nonprofits, government agencies and community members to create more inclusive immigrant communities in Southeast Michigan (Global Detroit).

WOB is located amongst industrial ruins in a building constructed in 1922 on the corner of Carpenter Avenue and Mitchell Street. Across the street is the Ukrainian Workers Home (UWH). Fraternal halls such as the UWH have supported working-class immigrants and members of ethnic groups within the industrial trades, providing a social space and, oftentimes, meeting rooms and performance spaces with stages and bars. In 1917, according to administrative documents, Ruthenians, which ethnolinguistically refer to Ukrainians, were the eighteenth largest ethnic worker group at Ford. Of the three hundred and sixty-eight Ruthenian workers at Ford, three hundred and fifty-seven had not been naturalized, and one hundred and thirteen were listed as not speaking English ("Language and Citizenship"). With the collapse of the industrial era the UWH has now been shuttered for decades. Such spaces are not only closed off city spaces, but they are also something of a rejoinder within a historical conversation that tells the story of Americanization and American manufacturing minimizing the importance of immigrant labor. Returning again to Linkon, who describes the role that broken down industrial spaces play in the economy, in politics, and the lives of residents today, stating:

[14] The following analysis of Women of Banglatown (WOB) is based on their website.

> Abandoned factories, deteriorating buildings, even seemingly empty lots where (sometimes pretty) weeds hide the remnants and detritus of the past result from economic restructuring and neoliberal politics, but they also shape how people see themselves, their communities, and the larger social and political forces that affect them. (*The Half-Life* 129)

In this way, the abandoned UWH is more than a backdrop to Women of Banglatown. Given the history of industrial era processes of Americanization, it is something of a daily material reality for residents of the forces that shaped the lives of previous generations of immigrant workers. Thus, on the level of the neighborhood, community centers such as WOB are never entirely separate from economic, material, or cultural conditions of the city. Nor are they separate from histories of industrialization and Americanization that haunt the city through now dark and empty working-class spaces such as UWH.

During the time of the FES, there were thousands of Americanization projects across the country. Local populations perceived to need literacy and citizenship training were targeted, including native students in Hawai'i (Taira "Embracing education and contesting Americanization") and Japanese and Mexican immigrant students in Los Angeles (Gutfreund "Immigrant education and race"). Gender was also a marker that determined an imagined need for Americanization. Consider, for example, the General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC) that sought to Americanize Jewish immigrant women in New York City. Like Ford, the GFWC also made the ethnic home a site of Americanization. The GFWC curriculum included "home teaching" (White "We learn the customs of our new country, America" 15), which emphasized the cultural norms of a middle-class home, including "consumerism, health and sanitation standards, dietary habits, and gender roles" (16). Here rises again a specter of Americanization, according to Avery Gordon, who states that we know that a haunting has occurred when the "home becomes unfamiliar" (xvi). Despite the tensions that may have manifested during times of

such change, according to analysis of archival materials, White notes an "awareness of and appreciation for the freedom of women in the United States to get an education and participate in government" (20). In this way, Kate White's analysis aligns with the analysis of the response of FES students who praised Ford for the work of the FES. From an institutional point of view, Americanization is a way of creating opportunity for people with preferred identities in public spaces. From a community point of view though, Americanization is a force that seeks to reshape the home life of immigrant communities. Given the force of Americanization, how do new immigrants to the country make a life for themselves in public while holding on to ethnic and linguistic practices and values?

Given this history of deindustrialization and Americanization, Asian girls and women who make up the clientele of *Women of Banglatown* have a narrow road to walk as they make a life for themselves in the US. On one hand, it may be that some of the girls and women are enacting their own agency by joining WOB. Given the difficulties of navigating a city without knowing the dominant language, making such a move would be wise. On the other hand, it may be that joining WOB may be a way for girls and women to move outside the limitations of Bangladeshi households, where women "are encouraged to stay home and care for the family," minimizing relationships and activities outside the home ("Vision + Action Plan for Banglatown 2016"). In this way, WOB was founded upon a need to create a separate space for Bangladeshi girls and women. According to Ali Lapetina, founder and WOB board member, the idea for WOB came during a photography project in Hamtramck, where Lapetina sought to explore stories of "immigrant and underrepresented communities navigating daily life in America" ("A Home Abroad"). Lapetina's project led her to the alleyways and in-between spaces where Bangladeshi women kept gardens of South Asian vegetables, including bitter melon, long bean,

and water squash. While there, Lapetina saw Bangladeshi boys zipping "through the neighborhoods on their bikes," finding "commune with each other." She also recognized that "there was no equivalent for these girls." Thus, "Women of Banglatown was created to provide that space" ("Women of Banglatown Youth Arts") to help Bangladeshi girls navigate life in deindustrial Hamtramck.

WOB seeks to provide resources for new immigrants to navigate deindustrial Hamtramck. The mission of WOB engages the rhetoric of ethnic communal belonging in tension with American individual identity. According to their website, WOB seeks to create "a welcoming and culturally-sensitive space" for "first generation daughters" of the Banglatown community of Hamtramck. Turning again to their website, the goal of WOB is to create "opportunities for women and girls to explore and learn their own creative and social potential." A volunteer echoes the mission of WOB, stating that the "[WOB] creates a community for young girls to be themselves" ("Women of Banglatown: Community Art Space for Girls and Women"). As the WOB mission describes and the volunteer states, Bengali girls and young women must negotiate community and individual relationships. In this way, the mission of the WOB asks girls and young women to position themselves between community belonging and individual potential, balancing on one hand Bangladeshi ethnic community and family tradition and on the other hand American cultural values of self-discovery and self-expression.

The WOB curriculum provides arts and exercise classes. The WOB calendar includes classes on paper making, ceramics, photography, bookmaking, as well as yoga and Zumba. Whereas the FES curriculum sought to position the home of the worker as the site of literacy and learning ("Lesson No. 8: Evening at Home"; "Lesson No. 13: Writing to a Friend": "Lesson No. 14: Receiving Mail"), the WOB seeks to bring these practices into public, communal spaces.

Further, WOB is something of an extension of public education, providing access to WIFI-enabled study spaces as well as printers to help students complete their schoolwork, with plans to build a social justice library. The WOB also provides English language instruction. Turning again to the WOB website of the English curriculum description:

> Everyday English for Everywhere is a 7-week female-exclusive ESL course designed to address the linguistic needs of the women living in Hamtramck and Banglatown neighborhood of Detroit. This course aims to equip adult women to develop basic conversational English skills and expand their socio-economic opportunities. This course covers elementary English skills, and it is taught in the Sylheti language by female volunteers from the community. ("ESL Classes")

The Everyday English for Everywhere course provides English education for Asian women in public spaces. According to the course description, the linguistic needs of Bangladeshi women in Hamtramck are concerned with basic conversational English skills as a route toward Americanization. Importantly, the Everyday English for Everywhere course is taught in the Sylheti language, which a dialect of Bengali. In this way, the WOB curriculum is a step away from the English Only ideology that infused the FES curriculum. Further, creating "female-exclusive" classrooms may be a way toward creating more gender-based equity in the classroom, even as American linguistic values are promoted through English instruction.

The newly formed WOB Youth Advisory Council (YAC), which contributes to developing WOB curricula, is made up of individuals who identify as Bangladeshi or Bangladeshi-American women. Co-Chair of YAC, Salma Ali speaks to the importance of making connections across generations according to gender as a foundation of pedagogy, stating: "My time with WOB has emphasized the importance of having women-led spaces that nurture and connect women and girls in the community with one another" ("Youth Advisory Council"). Yet, as research into the teaching practices at the FES have shown, already Americanized immigrants are a tremendous resource in the ongoing practice of Americanizing future

generations of immigrants. Said another way, hiring teachers of the same ethnolinguistic community as the students cannot stand in the place of a critical view of English language instruction as a foundation of imposing American middle-class values of language use.

As much as WOB was born of a critical concern with gender and public space, questions about the power and the imposition of English remain. In a return to those in-between spaces of the city, Lapetina describes the role of language in photographing Bangladeshi women in their gardens, where English was not the dominant language. In a recent interview, Lapetina noted the language barrier between herself and her subjects, including a group of young Bangladeshi girls, their siblings, and their mothers. Lapetina sidesteps the interviewer's question concerning the power of English, stating that the project did not suffer for the language barrier, suggesting instead that the linguistic barrier was an affordance that allowed her "to really see the common points that make us all human" ("Bengali Gardens"). Here, Lapetina forwards a concern for humanity, with concerns for equity across ethnic, national, and linguistic difference. In this way, Lapetina's view of language difference aligns with Salma Ali's concerns with gender and community described above. Yet, language is not only ever an expression of humanity within an art project. English is also a site of imposing American culture upon new immigrants to the country.

Focusing on a shared humanity may be a way of ignoring the tensions between language and identity within histories of immigration and language loss. As we have seen in this dissertation, working-class immigrants may find themselves subject to powerful institutions that seek to shape their languages and identities to meet institutional need according to ableist and nativist thinking about the preferred American identity. In the absence of a critical view of the politics of language, I fear that the WOB ESL course may replicate a curriculum, as noted in

chapter one, that encouraged students to assimilate at expense of their home cultures, languages, and dialects. In the absence of a critical view of language difference, the ghost of Americanization that haunt deindustrial spaces of immigrant communities of Hamtramck may continue to reemerge as a force in the lives of immigrants today. This is the legacy of the Ford English Only policy we must contend with. Ignoring these tensions within a politics of language may implicate us in the ongoing process of creating monolingual and monocultural Americans of new immigrants arriving today.

In short, as important as it is to create public spaces such as WOB, what does the WOB mean for the maintenance of the home within the Bangladeshi community of Hamtramck? For example, one student describes WOB as "our second home" ("Women of Banglatown: Community Art Space for Girls and Women"). In this way, the WOB may be effectively enacting their mission to widen opportunities for entry into public spaces for girls and women from the Bangladeshi community, which certainly challenges the cultural values of the Ford Man. But, based upon materials in the WOB website, I have concerns. But what of home life? To put Kate White's earlier analysis of the values of English into wider perspective, I ask: what might it feel like for WOB students to return home one day, recognizing that the vegetables in gardens have been harvested in their absence? What might it feel like when their heritage languages and dialects seem to slip? A shared humanity of language use cannot account for the pain of these moments. Of course, a study of the WOB that went beyond their website, a limitation brought about by pandemic conditions, would enable us to explore how the women and girls navigated, accepted, or rejected elements of the institution's mission.

I argue that there is a real tension between becoming proficient in English in public spaces and losing hold of meaning at home in heritage languages. As I have already stated in this

dissertation, I am very much a product of Americanization, where English was meant to supplant heritage language and Mexican cultural values and identity. Even as a child, perhaps at the same age of WOB students, I recognized a troubling feeling about my language usage. On one hand, my English was effective in the classroom and other public spaces. On the other hand, I remember not being able to communicate easily with my grandparents. They spoke English, but I could sense that it was difficult, and they didn't prefer it. To them, English represented uncertain terrain, and Spanish was the same for me. When I think back to those moments of discomfort in communication between languages, I recognize the specter of Americanization that haunted my upbringing. (Remember, the Ford plant was just down the street from my maternal grandparent's home.) It may be that WOB students are experiencing similar moments in their own lives, in their own homes, amongst their own families in the shadows of Ford's Highland Park plant.

The Piast Institute: Polonia in Deindustrial Hamtramck

As much as Hamtramck is now the home of immigrants from Asia, the city also remains the home of a Polish community, whose roots are tied to the Ford English School. Chapter two of this dissertation described the work of various institutions of education that, together, represented a countermodel to the Ford English School. Given the failures of education tied to an ongoing history of deindustrialization, many of the schools that once sought to serve ethnic and immigrant communities on the east side of Detroit have closed and been demolished.[15] Here, American cultural linguistic values are tied to a deep history of public education. To trace a local connection between the ongoing project of Americanization and the Polish community of

[15] This is an abbreviated list of parochial schools on the east side of Detroit that served immigrant communities. Note that the founding and closure dates overlap the rise and fall of the era of industrialization: the St. Peter School (1877-2013); St. Anthony/East Catholic High School (1857-2005); St. Albertus Catholic School (1872-1990); St. Rita Catholic School (1926-2008); St. David High/Duke Ellington School (1924-2013).

Hamtramck, we must turn to the Piast Institute (PI) as a way of describing how Ford's Americanization project continues to disrupt community networks.

The PI is a national research center of Polish and Polish American affairs on Joseph Campau Ave, a seven-minute walk from Women of Banglatown. The PI was co-founded in 2003 by Thaddeus Radzilowski, whose scholarship on Polish life in the United States has been featured throughout this dissertation, and Mrs. Virginia Skrzyniarz, who, as of 2018, is the CEO of PI. Broadly, the mission of the PI is to celebrate Polish contributions to America and to counter inaccurate or defamatory information about Poland, Poles, and Polish Americans. The mission of PI is enacted through community engagement. The PI hosts conferences, seminars, lectures, and exhibits about Poland, Poles, and Polish Americans, with an emphasis on the values of Polish ethnicity in public life. PI also engages civic responsibility. For the 2020 US Census, which is the first to take place online, PI is working to make sure that local households that do not maintain access to the internet can effectively enact their rights as citizens. Additionally, PI also contributes to environmental and policy changes through policy papers as well as through historical, cultural, political, and economic studies. PI is also working to preserve archival materials on the local history of the Polish working-class. Amongst this diverse list of civic and community work, PI engages local and national literacy initiatives rooted in a history of Americanization.

As described in chapter one, Ford's Americanization project was facilitated through collaboration with federal immigration offices whereby FES diplomas could be contributed to naturalization applications. Today, PI collaborates with state and private institutions to facilitate bilingual education—in English and Polish. The PI works with the Michigan Department of Education and Avent Assessment, a private assessment company, to proctor a nationally

recognized test for Polish language proficiency. The acronym for the Avant Assessment test is STAMP (**STA**ndards-based **M**easurement of **P**roficiency), which seeks to measure language proficiency in spoken, written, reading, and listening Polish communication. Marzanna Owinski, who is the PI's Director of Cultural & Educational Programs, and a former Polish language instructor at St. Mary's Preparatory at the Polish Mission and former principle of the Father Jozef Dabrowski Polish Language School in Orchard Lake, worked with the Polish Mission and Avant Assessment to develop the Polish language STAMP test ("Expanding Opportunities for Polish Speakers: As Seal of Biliteracy Testing Increases, So Should Access"). In addition to proctoring the test, the PI also hosts the awards ceremony, where the Seal of Biliteracy diploma is conferred. According to the Piast Institute website, the Seal of Biliteracy was created to encourage students "to embrace their native and heritage languages" and to study world languages ("Seal of Biliteracy"). Owinski echoes this call to bilingual literacy with an emphasis on a community of Polish languages users, stating: "If a child's heritage language is recognized and rewarded, they are more likely to maintain and develop it*"* ("Interview with Marzanna Owinski of The Polish Mission"). In this way, Owinski speaks to the importance of respecting the literacies and knowledges of heritage language speakers as a source of identity for ethnic and immigrant communities, even while expanding the potential for opportunities through literacy training and assessment. Said another way, the Polish language is a springboard to a life in a wider English-speaking public world.

At the same time, the local history of Ford's Americanization project is not lost at Piast. Marzanna Owinski speaks to the history of Americanization in the US as a force of assimilation, stating:

> For generations, (immigrants in America) didn't speak their language because people didn't see it as appropriate. They wanted to blend in as soon as possible. We lost so many

> generations of (people who speak more than one language). Both languages are important. People who come here should learn English, but they shouldn't give up on their own language. ("First-ever Polish language test available for Orchard Lake students")

Owinski's concern with the ongoing force of Americanization speaks to tensions within immigrant communities. The loss of language and ethnicity of Polish immigrants speaks to the erasure of cultural values that make up a foundation of a community of people. At the same time, Owinski notes the importance of Polish, not only as a foundation of bilingual literacy, but as a way of preserving Polish identity in the face of histories of Americanization and the imposition of English.

The STAMP test and the Seal of Biliteracy complicates the mission of the Piast Institute as a site of Polish community literacy. Whereas the English curriculum at Ford was designed to assimilate immigrant students to their new identities, new jobs, and new homes *in* the greater Detroit area, the STAMP test is geared toward high school students making their way *away* from deindustrial Hamtramck. Passing the STAMP test results in a notation of bilingual proficiency on a high school transcript, which may aid the student in application for future study in higher education or in the search for work. The founder and CEO of Avant, David Bong, who is the former Director of the Center for Applied Second Language Studies at the University of Oregon, describes a concern for language and labor within a globalized context this way: "In today's global economy and multicultural society, language skills are as valuable as math and science" ("Press Release: Avant STAMP Language Proficiency Test in Polish"). Like the FES, where skill in English was meant to accelerate production in English, the STAMP test emphasizes language generally as a technological skill, while diminishing cultural and social value of language to an ethnic immigrant population of language user. In this way, the ghost of

Americanization continues to haunt the deindustrial spaces of Detroit, even as private educational companies such as Avant suggest there is no such thing as a social haunting.

Bong's and Avant's view of language cannot account for local conditions of students growing up in and around deindustrial Detroit. What might Bong know about growing up amongst the deindustrial ruins of Detroit? On a recent research trip to Detroit, I was driving a rental car around the city. The archives had closed for the day, and I was wandering around. After glimpsing a massive site of overgrowth of trees and shrubs and weeds, I turned onto a residential street where houses once stood. Most of the neighborhood was gone. But every once and a while a house that was obviously occupied stood, maybe with children's toys on the lawn. I kept driving along. Around the corner, I saw a boy, no more than ten or twelve, riding a BMX bike down the street. I watched him in my rearview mirror as he peddled past me, wondering what it might feel like to grow up in this empty place. When I thought back to my own childhood, I imagined that growing up with all this empty space would feel like a giant playground. But I also wondered about his friends. I mean, my five best friends as a kid all lived within a four-block radius. I wonder if that boy felt left behind. If so, did this impose a desire to get up and leave this place. And once he is grown, how might this boy look back on this time and these empty spaces. Through its Sociological Department, Ford sought to Americanize worker neighborhoods. Within the era of deindustrialization, neighborhoods are gone, along with the Ford Man, who may have relocated to Ford Motors' Cuautitlán Stamping and Assembly Plant in Cuautitlán Izcalli, Mexico. This is the moment the ruins of deindustrialization and the history of the labor of working-class immigrants are in tension with a sense of survival, which may manifest in a desire to get away. And the Piast Institute, along with private education companies, enable that desire for survival, in the way that Ford Motors and the YMCA did, with an emphasis

on imposing American cultural values through English as a way into the world beyond the culture of the home.

Hamtramck Public Schools

Public school systems have long been the target of special interest groups that have sought to deploy political ideologies through curricula. Chapters throughout this dissertation describes the ways in which local businessmen, politicians, and even school administrators sought to Americanize not just industrial workers, but students, as a way of shaping the next generation of worker. This description of Hamtramck Public Schools will trace the ways in which Ford's history of Americanization plays out amongst a largely immigrant student population existing today.

Hamtramck Public Schools (HPS) is a small school district of about 3,500 students. HPS students speak at least twenty-nine languages and dialects. Most of the students are considered English learners. Despite the demographics, which suggest that students and their families had migrated from dozens of countries, in 2016, there were only about ten ESL teachers in the district. Student attendance was terribly low. Further, Hamtramck Public Schools had already been cited by the US Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights for not providing to students access to an education. That same year, Jaleelah Hassan Ahmed, who has been an educator for twenty-two years with an emphasis in English as a Second Language (ES) and Literacy, became the first director of English language development.

Jaleelah Ahmed contributed to significant changes within the district. First, she founded the Youth Voice and Engagement Committee as a way of amplifying the voice of the student and closing the feedback loop between students and administrators. Further, Hamtramck Public

Schools is now working with Wayne State University for current teachers to receive ESL training. Ahmed also sought to extend education to parents of HPS students ("UM-Dearborn alumna is a champion for Hamtramck's English language learners"). As a result of these initiatives, the citation from the Office of Civil Rights, which threatened the ability of HPS to retain local control of the school system, has been removed. In an age where public schools are targeted and dismantled at the hands of philanthropists, school choice advocates, and conservative legislators, retaining local governance of HPS is central to meeting the needs of HPS students. Student attendance is now up to 90 percent. Despite gains made at HPS, the ghost of Americanization continues to haunt.

In a recent interview with the Dearborn, Michigan-based *Yemeni American News*, Ahmed describes a family education initiative called the Newcomer Engagement Parent Program, which focuses on helping newcomer (newcomer is code for immigrant) parents understand the outcomes of the school their students may be attending. In this program, parents are welcomed into HPS schools to meet with agents from the wider community to gain life skills. For example, parents will meet with city firefighters who talk about keeping a safe home. Or they might meet with policy officers to discuss safety in getting around the city ("Educator Jaleelah Hassan Ahmed"). Of course, these having this type of support can benefit all who choose it, particularly when we consider the difficulty of navigating a city with less than native command of the dominant language. Whereas Ford Sociological Department agents were deployed to worker homes looking for evidence of Americanization amongst immigrant populations, immigrant parents today are encouraged to come to HPS schools to learn to get by in an urban American city. Many of the FES lesson plans focused on themes that sought to teach immigrants how to get

by in urban Detroit. But learning to get by is only part of the legacy of the Ford Americanization project.

Newcomer education reinscribes English onto the body of the immigrant, evoking histories of Americanization. HPS uses the Comer Method or Comer Process as a foundation of parent education. In 1968, child psychiatrist James Comer, with the support of the Child Study Center of Yale University, developed an academic program aimed at ethnic, inner-city youth living in poverty. Comer identified a problem of education within poverty-stricken communities as the fragmentation of community bonds ("New Haven, New Haven" *School Power* 42-54), which, in this dissertation, can be traced to Ford's disruption of community life of immigrant families through the FES curriculum. Thus, the goal of the Comer Method is to reestablish connections between schools and communities. According to this method, student success will be built upon connections between schoolteachers, administrators and parents. With an emphasis on reestablishing these connections, Comer states: "In every interaction you are either building community or breaking community" (Comer et al. *Rallying the Whole Village* 148). The Comer Method was originally developed in urban schools with large African American populations that, like immigrant student populations, are often determined to need Americanization. Echoing the pedagogy of the FES, the Comer Method seeks to "teach inner-city students how to be effective participants in society." Further, echoing concerns of the Ford Sociological Department, the Comer Method focuses on teaching students to engage middle-class institutions such as banks and employment, as well as political processes afforded citizens (Comer et al. "School power" 196) that speak to the residue of the Ford Man's relationship to middle-class institutions. Of course, I want to acknowledge that some families might want such programs.

Importantly, flexibility is built into the Comer Method. Planning and management groups are formed, including a "Parents' Team," whereby school and communities determine their own educational needs. At HPS, the Comer Method deploys an English language curriculum for new immigrants who are parents of HPS students. Echoing Comer's concern with poverty, ethnicity and community, the Hamtramck Public School District states:

> Children from low-income and minority families have the most to gain when schools involve parents. Parents can help, regardless of their level of formal education. We cannot look at the school and the home in isolation from one another; we must see how they interconnect with each other and with the world at large. ("Parent Engagement Plan" 5)

Thus, the school and the homework hand in hand to encourage student success with the added benefit of bringing the English language into the home of recent immigrant families of Hamtramck. HPS describes the goal of English language education for immigrant parents this way: "We know that when parents are learners they invite learning into their homes" (5). Threaded through the Comer Method at HPS is the idea that the student who is determined to need Americanization through English will be more likely to submit to such a curriculum if their family, particularly their parents, are engaged in similar processes of Americanization.

Woodward Throwbacks

The previous chapter considered questions of archival preservation of FES student voices tied to the Benson Ford Research Center and the Henry Ford Museum of American Innovation. One of the great cultural uses of museums and archives is that they add durability to industrial era materials. But what of those materials that do not find their way into such spaces of preservation? For example, throughout Detroit, abandoned houses, churches, schools, and factories have fallen into states of disrepair, thus reshaping neighborhoods. Sherry Lee Linkon is

similarly concerned with the identity and the character of those who attempt to intervene in what she calls "civic culture of the half-life" (132). Linkon uses the term "rust belt chic" this way:

> Indeed, Rust Belt chic can be read as an effort to redefine the identities of Rust Belt communities in response both to the disruption of deindustrialization itself and to largely negative representations of the region that appeared over subsequent decade, many of which focus on its failure to bounce back. (135-136).

As Linkon notes, rust belt chic is a way of looking backward with a sense of nostalgia with a view toward the future and the making of a meaningful life when such a thing seems unlikely. Rust belt chic also speaks to character and identity, emphasizing the value of local peoples, who can defend deindustrialized communities "from outsider misrepresentation," while contributing to "local solidarity and agency" (138). In this way, residents who have grown up amongst the rubble of deindustrialization, may seek to reinvent their identity (132) according to a sense of pride in the "grit and resilience" it takes to persist "through decades of economic struggle" (140) within this era of deindustrialization. At the core of rust belt chic is a desire to make a life for oneself amongst the rubble of industrialization.

But if the values of industrial era American identity are tied to features of standardization in labor and cultural homogenization, what can this nostalgia be worth to those who may not embody the values of Americanization that built industrial Detroit. Further, given the ongoing myth that the working-class is the realm of white, male, American labor, how might rust belt chic include or exclude new immigrants? If it does seek to include, to what end? At Ford, one hundred years ago, Ford welcomed immigrant labor if he could Americanize them. We will now turn to another ongoing Hamtramck

project to think more about the value of rust belt chic as an extension of the values of Americanization in the lives of new immigrants to the city.

Across the street from the Piast Institute on Joseph Campau Avenue is a workshop/retail space named Woodward Throwbacks (WT). WT takes its name from one of the major roadways through Detroit, Woodward Avenue, which, in 1909, became one of the earliest paved roads in America. With a nod toward nostalgia as a foundation of rust belt chic, WT sells reclaimed items and fixtures, including doors, flooring, tables, cabinets, etc. The WT showroom and workshop upstairs has been repurposed from the Garrity Dodge Dealership ("Woodward Throwbacks Turns Car Dealership Building into New Showroom"), which closed long ago.

WT is founded upon engaging emerging civic life in Detroit. By 2013, after decades of deindustrialization, several illegal dumpsites popped up around greater Detroit. WT co-founders and Detroit residents Bozenka "Bo" Shepherd and Kyle Dubay sought to help clean up the illegal dumpsites as an expression of social entrepreneurship grounded in civic responsibility. Bo states: "We combined our love for the city and the idea that taking materials found in the street would also help clean our neighborhoods" ("Bo Shepherd of Woodward Throwbacks"). Thus, as Bo and Kyle worked to clear-up dump sites, they also plucked salvageable materials to refurbish and sell in their showroom or on their website. In addition to dump sites, Bo and Kyle also go on salvage jobs, collecting materials and fixtures from abandoned buildings, such as churches and schools as well as from private homes. With a $40,000 grant through Detroit's Motor City Match ("Motor City Match grant recipients open stores in Detroit"), WT has established itself as a viable small business in Hamtramck, where rust belt chic exists within a largely immigrant neighborhood of Hamtramck. In this way, I must wonder just who the imagined customer of WT

is. It may be that recent migrants who have landed in Hamtramck may not be paying $625 for the Evangelical Book Cabinet No. 1, which, according to their website, was salvaged from a local Evangelical church.

Whereas industrial workers made a life of labor accumulating and exploiting natural resources, blue collar workers in the deindustrial era also make a life of labor on the margins. The work of WT is built upon family histories of labor within the building trades. Bo's father was a general contractor in New York. Further, Bo studied Transportation Design at the College for Creative Studies, and worked for General Motors for over five years, where she designed interiors for pickup trucks before turning away from the automobile industry. This move away from the industrial era model of labor and of worker (recall the Ford Man her) is telling. Bo and Kyle are amongst several individuals and small companies making their way in deindustrial Detroit. In this way, Bo and Kyle redefine "the loss and struggle of the half-life as an opportunity, not only as a matter of local and individual character but as a resource for creativity" which, in turn, "enables a new sense of place identity, based in industrial and deindustrial history and in postindustrial potential" (Linkon 142-143). In short, Bo and Kyle have sought to make their lives and labor amongst the abandoned spaces of Detroit, salvaging, refurbishing, and selling bits of industrial history as a foundation of urban life in deindustrial America.

The rust belt chic project of WT illuminates the fault lines in the promise of an American life. A century ago, Ford promoted the standardization of labor and language as twin foundations of an American life. Through systems of assembly line assembly and Americanization, Ford sought to produce the perfected products of industrial manufacturing along with Americanized workers living in rows of American homes. Through the work of WT though, we see that life

and labor is cobbled together from the ruins of industrialization. In fact, WT emphasizes this pieced-together nature of their work. For example, Bo and Kyle use their home to practice and promote the type of home restoration projects that are possible through purchases from WT. Bo and Kyle's home, which was built in 1901, is located near Hamtramck in Corktown, which was named long ago for the number of residents from County Cork, Ireland. The couple use the restorations they perform in their own home as examples of DIY projects popular amongst their home restoration customers. One recent example, "How To Make Shelves," was posted on their WT website with pictures, video, and text that broke down the restoration work into a handful of steps. The project began with refurbishing wood recovered from the bleachers of a local high school. As a way of promoting an aesthetic of rust belt chic, Bo describes the "patina" of the wood, which promotes the value of the obviously aged and worn wood. According to Bo, the patina of the wood contributes to a "cozy and warm" feeling in the deindustrial home. Using their home as a model is a smart business move. It is also a way for us to recognize that, unlike museums and archives, which can limit access to significant holdings, our homes also hold significant artifacts that speak to the ongoing cultural shifts brought about by deindustrialization in rust belt neighborhoods across America.

Conclusion

Linkon's idea of the half-life of industrialization theorizes the difficulty of making a way in the world during a transition from an industrial to a deindustrial economic era, where expectations and ideas that may have emerged in the previous era inform life today. In this way, I want to honor the ambivalent, imperfect attempts to move beyond Ford Man-ism we see in the good

work people are doing at Women of Banglatown, Piast Institute, Hamtramck Public Schools and even Woodward Throwback.

There are two threads running through this chapter. The first is the legacy of Americanization in the lives of working-class immigrants that continues to haunt immigrants, students and workers in Hamtramck, Michigan today. In three sites—Women of Banglatown, Piast Institute, and Hamtramck Public Schools—the English language continues to be used to develop the normative (Americanized) identity of immigrants. In each of these sites we also recognize the complicated process of making a way in such difficult conditions for working class immigrant and ethnic minorities. For example, for Asian girls and women at WOB, making a way in English in public may be a way of disconnecting from heritage language use and family life, while also enacting agency concerning directions for their own lives. Similarly, in a move that is perhaps most reminiscent of the Ford English School, Hamtramck Public Schools seeks to inscribe English onto the bodies of recent immigrants who are the parents of students enrolled in Hamtramck Public Schools. Further, students enrolled in dual language certification at Piast may be propelled away from home and away from the city and into the realms of higher education and/or labor. In each of these examples, moving across languages, public and private spaces, cultural spaces, is not itself a problem. Rather, I want to acknowledge the potential for cultural dissonance as a problem. For example, studying at Syracuse University and taking a position at Boston College has been a wonderful experience for me so far. At the same time, I realize that I feel I am the person I am meant to be when I am in Los Angeles, California. In this way, I understand the work of the fourth site of this chapter—Woodward Throwbacks—and an unwillingness to leave a neighborhood even when the neighborhood is undergoing so much

change. As Carlo Rotella states in the epigraph to this chapter, “We live in neighborhoods, and neighborhoods live in us” (3).

A second thread through this chapter is the funding of these projects. Overwhelmingly, funding is coming from private interests and the business world. And with each source of funding comes the mission and goals of those organizations, each of which seeks to deploy their mission throughout ethnic and business communities of Hamtramck and greater Detroit, which may work to reinscribe preferred identities onto immigrant bodies today. In this way, organizations that are also grappling with the half-life of the industrial era. For example, Detroit Future City (DFC) funds Women of Banglatown. The mission of DFC, which is guided by the neoliberal rhetoric of “equity and engagement,” is to advance the quality of life for Detroiters. DFC seeks to achieve its mission through community development and sustainable land use (“Mission”). In this way, DFC seeks to unmake the urban environment where inequality and Americanization has been inscribed upon the body of immigrants going back to the FES. For example, DFC is part of a movement working to depave Detroit. Removing blacktop and concrete creates greenspace, lowers drainage costs, and aids in the management of stormwater, thereby improving the lives of residents, while lessening the city’s burden of maintaining industrial era sites with no meaningful purpose (“Depave Detroit: Transform your pavement into beautiful green space”). In this way, the project is a literal unmakes features of the industrial era. Further, DFC is involved in a project, with public and private sector partners, to reuse “vacant industrial land and buildings” to “reduce blight, mitigate environmental hazards, create neighborhood jobs, and promote healthy, safe and sustainable neighborhoods,” with an emphasis on “small-scale manufacturing” (“INDUSTRIAL DISTRICTS: Rethinking Strategies for Adaptive Reuse”). In short, DFC’s projects are designed to help Detroiters make a way in

deindustrial Detroit. It remains to be seen though if repurposing and unmaking unused urban sites of the industrial era may impact the legacy of Americanization in the lives of immigrants in local neighborhoods.

In addition to its work with Avant Assessment in bilingual education, the Piast Institute has a "special interest in the role of Ethnicity," which places an emphasis on Poles and Polish Americans in American Life ("About Piast"). In addition to its many initiatives, Piast is looking toward the future, having launched the 2020 *Polish Americans Today* Survey, the first of which was deployed in 2010. The hope is that the results of the survey will contribute to the work of community organization, scholars, and researchers interested in American Polonia. Co-director of the survey, political scientist Dr. Dominik Stecuła, speaks to the question of identity during these uncertain times, stating: "The value of this work is not purely academic, but it has implications for our understanding of who we are as a community and where we are headed" ("Updates and Events"). For all their effort concerning the future of Polish life in the US, the 2020 Survey is deployed in English only, which effectively excludes heritage language speakers.

Private interests and business were foundational to Progressive Era reform in public education that gave rise to the Ford English School. Given our current era of deindustrialization, municipal governments in urban spaces have struggled to provide stable funding for public school. The ongoing history of school closures in Hamtramck and greater Detroit is as much tied to a mass exodus of residents from the area as it is tied to forces and processes of privatization that seek to defund public education. Said another way, deindustrialization has created opportunities for privatization. Scholar of American urban education Leanne Kang describes "the market model of public schooling," which is a "culmination of past events and consequences, and failed responses to longstanding problems and issues" (*Dismantled* 5) that, I suggest, are

rooted in Detroit's Americanization movement going back to the Progressive Era. Kang also emphasizes the ways in which market-based reform in Detroit is linked to national trends and policy in public education, pointing to the DeVos family—Dick of the Amway fortune, and Betsy, who was the US Secretary of Education that together have been at the center of Michigan school choice debates going back to the 1980s. With over 200 million dollars invested in public education reform, through charters, school vouchers, and virtual education, Betsy DeVos has sought to dismantle public funding of education, according to a conservative political worldview underscored by a Calvinist perspective of education whereby "it is a matter of faith to shield American families from government encroachment and ensure the freedom of families to control and shape their children's values" (72-73). In short, Betsy's one size fits all education model echoes the mission of Henry Ford and the values of the Ford Man.

Finally, the movement to address blight is also the concern of Motor City Match (MCM), which funded Woodward Throwbacks. MCM partners with local and federal organizations, with the goal of filling the gap in funding ("Motor City Match FAQs: Frequently Asked Questions" 7) to "low- and moderate-income" business and building owners (4). Applicants for funding from MCM are scored on five criteria, with an emphasis on "market opportunity," the "vision and plan for the business," as well as benefit to the surrounding community (10). In total, MCM scoring criteria is built upon an industrial era model of business and urban development that, in my view, may limit immigrant participants. Within a largely immigrant community of Hamtramck, what do residents need with storefronts such as Woodward Throwbacks, which evokes the spirit of industrialization and the image of the Ford Man, which has always been about assimilating immigrant labor.

Chapter Five

The Voice of the industrial worker at Ford's Rouge River Complex and Twin Cities Assembly Plant

> I have never known the police of any country to show an interest in lyric poetry as such. But when poems stop talking about the moon and begin to mention poverty, trade unions, color lines, and colonies, somebody tells the police.
>
> Langston Hughes, "My Adventures as a Social Poet" (1947)

> Don't get me wrong, we were fond of our relationship with Ford and all the other auto companies, but the Arab immigrants, like many immigrants and African Americans, were the backbone of the building of the Ford Motor Company, because they were in the trenches and the hard work and the foundry, and the really hard times. When you went to work, it was hard work.
>
> Chuck Shamey, "Chuck Shamey Interview," *Arab Americans and the Automobile* (1999)

Chapter One explores a history of English language education at the Ford English School (FES) form 1914-1919, demonstrating how Ford sought to Americanize "unskilled" migrant workers as part of the production of the literacy skills required for the modern American worker. Foundational to a nativist and ableist curriculum that identified the Ford Man as the ideal industrial worker was an ideology of *linguistic economic ableism*, whereby English would act as the vehicle for the transmission of values and beliefs beneficial to Ford Motors, thereby readying the body, the mind, and the voice of the worker for industrial labor. The chapter provides a foundation for a historical and archival look at forces of Americanization that continue to shape immigrant working class bodies through rhetoric of assimilation and efficiency as twin foundations of English-speaking, Americanized labor.

Chapter Two re-sees the FES within a broader industrial educational framework of Ford's English language education and manual training with an emphasis on Americanization, immigration, and race. Henry Ford's industrial education project was centered in the greater

Detroit area. For example, Ford pulled engineering students from the University to Michigan in nearby Ann Arbor and created the Henry Ford Trade School with the goals of contributing to a skilled workforce. But Ford's industrial education project drew people from far beyond Highland Park. For example, Ford welcomed graduates of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, where Native American students received a curriculum of Americanization and industrial training. Further, in Georgia, he funded the Berry Schools and the George Washington Carver School for Negroes, emphasizing a curriculum of labor and English language, respectively. This chapter also presents a countermodel to the Ford English School made up of private and parochial schools, colleges, and Polish education clubs for ethnic and immigrant students. Instead of aligning themselves with pro-capital ideology of corporations, these parochial schools, educational clubs, and political parties developed curriculum that created opportunities for workers to challenge and even resist corporate descriptions of industrial labor and literacy, while promoting the development of community- and ethnicity-based solidarity against capitalist exploitation.

Chapter Three turns to the industrial archives. This chapter traces the research labor of the project. A central concern in this search is for Ford English School student voices. Yet, as much as Ford had kept extensive administrative records, the writing of the Ford English School student represents a minor voice of the Ford archive. Thus, the chapter describes the move toward archives whose holdings supplement that of Ford Motors. In this way, I found gaps into which the voices of FES students complicated identity might emerge to determine the agency afforded to Ford worker-students. In these moments of analysis of FES student writings, I address the spirit of standardization that not only permeated industrial manufacturing at the turn of the last century, but the culture of Ford Motors as a site of labor for US citizens. The analysis

of working-class voices in this chapter speaks to an ongoing project of producing and moderating the voice of an Americanized working class.

Chapter Four traces the legacy of Americanization that continues to impact the lives of immigrant working class communities. This chapter returns to Hamtramck, Michigan where large populations of Ford English School student-workers lived in the 1910s. Although Hamtramck remains a stronghold of Polish community, the city is also made up of more recent immigrants, largely from Asia. Through the study of four local sites—Women of Banglatown, Piast Institute, Hamtramck Public Schools, and Woodward Throwbacks—I trace the ways in which Ford's industrial project of producing Ford Men continues to influence the ways in which immigrant identities are shaped today. At the same time, in each of these sites, we consider the affordances residents have at their disposal and how they may struggle to negotiate their literate and working lives in the suburbs of Detroit, where the spirit of Americanization lingers.

This chapter will turn to the voice of Detroit area autoworkers to think about the ways in which echoes of Ford's Americanization program can be heard in the voices of auto workers more recently. In each of the two sections, I will attempt to record the actual voice of the worker through oral history or creative writing. First, we will consider the voice of Arab American autoworkers, who lived and worked in the shadows of the Ford Motors Rouge River Complex in the Southend of Dearborn. Next, we turn to the Twin Cities Ford Assembly Plant in Minneapolis, which is the site of a working-class writers group made up of an instructor of English from the local university and working-class poets who labored at Ford. In each of these sites, we hear echoes of Ford's Americanization project against the backdrop of deindustrialization as we consider more recent descriptions of working-class immigrants making their way at Ford.

Ford Motor's Rouge River Complex and the Southend of Dearborn

To listen for the voice of automobile workers, we must start at Ford's Motors Rouge River Complex in Dearborn, Michigan. The Rouge Complex, which opened in 1928, was designed by architect Albert Khan, who had designed Ford's Highland Park plant. The Rouge Complex was a vertically integrated plant with docks on the Rouge River, railroad tracks, an electricity plant, and steel mill, enabling Ford to take delivery of and process all the raw materials necessary to manufacture and assemble Ford vehicles—completely on site. At its height, Ford employed up to 100,000 workers at the Rouge Complex. In this way, the Rouge Complex also represents a significant contrast to Ford's Village Industries Program (VIP), which moved industrial manufacturing out of urban centers to rural sites, often employing no more than one hundred workers—workers who often maintained family farms. In this way, Ford may have been able to offset it's Five Dollar Day. According to one worker, who labored at one VIP plant—the Ford Valve Plant in Northville, Michigan, starting wages in 1953 were a dollar sixty-nine an hour ("Ahmed Hassan Interview" 11). Ford's VIP program, which began in 1919, anticipates similar moves of manufacturing from Detroit in the 1960s and 1970s, an era defined by white flight and social unrest that is foundational to American deindustrialization in urban centers.

Today, the Rouge Complex is the center of Ford's Detroit manufacturing. While researching the archives for this project, I took a tour of the Rouge Complex, which employes about 10,000 workers. The tour began in a theatre, with a giant screen presentation of the history and the future of the plant, with emphasis on robotics on the assembly line. We then took a walking tour of a working assembly line, where the chassis of the F-150 pickup trucks were being assembled. Tourists stood behind heavy plexiglass, while assembly line workers added doors and other features to the cab. A couple of times I caught the eye of a worker, which made

me feel uneasy. I remember thinking that I wouldn't want my labor, my body on display like that (even though I am a teacher whose body and whose labor is on display in the classroom). I wondered what I might come to understand about the assembly line if I could sit and talk with an assembly line worker. (Although I received IRB approval for this project, all plans for interviews were cancelled due to Syracuse University's pandemic protocols.) Given Ford's investment in robotics and Artificial Intelligence, these workers likely understand the future of the Ford system of assembly line manufacture.

In addition to its current outsized role in manufacturing, the Rouge Complex also plays a significant role in cultural and labor history. On that same research trip, I visited the Detroit Institute of the Arts (DIA), which houses the "Detroit Industry" (1933) murals of Mexican muralist Diego Rivera. In preparation for those murals, Rivera studied the laborers on the assembly line at the Rouge Complex. Just a few years after Rivera's visit, the Rouge Complex was the site of terrible labor disputes. On May 26, 1937, Ford agents violently clashed with Walter Reuther, graduate of the Brookwood Labor College, and the United Auto Workers in what is known as the Battle of the Overpass. The pedestrian overpass where Ford's men attacked these union organizers was situated along Miller Road, which separated the Rouge Complex from the community known locally as the Southend of Dearborn.

As early as the 1950s, Ford sought to crush the Southend of Dearborn. With the city of Dearborn and the Edward C. Levy Company, Ford sought to have the Southend designated as a blighted area. The goal of this "urban renewal program" was to evict residents and rezone the neighborhood as an industrial space. Ford and the Levy Company would then be able to expand its operations and the city of Dearborn would be free of its problem of encroaching immigrants. Sandra Amen, who grew up in the Southend and who went to work at Ford alongside members

of her extended family, describes the project. First, Ford attacked Southend schools as a way of undermining the neighborhood. Amen lists local schools as roots for ethnic families, stating: "We had Salina School, we had Roulo School, which was also a very large facility, and there was also St. Bernadette. There was a big choice of schooling at that time. Just St. Bernadette alone was a big attraction for a lot of the Catholic families here" ("Sandra Amen Interview" 20). Once local schools were threatened, the city of Dearborn then pressured residents to sell their homes, arguing that homes were substandard even as demolition crews had to use more powerful bulldozers to knock down brick homes that had been reinforced with steel beams. Once residents agreed to sell their homes, often at below market value, "it was up to the city to change the classification [of the neighborhood] from residential to industrial" (21). Despite this multipronged attempt at theft based on industrial need, racism and xenophobia, neighborhood residents fought back. In 1973, after hundreds of homes and some public buildings had been demolished, the Southeast Dearborn Community Council emerged, halting the bulldozers in a class action lawsuit. The courts recognized that the city of Dearborn capitalized on "language barriers and lack of education of the homeowners" in their underhanded attempts to steal the homes of ethnic and immigrant Ford workers (22). As a result of these motivated and organized community members, the Southend survived these threats from the city and from Ford.

By that time, the Southend of Dearborn had already become an international neighborhood. Just like the Polish neighborhood that sprang up around Ford's Highland Park plant, the Southend of Dearborn was a community of working-class ethnic and immigrant laborers and their families. One resident states: "Every family was an immigrant family. Every family was from Italy, Syria, Poland, wherever and they were all immigrants too" ("Don Unis Interview" 5). Global threats also influenced the development of the Southend of Dearborn as a

largely Arab and Arab American community. The eruption of conflicts across the Middle East, including the Six Day War (1967), Black September (1971), the Yom Kippur War (1973) brought immigrants from Yemen, Palestine, Syria, Kuwait, and other countries to the Southend, where family and friends often provided refuge. Ironically, refugees of these and other wars who went to work at Ford Motors often contributed to the US war effort in Vietnam. As much as the Southend had become a refuge, living in the shadow of Ford was no great joy. Growing up in the Southend also means growing up "under the smoke stacks" ("Sandra Amen Interview" 2). "Ford Fallout" is a term used locally to describe air pollution from the Rouge Complex. One local resident reflects on his childhood, stating: "I remember playing football . . . We were ninth graders in 1961, and we couldn't see each other on the field because of the pollution" ("Chuck Shamey Interview" 7). Children weren't the only ones whose lives were impacted by Ford.

Oral History: Voices from Ford's Rouge River Complex

Out of this history of struggle for survival came the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS), which supports and advocates for Arab and Arab American concerns in the Southend. In 1999, ACCESS conducted an oral history project, *Arab Americans and the Automobile: Voices from the Factory*, which sought to document "the history of the Detroit area's Arab immigrants in the automobile industry" ("Arab Americans and the Automobile: Voices from the Factory Collection"). Throughout this oral history project, interviewees describe their personal histories of working in the automobile industry with an emphasis on race, ethnicity, and the English language. The Ford Man is evoked through the story of a janitor who was invited to sit and chat with Henry Ford and Harvey Firestone, founder of Firestone Tire and Rubber Company. Perhaps most poignantly, this oral history project preserves the voices of

working-class immigrants, who provide insight into a laboring life shaped by Ford Motors and an industry built upon values of American industrial labor.

The interviews that shaped the oral history project were guided by a handful of questions concerned with technology and manufacturing, ethnicity, racism, and discrimination, worker resistance and union organization, as well as language use—issues that shaped the working and languaging lives of Ford workers at the Highland Park plant one hundred years ago. Today, this collection of interviews is stored on audio files and written transcripts at the Arab American National Museum in the Southend of Dearborn, just four miles from the Benson Ford Research Center. By turning to this oral history project, I hope to arrive at an understanding of the ongoing impact of Ford's Americanization project as well as an understanding of how Arab American autoworkers understood their motives and motivations for using English in the workplace, as well as whether and how they were trained to use English as a foundation of engaging modern industrial technologies that are founded upon Ford's innovation of the assembly line over a century ago.

Worker Education and the English Language

Whereas the Ford English School situated language learning in the Ford factory, the closure of the Ford English School brought about an end to Ford's in-house language education project. But this does not mean that this put an end to a concern for English. As it was discussed in chapter three, Ford contributed to several English language initiatives. At the same time, English language education occurred in numerous sites beyond Ford. Consider the experience of Ali Baleed Almaklani, who emigrated from Yemen in 1968, and who was hired onto the Ford assembly line, and who worked as a utility man in the Ford glass factory for thirty years.

Almaklani attended ESL courses at the International Institute of Metro Detroit (IIMD) ("Ali Baleed Almaklani Interview" 5), which also provides legal services, food assistance, and workforce development assistance through citizenship and ESL classes. According to their website, IIMD was founded during the time of the Ford English School, by members of the Detroit YMCA, who also helped found the FES. The goal of the IIMD, as it is stated on their website, is to "help legal immigrants learn English, appreciate freedom and democracy, become U.S. citizens, be assimilated into their new communities, and learn to understand each other's culture" ("History and Mission"). Limiting freedom and democracy to "legal immigrants" speaks to the spirit and the force of Americanization in the lives of immigrants then as today.

Other Arab and Arab American workers described English language learning as occurring at home with family. For example, George Kassab, who lived in the Southend of Dearborn, but worked at the Hamtramck plant of General Motors, describes learning English from those family members who had emigrated earlier as well as future generations of family who were born in the United States ("George Kassab Interview" 14). Another worker, Imad Srour, who worked twenty-seven years in the auto industry, describes the importance of English as rooted in an ability to explain or defend yourself. ("Imad Srour Interview" 3). Srour goes on to describe his method of coming to English as a daily practice, stating: "I think it's important to me and any other employee or immigrant, is try to learn at least one word a day. And the main thing, not learn one word, but use it on a daily basis" (10). Kassab's and Srour's statements helps us remember that learning English is an important and necessary feature of immigrant life in the United States. I also want to point out that I transcribed Srour's words exactly as he spoke them as a way of reinforcing that, despite the unexpected grammar, his words, if we are active and attentive readers, are not difficult to understand.

Workers also described English as a skill that would grow on the job. Ali Souhouba, who emigrated from Yemen in the late 1960s, found his way to Michigan in 1973, where he was hired on at the Chrysler Corporation where he worked for twenty years. During that time, Souhouba worked the assembly line at the Warren Truck Assembly Plant, which, he says, was a good fit, since he didn't speak "too much" English. Like Ford a century ago, English was not a requirement on the Chrysler assembly line. His sense was that the company felt the language needed for the job would come while doing the job. This is not to say that worker literacy was not a concern. For example, according to Souhouba, Chrysler offered computer training on the job, where workers attended classes at the plant, two hours every week for up to six or seven weeks ("Ali Souhouba Interview" 7) learning new computer technologies on the assembly line (3). Further, the UAW-CIO autoworkers union, along with Ford Motors, hosted computer classes for employees ("Ali Baleed Almaklani Interview" 6). Other times, Ford workers describe a complete lack of training. Sandra Amen, who described Ford's attack on the Southend earlier in the chapter, states: "There's no kind of training. They tell you to get in there, hit the buttons. Just a brief explanation of what's going on and they orient you to keep things going. Don't stop the line ("Sandra Amen Interview" 4). Like English literacy, computer literacy contributed to the assembly line as a foundation of 20th century American industrial labor. That is, unless your job warranted no training, which meant you were on your own.

Given an ongoing requirement of English, auto workers also describe needing to find a workaround for English. Abdullah Rizkallah, who worked at Ford's Rouge Steel plant for twenty-one years, going back to 1978, describes emigrating to the United States in 1967, when he first tried to get a job at the Rouge Complex, where he was refused employment for a lack of English ("Abdullah Rizkallah Interview"). Yet, as some workers describe there are other ways

into the factory. For example, according to Don Unis, an Arab man named Toufi Sa'ad, who was a shop owner in the Southend, acted as an intermediary between would-be workers and the Ford employment office. Sa'ad was a friend of Harry Bennet, head of the Ford Service Department, which handled anti-union and labor unrest, and who led the attack at the Battle of the Overpass. Unis states:

> If you were from the Southend and you wanted a job at Ford Motor Company, you didn't go to Ford Motor Company, you went to Toufi Sa'ad's store. You paid him 25 or 45 or 50 dollars and he would make a phone call or give you a letter and you would go to the Ford Rouge plant and get a job . . . that's how most Arabs from nineteen…from 1925 to 1948, when Harry Bennet left, that's how most Arabs at the Ford Rouge plant got their jobs. ("Don Unis Interview" 4)

According to Unis, the strict language protocols of the Ford Sociological Department and the Ford English School had given way to backdoor deals, whereby immigrant workers found a way into the plant. Other times, potential workers from the Southend bribed members of the employment office as a workaround for English. Ron Amen, who is a second-generation citizen of the United States of Lebanese heritage, describes the way his father, who spoke little English, was hired on at the Rouge Complex in about 1941 or 1942, stating:

> Well, because my dad was unable to read and write English, and could speak very little . . . his command of the English language was poor. And at the time, in order to work, you had to be able to read and write, or at least communicate verbally. And he could do very little of that. So the other way was through the back door. There was the unemployment office at Gate 4 on Miller Road [at the Rouge Complex], and there was the back door to the unemployment office. And what got you in the back door was greasing a few palms here and there ("Ron Amen Interview" 4).

Despite having to pay out of pocket for a position at Ford, Ron Amen's feeling is that the job played a central role in the family being able to buy a house, where the family still lived in the Southend (34). Once in the door, if workers found themselves in trouble—by trouble, I mean for labor organizing—they simply changed their identities. They would Americanize their names and then find their way back to the factory. For example, Don Unis describes how his father was

fired three times from the Rouge plant for organizing with the UAW, stating: “And then, every time he would hire back into the company, he would hire in under a different assumed name . . . Consequently, when my Dad died, I was a young boy, he had hired in for the third time under an American name” (“Don Unis Interview” 3). Unis’s statement on his father’s labor organizing echoes the organizing work of the previous generation of ethic labor organizers such as Stanley Nowak.

In short, there was no standardized requirement for English. The English language requirements auto workers describe in these oral histories speaks to an ongoing concern for English language. In some instances, English was a requirement. In others, English was learned on the job. Or it was up to the employment office—if they felt that the potential employee had “enough” English, then they were employable. There is no mention though if “enough” English was a concern when workers bribed their way into a position at Ford. It may simply be that the view at the time was that the English needed to labor at the Rouge Complex was located/practiced at the Rouge Complex. And the only way to know if a worker could do the labor and communicate according to the needs of the job was to put that worker on the line and find out. Interestingly, these workarounds in the form of bribes, which from the perspective of Ford Motors may be viewed as corruption, speak to Ford’s Americanization project. As we learned in chapter one, Ford thought that corruption was located in ethnic identities and communities. In Ford’s thinking, which found its way to the curriculum of the FES, “immigrant bosses” such as Toufi Sa’ad in Dearborn’s Southend, stood in the way of an Americanized workforce and Americanized ethnic community. It is no wonder Ford and the city of Dearborn worked together to be rid of the immigrant residents of the Southend.

Harvey Firestone and the Purloined Wallet

Threaded through Ford Motors is another ghost of Americanization—the Ford Man. According to accounts, the Ford Man remained an ideal against which ethnic workers were measured. Take for example the oral history of Mr. Sam Shamey. Shamey worked for Ford, starting in 1937 at numerous locations, including the Highland Park plant and the Ford Rotunda. The Ford Rotunda was a display space for new models and a visitor center for Ford Motor Company's world headquarters until it was destroyed by fire in 1962. One day, while on shift as a janitor in the Rotunda, Mr. Shamey found a wallet that contained five thousand dollars, which he turned over to his boss. Chuck Shamey, the son of Mr. Shamey, who worked in the iron foundry at Ford, and who was a millwright until he was laid off in 1980 ("Chuck Shamey Interview" 16), describes what happened next, stating: " . . . after he turned it in, it wasn't too long and he was summoned across Schaefer [Road] to what was then Ford World Headquarters, and he was actually summoned into Henry Ford's office" (3-4). It turns out the wallet belonged to Harvey Firestone of Firestone Tires, who was sitting in Ford's office.

After a discussion of a reward, which Mr. Shamey refused, Ford took the opportunity to celebrate Mr. Shamey as a company man. Henry Ford was said to be "so happy to show Mr. Firestone that this was the kind of employee that Ford Motor Company had" (4). On the surface, this story echoes the values of the Ford Man who puts the needs of the company above their own needs. But the rest of the story, which is told by Don Unis, Chuck Shamey's stepbrother, speaks to Ford's understanding of tensions at play in the identity of the Ford Man. When Mr. Shamey refused the reward, Ford called his secretary into the office, reportedly stating: "You put in Sam's [Mr. Shamey] file a letter that as long as there's a Ford Motor Company, he will always have a job." Henry Ford then reportedly turned to Harvey Firestone, asking: "You got workers

like this? Dumb like a fox?" ("Don Unis Interview" 13). In this question, Henry Ford reveals his judgement of and appreciation for Sam Shamey, the janitor who discovered a small treasure and traded it in for the promise of future employment. Shamey's move is a good move in any language.

Civic Life and Americanization

Ford Motors presented Americanization as melting pot ideology, where the fitness of the working-class immigrant was measured through the English language. Yet, according to the oral history of Ali Baleed Almaklani, Americanization not as a method of standardization according to language and citizenship, but as a method of working across difference as a member of an international workforce. About his time on such a workforce, Almaklani states: "I learn how to be patient, I learn how to communicate with different color, with different people where I work with. Of course, they have different habit, different living, religious, different cultures" ("Ali Baleed Almaklani Interview" 18). Almaklani continues, connecting an acknowledgement of difference as a foundation of assimilation, as a way of becoming and reflecting, while on route toward a civic life, stating:

> When you come from different country to United States, at the beginning you feel like a honey moon. You know, like everything you seeing around you, like the big buildings, like the cars, you like this and this and this. After that, you start to pick up. No you want to, you want to be Americanized. You want to build a bridge between you and the community…the American peoples, but you cannot do it because of your language, because of so many different things. And then you might criticize the people who might do it and you cannot do it. And then after that, after you learn the language, after you learn…that you are in the new country and you have so many different feel toward, you start to think, "I should benefit myself and my family." And we start to build the relations among us as Yemenis and then as Arab and then as Americans. So it takes time for someone to start to forget this coming and going, coming and going. I am in a new country, this is my new … homeland, I have the right to participate in different fields. In government, in…whatever it takes (11).

Ali Baleed Almaklani describes Americanization as a process of becoming, involving not only the recognition of difference, but even a celebration of difference. Almaklani continues, describing Americanization as building relationships, moving in ever wider social circles, with an eye toward doing good for ourselves and our family. And at the center of this way of assimilating is the English language as a method of communicating across differences. In this sense, English is something of a bridge across.

In short, the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services' oral history project, *Arab Americans and the Automobile: Voices from the Factory* faithfully records the voice of Arab and Arab American industrial workers from the Southend of Dearborn. Although the collection is rather small—there are only sixteen interviews on the Arab American Museum website, in addition to transcriptions, which are accessible on PDFs, the website also includes audio recordings of the interviewer's questions and the interviewees responses. As I listened to this small archive of industrial worker voices, I kept thinking that this collection is an example of building ethical relationships. For example, the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services was born of a time when Ford Motors and the city of Dearborn sought to push Arab and Arab American residents out of the Southend of Dearborn. Plus, the Arab American National Museum (AANM), which houses this oral history project, is in the Southend of Dearborn, acting as a public site for the preservation and presentation of Arab American history and culture. In this way, this *Voices from the Factory* oral history project records and projects the workers full voice in ways that the Henry Ford Museum of American Innovation, which is under five miles away, just doesn't do. Further, the access conferred at the AANM is absolute, not unlike the limited access to Ford's dark archive of FES worker "Letters of Appreciation." Finally, given this access, what I appreciate the most of these oral histories was the complexity

of relationships between Ford Motors and immigrant workers. Chuck Shamey, who was interviewed as part of this oral history project, speaks to this complexity and to the contributions of immigrant and African American laborers, in the epigraph of this chapter, stating:

> "we were fond of our relationship with Ford and all the other auto companies, but the Arab immigrants, like many immigrants and African Americans, were the backbone of the building of the Ford Motor Company, because they were in the trenches and the hard work and the foundry, and the really hard times. When you went to work, it was hard work" ("Chuck Shamey Interview").

Shamey's got it right. Industrial work is hard. As the Arab American National Museum shows us, the preservation of industrial history—particularly the voice of industrial workers—isn't.

As this section has shown, recent immigrants struggled with navigating the needs of English as a foundation of employment. Workers also devised workarounds to a system that used English as a gatekeeping function, sometimes through bribery. Ironically, when white collar professionals engage in this practice, they turn to agencies and recruiters. But when immigrants do this, they may be viewed as ethically unfit. Or take for example, Sam Shamey, who sat down with Henry Ford and Harvey Firestone and negotiated job security at Ford as an immigrant who may have had little job security. That was agency. And finally, Ali Baleed Almaklani, who describes Americanization as a process not of standardization, but of learning to work across differences, with some version of English as a mediating tool across those differences. These are the voices of blue collar Ford Workers, who describe making their way, negotiating a life for themselves. In this way, the voices of these Arab and American auto workers represent the unmediated voices of Ford workers.

The Twin Cities Ford Assembly Plant and the Voice of Ford Worker Poets

The voice of Ford workers can also be found at the Twin Cities Ford Assembly Plant in Minneapolis. As early as 1912, Ford converted a Minneapolis warehouse into an assembly plant, where, in the first year, Ford workers assembled 757 Model T's. By 1925, Ford built an assembly plant and hydroelectric dam along the Mississippi River in neighboring St. Paul, which became known as the Twin Cities plant (also known as the St. Paul Ford plant). The Twin Cities plant was but one amongst several assembly plants Ford built across the country, including, as I have already described, across the street from my grandparent's home in Los Angeles. By 1937, the Twin Cities Assembly Plant was celebrating the production of its one millionth vehicle. And for nearly a century, Ford cars and trucks rolled off the assembly line through the labor of generations of workers. In January 2006, Ford introduced a restructuring plan dubbed "The Way Forward," which included plans to shutter seven assembly plants and seven parts plants in the US and Canada, impacting up to thirty thousand autoworkers. Although the Twin Cities plant was spared in that initial notice, workers and members of the United Automobile Workers union knew they were on the bubble (Nowak *Social Poetics* 150-151). At the height of these tensions, a man named Mark Nowak visited the offices of the United Auto Workers #879 to propose a poetry workshop for Ford workers.

At that time the poetry workshop was founded, Nowak was an associate professor of humanities at St. Catherine University in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Today he is a professor of English at Manhattanville College in Purchase, New York and is the founder of Worker Writers School at the PEN American Center in NYC. Nowak's work with blue collar worker writers is rooted in growing up in Buffalo, New York during the era of deindustrialization. Nowak describes the devastating effects of the closure of the Westinghouse plant and Bethlehem Steel had on his family and the community, stating: "everybody in these deindustrializing cities went

quiet and mute back then, and how when their mouths weren't closed, many of them were either yelling or drinking." Given the inevitable closure of Ford's Twin Cities plant, Nowak envisioned a poetry workshop as a way for Ford workers to write "through those silence and those screams." To get the word out, Nowak went to the United Auto Workers, which then posted an ad in the UAW #879 newsletter. But getting buy-in from Ford workers themselves was another matter entirely. Evoking the concerns of FES student writers whose job was tied to the needs of the company "[i]t isn't an easy task to recruit Ford workers for a poetry workshop when they're terrified that their plant might be permanently closed" (152). Further, given a history of unionization, workers standing up and speaking up for themselves, would likely be seen as a problem in the way Langston Hughes describes in the epigraph of this chapter, stating: "when poems stop talking about the moon and begin to mention poverty, trade unions, color lines, and colonies, somebody tells the police" (205). Not long after though, Nowak began hosting writing workshops inside the plant, between shifts.

The St. Paul Ford Worker Writer Workshop

On April 13, 2006, despite the pleas of the mayor of St. Paul and the governor of Minnesota, Ford announced the closure of the St. Paul plant, impacting the jobs, pensions, and health care of nearly 1,900 workers and their families. But just prior to the closing of the plant, Ford workers raised their voices, describing just their working lives were like. The voice of one worker, Denny Dickhausen, who had hired on at Ford in Minnesota on August 25, 1970, came to the fore. On the eve of the plant closure, the Minnesota *Star Tribune* ran Dickhausen's photo, with a furrowed brow, forearm tattoos, and a sleeveless canvas work shirt, on the front page. Although the *Star Tribune* story speaks to the negotiations involved in closing the plant, Dickhausen's image is

important. Dickhausen, with thirty plus years on the factory floor, symbolized the loss of white working-class jobs in this era of deindustrialization. He was, for the Star Tribune and its readers, the image of the Ford Man against the ropes. He was about to lose his job and his livelihood.

Mark Nowak responds to the *Star Tribune* story by focusing on the way in which Dickhausen goes against the grain of the Ford Man. Nowak describes Dickhausen's habit of jotting down notes and observations during his shifts. Referring to the journalist who wrote the *Star Tribune* story, Nowak states:

> They don't tell you that he [Dickhausen] carried little notebooks around in his pocket when he worked his shifts and overtime for thirty-six years at Ford. They don't tell you that for years and years he jotted down brief notes, ideas, funny quotes, and conversations he heard at the plant. They don't tell you that he never knew what to do with all the notebooks, so he kept them in a shoebox in the basement of his house. (156-157)

Before we get to Dickhausen's poetry, it is important to think about writing—poetry that is—and social class. Prior to the Ford English School or the Ford assembly line, automobile production occurred according to the craftsman model, where skilled craftsmen and tradesmen innovated and crafted parts and components. These workers innovated and created processes and products where there was none. Once the assembly line came to be, this expertise was shifted to a managerial middle class. Production was standardized and scaled up and blue collar workers came to be associated with toil and menial labor. Given this shift in production, the view of the blue collar worker from the middle class is something like: if workers couldn't "craft" at work, how could they craft with words? This is at the center of some of Jessica Pauszek's work with the *Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishers*, which is a collection of working-class writer communities that wrote and published from the 1970s to the early 2000s. One member of the FWWCP, Sally Flood, who, like Dickhausen, jotted down poetry during her shifts, recounts the ways in which literary arts councils undervalued FWWCP member writing.

writing from the "wrong class." Pauszek states: "Sally recounted that when the FWWCP requested Arts Council funding, they were emphatically told that their organization had "no solid literary merit" ("Writing From "The Wrong Class" 65). In a sense, the shift away from the craftsman model of production and toward the assembly line is another instance when the voice of workers is undervalued according to conditions of labor that may be largely beyond their control, particularly then the worker is an immigrant, or a woman, or a person of color. Further, according to the ideal of the Ford Man, no self-respecting Ford worker would bother recording thoughts and observations, which did not serve the company.

Valuing Worker Voices

Dickhausen's poetry is the literature of deindustrialization. At the heart of Denny Dickhausen's poetry is a concern for life at Ford, which was cut short due to the closure of Ford's Twin Cities plant. If we want to understand the cultural influence of economic restructuring of deindustrialization, "we must attend to its emotional, intimate, everyday effects" through literature that "explores how working-class people perceive and respond to the changes occurring around and being imposed on them" (Linkon 9). According to Linkon, Dickhausen is something of a witness to this ongoing process of deindustrialization as the plant is about to close, forcing workers and their families into uncertainty. While attending Nowak's poetry workshop, Dickhausen drafted the poem, "My Life at Ford." This is the poem:

August 1970
I began working
at Ford
Making big boxy LTD's.

After a week I'm saying,
Will I ever learn this job?

You'll get it one of these days,"
says Jimmy Cobb.

Just walking to my car
turns out to be a job.
My wife says it can't be that hard.
I tell her, You work in that damn place!

The next week
Jimmy's smoking a cigarette
and drinking coffee
between cars.

(We were steaming headliners
and cleaning up scrap nuts and bolts.)
Jimmy says, "Do you think
this white boy will ever get this?"

Then, one day, I got it.
Jimmy says, "What happened today?
You finally have a chance
to take a breath between cars!"

What a great feeling.
Empowered.
Thirty-six years later
Ford said it's closing our plant.

What a shock.
My friends cried.
Some almost died.
What will they do

(including my daughter, 32
who works on the sealer line)
thrown away like an old shoe.
Is forty old? Is fifty?

I say it's a crock.
I grew up, I grew old at Ford.
I bled at Ford.
I feel used up. (qtd. in Nowak 158-159)

Denny Dickhausen's poem was drafted only a handful of years after the *Arab Americans and the Automobile* oral history interviews were recorded. It feels odd to point to Dickhausen's poem

when the first part of the chapter begins with the voice of Arab and Arab American workers. Like my stunted search for the voice of the FES student, Dickhausen's poem is the only I could find from Nowak's Twin Cities poetry workshop. The inclusion of Dickhausen's poem isn't an example of a fully expressed worker-writer. Instead, his is the poem we have to work with. In this way, Dickhausen's poem helps us to recognize a preference of the concerns of white industrial labor in the way that Satnam Virdee describes in chapter four when they state that "working-class" is often code for "white workers." Echoing Virdee, Linkon offers a rationale for focusing on Dickhausen, stating: "because the economic and social displacement of deindustrialization had a particularly powerful effect on white men, their experiences dominate the genre" (12). Said another way, if white, male laborers are not impacted by deindustrialization, is deindustrialization even real?

That Dickhausen worked with Nowak revising his poem also speaks to the agency that he has as a worker-writer that FES student's may not have been afforded in the translation of their "Letters of Appreciation." Despite these tensions, Dickhausen's poem is meaningful as an expression of the troubles of deindustrialization visited upon industrial workers. Like Chuck Shamey in the previous section of this chapter, Dickhausen describes the difficulty of learning to labor on the assembly line, when he asks: "Will I ever learn this job?" He juxtaposes this feeling with the shock that many assembly line workers must recognize during this era of deindustrialization, stating: "Thirty-six years later/Ford said it's closing our plant." And with that shock, a moment of self-reflection, perhaps thinking about future labor, when Dickhausen asks: "Is forty old? Is fifty?" Dickhausen wraps up the poem with a sense of loss of himself, stating: "I grew up, I grew old at Ford. / I bled at Ford. / I feel used up." For me it is Dickhausen's heartache that I am left with.

In chapter four, I described how at age twenty-one I became a journeyman member of the United Food & Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 1428. Around that time, I remember my first strike vote, where we lost health benefits and a decrease of increased wages with our new contract. I remember talking with my stepdad Mario who had been in the grocery industry for about twenty years by then. He suggested the union was on its way out. It used to be that you could make a decent wage in the grocery industry. I knew plenty of guys who owned homes and raised families on union wages. But soon I was on my way out. By the time I was twenty-four, the company I worked for, Alpha Beta Markets, was bought out by Food For Less. Layoffs soon followed. The cut off was seven years of seniority. I had six. Instead of being laid-off outright, I remember being called into the office where I was offered a position at Food for Less. It was a lousy offer with reduced hourly wages, reduced guaranteed hours per week and reduced health insurance. I remember talking to my boss, trying to imagine taking the offer. I would have been embarrassed to take the offer, so I went with the buyout. I took the severance pay, cashed in my stock, and within a few weeks made my way to the unemployment office. My time with Alpha Beta was nothing like Dickhausen's time with Ford, but I gotta say that being laid-off, even in those conditions when I could have continued to work, is a terrible feeling. Nobody likes being broken up with. As I look back now, it took real nerve for me to turn down the job with Food for Less. In academia, we call that agency. I was also fearful, but I turned my fear to anger in the way I was taught. I can only imagine how others may have struggled with that moment, perhaps taking the offer of a lesser job, perhaps for a lack of English or potential trouble with citizenship. And this gets to the heart of the issue that many immigrants to America face—a troubled sense of themselves and their place in the US given nativist sentiment that says some people just don't belong here.

One of my favorite authors is Charles Bowden, who, through his journalism and poetry, published widely on immigration and life on the Arizona/Mexico border. In "Contested Ground," Bowden grapples with underlying forces of America's rabid nativism not as a hatred, but of fear that one day Americans will get what we deserve for our sins against native peoples, animals, and the land itself, which was stolen to make America, stating:

> We are dancing to the edge of life and we now move through the forests of dread and what we fear, really fear, is not some other nation conquering our plains and mountains and deserts, no, no, what we fear is that someone or something will do to us exactly what we have done to the buffalo, and to the mounted warrior on horseback with that lance and bow, what we have done to the rivers and the trees and the fine native grasses that first fell under our footsteps as we ventured into the bewitching and yearning ground.

According to Bowden, we are living on borrowed time, and we can only pray for redemption. I think about Bowden when I think about unstable weather patterns. Given the force of climate change, American citizens may soon be treated on Canadian borders as we treat Mexicans on our own southern borders.

Summary: linguistic economic inclusion

This dissertation has been driven by a description of Ford's ideology of *linguistic economic ableism*. Going back to the Ford English School just over a century ago, Ford used an English language curriculum as a vehicle for the transmission of values and beliefs beneficial to Ford Motors, thereby reading the body, the mind, and the voice of the industrial worker for labor at Ford. The ideology informed Ford's to industrial education projects across the country. But I want to propose an alternative to Ford's ideology—*linguistic economic inclusion* as a way of creating structure to recognize immigrant worker voices and labor. Consider, for example, if the Benson Ford archive had created structures that valued the labor of assembly line workers and preserved the voices of migrant laborers. If that had been the case, it may be that there would

have been a greater value placed on the voices of immigrant workers in their first languages, which might have resulted in the preservation of materials. Or it may be that based on linguistic economic inclusion, researchers would be granted greater access to FES "Letters of Appreciation" that currently reside in a semi-dark archive. Instead, as I have described, there are few archival materials in Ford's industrial archive that represented the full voice of immigrant assembly line workers.

On the other hand, the Arab American National Museum's *Arab Americans and the Automobile: Voices from the Factory* does seem to enact an ideology of *linguistic economic inclusion*. The oral history project seems to be built upon a structure that recognizes and values immigrant worker voices. For example, interviews were conducted by members of the community who counted themselves as Arab or Arab American. In that way, they were peers of the subjects being interviewed. Further, the interviewees performed several types of labor at Ford and other automobile plants around the Detroit area, from to the assembly line, to the furnace, to janitorial. Neither the interviewees nor their questions seemed to place less value on the worker according to the type of labor they performed. Even more, the interviews were recorded through transcription and on digital audio files, which preserved the voice of the interviewees in ways that transcription alone cannot. While listening to the audio files, I often heard the interviewees speak with accented English, sometimes according to the syntactic structures of their home languages that sometimes differed from English. In short, preserving archival materials according to an ideology of *linguistic economic inclusion* is a way of sidestepping a hierarchical view of language dominance, with standardized English at the top. In short, linguistic economic inclusion is a way to recognize and value the voices and ideas of diverse groups of people,

including working-class immigrants, thereby working to create a greater sense of intimacy within a community, with an eye toward archival preservation and greater access to future researchers.

Conclusion

The Legacy of the Ford English School

> Who am I without America? What would I be without America?
> Jose Vargas *Dear America: Notes of an Undocumented Citizen*

On a recent trip to Los Angeles, I drove past the Samson Tire and Rubber plant shopping mall that I described in the introduction. The sight of the massive building, which is still decorated with ancient Babylonian princes, evoked a thought of the construction of ancient cities, temples and monuments—as a foundation of ancient society that is so often referred to in the construction of Western civilization. Yet, to reflect on the closure of the plant, which is a marker of deindustrialization in Los Angeles, we might also consider Percy Bysshe Shelley, who remembers not the great achievements of ancient princes, such as Ramesses II, but his "shattered visage" ("Ozymandias") as the face of industrial decline that stretches far away across the American landscape. As I stated in my introduction, it is these scenes of deindustrialization that sparked an interest in understanding more deeply the impact of these moments as well as their connections to larger social and cultural histories.

My study of the Ford Motors English School emerges from my having grown up in deindustrial Los Angeles. To understand my place and time, I had to go back to Detroit at the turn of the last century, where Ford first instituted an assembly line system of assembly as well as an attendant English language school for migrant workers. By turning to the industrial archives of Ford Motors, I uncovered FES lessen plans, which were featured in chapter one. Through an analysis of these lesson plans, I described Ford's Americanization curriculum, which sought to shape the language and the culture of migrant assembly line workers. Further, by engaging histories of immigration that point to the ways in which immigrant bodies were labeled

unfit (un-American), I discovered the hidden curriculum of the FES, which is built upon Ford's ideology of *linguistic economic ableism*. Through an ideology of *linguistic economic ableism*, English acted as the vehicle for the transmission of values and beliefs beneficial to Ford Motors, thereby readying the body, the mind, and the voice of the worker for labor. Standardization of production and English language acquisition was central to Ford at the time. Standardized industrial production helped Ford produce cars and trucks at a massive scale. Similarly, standardized English helped Ford produce an industrial workforce at scale.

In the introduction, I also discussed the ways in which questions of Americanization emerged while teaching first year writing as an MA student. As a result, I think of the FYW writing classroom as not so different than any other space in America. There is nothing to say that racism and nativism cannot raise their ugly heads in the classroom. Of course, universities and colleges are instituting diversity and inclusion statements. At Boston College, where I now work, the university describes diversity as "the range of human differences," whereby each person is valued according to a commitment to inclusion. As it is for other university statements I have read, Boston College's says nothing about language, which is often the cloak for racist and nativist sentiment. Thus, I take up my concern with the politics of language in my classrooms.

My teaching is informed by a concern for the voices of diverse groups of people. In chapter two, I referred to Asao Inoue's question about not penalizing students who not white and middle class in the writing classroom. In that instance, the issue at hand was a critique of first year writing as a middle-class project. Now though, I want to return to Inoue's question as a way for me to discuss my teaching. I design my classroom with the goal of creating an inclusive space for students whose identities and heritage languages and dialects may otherwise deny them

access to imagined spaces of equality according to a taxonomy of racial, national, and linguistic difference. Inspired by Ligia Mihut's "Linguistic Pluralism: A Statement and a Call to Advocacy," I include the following statement on language use in the syllabus, help me meet this goal:

> This is a course in academic writing, which can be done in any language and in many modes. In your work for this course, you have the right and you are welcome to use the language varieties and styles that best fit your own goals and audiences. You are also encouraged to conduct research and cite sources in languages other than English. If you are writing in a language other than English, please provide an English translation so I can fairly assess your work.

Thus, my pedagogy couples a critical view of language difference with the acquisition of academic literacy practices and skills, while encouraging students to identify and engage intellectual interests through meaningful inquiry. In short, I engage an ideology of linguistic economic inclusion with the goal of making sure to listen to the voices of all students in my classroom, not just the students whose voices reflect an education of standard academic English.

The curriculum of my First Year Writing Seminar (FWS) at Boston College takes up issues of language politics. The syllabus begins, stating:

> Who gets to speak what languages, where, and under what circumstances? These questions are central to many ongoing conversations according to a politics of language in the United States. In this section of the First-Year Writing Seminar, we will work in a social and collaborative fashion (you, me, your peers) on projects related to language politics, language policies and advocacy. We will think and write together about the meanings and practices of language use and language practices in local and global settings, asking when and why language practices matter, what's at stake when language politics work against heritage language speakers and how we might advocate for change. We will weave the practices of academic writing–research, citation, revision, editing, etc.—through a variety of papers and multimodal compositions.

In the FWS course, which asked students to research an emerging language issue, students worked on a wide range of research projects. One student researched the difficulties of navigating Boston College as a deaf and hard of hearing student, which included her

interviewing members of the Disability Services Office. Another student researched Boston College's stance on pronouns—a project tied to recent legal cases as well as the identity of the student's brother, who is transgender. Another researched the political legacy of the Boston Accent in relation to race and gender, given that Boston's new mayor is Michelle Wu, who is the cities first Asian woman mayor. There were so many other great projects students produced for my First Year Writing Seminar. Throughout the semester, I sought to reinforce the idea that I wanted to hear from them—I held four one-on-one writing conferences with each student. (The class is capped at fifteen, so this wasn't that difficult.) I also sought to reinforce the idea that their ideas and their voices matter—in local matters and national matters. And the students took it from there. In my experience, if we create the conditions for students to explore issues that matter to them, and to do so in an ethical way as researchers and as writers, students will take up meaningful questions and take-on social problems that matter to them. As much as my curriculum guided students toward discussions around identity and language use, it was the students themselves who imagined such wonderful research projects.

I want to conclude this short chapter to think more about the epigraph to this chapter, where Jose Vargas asks foundational questions: "Who am I without America? What would I be without America?" (211). These questions come from his memoir *Dear America: Notes of an Undocumented Citizen*. In the memoir we learn that as a child he had emigrated to the United States from the Philippines without papers. This means that, like so many others, if he were to leave the country for a vacation or to visit family, he would not likely be able to return to the United States, unless he were to emigrate secretively, through otherwise invisible doorways. Through his memoir, Vargas tells the story of becoming a journalist and investigating the round-up of children who has emigrated to the US by walking across the deserts of Arizona and Texas.

What Vargas did not realize—not until it was too late—was that United States Border Patrol agents set up checkpoints to stop vehicles up to fifty miles north of our American borders. On a recent trip to Arizona's Organ Pipe National Monument, near where Vargas was picked up, I had a run in with border patrol. An agent, who was patrolling the national park, rounded a bend in his Jeep to discover me walking on a dirt path. I watched him do a doubletake, slam on his brakes and put it in reverse to get a better look at me. He thought I would jackrabbit out of there, but I didn't. We had a moment just staring at one another. I remember thinking that if he approaches me with some questions, he will hear in my English the truth of my responses—that I was born in the United States. But if that didn't satisfy his curiosity, my passport was back in the cabin. Soon though he must have recognized that I wasn't going to run, so he drove on. Unlike Vargas, who was arrested and held as an illegal immigrant, I merely went about my morning, finishing my coffee, my official papers protecting me. To Vargas' questions— "Who am I without America? What would I be without America?"—I add my own: Who would I be without English?

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