respect the historical impulses which produced the SRTOL."

In the last part of the concluding chapter, subtitled "New University Coalitions," Parks considers possible organizational bases for implementing his ideal curriculum. Drawing on the history of SRTOL in NCTE and CCCC, he now (somewhat inconsistently) expresses little hope of acquiring the active support of professional organizations—the same support that he called for in the earlier passage quoted in my first paragraph above: "These organizations allow progressive caucuses to exist as subunits, but with bureaucratic structures that ensure that the caucuses have little impact." (My own sense is that in recent decades NCTE, CCCC, and MLA have become much more open to change as progressive members have gained influence within their official structures—to the dismay of conservatives, who consider these organizations bastions of leftist political correctness.) As an alternative to the established organizations, Parks proposes a new organization:

> Instead, it appears to me that a new organization is needed which will work to bring together progressive caucuses and community organizations committed to the expansion of critical democracy. Such an alliance would be concerned not just with the production of disciplinary knowledge (or the protection of disciplinary status), but with connecting such knowledge to practical community work. That is, the goal of such an organization would not be to collect fees to produce academic conferences, but to use membership dues to fund and join in the struggles being daily waged for a more vital democratic sphere.

For this kind of alliance to succeed, he continues, it would need to have a firm institutional base, perhaps in a university, a union, or a nonprofit organization that would share funding. Parks concludes, "Most important, any such alliance would also have to move toward real connections with other facets of the labor market: nonuniversity professionals, labor unions, service workers, and sweatshop workers. That is, it no longer seems appropriate for academics to imagine themselves as separate or different from the general labor market."

In his preface, Parks indicates that the program outlined in his conclusion subsequently found a provisional home in the Institute for the Study of Literature, Literacy, and Culture at Temple University, where he is now assistant professor of English, and in the national Teachers for a Democratic Culture, whose leadership he has taken over from its founders, who include Gerald Graff, Gregory Jay, and John Wilson. (He fails to mention Scholars, Artists, and Writers for Social Justice, which has a broader membership than the English studies-based TDC and is more directly aligned with organized labor.) An important postscript to *Class Politics* is "Writing beyond the Curriculum: Fostering New Collaborations in Literacy," an article by Parks and his colleague Eli Goldblatt that was published in the May 2000 issue of *College English*. This article is an encouraging progress report on the work of these projects at Temple in developing literacy education, service learning, and community organizing, and in forging partnerships between university faculties and students and K-12 schools in the Philadelphia area (and the projects are associated with an Internet-based Progressive Information Network). Thus, Stephen Parks has become not only a formidable advocate of critical education, but a dynamic leader in implementing its practice.

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Class Politics: The Movement for the Students' Right to Their Own Language, Stephen Parks (Urbana: NCTE, 2000. 353 pages).

Reviewed by Jerrie Cobb Scott, University of Memphis and Valerie Felita Kinloch, University of Houston

If you have ever wondered what happened to the "Students' Right to Their Own Language" (hereafter SRTOL), you will find an answer in this book. Stephen Parks tells the SRTOL story from the perspective of class politics by focusing on the relationship between composition studies and movements for social justice. Reading between the lines of *Class Politics*, however, you might deduce that the statement and the related pedagogical practices died an unnatural death largely because this statement's origins were never fully understood and its purposes were never fully realized. At the outset, though, Parks makes it clear that *Class Politics* is not intended to be a book about pedagogy. Rather, it is intended to show how, as Parks says, "scholarship created in the moment of political struggle" can lose its power to make substantive changes in society. As suggested by the title, then, this book is about class politics; more specifically, it is about how class politics, political alliances, and progressive social movements can enhance the foundation of composition studies while advancing the mission of what Parks calls "community-based critical pedagogy." Parks uses SRTOL to demonstrate that the academy has difficulty linking scholarship to social and political changes in the real world. Thus, the book might have been better titled *Class Politics: Evidence from the*

Movement for the Students' Right to Their Own Language.

Class Politics is divided into two parts. The book begins with a foreword and an introduction (both of which are must reads) that set up clear expectations for the reader. In the foreword, Richard Ohmann, one of the few academic stars in this class politics drama, explains the connections between the pedagogical and political dimensions of SRTOL. A historically significant and notable public statement, SRTOL questioned whether the discipline of English has the authority or the right to serve as the regulator of language status and the protector of language stratification practices. On the surface, SRTOL defended the integrity and equality of all dialects. Indeed, underlying the statement was a defense of non-mainstream groups against the domination of mainstream groups. Ohmann sets the reader up to expect that *Class Politics* will make explicit the influence of broader social movements for equality on the development of composition studies. Thus, from the outset, the reader begins thinking about the struggle of composition studies to continue developing in accordance with the social movements that were an integral part of its formative stages.

Parks' introduction to the book speaks immediately and directly about his major concern: social action in academic settings is often presented in a marginalized and fragmented way, making it difficult to construct a history of what he calls academic political work. Without believing in its own significance and unable to see the parts and their relationships, academic political work is doomed to live a short life of unacknowledged and unfulfilled visions. In the discipline of English studies, the development of composition studies—particularly the issues surrounding the construction and reconstruction of the SRTOL statement—demonstrates how academic political work loses its appeal. Thus, Parks leads the reader to expect this treatment of class politics to provide a starting point for the development of a framework for reconstructing a history of academic political work. He sets out "to expand the archive that historians use when writing the history of composition studies and, in doing so, to reinvigorate the calls for radical academic political organizations."

The first three chapters examine the politics of student involvement, focusing on the interplay between political events that occurred both inside and outside of academia, including the civil rights activities of the Student Nonviolent Coordination Committee (SNCC), the Black Panther Party, the New University Conference (NUC), and the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC). Chapter one, "Tracking the Student," discusses the role of students—African American students, in particular—as catalysts in legitimizing the causes, practices, and politics of social change and of professional organizations. Chapter two, "New Left Politics and the Process Movement," explains the relationships among the process movement in composition studies, student activism, and the political legitimacy of student identities and languages. In chapter three, "Black Power/Black English," Parks argues that "the beliefs of Black Power gave Black English an oppositional character."

The second part of the book uses evidence from events surrounding SRTOL to examine the political and scholarly dimensions of work in professional organizations. Chapter four, "Locking Horns: The NUC Encounters the MLA, NCTE, and CCCC, 1968–1972," shows how NUC and CCCC attempted to use SRTOL for different political reasons—in particular, NUC's effort to advance the causes of the social movement, and CCCC's effort to gain advantage with its parent organization, the National Council of Teachers of English. Chapter five, "The Students' Right to Their Own Language, 1972–1974," analyzes the debate over the language of SRTOL. Here, Parks focuses on the fact that the CCCC abandoned "the social and economic politics from which it initially emerged," thereby diminishing its potential to combat the social and political dimensions of a global corporate economy and its potential to advocate effectively against the return to an educational agenda undergirded by the same types of conservative ideologies that SRTOL challenged in the beginning. Finally, chapter six, "A Coup d'Etat and Love Handles,1974–1983," examines the historical materialization of a new SRTOL statement, explains CCCC's failures, and then proposes a community-based critical pedagogy as a means of advancing the work of social justice and the progressive politics of composition studies.

This broad description of the contents of the book makes clear that those who see the SRTOL reference in the title and proceed to look for pedagogical implications will be disappointed. Yet, readers should take the intent of the book seriously, for it is about social action and politics—highly engaging topics for those who have knowledge of and interest in the social movements of the 1960s through the 1980s and the backlash politics of the conservative educational agenda that has taken us into the twenty-first century.

Those looking for rigor, however, may find the book lacking. Interpretations often sound highly subjective. Rather than having this "history" evolve from the evidence, Parks seems to search for evidence to

support ready-made conclusions. Unfortunately, the supporting evidence appears to be carefully selected, and Parks tends to sound overly critical. Moreover, the critical tone coupled with the selection of evidence attenuate the force of Parks' argument, making his interpretation seem merely speculative. In chapter five, for example, Parks uses a close analysis of the language in the notes of meetings to assign motives and intentions to selected members of the CCCC Executive Board, yet his interpretation of intentions is not fully convincing. His naming of people distracts from the case that he tries to build, which is a case about the failure of organizational work rather than the intentions and failures of individuals.

Another striking dimension of this history is the absence of the voices of African Americans, the group most frequently mentioned throughout the book. One wonders, in fact, whether African Americans were even involved in the SRTOL movement, whether African Americans served on the Executive Board, whether they were silent in meetings or simply were not represented in the book. The fact is that African American scholars played an integral part in the formation and development of the SRTOL movement. Added, then, to Parks' explanation of failures in the reconstruction of the social and political history of scholarly work is the silencing of the voices and actions of people of color. Many of the African American scholars who participated are still among us, which makes it difficult to explain why Parks did not expand the data set to include interviews or surveys that would provide multiple perspectives on his interpretation of events. Indirectly, then, *Class Politics* shows how the politics of exclusion, which is the underlying cause of social injustices, finds expression even in discussions of issues about marginalized groups. Selection and inclusion are indeed important dimensions of historical reconstruction. Parks' systematic exclusion of African American voices and his failure to provide corroboration of his interpretations by those directly involved in the movement stand as critical oversights that could, and perhaps should, lead to questions about the class politics not only of the movement but also of Parks' historical reconstruction of the movement.

At the same time, *Class Politics* is in many ways a valuable addition to the field. It examines the development of composition studies from a political perspective by locating and reestablishing its political history in the context of nonacademic social movements. Parks makes remarkable connections between social actions within and outside academia, between the profession's philosophy of "English" and the stigmatization of non-

mainstream dialects in social practices, and between the events that have traditionally marked the development of composition studies as an emerging field (that is, the process movement) and parallel events that are often ignored in the field (for example, the cold war and the social movements of the 1960s). More specifically, Parks points to discrepancies in and disconnections between the existing principles of the Great Society and the principles of counterhegemonic struggle in gaining access to higher education. He does this by positioning SRTOL as a public document representative of serious historical events that force the field to better account for what activism means in light of the politics of language, power, and coalition building. While this tactic is splendid, it nevertheless reiterates the exclusion of voices of color, which continues to be a major problem in composition scholarship.

Composition studies as a field of study within the discipline of English, and the many dedicated scholars whose work somehow relates to the historical promise of composition, should find in Parks' discussion a view of the significance of past and present social movements, of the promise of participatory community, and of the importance of organizing in the academy. While this enlightening discussion establishes some parameters for reconstructing the political history of composition studies and concludes with a powerful call for community-based critical pedagogy, it fails to provide an exact model by which such a pedagogy can be directly implemented in classrooms, in communities, or in efforts at organization.

Still, *Class Politics* is a timely book that boldly calls attention to the politics of language studies in the context of contemporary shifts toward conservative educational reform. Much of what can be seen in today's composition scholarship either reverses or ignores the earlier vision of balancing the equation of language and social stratification/diversification. If this vision had not been dimmed, scholars in English studies might have been in a better position to advocate clearly and persuasively for public policies that actually value diversification over stratification. Furthermore, perhaps too many scholars insist on *their* right to *their* own language and, in so doing, have become entrapped in a web of academic language that communicates little to the general public, let alone to students in classrooms who are affected by the push for conservative educational reform.

Regardless of whether the reader agrees with the central argument of the book, one of its most valuable contributions is that it forces the reader to create intellectual space for thinking again about what matters and why.

In this intellectual space, questions for further research will likely occur. How can the practice of exclusion be eliminated from the process of reconstructing the history of academic political work? What were the covert rules of engagement that overpowered the struggle for equality in language, in organizational work, and among people? How should scholars committed to political work proceed in view of the conservative agenda that is breathing new life into old standardizing practices—for example, high-stakes testing and its validation of Standard English as well as conservative language policies, such as the English Only movement? Neither high-stakes testing nor English Only makes sense in the shrinking world of multiple languages and multinational corporate structures.

In the end, Parks acknowledges that despite the unnatural death of SRTOL the movement was not in vain. The debate over SRTOL left its imprint on composition studies, causing the field to develop greater consciousness of language politics, greater sensitivity to the multiple voices of students, and greater appreciation for the language and cultural background of a pluralistic society. The book invites further thought about the purpose of education in general and composition and language studies in particular. Scholarship in language pedagogy and policy is, like it or not, political. *Class Politics: The Movement for the Students' Right to Their Own Language* calls attention to the covert dimensions of academic political work. Readers will likely close this book wondering not what happened to SRTOL but what will happen if the political aspects of language and language scholarship are ignored.

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Beyond Ebonics: Racial Pride and Linguistic Prejudice, John Baugh. (New York: Oxford UP, 2000. 149 pages).

Reviewed by Arthur L. Palacas, University of Akron

As I write, with an autographed first edition at my side, I congratulate the editors of Oxford University Press for asking John Baugh to write the book on the Ebonics controversy that became *Beyond Ebonics: Linguistic Pride and Racial Prejudice*. Baugh brings his considerable and distinguished expertise in black English linguistics to his analysis of the Oakland uproar, and, as a proud descendant of African slaves in America, he also brings the authority and insight of his personal experience. The highly charged topic of Ebonics and black English has plenty of hot buttons that, for most people, are better left untouched. Baugh's candid, personal, yet academic approach to the topic, in which he exposes the hot buttons and keeps the important issues alive, is thus most appropriate and welcome.

In nine chapters, Baugh takes a close look at the Oakland Resolution on Ebonics—its precedents and sequents, the origin and evolution of the term "Ebonics," the confusing use of the term in the Oakland Resolution, the negative political fallout to and legal implications of the resolution, and the racist and satirical media reactions to it, including a sample of the sometimes biting political cartoons responding to the resolution. The three appendices include the Linguistic Society of America's resolution on the Oakland Ebonics issue and legislative documents from California and Texas. The book as a whole brings understanding of the length and breadth of the issues surrounding Ebonics and is a veritable breadbasket of research and paper topics for an elective course on black English.

In a chapter on linguistic pride, Baugh reveals his own struggles as a youth not to appear "lame" to his "black street speech" speaking peers while acceding to the demands of his educated parents (both holding doctorates, one learns in *Black Street Speech*, also by Baugh) to speak "proper" standard English: "I felt as though I were trapped in a cultural vise consisting of two opposing linguistic barriers with each side offering situationally dependent rewards or sanctions"—the same "cultural vise" of the worlds of black English and standard English that grips so many African American youth. He also confesses his youthful linguistic pride and consequential prejudice against Hispanic-accented peers. His own early attitudes and struggles become symbolic of prejudicial linguistic attitudes across the nation and of the struggles of many black youth in the educational system. Baugh's personal development becomes a symbol of hope, not only for black English speakers but for speakers of other nonstandard varieties of English—or, as I am inclined to put it, other minority Englishes, or minority varieties of English, as well (with emphasis on the variety of English being a minority variety, so as to include, for example, Appalachian English).

On its highest plane, this book is infused with Baugh's lofty personal hopes for our society (a hope echoed in the foreword by Dell Hymes as "the true promise of America"). Today, most people can't even imagine black English as a potentially powerful catalyst in the "national quest for racial reconciliation," yet this idea is the passion that motivates Baugh's book. In fact, Baugh warns that unless we "redress the linguistic legacy of American slavery within the context of providing equal educational