

A photograph of a wooden covered bridge, likely the Smith-Watson Bridge, with a sign above the entrance. The bridge has a gabled roof and is surrounded by green trees. The text is overlaid on the image.

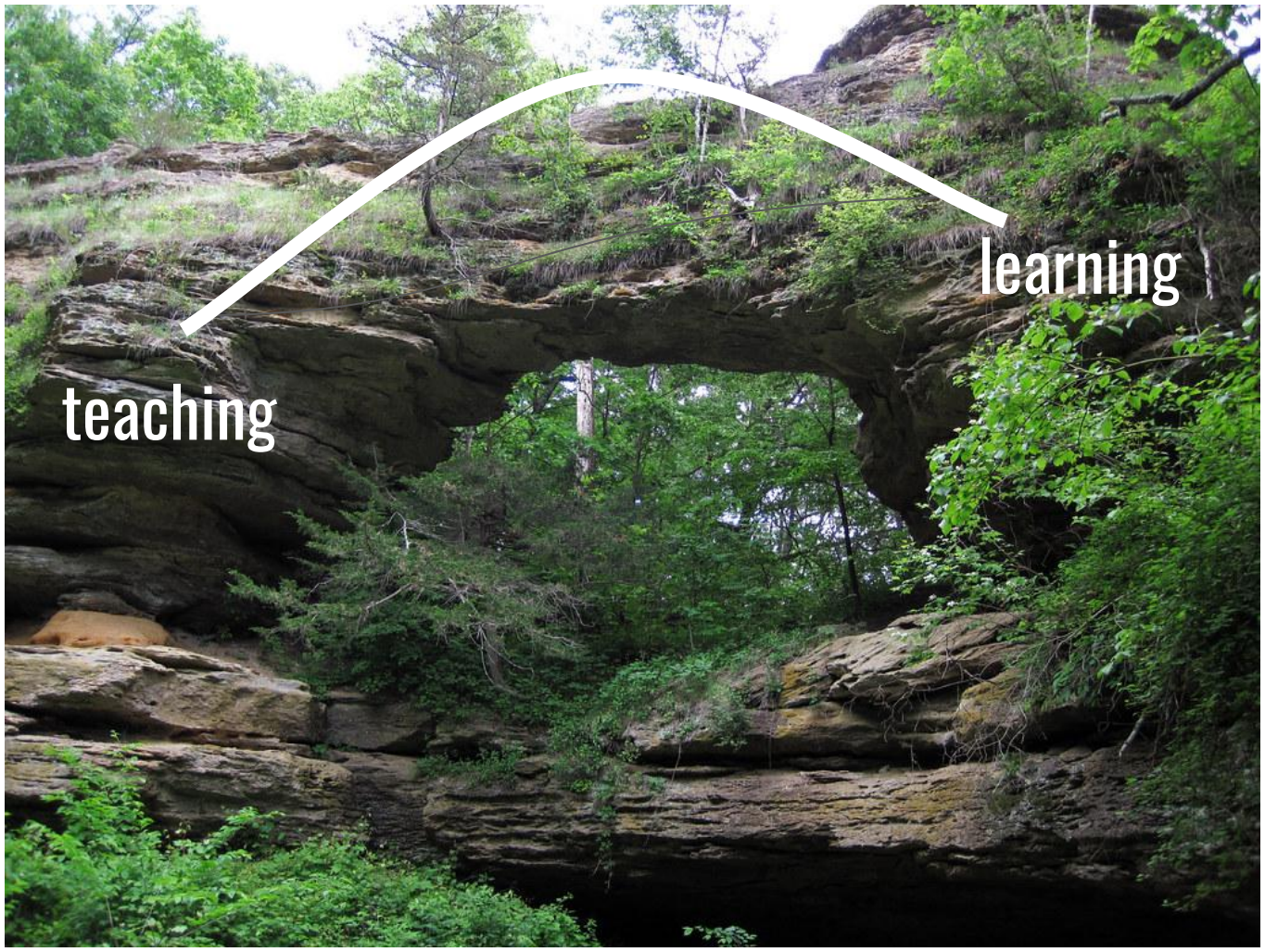
Building Bridges to Bring the Wisconsin Idea Home:

Rhetorically Listening to our Home Communities

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University of Wisconsin
Whitewater



teaching

learning

Overview

- 1 History of the Wisconsin Idea
- 2 Rural populations, rhetorical listening and transformative hospitality
- 3 Instructors as code switchers, representatives, interpreters, and liaisons
- 4 Questions and Discussion

When the State cuts academics,
is this also an attack on civil
society and democracy?

Remembering the *American Promise* and the
Wisconsin Idea.

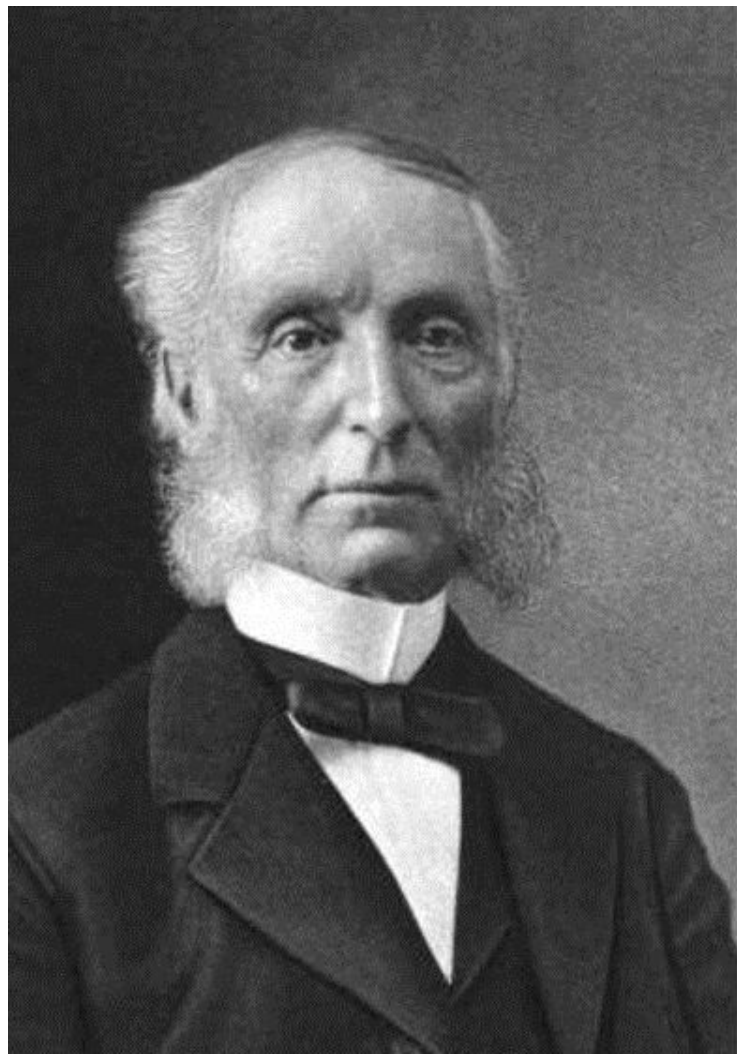
In memory of my nephew Ryan.

Ryan died two years ago from a drug overdose.

He was 29 years old, a talented software coder, but a drop-out from college, and always in debt.

One evening he bought synthetic opioids and was found the next morning dead on his front lawn.

Many of my students this year knew person's dead from either opioids, gun violence, or covid.



John Bascom,
President of University of Wisconsin 1874-
1887

- “We are abundantly able to give our schools a thorough support, and so supported they will steadily reduce in many directions our burdens of taxation. ...”



President of University of Wisconsin 1874-1887

10 of his 25 books written in his life

Philosophy Of English Literature (1874)

Education And The State (1877)

Comparative Psychology (1878)

Ethics (1879)

Natural Theology (1880)

The Science Of Mind (1881)

The Lawyer And The Lawyer's Questions (1882)

Problems In Philosophy (1885)

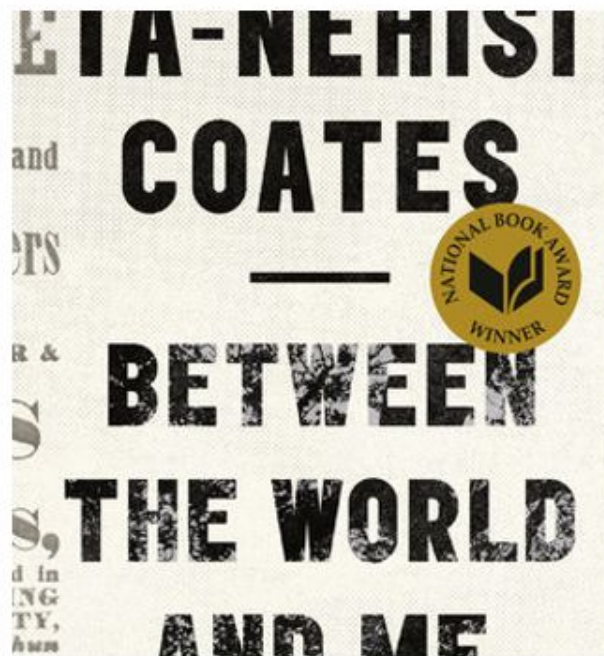
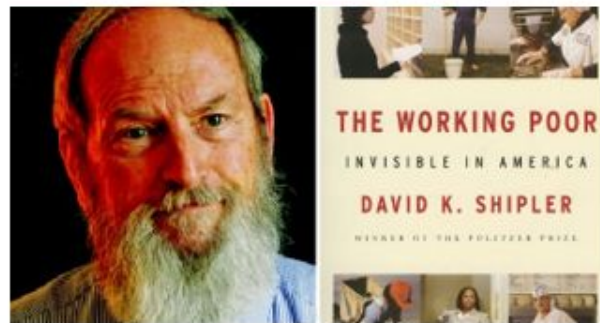
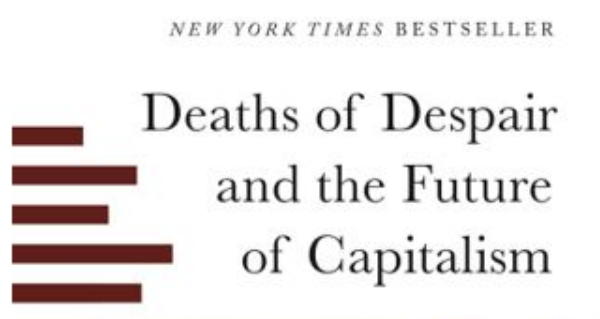
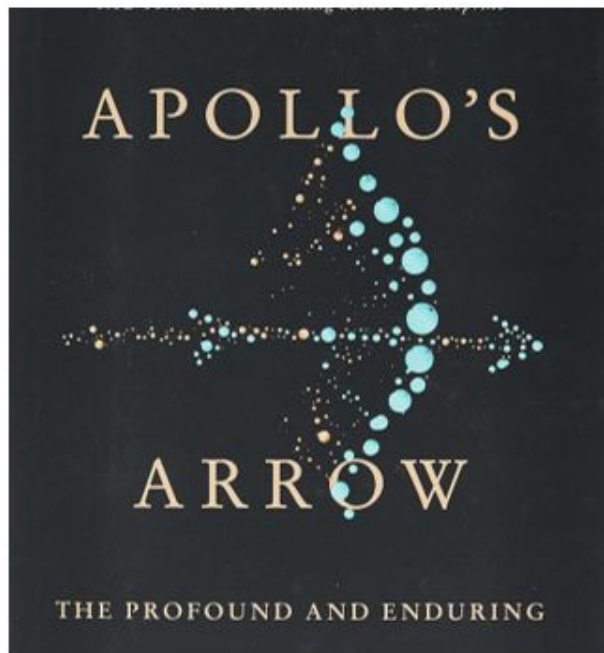
Prohibition And Common Sense (1885)

Sociology (1887)

John Bascom's Students from class Of 1879, the John and Belle Case Lafollette

- “..It is cheaper, as experience shows, to educate a man than to maintain him as a lunatic, feed him as a pauper, imprison him as a criminal, or shoot him in insurrection. If there is any connection fixed in human society, it is this general relation between intelligence and good citizenship.” -1878





Experience and Knowledge

43%

K-12 public school students in Wisconsin who are in rural areas or towns more than 10 miles from urban centers

Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

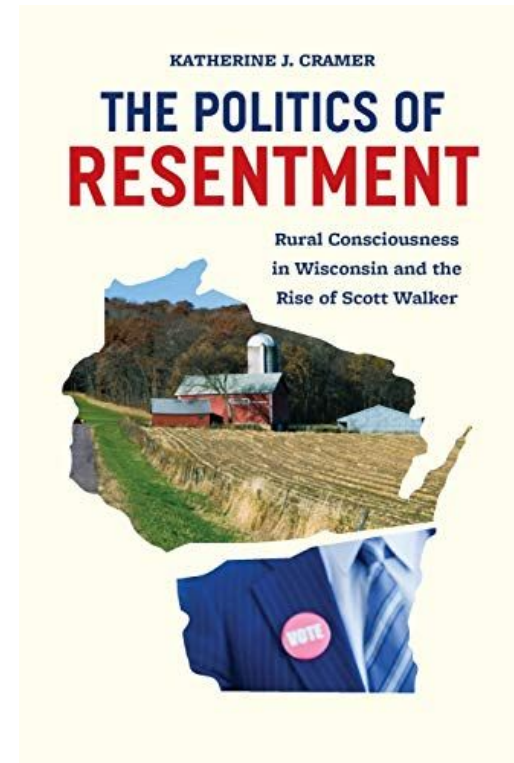
Where I Come From... because place matters:

- I grew up in rural Wisconsin, on a county highway surrounded by dairy farms and corn fields,
- 16 miles away from the nearest school district, where there was an incorporated village of one-thousand,
- Where there are two primary employers: Mercury Marine boat motor manufacturing factory and multi-generation family dairy farms



Politics of Resentment... what we need to consider: the ever-shifting context for the Wisconsin Idea...

“Rural consciousness”: “An identity as a rural person that includes a sense that decision makers routinely ignore rural places and fail to give rural communities their fair share of resources, as well as a sense that rural folks are fundamentally different from urbanites in terms of lifestyles, values, and work ethic... denotes a multifaceted resentment against cities” (Cramer 4).



Examples of Rural Consciousness in Country Songs:

“Country Boy Can Survive” by Hank Williams, Jr.:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4WwzYhVL5Sc>

“Where I Come From” by Alan Jackson:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cV292aZuYEO>

“Flyover States” by Jason Aldean:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ToT1Tmq_NQ



Pride. Rural consciousness also
dictates disidentification with
positions of perceived
indebtedness or weakness...

Something else to consider for the Twenty-first Century Wisconsin Idea...



Logical Fallacies we're all susceptible to:

The zero sum game...

Binary thinking, “us” vs. “them”





Possible approaches:

- **Rhetorical Listening,**
- **Transformative Hospitality, and**
- **Rural Ambassadors**

Rhetorical listening is a mode of cross-cultural communication. Rhetorical listening involves a **stance of openness**, of **non-identification**, of refusing to consume or disavow another and their position. It involves listening with intent, not for intent.

Rhetorician Krista Ratcliffe theorizes “rhetorical listening” as a way to genuinely hear and engage across similarities *and* differences, a position of mutual respect, and as a **possible solution to “dysfunctional listening”** in which parties participate only to determine who is “right” and who is “wrong” or listening only for what you can agree or disagree with.

From *Rhetorical Listening: Gender, Identification, Whiteness* by Krista Ratcliffe

Transformative Hospitality...

From Haswell, Haswell, and Blalock's
*College Composition and
Communication* article "Hospitality in
College Composition Courses" (2009)

"The most radical form [of hospitality] is **transformative hospitality**, which accepts the possibility that host and guest, teacher and students, will all be **changed** by their encounter...

"[In transformative hospitality] the student-guest brings the promise, the **gift**, of news from a different world, the world first of that person's own experiences, hopes, perceptions, and reflections, and second of that person's different generation, age, gender, class, perhaps nationality, relation, and culture."

Rural ambassadors

...another possible approach

Capable of code-switching, building bridges, comradeship.

Empowering those who come from rural communities, who walk in both worlds.

This is the sense in which I am obliged to be a listener. To listen to the student's doubts, fears, and incompetencies that are part of the learning process. It is in listening to the student that I learn to speak with him or her.

Paulo Freire

quotefancy

Shaping the student-citizen: pedagogical practices

Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Paulo Freire

1. Educators are not bankers
2. Reciprocal exchanges of knowledge(s)

Questions?



"Teaching and learning are reciprocal acts. You can't do one without the other, at least not if you're doing it right."

- Paulo Freire