LiCS

Literacy in Composition Studies

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LITERACY IN COMPOSITION STUDIES

LiCS MISSION STATEMENT

Literacy in Composition Studies is a refereed open access online journal that sponsors scholarly activity at the nexus of Literacy and Composition Studies. We foreground *literacy* and *composition* as our keywords, because they do particular kinds of work. Composition points to the range of writing courses at the college level, including FYC, WAC/WID, writing studies, and professional writing, even as it signals the institutional, disciplinary, and historically problematic nature of the field. Through literacy, we denote practices that are both deeply context-bound and always ideological. Literacy and Composition are therefore contested terms that often mark where the struggles to define literate subjects and confer literacy's value are enacted.

Given its ideological nature, literacy is a particularly fluid and contextual term. It can name a range of activities from fundamental knowledge about how to decode text to interpretive and communicative acts. Literacies are linked to know-how, to insider knowledge, and literacy is often a metaphor for the ability to navigate systems, cultures, and situations. At its heart, literacy is linked to interpretation—to reading the social environment and engaging and remaking that environment through communication. Orienting a Composition Studies journal around literacy prompts us to investigate the ways that writing is interpretive as well as persuasive; to analyze the connections and disconnections between writing and reading; and to examine the ways in which literacy acts on or constitutes the writer even as the writer seeks to act on or with others.

At this time of radical transformation in its contexts and circulation, *LiCS* seeks submissions that theorize literacy at its intersection with composition and will prioritize work that bridges scholarship and concerns in both fields. We are especially interested in work that:

- provides provisional frameworks for theorizing literacy activities
- analyzes how literacy practices construct student, community, and other identities
- investigates the ways in which social, political, economic, and technological transformations produce, eliminate, or mediate literacy opportunities
- analyzes the processes and power relations whereby literacies are valued or circulated
- adds new or challenges existing knowledge to literacy's history
- examines the literacies sponsored through college writing courses and curricula, including the range of literate activities, practices, and pedagogies that shape and inform, enable and constrain writing
- considers the implications of institutional, state, or national policies on literacy learning and teaching, including the articulation of high schools and higher education
- proposes or creates opportunities for new interactions between Literacy and Composition Studies, especially those drawing on transnational, multilingual, and cross-cultural literacy research.

EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

At this moment, we mourn George Floyd, Rayshard Brooks, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and the countless other Black men and women who have been victims of police brutality and violence perpetuated by white-supremacist ideologies, and a history of systemic racism in our nation. The themes of activism and action against systemic racism and disenfranchisement run deeply throughout this issue; we hope they will buoy readers, provide sustenance and salve, and engage us in the continued work ahead. For our part, we hold ourselves accountable to continuing anti-racist work. There is still much to do.

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This issue of *LiCS* offers three different articles that explore the importance of position—position as identity, as the accumulation of lived experiences, and as points of access. While Jamilia M. Kareem, Clay Walker, and Matthew Overstreet explore a wide range of subjects, from Black-American-built educational institutions to César Chávez's literacy genealogy to digital media literacy pedagogy, an attention to where and how one engages with literacy activities threads across these pieces. This same thread can be found in the three book reviews where Sarah Moon considers the various rhetorical and feminist lenses in Melissa Goldthwaite's edited collection *Food, Feminisms, Rhetorics* (2017), Keira Hambrick discusses education and placemaking in Brice Nordquist's *Literacy and Mobility* (2017), and Nick Marsellas explores helping students understand discursive power differently through his review of Alex Kapitan's *The Radical Copyeditor's Style Guide for Writing About Transgender People* (2017) and Race Forward's *Race Reporting Guide* (2015).

The first article in this issue addresses the importance of Black voices in transforming our understanding of our own history. Borrowing the framework of a "unique voice of color" from Delgado and Stefancic, Jamila M. Kareem's "Independent Black Institutions and Rhetorical Literacy Education: A Unique Voice of Color" speaks to this current historical moment by considering the influence of four Black-American-built forms of institutionalized education: Citizenship Schools and education programs, Freedom Schools, Black Panther Liberation Schools, and pre-college independent Black institutions. Kareem offers a corrective to current histories and constructions in the field by describing the significance of these vastly understudied yet influential institutions. Kareem specifically examines the curricular, pedagogical, and instructional practices of these institutions and offers "counter-stories" to the historical narratives about Black Americans typically gentrified by White and European-American perspectives. By highlighting these institutions—and the Black voices that created them—Kareem argues that these models and the critical race theories on which they are based should be integrated into today's college literacy and writing education programs to help reduce ignorance of systemic racism. In adopting Afrocentric literacy education programs, literacy and writing education "can create race- and community-conscious writing curriculum, pedagogy, and instructional practices" (2).

Clay Walker's "Lifeworld Discourse, Translingualism, and Agency in a Discourse Genealogy of César Chávez's Literacies" examines the literacy history of the labor activist, particularly up until his work with the Community Service Organization in the late 1950s. Walker analyzes Chávez's experience through the lens of what Walker calls "Discourse genealogy," a method that expands on James Paul Gee's concept of "lifeworld Discourse," or "the way that we use language, feel and think, act and interact, and so forth, in order to be an 'everyday' (non-specialized) person" (Gee qtd. in Walker 27). According to Walker, lifeworld Discourse and Discourse genealogy can be powerful tools for translingual theory—despite recent critiques of second-wave literacy theory in translingual scholarship—because they offer "a way for understanding how literacy repertoires or Discourses are accumulated as sedimented resources for discursive agency without categorizing these resources as constituent elements of named languages." Walker analyzes how Chávez, in his family life and in his community organizing work, blended different literacy repertoires from "across Discourses and social spheres" to act. Understanding further the discursive blending Chávez performed, Walker argues, can help teachers develop threshold pedagogies that encourage students to make meaning from the diverse discourses they use and are learning—as opposed to pedagogies based on bridging and scaffolding metaphors that position students as leaving "behind one discursive world for another" (39).

In "Writing at The Interface: A Research And Teaching Program For Everyday Digital Media Literacy," Matthew Overstreet argues that "composition studies should do more to understand and promote networked literacy as it manifests in everyday digital media engagement patterns," and to do so, we must "think the human and non-human in combination" (48). Because of the ways digital literacy is inextricable from the technology that mediates it, Overstreet contends that writing teachers must move from a literacy pedagogy that focuses on "fact checking" to one that teaches students to examine the information ecosystem they are operating within. Overstreet explores three key concepts for a "research and teaching program for everyday digital media literacy: the information ecosystem, the interface, and user as designer." He urges compositionists to engage with media studies scholarship to get the "insight into consumption and cognition" that we need to "teach everyday digital media literacy" (53). Overstreet describes this pedagogy as he has practiced it in teaching in both Europe and the Middle East. Overstreet offers his digital media literacy as an updated critical pedagogy where "[r]ather than signs and symbols and 'preferred narratives,' students read interfaces—the places where design is actualized. And they read not to understand what interfaces mean, but what they do" (59).

This issue concludes with three review essays that represent a diversity of research, rhetoric, and pedagogical perspectives on relevant issues within composition studies. First, Sarah Moon's review of Melissa Goldthwaite's *Food, Feminisms, Rhetorics* (2017) explores the various rhetorical and feminist lenses through which this book centers the question: "What rhetoric around food and bodies is most authentically empowering to women?" (67). In her critique of the various articles in this edited collection, Moon reflects upon the ways in which "progressive shifts in food system rhetoric" might intersect with body-related rhetoric, ultimately praising the way this text shows us that "attending more consciously to our choice of words around farming, food packaging, cooking,

and female bodies is essential to a cultural shift toward a more feminist conception of food" (70). Next, in her review of Brice Nordquist's *Literacy and Mobility: Complexity, Uncertainty, and Agency at the Nexus of High School and College* (2017), Keira Hambrick discusses the ways in which Nordquist, in Hambrick's words, "interweaves methodologies and methods" "through which students engage 'education as a process of placemaking in the present'" (72). Finally, in Nick Marsellas' review essay, "Preempting Racist and Transphobic Language in Student Writing and Discussions," he analyzes two pieces that are, according to Marsellas, "an invaluable supplement to course materials that ask students to engage with race and gender" (76): Alex Kapitan's *The Radical Copyeditor's Style Guide for Writing About Transgender People* and the nonprofit racial justice organization Race Forward's *Race Reporting Guide.* By providing important context based on his experience implementing these texts in his own composition classroom, Marsellas shows how these style guides may "help students to reframe their understandings of writing through the lens of discursive power in ways that carry over into discussions of other writing decisions and style rules" (ibid).

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Independent Black Institutions and Rhetorical Literacy Education: A Unique Voice of Color

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KEYWORDS

literacy education; critical race theory; rhetorical education; counter-story; race-conscious; community literacy; African American literacy

"There is a cultural price-tag to literacy."
—Carl F. Kaestle, *The History of Literacy and the History of Readers*

The tales of my people's literacy education history have been gentrified. The truth about the valiant fore-teachers and students wading against the political, economic, physical, and rhetorical barricades to their learning objectives is removed from the collective consciousness of American history. Historians assessed the agency earned by Black-built practices and traditions developed by Black communities, Black-owned rhetorics, discourses, and literacies and determined that agency worthy of being traded out for literacy histories owned and operated by sanctioned middle-class White patriarchal sociocultural constructions. And so, our true literacy history is relegated to the margins of cultural knowledge about the needs and goals of education for Black Americans, historically and contemporarily. Save for the work of a small collective of composition and literacy scholars, the history of rhetorical literacy education in and for American Black communities has been reduced to "romantic adaptations" (Lathan xxvi) that appease "majoritarian stories" (Solórzano and Yosso) about the place of Black people and blackness in American culture. Rhetorical literacy education constitutes instruction in social and civic-based literacy practices for the purposes of rhetorical participation in society and culture. I employ this term rather than rhetorical education because I intend to emphasize the rhetoricity—the rhetorical force and influence—of literacy practices taught in these divergent education sites rather than to emphasize the persuasive purposes of formal education.

For Black folks, like me and my kin, descendants of American slavery, literacy education has always been rhetorical (Royster, *Traces*; Logan, *Liberating*; Kynard, "Writing"; Lathan; Karega; Richardson). Both the pursuit of literacy and its uses have been wielded to

strengthen our social and political stations and resist assimilationist practices. In this essay, I apply the critical race theory "voice-of-color" tenet (Delgado and Stefancic) to establish a counter-story about the rhetoricity of literacy education for Black Americans by analyzing the literacy instruction of independent Black institutions, a style of education developed outside of majoritarian Eurocentric voice. Our literacy education has often occurred in community sites outside of formal schooling. By adopting central features of these Afrocentric literacy education programs, college composition programs and faculty can create race- and community-conscious writing curriculum, pedagogy, and instructional practices.

> *"By adopting central features of these Afrocentric literacy education programs, college composition programs and faculty can create race- and community-conscious writing curriculum, pedagogy, and instructional practices."*

I detail critical race theory's unique voice of color principle and how, as a lens for framing cultural narratives, it reshapes historical and perpetual narrative constructs of American literacy education. The unique voice of color suggests that individuals outside of racial-cultural norms can best speak to experiences of those outside of racial-cultural norms. This principle focuses on narratives that counter accepted social myths, as "because of their different histories and experiences with oppression, black, American Indian, Asian, and Latino/a writers and thinkers may be able to communicate to their white counterparts" better than Whites can to each other (Delgado and Stefancic 4). Eurocentric literacy instruction persists as a central tactic for the dominant culture to rob students of color of the opportunity to use academic discourses as one of many ways to respond to their social, cultural, and political positions (Delpit). This pattern, however, results in part from the divide between the public community and the college or university that has historically prevailed within Eurocentric educational models, models that have been challenged and reimagined by composition-literacies (Kynard, *Vernacular*) recently. In venerating school literacies for the singular purpose of being academic, "such efforts mistake the official purposes assigned to academic knowledge and academic discursive and institutional forms for the full range of uses to which these can and have been put" (Horner 169). The unique voice of color will aid me in presenting a counter-story to the dominant academy tale about the rhetorical of literacy education for Black Americans. This unique voice of color reveals the objectives of rhetorical literacy education for Black Americans as *instruction in the social actions, civic practices, and language performances for the purposes of rhetorical participation in society and culture in advancement of Black communities, locally and globally*. The following pages first outline attributes of the predominant Euro-American voice about literacy education for Blacks in America and then outline the implications of a unique voice of color for speaking against that dominant voice. In discussing some critical practices of independent Black institutions, I exemplify a unique voice of color counter-story to the prevailing perspective about rhetorical literacy education for Black Americans. This Afrocentric education model is grounded in truthfully representing and advancing Black American and African-centered cultures. I end with a discussion of implications for composition-literacy approaches that support the education of Black American students.

Black Rhetorical Literacy Education from the
Majoritarian White Voice

Majoritarian historical and contemporary accounts of Black Americans' place in American higher education literacy instruction are those that dismiss the legacy of educational endeavors initiated out of Black American communities. These endeavors often privilege Afrocentric ways of knowing, and because majoritarian stories often "generate from a legacy of racial privilege" (Solórzano and Yosso 28), those about literacy education "distor[t] and silenc[e] the experiences of people of color" (29). The majoritarian White voice speaking to the subject of Blacks in American higher education literacy generally imposes the narrative of the White savior. Yes, these tales say, Blacks had their own community-developed education outlets, but none were sufficient as systemic forms of academic learning. It was only when the mainstream White education system *allowed* Black Americans into predominantly White colleges that our rhetorical literacy education became adequate and relevant to American society.

This majoritarian historical and contemporary account of Black Americans' place in literacy education is constructed from a whiteness-valued Eurocentric epistemological perspective. I draw this term from Black feminist intellectual activist Patricia Hill Collins, who defines the Eurocentric epistemological perspective as knowledge validation practices that honor or privilege Eurocentric cultural ways of being (253). Jacqueline Jones Royster and Jean C. Williams describe the consequences of excluding selected perspectives from the history of a discipline like composition studies. The Eurocentric narrative about Black Americans' literacy instruction in higher education proclaims that, except for in a few anomalous cases, our curricular options were subpar until we were allowed to enter White-majority education sites in the 1960s (Brereton; Brubacher and Rudy; Miller; Thelin). Even though select Blacks accessed and succeeded in mainstream White American colleges and universities, most of the rhetorical purposes of literacy education were aimed at assimilating into mainstream, White-dominated society and culture.

John Seiler Brubacher and Willis Rudy imply that Black Americans, indigenous Americans, and Latinxs received vast changes to their higher educational opportunities with the implementation of affirmative action admissions policies in 1964 and open admissions in 1970 (78-79, 401). The authors deduce that the "threats to withhold federal funds … [to] institutions which were held to be too slow in implementing" affirmative action guidelines resulted in findings by the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education that "many colleges and universities were being forced to lower their academic standards and to undermine the quality of their faculties because of the demands flowing from Affirmative Action programs" (79). In noting that Black Americans and other racial formation groups underrepresented in colleges and universities fell behind those of Asian descent in accessing higher education (401), the historical account fails to note that this gap existed within predominantly White institutions. John R. Thelin, by contrast, does include a partial history of historically Black American institutions of higher education. Although, in the discussion of predominantly White institutions, the inclusion of experiences of color remains in step with the majority of historical texts on the

subject. Thelin's approach of considering "key historical episodes that have enduring implications for colleges and universities" (Introduction) ignores, for instance, the inaugural graduation of Black American Richard Henry Green from Yale College in 1857 (JBHE Research Department). Nor does the historical record chronicle the impact of approximately forty Black students graduating from universities and colleges in the North or Lucy Ann Stanton's certificate in literature from Oberlin College, the first Black American woman to receive such an honor (JBHE Research Department). These events are but a few that create a racial perspectives gap in how researchers historicize American higher education. I share them to show that the majoritarian White voice in historicizing rhetorical literacy education is but a product of a larger cultural phenomenon in college-level education.

Turning to literacy and composition histories in higher education institutions, the discipline has not fared much better in eliminating an absent presence of race (Prendergast) from how it historicizes the discipline in higher education. In the introduction of *The Origins of Composition Studies in the American College, 1875–1925*, John Brereton notes that "the 1865 founding of Cornell University, a school which promised that anyone could learn anything there, was a sign that a determined philanthropist with enough money could influence the course of education" (8). This change led to the 1869 ascension of Charles W. Eliot as Harvard's president and to the rise of modern English composition literacy instruction and practices. The year 1869 also marks the year that Massachusetts's first Black American judge, George Lewis Ruffin, graduated from Harvard Law School. Brereton does not examine the role that admitting and educating Black Americans had in executing the new installation of composition.

Brereton's goal for this collection is to "supply … all those interested in the history of English composition with some of the most significant documents in readily accessible form" (xii) by connecting theory to practice (xiv) through the central documents that compositionists of the time sourced (xv). Brereton acknowledges the limitations of focusing on the public record, because "a great deal of what we would now regard as postsecondary writing was done by … men and women . . . at historically black institutions," and even as these marginalized institutions may have borrowed pedagogical and curricular methods and outcomes from majority White schools, "some students and some teachers asserted themselves in new and important ways" (xv-xvi). Although, the Introduction does remark that "[Black American] writers were forging a distinctive voice (or series of voices) in nineteenth-century America," it additionally notes that Black students and faculty were still expected to perform discourses of whiteness (Inoue) in their writing practices (Brereton 21). In *The Evolution of College English: Literacy Studies from the Puritans to the Postmoderns*, Thomas P. Miller narrates a history of college English studies, broader than composition studies but including composition and literacy studies. This historical record does make a few strides in acknowledging the presence of Black Americans in literacy instruction and its development in the American education system through the centuries. Similarly to the accounts reviewed thus far, Miller includes the cases of Black Americans in the development of English and literacy studies within the purview of Euro-American histories. These acknowledgements are significant, but their limitations represent yet another erasure of lived experiences from Black American students with literacy in the education system.

These tales about the arrival of Black Americans at historically White sites of higher education ignores the history of Black American-centric education in Black communities, constructing Eurocentric education as the ultimate key to social mobility for Black Americans. The result of these perspectives is that they construct histories that have "social, political, and cultural *consequences*" (Royster and Williams 563). The account of the Black American presence in composition studies that Royster and Williams present counters or revises the conventional Eurocentric epistemological perspectives of this presence. Drawing inspiration from the ways that Royster and Williams "counter mythologies about African American presence" in the history of composition studies (579), I aim to wield a unique voice of color to counter perspectives that emulate the "majoritarian racial privilege" within American rhetorical literacy education.

Counter-story of the Unique Voice of Color

Critical race theory can help explicate this racialized construction of literacy education. Critical race theory hypothesizes that people of color have a unique voice that can provide vital counter-stories to accepted knowledge about racialized experiences. In other words, in a society ordered in part by racial identifications, racialized experiences may allow writers and intellectuals of marginalized races to communicate issues to the dominant White racial culture that Whites do not have the language to communicate to each other (Delgado and Stefancic 4). According to this tenet, racial counter-narratives are essential to providing a complete historical perspective of American social institutions. Aja Y. Martinez proposes that critical race theory, and particularly counter-story, can act as a testimonial method of narrative methodology to bring to light persistent racism in the field of composition studies and the academy itself (34). Martinez notes that such narrative forms are necessary as the field faces a "demographic shift" in the students it serves (34).

Counter-story has been used as a research methodology that allows researchers to challenge the de-humanizing expectations of "empirical data" (Martinez 37) that propagate deficit narratives about people of color (Solórzano and Yosso 4) and the privilege of the dominant cultural ways of knowing (Solórzano and Yosso 33). Literacy research in composition studies has alluded to the need for such ways of knowing (Kynard, *Vernacular*; Lathan;). In *Freedom Writing: African American Civil Rights Literacy Activism*, Rhea Estelle Lathan pushes back against the notion that "literacy *belongs* to white people" (28) by performing cognitive mapping of Jim Crow and composition studies (30) as they relate to the teaching and learning practices of Citizenship Schools. This mapping, or "spatial diagram or distribution of both" (Lathan 30) cultural productions, distorts cultural ideologies about literacy education and literacy activism, therefore providing a space to interject theoretical counter-stories. In another look at the possible ways of knowing in contrast to

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those advocated by dominant racial epistemologies, Carmen Kynard explores the ways that the Black Arts Movement, Black Studies, and the Black Power Movement could craft an "alternative social world" when connected to language arts and composition pedagogy (*Vernacular* 111). Cognitive mapping of historical and disciplinary narratives and imaginings of unconventional social worlds can help create a unique voice of color that acts as a critical race counter-story to prevailing narratives and imaginings.

Critical race researchers see "counter-story [as] also a tool for exposing, analyzing, and challenging the majoritarian stories of racial privilege" (Solórzano and Yosso 32). The voice of color is essential to this process as it calls for inquiries into the impaired judgement of the singular Eurocentric epistemological voice. The voice-of-color thesis has its complications, including that it risks essentializing racialized experiences. In theorizing that a unique voice of color exists for speaking to systemic racist practices, critical race theory complicates the principle that races are constructed through thought and social relation (Delgado and Stefancic 8). I apply the voice-of-color thesis here as a theoretical frame to analyze one case of rhetorical literacy education for Black American students through non-Eurocentric perspectives. Instead of essentializing the Black American literacy education experience through the unique voice of color, I hold it as protection against epistemological gentrification around this education.

Counter-stories to American Rhetorical Literacy Education

Two critical works in composition-literacies studies have detailed the rhetorical purposes of postsecondary education for Black Americans. *Traces of a Stream: Literacy and Social Change Among African American Women* by Jacqueline Jones Royster and *Liberating Language: Sites of Rhetorical Education in Nineteenth-Century Black America* by Shirley Wilson Logan provide counter-stories, revisionist narratives, or an alternative social world to dominant conceptions of what rhetorical literacy education has looked like for Black Americans, one of several groups typically marginalized in education histories. For a long time, White America crafted the official accounts of Black Americans' acquisition of literacy and rhetorical education through formal higher education. Yet as far back as 1903, *The Souls of Black Folk* by W.E.B. Du Bois offered a counter-story about the formal education of Black Americans. In "On the Wings of Atalanta," Du Bois distinguishes Atlanta University's exceptionality from other distinguished universities:

> Not at Oxford or at Leipsic, not at Yale or Columbia, is there an air of higher resolve or more unfettered striving; the determination to realize for men, both black and white, the broadest possibilities of life, to seek the better and the best, to spread with their own hands the Gospel of Sacrifice, — all this is the burden of their talk and dream.

Du Bois sees Atlanta University as "the organ of that fine adjustment between real life and the growing knowledge of life." Contradicting the principal narrative of Black Americans and higher education, this period-based description of an HBCU conveys an opportunistic perspective.

If one central goal of higher education is liberation through assimilation into culturally dominant ways of knowing and being, then writing in literacy education, as it is most generally

accepted, is central to this goal. Revisionist narratives through counter-stories have been central to Black communities owning their identities and creating meaning. The Literacy Narratives of Black Columbus Project, developed out of The Ohio State University with community partners, presents a unique voice of color from stories that complicate the dominant narratives about Columbus, Ohio, and its history.[1] Studying the rhetorical literacy education practices of Black Americans prior to inclusion in Eurocentric sites of education may have proven complicated, since much of the education happened in non-academic settings (Kates; Logan "Liberating"; Royster). This exclusionary rationale might be just a poor excuse to omit Black Americans from the narrative, however, because plenty of our instruction in literacy education happened in what would be considered formal institutions today. Yet because of the second-class status during particular historical moments, it takes the efforts of dedicated researchers to locate the records of these institutions. Along with accounts of informal instruction in literacy education, details of rhetorical literacy education through formal Afrocentric curricular applications crafts counter-stories to the dominant narrative about the history of rhetorical literacy education in America.

Rhetorical Education in America (Glenn, Lyday, and Sharer) provides a broad scope of approaches to defining and applying rhetorical education in American classrooms. The contributors inquire into the institutional policies around rhetorical education meant to uphold the status quo but also propose rhetorical education practices that empower traditionally subjugated groups wishing to overturn the status quo (Glenn, Lyday, and Sharer). My research into the unique voice of color of IBI literacy education speaks to the latter of these approaches. Kynard's *Vernacular Insurrections: Race, Black Protest, and the New Century in Composition-Literacies Studies* expounds on the ways that Black American students have brandished composition-literacies for rhetorical, political, and social action across twentieth century decades. While many composition studies and literacy studies scholars have examined various aspects of literacy education for Black Americans, most have not considered what this unique voice of color productively adds to examine the role of literacy education histories in their influence on contemporary rhetorical literacy education practices. Further, no scholar has addressed explicitly the literacy education in the instance of Afrocentric education outlined here, independent Black institutions (IBIs). Overall, writing studies focuses little on the rhetorical literacy education of Black Americans during these eras and within these sites; the majority of information stems from interdisciplinary literature. Two key texts, *Teach Freedom: Education for Liberation in the African-American Tradition* and *Education as Freedom: African American Educational Thought and Activism*, provide grounding for this exploration.

The collection *Teach Freedom* provides essays and primary texts related to the educational institutions discussed in this article. From historical analysis of Afrocentric education just around the Civil Rights Movement to proposals and firsthand accounts from those who were there, this book supplies crucial perspectives on the dissemination of education to Black Americans. *Education as Freedom* complements *Teach Freedom* by illustrating how oppression and liberation have constituted two sides of the same coin for Black American education throughout history. The collection brings together authors who exemplify the objectives around social progression of Civil-Rights-era rhetorical education for Black Americans as well as perspectives on alternatives to the

mainstream instruction provided by Afrocentric education. These works are vital to situating the revisionist, counter-story, and alternative social world narratives that create a unique voice of color from Afrocentric frames for rhetorical literacy education at the college level. In the next section, I will closely consider the curricular and extracurricular approaches of these types of education and their potential for adoption in composition-literacies curriculum.

Adding a Unique Voice of Color to American Rhetorical Literacy Education

Several embodiments of formal education for Black Americans have sprung from community education models. These formal education forays succeeded in granting Black students access to pre-college and higher education for transformative purposes. Afrocentric models from the 1960s and 1970s succeeded in transforming the ways of thinking about social status for Black community members and that rhetorically educated a wide range of Black community members. Contemporary education programs for Black American students have a number of predecessors.

Particularly for Black American students, rhetorical literacy education often occurred in community sites outside of formal schooling (Enoch). Black communities have a history of utilizing rhetorical education as a tool of civic engagement and civic responsibility. After all, "[l]ooking to the past for models and uses of rhetorical education … [g]iven that rhetorical action is initiated in response to mediated exigencies, few Americans have had a greater need to respond than have African Americans nor a greater desire to respond effectively" (Logan "'To Get an Education,'" 37). For many Black Americans, even today, our introduction to the practices of language and power as a tool of social action is through the church or community centers. Mainstream school forms of literacy education often undermine rhetorical literacies conferred by our communities.

Readers will be familiar with Black-built institutions of higher education such as Fisk University, Tuskegee Institute, and Atlanta University, all of which serve as forerunners to the programs of education highlighted in this unique voice of color. Among the schools produced by goals of community-building literacy education was Mary McLeod Bethune's Daytona Educational and Industrial School for Negro Girls—transformed currently into Bethune-Cookman University, established in 1904 with a mission to promote racial uplift for young Black girls through education, in order to help them "earn a living" (Bowie qtd in McCluskey 67). The curriculum put students in a position where they could use education to transform their lives by applying their learned knowledge and skills to gainful employment in service to themselves and their local communities. Normal schools for teacher training are a significant example of the rhetoricity of literacy education, because they carried out the specific purpose of serving the Black American community through educating future teachers as a resource for social change. Any of the remaining normal schools started by and for formerly enslaved Blacks during Reconstruction and post-Reconstruction are now historically Black colleges or universities (HBCUs).

Teacher education held a significant role in growing Black communities, as long-established debates questioned whether students were better taught by Black teachers or White teachers,

southern teachers or northern teachers (Du Bois; Morris). This educational progress aimed to produce politically and socially conscious teachers. In *The Mis-Education of the Negro*, Carter G. Woodson argues that vocational training, like teacher training, should help teach Black students how to make a living (38-40)—not just a living for the students themselves, but to make a living for the community. Independent Black institutions embody these goals and outcomes. In the US, these homeschooling institutions for Black students came out of the spirit of Civil-Rights-era Citizenship Schools, Freedom Schools, and Black Panther Party liberation schools, as outlined in the next section. Just as "the 'legal storytelling' movement urges black and brown writers to … apply their own unique perspectives to assess law's master narratives" (Delgado and Stefancic 11), the voice-of-color perspectives presented about these instructional sites provide an assessment of narratives about mainstream rhetorical literacy education.

The Unique Voice of Color from Independent Black Institutions

Independent Black institutions arose as a way for parents and community members to counter the hidden curriculum of White supremacy offered in traditional schools. Unlike these homeschool collectives and online sites of community learning, Citizenship Schools, Freedom Schools, and Black Panther Liberation Schools constituted more official sites of general education and literacy education for Black communities. Each offered its own counter-story to dominant narratives of literacy education histories. Lathan proclaims Citizenship Schools as "a chapter in the continuing struggle against the overwhelming justification for relegating black people to subhuman positions: the belief that they were, by and large, illiterate" (xiii). The literacy and political education of older community members became central to Civil-Rights-era Black American communities in the South and prompted the creation of Citizenship Schools in 1957 Tennessee. These counter-stories also provide a Black American perspective of the range of uses for rhetorical literacy education in community affairs. Along with Freedom Schools, Citizenship Schools developed within the Black communities and taught formal writing education to enhance citizenship practices as well as service to the community. Citizenship Schools created a unique voice of color to the White American education perspective "that Black students were capable of little learning" and in doing so developed a participatory student body where such an opportunity did not exist for these students before (Levine 37). A key goal of both Citizenship Schools and Freedom Schools was to create more Black voters, particularly in the South in order to bring Black American interests and concerns to government representation.

Freedom Schools developed as a derivative of the civil rights goals established during Freedom Summer, 1964. The schools aligned with the overall Freedom Summer objective "[t]o create a truly representative political party [from] the vast majority of disempowered African Americans" by "develop[ing] the self confidence [sic] and organizational skills required of active citizens" (Emery, Braselmann, and Gold 5). Freedom Summer activists aimed to change the perception that registering to vote was something only White people did, believing their "main challenge was getting Black people to challenge themselves" (Cobb 70). The Freedom School model of education produced formal literacy education as a resource for preparing students for social action of multiple kinds, for

example, to teach others and organize boycotts. The everyday reality of Black students that Freedom Schools aimed to upset included "[n]ew brick school buildings built to give the illusion of 'separate but equal' [but] contained virtually bookless libraries and science labs with no equipment" (Cobb 71) and teachers removing Black students from class for questioning about voting and organized freedom rides (67). Thus, one concern of Freedom Schools was to inspire students to brave their public-school classrooms to ask critical questions of their teachers (Cobb 67). Carmen Kynard suggests that this inspiration derived from the very racial oppression in the education system that created critically conscious and educated citizens to challenge that system (*Vernacular* 25). Part of the rhetorical literacy education of Freedom Schools included preparing students for participation within the mainstream education programs.

The Black Panther Party's Liberation Schools built upon and enhanced the previously discussed models with a resolute political approach to the education of young Black Americans. Liberation Schools reflected a distinct connection between politics and pedagogy, an approach that counters the formative, universalist Eurocentric epistemological perspectives to keep politics out of the classroom. Like the Black Panther Party that developed the education program, these schools aimed to "chang[e] the way Black people were viewed in the public sphere, and in the process [they] changed the way Black people looked at themselves" (Pough 71). Its vision for creating young revolutionaries addresses Shirley Wilson Logan's central question in "'To Get an Education and Teach My People': Rhetoric for Social Change," which is "Rhetorical education for what?" (36) The rhetorical literacy education at Liberation Schools taught students the history of socio-political conventions including "racism, capitalism, fascism, cultural nationalism, and socialism" (Perlstein 262). Rather than teaching reading, writing, and other literacies as disconnected from social contexts, teachers urged students to confront and question the entire gamut of school-related practices (Perlstein 264), including the "Pledge of Allegiance." Not unlike Freedom Schools, the educational system itself became a topic of study within Liberation Schools.

Citizenship, Freedom, and Liberation Schools' educational models stem from critical moments in American history, where the literacy education of Black Americans was a source of either oppression or progression. Independent Black institutions are modern-day constructions of Afrocentric rhetorical literacy education representing a unique voice of color. With modern versions first established in the early 1970s, IBIs have gained increasing popularity over the last thirty years. These schools use an Afrocentric program of education to teach relevant curriculum and values to preschool through high school-aged students (Lomotey 455). They come in the form of "homeschool collectives" and "African-centered schools" (Changa)—or *Afrikan*-centered, as many practitioners prefer to spell the term, where they hold a more encompassing view of success than do mainstream schools (Lomotey 456). IBIs' unique voice of color about the most effective curriculum to help Black Americans prepare for active community life can inform approaches for theorizing and teaching literacy in composition studies.

This counter-narrative to traditional rhetorical education practices responds to Kynard's argument that "when we have talked about understanding the social contexts of literacy, language, and discourse, … we have not done so from the perspectives of interrogating deep political and

ideological shifts that have left structured inequalities and violence firmly in place, especially in reference to, but not solely based on, race" ("Literacy/Literacies," 64) and Logan's question "[r]hetorical education for what?" ("'To Get an Education,'"36). It takes on Jacqueline Jones Royster and Jean C. Williams's call for *"a systematic commitment to resist the primacy of 'officialized' narratives"* (582) about literacy education. They are able to uphold these approaches in part because "money to support IBIs comes directly from African American communities" (Bush 392). Such a financial model permits these institutions to "refrain from depending on outside financial support to prevent unwanted control and influence" (Bush 392).

Lawson Bush, Edward C. Bush. and Tonia Causey-Bush trace IBIs through a 10,000-year historical evolution through ancient African systematic apprenticeship education. These roots can be detected in modern iterations of IBIs, which include as part of student success "attitudes toward school and the nature of the relationships between school personnel, students, and families" (Lomotey 456). Community relations is a central aspect of IBIs. This community connection is embedded within the Afrocentric institutional philosophies. These philosophies originate from various principles based in African diasporic epistemological perspectives. IBIs privilege Afrocentric narratives of history and culture, which may be one of the reasons that their institutional histories, like those of their HBCU cousins, are absent from mainstream narratives about literacy education in America. These collectives of homeschool, virtual, and community-based education teach through an African-centered worldview, a perspective that conflicts with the perpetuation of Eurocentric ways of being of dominant rhetorical literacy education. Similar to indigenous American tribal community schools (Lee and McCarty), this unique voice of color rejects the notion that students are best rhetorically prepared for society when they learn and adopt Euro-Western rhetorical traditions and literacy practices.

For example, some IBIs are based in the concept of "nommo," the notion that "all magic is word magic, and that the generation and transformation of sounds contribute to a [rhetor's] power" (Asante 60). Some are based in "Ma'at" or "ancient African principles of ethical character development" (Lee 166).[2] Others share values with the seven Kwanzaa traditions of Umoja (unity), Kujichagulia (self-determination), Ujima (collective work and responsibility), Ujamaa (cooperative economics), Kuumba (creativity), Nia (purpose), and Imani (faith) (Lee; Lomotey). According to a Facebook post citing Kalonji Jama Changa on the page for the Council of Independent Black Institutions, these institutions are "growing everyday [sic], not as an alternative to public school, but as our own paradigm for academic excellence, cultural awareness, and the quintessential foundation for Black self-sufficiency and sovereignty for African people" (Council of Independent Black Institutions). Their community-based approaches to curriculum, pedagogy, and administration exhibit an emphasis on rhetorical action. By grounding their curricular and pedagogical approaches in Nguzo Saba, or "Seven Principles of Blackness," IBIs deliver literacy education that "develops in students a communal and civic identity" (Enoch 7) relevant to who they are and their social positions by teaching Black American students "to look at the world through an African-centered set of lenses that … has a wider periphery and more depth" (Lomotey 456). Further, as Kynard suggests, it helps Black American literacies mobilize beyond systemic stifling that never positions these literacies or

their participants as equal (*Vernacular* 26).

Taking the definition of rhetorical education for Black American students proposed earlier, these schools aim to develop communicative and behavioral practices based on the students' cultural and community histories. The pedagogy underscores *social action* and *civic practices* relevant to Black people. Among the eight goals for Afrocentric pedagogy within these schools, four center on the progress of community life (Lomotey 465-66). These include a goal for teachers to amplify support for serving students' multiple local, cultural, and world communities as well as to champion the belief that individuals and communities are producers instead of simply consumers of knowledge (Lomotey 466). The other goals for pedagogy build on an Afrocentric consciousness, including consciousness of language performance which "[e]xtend[s] and build[s] upon the indigenous language" (Lomotey 465). Kofi Lomotey does not elaborate on what "the indigenous language" is, but I take it to mean the student's "mother tongue." The intention is for teachers to expose students to both the progress of community life and Afrocentric critical consciousness as early as possible. In doing so, IBI educators help ensure that these values and ways of knowing influence students' overall engagement with education.

In terms of literacy instruction at IBIs, let's consult two examples of IBIs for middle and high school students. The Fawohodie Sua Pan-Afrikan Educational Online Co-op and Maroon Life Learning online course collection provide examples of teaching and learning practices that challenge the majoritarian White voice about the rhetoricity of Black-centric literacy education. Eurocentric epistemological perspectives of literacy education promote the literacy practices of Euro-Western cultures as the race-less, decontextualized norm (Barnett; Kincheloe). However, these two IBIs, along with others, interrupt this majoritarian voice that suppresses or outright denies literacy practices meant to create and sustain sovereignty of African diasporic cultures, including those in the US. Fawohodie's Word Power course offered the 2020 winter quarter teaches students "scholarly analysis and critique of the values, virtues and culture transmitted through Afrikan folktales and lore, and their evolution and propagation in the diaspora" ("Fawohodie Sua"). Instead of speaking against Eurocentric epistemological perspectives, this outcome of literacy instruction sustains Afrocentric literacy practices and literacies. Django Paris and H. Samy Alim explain that sustaining cultural practices in education requires not only honoring them but also critiquing and problematizing their context and use, in the same ways that this approach has become reflexive in our treatment of traditional reading, writing, speech and research practices.

Through its outcomes, this course also inspires students to "explore Afrikan traditional folkways and culture that 'appear' in Afrikan life in America, via the spoken words, lore and literature that was and continues to be a part of black life in America" ("Fawohodie Sua"). This approach to literary analysis reflects some of the concepts of African American rhetorics (Richardson and Jackson), such as "a view of culture, as influenced by African ancestral traditions, as an appropriate factor in analyzing performance" (Royster, "Foreword" x). If one aim of Eurocentric epistemological perspectives is to sustain absent-present, acontextual knowledge-making conventions of White supremacy through institutionalized literacy curriculum (Ladson-Billings; Ladson-Billings and Tate; Collins; Richardson; Barnett; Keating; Leonardo; Villanueva, "Maybe"; Villanueva "On"), this

learning objective collides with such an aim. To maintain a majoritarian voice and dominance in culture, instruction based in Eurocentric epistemologies cannot truly "explore, honor, extend … [or] problematize" (Paris and Alim 3) the lore and literature representing *Afrikan* folkways and culture. Furthering the cultural sustenance goals of IBI literacy education, the Word Power course expects students to "discover the Afrikan retentions in their own family traditions and evaluate their benefits" as well ("Fawohodie Sua"). This aim of the course also opposes the goal of propagating Eurocentric worldview, which detaches knowledge development from social and cultural contexts (Kincheloe).

Even in their application of an Afrocentric worldview, not all IBIs are the same, as not all mainstream education institutions are the same. Take the Maroon Life Learning (MLL) online course collection. Their website states, "The main objective of our programs is to show youth and all people of African descent their own personal potential by introducing them to their history and to the achievements of Africans through the Ages [sic]." The courses are similar to most IBIs in that they strive to "connect the student to [the] awareness that Africans have had a long history, perhaps the longest of any other people on [E]arth" (MaroonLifeLearning). In contrast to Fawohodie aims, MLL's pedagogical methods for literacy include "decipher[ing] the world in which they live and to continue to find ways to not just survive but to thrive spiritually, mentally and materially" and "us[ing] primary sources of information ... to connect to the past through the lives and views of people from the past … [and] then move from concrete observations and facts to questioning and making inferences about the materials" (MaroonLifeLearning "Pedagogy"). While we teachers in traditional college literacy education can connect with some of the goals identified here, the recognition of the history and to the achievements of Africans through the ages, as well as the link to lives and views of ancestors, exhibits the unique voice of color missing from our literacy education practices.

Faculty in mainstream sites of education who want to sustain all students' racial cultural language practices as a teaching tool can turn to this objective and the previously discussed IBI objectives for inclusive literacy instruction. For example, the commonplace practice of conducting scholarly analysis of texts and textual practices of writers and intellectuals of color still approaches these materials from dominant cultural theoretical perspectives about literacy. Taking direction from the Fawohodie and MLL course objectives, composition teachers would invite students to study these texts under the lens of Afrocentric values, virtues, culture, traditional folkways, and other ways of being or knowing, in conjunction with Eurocentric traditions of literacy, language, and discourse. Studies by several composition and literacy studies scholars examine an array of pedagogical approaches that loosely apply Afrocentric cultural perspectives to composition curriculum (see: Gilyard and Richardson; Kynard "Writing"; Perryman-Clark). Where the White supremacist cultural script of mainstream education literacy curriculum (Ladson-Billings; Richardson) teachers discourses of whiteness as the universal truth, IBIs teach these discourses as one of many ways of being and thinking. Because their contemporary methods are influenced by literacy histories detached from the Eurocentric narratives, IBIs illustrate a true unique voice of color in literacy education.

IBIs continue to steadily prosper today, even with limited financial support. However, they are built on the tradition of Citizenship Schools, Freedom Schools, and Liberation Schools, and they use rhetorical education as a means for community engagement. Each of the schools detailed here

operates on the premise that all children deserve to receive a curriculum relevant to their worldview and therefore the lives they face. Rather than inculcating Eurocentric ways of knowing and acting through rhetorical education, these educational models demonstrate how academic knowledge can serve purposes outside the academic setting. This kind of knowledge allowed the students of these schools to take accountability for the advancement of their communities, or it gave them the tools for civic responsibility. To conclude, I reinforce the need for the unique voice of color that IBIs offer to college-level literacy education and histories in America so that we, as composition-literacies teacher-scholars, may shape rhetorical literacy education experiences that consciously sustain raciolinguistically marginalized students' literacy cultural traditions.

The Need for Unique Voice of Color Counter-Narratives in Rhetorical Literacy Education Inclusive Curriculum Design

The counter-story to Black students' engagement with literacy education in America that I have provided shows a missing link in the ways education histories frame the social-rhetorical purposes of this education, as well as the rhetoricity of its outcomes for a portion of socially subjugated students. While traditional approaches to literacy education have centered on acquisition of literacy practices to serve the dominant culture, my definition of rhetorical literacy education for Black Americans expands on the approach recommended by Logan, "a rhetoric of social change" ("'To Get an Education,'" 39). The counter-story provided by the unique voice of color represented in IBIs postulates that educators must consider, in addition to rhetorical literacy education for what, literacy education in service of whom.

Long before present-day IBIs, educational psychologist Inez B. Prosser studied the effects of non-academic social and psychological factors on Black American schoolchildren. The study compared the experiences of these children at segregated and integrated schools. Prosser concluded that that "the teacher-pupil relationships in the mixed schools are not as satisfactory as those in the segregated schools" (178). Still, even among teachers in segregated schools, Prosser suggests that they "strive to rid pupils of definite personal inferiority feelings unless such feelings are warranted"

> *"[C]ountering White savior narratives about Black students in literacy education can help reduce systemic ignorance about the purposes of this education, particularly within composition theory."*

and recommends "teacher re-education in newer aspects of mental hygiene" (186). Using Prosser's research into "certain attitudes and interests, the emotional stability, and the personality adjustment of two groups of Negro pupils … in the two types of schools commonly called mixed and segregated" (1), pedagogues of literacy education might better serve their Black student populations by understanding the non-academic variables that influence them inside the classroom. One of these nonacademic factors might be the psychological undertow that Black students feel that they "live and work in a world built up largely by and for someone else" (Prosser

30), because typical Eurocentric-privileged literacy education experiences reinforce this perception.

Since "counterstory [sic] functions as a method for marginalized people to intervene in research methods that would form master narratives based on ignorance and on assumptions about minoritized peoples" (Martinez 33), countering White savior narratives about Black students in literacy education can help reduce systemic ignorance about the purposes of this education, particularly within composition theory. The counter-story of IBIs, supported by Citizenship Schools, Freedom Schools, and Black Panther Liberation Schools, gives authority to marginalized perspectives in the history of literacy education. The rhetorical action promoted by the targeted literacy instruction of the Afrocentric educational approach demonstrates how the ways that we frame our teaching of literacy practices, such as writing, can impact the rhetoricity of those practices in social and civic contexts. Rather than focusing on using rhetorical behaviors for sole engagement with dominant society, this unique voice of color emphasizes how Black Americans applied the literacy education they gained from school to respond to the needs of their subordinated racial community.

For example, *reciprocity* is an African principle expected of IBI teachers and one that they instill in students. This African principle long precedes mainstream, predominantly White universities' community-based work and writing studies community literacy research. It puts forth the idea that the teachers are symbolically connected to the success of the students, and the students are symbolically connected to the success of their communities, and therefore, communities are symbolically connected to the success of both the teachers and students (Lee 165, 168); however, such a postulation is foreign to Eurocentric epistemological perspectives of mainstream college-level education. As Carmen Kynard notes, the tradition of "action/activism-based class alliances" is embedded within the tradition of Afrocentric American education, even at mainstream institutions where students often ally across class and across racially subjugated communities on and off campus (*Vernacular* 58).

This goal of serving Black communities stands in contrast to what many see as the central goal of institutional literacy education for this demographic. That goal has been to assimilate Black American students out of the "black ghetto" (Smitherman 202) by "inculcating the values of the dominant society and eliminating the cultural distinctiveness of Black America" (203). That rhetorical impetus of literacy education for Black Americans is the accepted gentrified narrative. It is happily accepted by mainstream higher education. By presenting these unique voices of color, I hope to join the tradition of literacy in composition studies scholars who have begun to reject these whitewashed assimilationist stories and reclaim historical and contemporary truths about the racialized ideologies of rhetorical literacy education. Privileging this narrative for Black Americans reframes the purposes of institutionalized literacy education in order to better serve the lives of more of our students.

NOTES

[1] For further details about The Literacy Narratives of Black Columbus Project, please see http://blackcolumbus.osu.edu/theProject/default.

[2] Ma'at is a concept described in what most Westerners know as *The Egyptian Book of the Dead* but which title actually translates as T*he Book of Coming Forth by Day.*

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Lifeworld Discourse, Translingualism, and Agency in a Discourse Genealogy of César Chávez's Literacies

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KEYWORDS

Introduction: Lifeworld Discourses and Translingual Literacies

Discourse, as the term has been used by James Paul Gee, describes the combinations of saying-being-doing-feeling that allow us to recognize and get recognized by others as certain *whos* doing certain *whats*. According to Gee, we all have primary Discourses that reflect the languages learned at home and secondary Discourses that reflect the languages learned in public spheres; some secondary Discourses are dominant, others are marginalized. Discourses function as identity kits that allow us to take on and recognize all sorts of socially constructed subjectivities, such as migrant farmworker, college student, labor organizer, Catholic priest, police officer, etc. As a theoretical framework in literacy studies, the notion of Discourse foregrounds the principle that our ways of using language (speaking, writing, listening, and reading) are forms of social behavior that are tied to a range of activities—repertoires of saying-being-doing-feeling—that exceed the language itself.[1] We learn these practices through our interactions with others already embedded in the communities that we encounter and participate in throughout our life. While Discourses point to behaviors and activities, they represent structural systems or semiotic spaces that we can inhabit within specific social spheres (e.g., school, work, temple).

Central to the translingual project of the last decade has been a critique of New Literacy Studies and other second wave literacy projects for focusing too much on how literacies are tied to localized/stable social spheres (Canagarajah, "Negotiating" 43). This scholarship argues that our discursivity is shaped by vectors of time, as users' language practices are hewed through a lifetime of use and emerge in relation to dynamically shifting rhetorical situations (Canagarajah, "Negotiating"; Cooper; Guerra and Shivers-McNair; Horner and Alvarez; Lu and Horner "Translingual Literacy"; Pennycook). Language practices, including established norms, are heterogeneous fluid activity systems marked by temporal dynamics, such as emergence, negotiation, and sedimentation (Cooper;

Guerra and Shivers-McNair; Lu and Horner "Translingual Literacy"; Pennycook). In a recent issue of this journal, Bruce Horner and Sara P. Alvarez make a strong case for this separation, arguing that translingualism represents a full epistemological break from second wave literacy projects by conceptualizing named languages (e.g., English or Spanish) as abstractions constructed by practices (the labor of language users) rather than as preexisting structures already marked as inside/outside the center/periphery of power (10). As Horner and Alvarez write, "There is no 'there' in language to defend, only a work in perpetual progress" constituted by the continual emergent (re)iteration of difference (23). Likewise, Eunjeong Lee and Suresh Canagarajah call for literacy researchers to examine how language and literacy are works in perpetual progress by "consider[ing] how people's histories and socialization over diverse scales of time and space develop transcultural dispositions that facilitate their translingual practices" (26).

According to the translingual view, difference in the (re)iteration of language formations does not indicate creative resistance to entrenched power or the creation of error, but is rather the norm of all language acts and indicates the emergent and negotiated nature of discourse practices. Yet the question of what the translingual difference entails has been questioned by scholars in the field sympathetic to the larger aims of translingualism (Gilyard; Cushman). Keith Gilyard argues that when we adopt a strong view of language as an abstraction constituted by practice (activity/ performance) that emphasizes the sameness of difference, we risk flattening the very meaning of that difference. When translinguality focuses on "a sort of linguistic everyperson," even high achieving students, then composition studies has no problems to address (285). Gilyard further argues that such a flattening of difference risks dismissing the cataloging of the competencies of marginalized speakers in favor of a heightened focus on performance (287). Ellen Cushman also questions the scope of difference in translinguality, arguing that social justice projects in composition cannot succeed unless they "generate pluriversal understandings, values, and practices" (239) which would allow us to exceed the binaries of imperialism (e.g., insider/outsider, center/periphery) by dwelling in the borders (240). Cushman further writes, "Understanding the differences within difference" can allow us to delink the social hierarchies indexed on language systems that are necessary for imperialism (239), and "By creating pluriversal contexts, values, and purposes for meaning making" for dispositions and practices, we can not only occupy empowered/marginalized spaces but begin to "dwell in the borders created by the imperial difference" (240).

Although Gee's work falls under the second wave literacy projects critiqued here, his Discourse model—and more specifically his concept of lifeworld Discourse—is well suited to respond to emergent theories of literacy because it emphasizes language practices within activity systems. Discourses describe ways of saying-being-doing-feeling that are acquired over time, much like the notion of repertoires in translingual scholarship, which refer to the bounded sets of activities that inform emergent literacy practice (Canagarajah, "Translingual Practice"; Leonard, *Writing on the Move*; see also Garcia and Wei). While Gee's emphasis on mastery of secondary Discourses bounded to specific social spheres (school, work, temple) represents the type of over-emphasis on stable language systems critiqued by translingual scholars, the overlooked notion of lifeworld Discourse in Gee's work aligns well with the translingual orientations toward fluidity, sedimentation, emergence,

pluriversal contexts, and diverse scales of time.[2]

In the following, I activate the lifeworld Discourse conceptual framework in an analytical approach that I call a Discourse genealogy in order to trace out the palimpsestic emergence and blending of Discursive competencies throughout labor and community organizer César Chávez's life. By attending to Chávez's lifeworld Discourse, Discourse genealogy enables a view of how discourse practices contribute to the sedimentation of repertoires and emergent discursive agency through archival research. I adapt lifeworld Discourse in order to theorize (1) how Discourse competencies are cultivated through the sedimentation of discourse practices over time, and (2) how actors occupy thresholds or dwell on borders while they draw on repertoires sedimented through prior experience in response to emergent rhetorical situations.

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As Gee explains, lifeworld Discourse refers to our primary Discourse from the vantage point of adulthood, after it has "undergone many influences" from our experience in the world, endlessly moving from scene to scene (216). Just as each Discourse has its own history of practice, so does each discursive agent, and the notion of a lifeworld Discourse attempts to capture these interleaving dynamics. As we come up in the world, we acquire a primary Discourse in our home community, and as we go public, we engage with all sorts of secondary Discourses (each affording a range of socio-political power) by enacting the practices available to us from the repertoire of our prior experiences in the myriad social spheres and engagements we have encountered.

These repertoires of practice constitute our lifeworld Discourse, and they blend, combine, and coalesce in dynamic ways, unique to each individual's experiences—often leaving deep impressions on how we activate language in social scenes—but always shaping our readiness to act in discursive situations, as we continually negotiate and combine language resources to achieve specific goals and purposes in our communicative engagements.[3] Lifeworld Discourse describes our readiness to act through language and literacy in rhetorical situations by accounting for the range of the pluriversal sedimented Discourses we've accumulated through prior practice and experience. Rather than conceptualizing actors as enacting empowered/marginalized Discourses (although individuals certainly take up Discourses that afford a range of socio-political power), lifeworld Discourse highlights the palimpsestic nature of Discourse practice over a lifetime and allows us to trace out how actors may dwell in Discursive borders by using emergent connections between Discourses to reframe practices to new ends. When we occupy thresholds between social spheres or Discourses, we may enact, blend, extend, or otherwise modify our sedimented repertoires in ways that allow us to

respond to emergent rhetorical situations while affording the construction or (re)iteration of socially recognizable positions or Discourses; this process represents the cultivation of Discursive agency.

In the following analysis, I look at Chávez's emergent lifeworld Discourses from birth in 1927 through the late 1950s, up to the point at which he began to organize the migrant farmworkers in Oxnard, California (1957-58) under the auspices of the Community Service Organization (CSO), a foundation that worked to organize Mexican-American communities throughout California in order to address the systemic failure of regular civic government to address the needs and concerns of this population. Using textual analysis of Chávez's writings and recorded recollections, I show how one thread of Chávez's lifeworld Discourse—responding to social injustice—binds together a number of Chávez's repertoires across secondary Discourses, forming a lifeworld Discourse. I take up César Chávez as a case study for examining lifeworld Discourse because his life is marked by a history of dwelling on and moving through borders of power and there is a record of nearly daily writings describing his work as a community activist in the 1950s that is further supplemented by a rich oral history record.[4] By focusing on Chávez's early life and discourse practices, this argument contributes to existing scholarship on Chávez's rhetorical career that demonstrates how Chávez "consciously gave discourse a

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central place in his worldview" (Hammerback and Jensen 3), for critical approaches to Chávez's work frequently gloss over his work in community organizing during the 1950s (the focus of this analysis) in order to consider his more historically significant work in organizing migrant farmworkers in the 1960s through the end of his life in 1993.[5]

Moreover, a case study focusing on Chávez is generative for larger understandings of lifeworld Discourse because his experience shows how the various social languages (Discourses) acquired throughout a lifetime are knitted together. As Bakhtin puts it, "languages do not *exclude* each other, but rather intersect with each other in many different ways" (291). Much translingual scholarship has focused on the ways in which discursive resources move between national languages (e.g., Spanish, English, Chinese, etc.) in a globalized world (Canagarajah, "Negotiating"; Lee and Canagarajah; Leonard, *Writing on the Move*; Otsuji and Pennycook). My analysis of Chávez's work emphasizes the intersections of social languages by attending to how repertoires acquired in one social sphere may

emerge as a potential for action in other social spheres. By looking at Chávez's Discursive genealogy, we can see how social languages and their constitutive practices sedimented in our lifeworld Discourse through experience don't exclude each other—enacting one Discourse or another isn't a matter of wearing different hats or costumes (identity kits) as if one is adopting entirely new identities—instead, our competencies with Discourses are forged, at least in part, by extending or blending our prior sedimented repertoires with new practices in social spheres as we pursue alternative agendas, purposes, and social identities. To return to Bakhtin, "all languages of heteroglossia, whatever the principle underlying them and making each unique, are specific points of view on the world, forms for conceptualizing the world in words, specific world views, each characterized by its own objects, meanings and values. As such they may all be juxtaposed to one another, mutually supplement each other, contradict one another and be interrelated dialogically" (291-2). Our discursive capacities are intertwined, even when their affordances for social or cultural power are vastly different.

The lifeworld Discourse framework helps to reveal how these Discourses or social languages are interrelated through experience and practice, and Chávez's experience is an important site for understanding lifeworld Discourse because of the extended interconnections between his various experiences as part of a range of distinct communities, including landowning farmers, migrant farmworkers, Mexican-Americans, Roman Catholic Church, CSO Organization. The repertoires learned even in some of our earliest engagements with society become resources that we enact, extend, and blend with other practices throughout our lifetimes as we cultivate capacities to act and enact social Discourses and identities.

This project is based on two sets of data. First, I analyze Chávez's daily activity reports produced as part of his role as a CSO organizer between 1954 and 1959. These unpublished documents are part of the United Farm Worker's Collection, which is housed at the Walter P. Reuther Library of Labor Archives at Wayne State University.[6] In my study of this archive, I focused on material that was typed by Chávez or written in his script (his wife Helen helped draft daily memos throughout this period, and I did not include memos written in her script). Using an inductive coding method, I focused on passages that described how Chávez used texts in his work as a CSO organizer. This essay addresses the findings related to one of the codes that emerged through my analysis: using texts to help others. Second, I draw on oral histories conducted by Jacques Levy with Chávez during the early 1970s (and published contemporaneously in *La Causa*). In this text, Levy acts as an archivist assembling transcriptions of Chávez's oral interviews, which were selected and compiled by Levy into book form, but without any editorial narrative synthesizing or otherwise commenting on Chávez's recollections. Like other scholars writing about Chávez, I treat this text as a primary source.

I trace out Chávez's lifeworld Discourse in this analysis by identifying key moments in his Discursive history where he occupies thresholds of power, dwelling on borders between Discourses by combining various resources from across the stratified Discourses with which he's engaged throughout his experiences. Focusing on these moments provides a perspective on how the sedimentation of Discourse practices cultivates a readiness to act in response to emergent rhetorical situations. Thus, in the following, I examine Chávez's adolescence, which was split between landownership in Arizona and migrant farmwork in California, Chávez's first formal exposure to scholarly texts on social

justice through his mentorship by Father Donald McDonnell, and his practice of helping others as a community organizer. The final section analyzes this Discourse genealogy to show how each Discourse practice sedimented in Chávez's lifeworld Discourse represents a potential for action or readiness potential that affords Chávez new agential resources.

Discourse Genealogy And Lifeworld Discourse

In order to analyze Discourse practices with a focus on how literacies change across the grain of one's life, I turn to Vicki Tolar Burton's concept of literacy genealogy. Burton uses literacy genealogy to organize the archival analysis in her work on the Methodist founder John Wesley's literacies by tracing the literacy practices in Wesley's family, including his maternal grandfather, parents, and siblings. Burton situates the literacy genealogy as a genre closely related to literacy narratives, as it "describes how acts and practices of reading and writing function in an individual's life, a family, a community, a culture" with particular attention paid to "issues of power, access, and agency" (33). Burton's use of literacy genealogy illuminates both how the "roots of [Wesley's] spiritual literacy in early Methodism lie in the histories" of his parents' literacies (33), as well as a view of practice in a certain social class during a specific historical moment (62). Burton's work illustrates how specific sets of textual practices, including a range of reading, writing, and pedagogical practices, extend beyond the capacities of one individual into the individual's network of friends and family members.

The notion of genealogy as a method of historical inquiry resounds with Foucault's genealogical approach (though Burton does not explicitly make this connection). Foucault's approach analyzes the disparate constituencies that imbue the body with meaning, using a vertical analysis that seeks out the strata that collectively constitute the body, thus focusing primarily on the historically contingent conditions that have formed the body. Accordingly, Burton's genealogy highlights the wide range of literacy practices evident in Wesley's family and demonstrates through her analysis how those practices shaped and made possible Wesley's work in developing the Methodist Church. This vertical or rhizomatic analysis contrasts with a horizontal analysis that removes discontinuity in order to locate the causal flow of history from one event to the next. A genealogical approach to history urges us to articulate the various strata that make up the body of the thing being analyzed and to interrogate the subdivisions and relations among the strata. Thus, Foucault writes, "the problem is no longer one of tradition, of tracing a line, but one of division, of limits; it is no longer one of lasting foundations, but one of transformations that serve as new foundations, the rebuilding of foundations" ("Archaeology" 5). Foucault's genealogical method highlights discontinuities or dissonances between historical strata in order to analyze how disparate lines of power inflect the object of analysis.

My first move in adapting Burton's genealogical analysis as a method for investigating lifeworld Discourse is to shift the focus of the framework to consider how individuals learn and acquire not only literacies, but broader sets of semiotic practices. As Gee explains, a given Discourse "is composed of distinctive ways of speaking/listening and often, too, writing/reading *coupled* with distinctive ways of acting, interacting, valuing, feeling, dressing, thinking, believing with other people and with various objects, tools, and technologies, so as to enact specific socially recognizable

identities engaged in specific socially recognizable activities" (171). Gee's project is useful because it highlights how practices compose identities and activities. He further argues that we all acquire a primary Discourse, which is the home Discourse practiced by our family early in life: "Our primary Discourse gives us our initial and often enduring sense of self and sets the foundations of our culturally specific vernacular language (our 'everyday language'), the language in which we speak and act as 'everyday' (non-specialized) people, and our culturally specific vernacular identity" (173). As we grow up, though, we are exposed to social situations outside the home where various secondary Discourses get enacted (such as church, school, and other public spheres). Gee further argues that we acquire some of these secondary Discourses through close relationships with other individuals who have already mastered these secondary Discourses; we must learn other secondary Discourses, however, because we have no access to deep relationships with those who have already mastered the target relationship. Throughout our life, we may combine, switch between, and even shed away any given Discourse, for Discourses are mutable, ever shifting ways of recognizing others and getting recognized by others as certain *whos* doing certain *whats*.

The notion of Discourse allows me to expand the scope of Burton's literacy genealogy to consider how individuals' "ways of acting, interacting, valuing, feeling, dressing, thinking, believing, with other people and with various objects, tools, and technologies" get indexed to specific Discourses. Further, at another level, the genealogical analysis seeks to understand how an individual's array of Discursive resources acquired through a lifetime emerge as possibilities for action in emergent situations as practices indexed to socially recognizable identities. In this way, a Discourse genealogy may focus on a single individual's literacy practices (as Burton does) within a broader matrix of textuality, but also the range of Discourses (that are taken up, acquired, learned, practiced, (re)combined or dispensed by the individual) that accumulate to constitute a lifeworld Discourse. Discourse genealogy, as a methodology attending to the framework of lifeworld Discourse, affords a theorization of emergent discursive agency through archival research.

While Gee's more widely used notions of primary/secondary Discourses emphasize the kind of indexing of social hierarchies on language systems noted by Cushman, lifeworld Discourse points to a palimpsestic sedimentation of the myriad Discourses we all encounter and for which we cultivate varying levels of competency. For Gee, lifeworld Discourse is akin to our primary Discourse after it has experienced countless shifts and changes from exposure to and influence by the various other Discourses we encounter and practice. Gee distinguishes lifeworld Discourse from secondary Discourses by arguing that our lifeworld Discourse is a sort of "non-specialized" Discourse (a term he also uses to describe primary Discourse), in contrast to the specialized social languages or Discourses like priest, police officer, and protestor (173). Gee writes, "Our lifeworld Discourse is the way that we use language, feel and think, act and interact, and so forth, in order to be an 'everyday' (non-specialized) person" (174). This framing posits a problematic separation between specialized and non-specialized Discourses, and it's hard to imagine how any of us are not at some point or another engaged in one sort of identity or socially recognizable activity or another. Although Gee notes that Discourses are not "tight boxes with neat boundaries" (173), they are often conceptualized as bounded to specific social spheres. Furthermore, distinctions between specialized Discourses

(secondary) and non-specialized Discourses (primary/lifeworld) do not provide for clear movement of practices between social languages.[7] Nonetheless, I am interested in adapting Gee's notion of a lifeworld Discourse to translingual scholarship because it emphasizes the dimension of time and sedimentation across a lifetime of discursive practice while preserving the useful notion that we accrue socially contextualized repertoires of behavior as we move through distinct social spheres.

The notion of lifeworld Discourse provides a way to understand how literacy repertoires or Discourses are accumulated as sedimented resources for emergent discursive agency without categorizing these resources as constituent elements of named languages. Rather, lifeworld Discourse highlights how individuals carry with themselves a range of resources, embedded as repertoires through sedimentation and experience, that may be negotiated, hybridized, and otherwise enacted in emergent rhetorical situations. Such enactments emerge from scenes rich with ideological territoriality and positioning and may serve in the construction of specific socio-cultural identities, but are not limited to specific Discourses, or ideological categories of socio-cultural positioning. Thus, rather than reifying seemingly stable boundaries around each of secondary Discourses, the concept

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of a lifeworld Discourse may help us to track how we deploy, combine, and iterate the discursive repertoires acquired through our experiences as we move through various scenes across the grain of a lifetime. Although Gee characterizes both primary and lifeworld Discourses as non-specialized, the boundaries between secondary Discourses (specialized social languages) and primary Discourse (our first language practices) are mutable, as repertoires acquired in one may be enacted, recontextualized, or revised in another. Gee gives lots of space for movement and influence between secondary Discourses but posits primary/lifeworld Discourses as separate sets of practice. The analysis in the next section suggests that repertoires thread through various Discourses, and the concept of lifeworld Discourse represents a way to mark that synthesis throughout a life.

Translingualism, Literacy Repertoires, and Lifeworld Discourse

The translingual paradigm has emerged as a response and resistance to both monolingualism and multilingualism by emphasizing (1) linguistic difference as a resource for agency and meaning in language acts rather than a problem, error, or deviation that limits meaning, and (2) by highlighting language varieties as fluid resources rather than stable bounded semiotic spaces (Guerra and Shivers-McNair; Horner, Lu, Royster, and Trimbur; Horner and Tetreault; Lu and Horner, "Translingual"). Crucial to much of translingualism's critique of previous language and literacy models has been its

focus on the temporal dimension of language and literacy practices (Canagarajah, "Translingual"; Guerra and Shivers-McNair; Pennycook). Lu and Horner argue that a spatial-temporal framework for conceptualizing literacies allows us to see difference as the norm, rather than as a deviation from a stable set of discourse conventions, and it further allows us to mark the (re)iteration of discourse practices in emergent literacy events as an agentive process that continually reforms discourses and subjectivities ("Translingual" 592). As Lu and Horner write, "Writers can thus be seen not as writing in a language or context, but as always writing, or rewriting, language, context, and subjectivity" (591). Likewise, Pennycook explains, "To look at language as a practice is to view language as an activity rather than a structure, as a something we do rather than a system we draw on, as a material part of social and cultural life rather than an abstract entity" (2). Gee's work on Discourse, like other work in the New Literacy Studies, conceptualizes our literacies or Discourses as multiple sets of abilities that get enacted in specific social spheres. Discourses are thus textual regimes that we draw on in specific social settings. The underlying organizational emphasis on spatiality allows us to consider how individuals inhabit, move between, and combine Discourses.

However, Discourses and their concomitant subjectivities are not carried around in ideational containers tied to specific social spheres, but are emergent within their context, continually (re)iterated out of the available situational and linguistic resources that arise within the discourse event. As A. Suresh Canagarajah argues, "Meaning has to be co-constructed through collaborative strategies, treating grammars and texts as affordances rather than containers for meaning. Interlocutors draw from other affordances, too, such as the setting objects, gestures, and multisensory resources from the ecology" ("Negotiating" 43). Meaning gets negotiated in the global contact zone, as interlocutors work to align the discursive codes they bring with them in conjunction with the array of situational affordances that emerge through the rhetorical engagement. This emphasis on a negotiated emergence of meaning underlines the temporal and performative aspects of discourse practices that is central to translingual scholarship and its critique of situated literacy models. The sedimentation of literacy practices through experience cultivates a range of semiotic resources available to us, emergent potentials for creating meaning in discursive scenes.

By underlining language, literacies, and discourses as performative activities that emerge through and by our practice, translingualism gives value to the reiteration of sameness and differences over time in a process of sedimentation. One of the problems with multilingual or multicultural models of language, Otsuji and Pennycook argue, is that they hold that individuals are constituted by multiple literacies or discourses; these paradigms pluralize discourses but do not account for the constitutive role of our fixed identities and languages in the pluralization of discourse. Responding to these limits, Otsuji and Pennycook adopt the notion of metrolingualism, which they explain "can be conceived as the paradoxical practice and space where fixity, discreteness, fluidity, hybridity, locality and globality coexist and co-constitute each other. This is different from multilingualism, which is either based on a pluralisation of fixed linguistic categories, or hybridisation, which cannot accord any legitimacy to the mobalization of fixity" (252). Otsjui and Pennycook's metrolingualism supports the performance of Discourse through an emergent and negotiated practice that is constituted not only by the interlocutor's available semiotic resources, but by a range of human and nonhuman

ecological actors in the rhetorical situation.[8]

Rebecca Lorimer Leonard describes these types of emergent and negotiated language resources as literate repertoires, which are "the complex cluster of reading, writing, listening, and speaking strategies and experiences" that we use to write; the concept of repertoire emphasizes for Lorimer Leonard the "dynamic sets of literate practices learned in specific, lived social contexts" that we are always in the process of accumulating *(Writing* 7). For Lorimer Leonard, repertoires describe the sets of literacy practices that have accumulated or sedimented as resources available for use in discursive situations, but they can also refer to "metalinguistic understandings and language ideologies" (*Writing* 7). Repertoires may be recontextualized (or not), for as Lorimer Leonard explains, certain literacy resources "do or do not move smoothly among languages, writers, or readers." Thus, Leonard describes repertoires as potentially fluid, fixed, or frictive (7). These repertoires are acquired and enacted through a process that Leonard terms rhetorical attunement and that draws attention to the in-process "sensibility fostered over time, across a spectrum of language and geographic boundaries" through countless engagements of negotiation and enactment of our literacy repertoires ("Multilingual" 230). Attunement here refers to our sense of how to adapt prior literacy repertoires in response to emergent socio-cultural contexts.

Repertoires refer to the specific discursive facilities that we obtain through experiences of negotiated engagement, that we accumulate and sediment as resources that we may move and decontextualize (or not) in diverse emergent rhetorical situations. In "Translingual Practice as Spatial Repertoires," Canagarajah writes that spatial repertoires "'link the repertoires formed through individual life trajectories to the particular places in which the linguistic resources are deployed'" (Pennycook and Otsuji qtd in Canagarajah 36). Canagarajah extends Pennycook and Otsuji's model, arguing that spatial repertoires are not brought to a rhetorical situation whole cloth, but are collaboratively "assembled *in situ* … in the manner of distributed practice" ("Translingual" 37). While these repertoires emerge through distributed practice across a network of human and nonhuman actors in a discursive situation, they are not entirely groundless, as interlocutors may still distinguish one language (and its resources) from another. However, as Canagarajah explains, "certain words index certain places and communities, and develop identities as distinctly labeled or territorialized languages. Indexicals sediment over time to gain an identity as belonging to one language or the other, with specific grammatical status in that language" ("Translingual" 37). Canagarajah defines proficiency as "the ability to align diverse semiotic and spatial resources for successful activity," and argues that communicative proficiency entails the ability for "individuals to situate themselves in the spatial ecology, not only to align the diverse resources, but also to be shaped by them" ("Translingual" 50). Canagarajah thus distinguishes between the process of sedimenting literacy practices as repertoire from the territorialization or emplacement of individuals in social ecologies in which they enact socially situated activities.

I find Lorimer Leonard's use of repertoires to describe the sedimentation of dynamic sets of literacy practices that may be moved across contextual boundaries to be helpful. But I also agree with Canagarajah's argument that spatial repertoires may be tied to social spheres through emergent processes of enactment. While Lorimer Leonard's use of repertoires seems to relate to the ways of

saying-being-doing-feeling that comprise Discourses, Canagarajah's emphasis on the indexification of repertoires to position ourselves within spatial ecologies resonates with the notion of Discourse in Gee's work: we learn, acquire, and use a range of socially situated activities (repertoires of saying-being-doing-feeling) in order to situate ourselves within social situations/ecologies. We acquire repertoires through our sedimented histories of practices, and these repertoires may be enacted in rhetorical situations in order to achieve specific identities or emplacements. Following Lorimer Leonard, repertoires are moveable and changeable, and thus they may be used to constitute a range of Discourses as they emerge as potentials for meaningful action. Thus, I use Lorimer Leonard's concept of repertoire to characterize sets of saying-being-doing-feeling that are sedimented through the lived experience of social engagement in a lifetime of practice and that may be enacted in a range of contexts. I use Gee's term Discourse to refer to the process of emplacement described by spatial repertoire. Discourses are constituted by a complex of repertoires (ways of saying-being-doing-feeling) that can afford certain socially constructed identities/ideologies by indexing them to discrete practices (repertoires).

When we look at the history of a life, we can see how certain repertoires for action repeat and emerge in situations markedly different than the conditions of their acquisition. These sets of activities are learned through sedimented routines of repeated practice, resulting in a readiness to draw on our repertoires in scenes of negotiated practice with others. While Gee's notions of primary and secondary Discourses draw attention to the social spheres in which we engage with and acquire various repertoires or Discourses, lifeworld Discourse highlights the range of repertoires and Discourses available to us as possibilities for engaging in emergent rhetorical situations. Translingual scholarship opens up the structural boundaries of secondary Discourses, highlighting how

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Discourse acquisition and practice are emergent phenomena dynamically shaped by the context in which one's varied language repertoires are enacted. Retaining elements from Gee's activity-oriented Discourse model, however, allows us still to acknowledge and trace the ways in which new repertoires get connected with older repertoires as individuals move through social spheres and practice their associated secondary Discourses. Making these connections opens space for pluriversal differences, allowing individuals to dwell in borders, to occupy the thresholds between spheres of socio-political and cultural power. The concept of a lifeworld Discourse allows us to retain a sense of the power that one's primary Discourse has in shaping our social interactions by pointing to the ways in which we expand and transform our ways (repertoires) of saying-being-doing-feeling to fit the emergent situations in which we must negotiate identity, meaning, and action. This multifaceted picture of one individual's Discourse genealogy allows us to better understand at a given historical moment how the array of Discourses at hand makes possible specific socially recognizable responses to specific

social situations.

César Chávez's Lifeworld Discourse

Chávez's childhood was split between two different worlds. On the one hand, Chávez lived the first eleven years of his life in a close-knit community that largely consisted of his immediate and extended family on a forty-acre family-owned farm situated alongside the Colorado River in the North Gila Valley just outside Yuma, an agricultural center tucked in the dry south-west corner of Arizona along the Mexican and California borders. On the other hand, Chávez and his family lost their home in the depression and migrated to California, where they subsisted as itinerant farmworkers, following the harvest up and down California's central valley. In Arizona, Chávez was part of a stable, close-knit family-based community, who worked on a large parcel of family-owned land. In California, Chávez rarely stayed in a location more than a few weeks due to the ever-moving harvest and endured poverty accented by a persistent and ironic hunger, as the family harvested boundless produce from California's fertile irrigated farmland. After he left the Navy at the end of World War II, Chávez continued to do migrant farm work and other work as he started a family in San Jose, where he came into contact with two mentors. Through his work with Fr. Donald McDonnell and Fred Ross, Chávez began organizing Latin/x communities in California.

The first years: Adolescence from Arizona to California

Throughout his youth, Chávez was heavily influenced by his mother, who, as Chávez puts it, "kept the family together" through her use of *dichos* (proverbs) and *consejos* (advice). "She would say, 'It takes two to fight.' That was her favorite. 'It takes two to fight, and one can't do it alone.' She had all kinds of proverbs for that" (Levy 18-9). Chávez explains, "When I look back, I see her sermons [*dichos* and *consejos*] had tremendous impact on me. I didn't know it was nonviolence then, but after reading Gandhi, St. Francis, and other exponents of nonviolence [as an adult in the 1950s], I began to clarify that in my mind" (18). Juana fostered not only repertoires like *nonviolent action*, but also *self-sacrifice in the service of others*. For instance, Juana's patron saint was St. Eduvigis—a Polish duchess who gave up her material possessions in service of the poor—and every year on St. Eduvigis' day, Juana

> would go out purposely to look for someone in need, give him something, and never take anything in return. If a man was selling pencils, she would give him some money but wouldn't take a pencil. She would look for people who were hungry to come to the house. Usually they would offer to do some work, like chop wood, in exchange for a meal, but she would refuse because, she said, the gift was invalid. (25-6)

Servicing others without concern for her own compensation was central to her spiritual practice. Later, the Chávez family were forced to seek migrant farm work after losing their land in the depression. Once they figured out how to succeed as migrant farmworkers through much trial and error, Juana would help out their fellow farmworkers new to the migrant stream. For instance, she would pick up entire families and would lead the Chávez family in helping these strangers learn the

system in a mentor-type relationship. Chávez recalls,

> After we sort of gave them an apprenticeship, they felt confident, and they'd take off. My mother did a lot of this work. I didn't realize how important it was until years later. I didn't even understand what she was doing. In fact, I didn't particularly like the idea very much. The things she did, being unlettered, were really amazing, just dealing with the problems and trying to help people. (Levy 70)

For Juana, this repertoire of *self-sacrifice in the service of others*, even when she and her family had little to offer, was a rhetorical and material practice that enabled her to express a deeply held spiritual worldview. Juana's practices fostered a repertoire for *self-sacrifice in the service of others* in Chávez that weaves through a number of other Discourses he acquires and enacts throughout his life, extending and blending with other repertoires in his lifeworld Discourse.

The Chávez family practices fostered other repertoires, as well, including the repertoire *standing up to injustice*. For instance, Chávez describes long hot summer days on the family farm in Yuma. In the evenings, Chávez explains, the family would gather for barbeques and stories about how Chávez's grandfather "escaped from the hacienda, how no one would speak out for their rights…[They] learned that when you felt something was wrong, you stood up to it" (Levy 33). The repertoire of *standing up to injustice* was woven into the fabric of Chávez's family-based Discourse, later becoming a recurring theme as he moved through other social spheres. For example, Chávez recalls several incidents in which a family member would identify an injustice in one of the California migrant camps, prompting the whole family to drop their work and walk out, regardless of consequences:

> If any family felt something was wrong and stopped working, we immediately joined them even if we didn't know them….When we felt something was wrong, we stood up against it. We did that many, many times. We were constantly fighting against things that most people would probably accept because they didn't have that kind of life we had in the beginning [in Yuma], that strong family life and family ties which we would not let anyone break…if one of us felt very strongly there was something wrong, my dad said, "Okay, let's go." There was no question. Our dignity meant more than money. I remember one time when it was a little hard to quit—we needed the money—but we didn't consider that. Our attitude was, we have to do it, and we accepted it. (Levy 78-9)

The practices outlined here illustrate how Chávez's family blended repertoires of *self-sacrifice in the service of others* and *standing up to injustice*, even when those actions might compromise the family's material well-being (e.g., loss of income or loss of other resources like food and shelter). The Chávez family's readiness to act in ways that resisted the injustice of the working conditions they faced was shaped by the lessons embedded in Juana's spiritually grounded commitment to service, family stories told during the summer evening gatherings in Yuma, and the close family-based community that forged the strong family ties that Chávez emphasizes.

Together, these repertoires form an important part of Chávez's primary Discourse, and as he moves through adulthood, as he moves through other social spheres and their Discourses, Chavez's repertoires extend, blend, and hybridize with other and, in doing so, inflect his cultivation of those secondary Discourses. Throughout his life, Chávez straddled multiple worlds, occupying thresholds

situated at the interstices between the interwoven strata of his various Discourses, such as in the adolescent period of his life when he was enmeshed in both landowning farmworker and migrant farmworker Discourses. From the position of these thresholds, Chávez had available to him certain potentials for action shaped by the sedimented repertoires and their capacity for enactment in the context of a Discourse and rhetorical situation. Occupying these thresholds enables the enactment of pluriversal contexts and meanings within a discursive act.

The sedimentation of experience encodes practices like helping feed others, mentoring families new to migrant farm work, and leaving a worksite to protest unjust labor practices into repertoires such as *self-sacrifice in the service of others* that can emerge as potentials for action in response to emergent situations. Discourses describe the socially recognizable identities that we enact as we pursue social actions or fulfill purposes and goals in social situations. Repertoires are the sedimented ways of saying-being-doing-feeling that are available to us as potentials for action in an emergent situation. Thus, the enactment of repertoires constitutes and colors the Discourses we seek to occupy. For instance, we can see how the repertoire of *self-sacrifice in the service of others* is grounded as part of Juana's Catholic Discourse, but it also emerges as her (and her family's) identity as migrant farmworkers. This blending of repertoires across Discourses and social spheres happens at thresholds—the interstices between Discourses—in which previously sedimented repertoires emerge as potentials for action. As individuals dwell in the borders of Discourses, the practice of enacting repertoires in a different social sphere affords new potentials for meaning. For instance, while Juana's repertoire of *self-sacrifice in the service of others* in Yuma entailed singular actions like feeding others without accepting a gift in return, but when deployed in the context

> *"This blending of repertoires across Discourses and social spheres happens at thresholds – the interstices between Discourses – in which previously sedimented repertoires emerge as potentials for action. As individuals dwell in the borders of Discourses, the practice of enacting repertoires in a different social sphere affords new potentials for meaning."*

of migrant farmwork, *self-sacrifice in the service of others* emerges with a new dimension of meaning in the form of mentoring that did not occur on the family farm in Yuma.

The early 1950s: Learning to organize communities

Around 1952, while in his mid-twenties, Chávez moved to a barrio in San Jose called *Sal Si Puedes* (get out if you can) where he first met his two key mentors: Father Donald McDonnell and the community organizer Fred Ross. Chávez's work with Fr. McDonnell was both an apprenticeship and a teacher-student relationship. Fr. McDonnell, who was part of a group of liberal Catholic ministers dedicated to social justice and known as the "mission band" (Ferriss and Sandoval 46), came to *Sal Si Puedes* because there was no Catholic church in this Mexican-American barrio (Levy 89). Fr. McDonnell was working to teach the farmworkers around San Jose about "the church's

social doctrines on labor organizing and social justice, hoping that they would begin to organize themselves to improve their lot" (Griswold del Castillo and García 23). Chávez's education from Fr. McDonnell is an outgrowth of this larger mission undertaken by the priest and dovetails with Chávez's upbringing. As Chávez recalls,

> That's when I started reading the Encyclicals, St. Francis [of Assisi, patron saint of the Franciscans, an order of Catholic priests dedicated to serving the poor], and Gandhi and having the case for attaining social justice explained. As Father McDonnell followed social justice legislation very closely, he introduced me to the transcripts of the Senate LaFollette Committee hearings held in 1940 in Los Angeles. I remember three or four volumes on agriculture, describing the Associated Farmers, their terror and strikebreaking tactics, and their financing by banks, utilities, and big corporation. (Levy 91)

These readings started to "form a picture" for Chávez that connected spirituality with political action aimed at social justice. Chávez describes this emerging picture:

> When I read the biography of St. Francis of Assisi, I was moved when he went before the Moslem prince and offered to walk through fire to end a bloody war. And I still remember how he talked and made friends with a wolf that killed several men. St. Francis was a gentle and humble man. In the St. Francis biography, there was a reference to Gandhi and others who practiced nonviolence. That was a theme that struck a very responsive chord, probably because of the foundation laid by mother. So the next thing I read after St. Francis was the Louis Fischer biography of Gandhi. (Levy 91).

Together, Chávez's recollection of reading with Fr. McDonnell suggests that Chávez was actively making connections with his previous experiences—perhaps reflecting on and gaining new perspectives on his mother's non-violent spirituality and contextualizing his own experience as a migrant worker in a broader socio-political framework. Chávez's readiness potential to recognize and respond to social injustice was already highly developed through the cultivation of the *stand up to injustice* repertoire. Further, as Chávez indicates by connecting this work with the foundations laid by his mother, Chávez appears to have some meta-awareness of his own ideological/Discursive history. But given that these reflective comments were recorded after his work with Fr. McDonnell, it is difficult to say with certainty that this meta-awareness shaped his ability to expand his potentials for action. Yet I would argue here that Fr. McDonnell extended this readiness to act (understood here as a capacity to identify, analyze, and respond to injustices in the fields) by folding in new Discourses—new strata—of theological, political, and historical Discourses, as these hybridizations would become closely aligned with Chávez's lifeworld Discourse through his work in the CSO, and later in the National Farm Workers union and the United Farm Workers union.

But Fr. McDonnell's lessons were not all directly rooted in conversations about texts. In one powerful example that would have a significant impact on Chávez as an organizer, using legal texts to help others, Fr. McDonnell showed Chávez how texts can enable agency. Chávez recalls that a Mexican woman who attended Fr. McDonnell's masses needed help when her mother died, since the family could not afford burial services. Chávez's first response was to solicit donations from the community and see whether Fr. McDonnell could persuade some of the Catholic Charities to help

with the cost. Since this had happened a few times in the past, Chávez assumed that Fr. McDonnell would simply agree to follow this plan of action. Instead, Fr. McDonnell suggested an alternative plan that they claim the body and bury it themselves, outside of the expensive funerary industry.

When Chávez, Fr. McDonnell, and the daughter went to the hospital to claim the body, the hospital worker stated that the three of them could not recover the body and that they would have to hire an undertaker. Chávez recalls that "Father McDonnell said no, and he pulled out the health and welfare code" and pointed out to the hospital worker that the next of kin could claim the body. Fr. McDonnell's act (repertoire) of *citing texts to claim legal agency* "started an episode that lasted about three hours" in which the question of whether the next of kin could claim the body moved up the ladder from the hospital supervisor, to the administrator, county counsel, district attorney, and finally, the California state attorney general, Pat Brown, who said, "Sure they have a right to claim the body" (Levy 90).

Chávez would later use this same repertoire, *citing texts to claim legal agency*, in the CSO and the United Farm Workers (91). As Mario García argues, Fr. McDonnell's education of Chávez "reinforced many of the same principles that his mother and grandmother had taught him: nonviolence, helping those in need, sacrificing for others, respect for others, and for one's self" (Levy 8-9). The repertoires Chávez acquired from his mother are tied to the repertoires Chávez learned from Fr. McDonnell by similar themes, yet they use different tactics to fulfill their shared objectives. For instance, Chávez's mother showed him how to sacrifice himself to serve the poor and hungry members of the community outside of formal social institutions by centering this service in and around the family home. Fr. McDonnell, in contrast, showed Chávez how to mobilize formal social and political institutions such as the law, hospital administrators, etc., to serve others. Fr. McDonnell's repertoires for *self-sacrifice in the service of others* differ from Chávez's mother's repertoires in that the self becomes an agent for others by acting as a wedge that leverages socio-political power on the behalf of others. This modification of Chávez's sedimented repertoires represents a hybridization of his primary Discourse, and it would become critical for his work as a community organizer and later as a labor organizer in the 1960s. This example illustrates how the recovery of the body from the morgue emerged as a threshold for Chávez in which he was able to extend his repertoires for *self-sacrifice in the service of others* and *standing up to injustice* by *citing texts to claim legal agency*. Notably, these repertoires, some of which are rooted in Chávez's primary Discourse, emerge in the context of supporting and participating in Fr. McDonnell's missionary work, and are apparently enacted here in ways that position Chávez as part of this Discourse.

The second pivotal figure whom Chávez met in Sal Si Puedes was Fred Ross, the labor organizer and founder of CSO. In his role as a CSO organizer, Chávez helped members of the communities he worked in to complete a range of official forms, including citizenship/immigration papers, visa applications, voter registration efforts, passport applications, accounting books, income tax forms, official affidavits, unemployment and welfare applications, and forms related to deportation proceedings. Overwhelmingly, Chávez's efforts to help others fill out or complete official forms primarily focused on citizenship and immigration paperwork, which was a key political tactic in the CSO model of community organization. This work became possible following the passage of the

McCarren-Walter Act of 1952, a federal statute that revised US Immigration and Nationalization policies to allow individuals who were 55 years or older and who had been living in the United States for at least twenty years to apply for citizenship (*Organize!*). Chávez explains:

> We were confronted with people who wanted to become citizens, but their immigration status was not up to date. Those cases were a lot of work because documentary evidence was needed that they had remained in this country since the time they had arrived. Proof was needed back to 1924 when the law was passed, but I would get evidence back to when they entered the country, whether it was 1924, 1905, or 1890, because it made it easier for the case. Reconstructing a person's whole life was hard because people were old, impatient, and couldn't remember. There were many of those cases, and it took a lot of time. (Levy 110)

Assisting others in completing immigration paperwork required Chávez to navigate a wide range of Mexican and American documents that could serve as evidence from the government's perspective of one's history in the United States. As Chávez wrote in one report from January 13, 1956,

> Mrs. Maria Briones called today she wants advice on Immigration and Naturalization.
>
> [T]here is no record of her crossing the border. In order to legalize her stay in this country I have to secure documentary evidence to prove her residence since 1924—I wrote letters to the following; Husband's employment records, Children Birth and Baptismal certificates, Children school records of attendance, and to her former Employers.

In the process of assisting others, Chávez must identify texts that can serve as evidence in support of an argument that the individual in question has fulfilled the statutory requirements for citizenship. As this example suggests, doing so required Chávez to identify indirect evidence, such as Mrs. Briones' children's record of school attendance, to establish her residency in the United States. Chávez describes the process of helping others applying for citizenship whose "immigration status was not up to date" in his oral interviews with Levy:

> Those cases were a lot of work because documentary evidence was needed that they had remained in this country since the time they had arrived. Proof was needed back to 1924 when the law was passed, but I would get evidence back to when they entered the country, whether it was 1924, 1905, or 1890, because it made it easier for the case. Reconstructing a person's whole life was hard because people were old, impatient, and couldn't remember. There were many of those cases, and they took a lot of time. At first I did this work in the evening, after getting off the job. But soon I didn't have enough time because there was other help people needed. I started taking time off work to do it on my own, a half hour, or one or two hours off. The boss didn't like it, but I got by with it. Then I'd just take off a whole day. I felt I had to do it. (110)

As Chávez's description of the process suggests, assembling the documentary evidence was a time-consuming effort that despite its difficulty was important to his sense of what it meant to be a community organizer. Further, this work entailed enacting the *self-sacrifice in the service of others, standing up to injustice*, and *citing texts to claim legal agency* repertoires in the construction or enactment of Chávez's community organizer Discourse.[9]

When taken together, the textual practices that Chávez mobilized to help others meet their goals illustrate how Chávez's lifelong practices of service for others became deeply intertwined with his emergent capacities to use legal and civic texts for the purposes of engaging with socio-political institutions and leveraging dominant power structures on behalf of his community. Furthermore, when the range of reading and writing practices required to complete tasks like generating textual evidence of residency and producing an accurate and persuasive application for citizenship are taken into consideration, we can also see the growth in Chávez's capacity to work with texts that afford socio-political power.

Given that Chávez's awareness of and readiness to read socio-political texts only began to develop in 1952 when he first began working with Fr. McDonnell, the volume of Chávez's use of various textual practices to help others work with and against social institutions demonstrates an emergent sophistication in Chávez's readiness to act, evident in the variety of types of reading Chávez practiced during this time, including examples of organizing labor (Lewis and Debbs biographies), texts focused on spiritual values and practices (St. Augustine, Papal Encyclicals, Gandhi), and texts focused on political issues (Gandhi, Senate hearings). The lifeworld Discourse framework encourages us to view the repertoires and Discourses in a palimpsestic way, as Chávez's primary Discourse and the repertoires that constitute that Discourse get extended and blended with the repertoires and Discourses that Chávez takes up throughout his life. As such, Chávez' civil-rights activist Discourse, which is formally marked by his employment as a CSO organizer, entails repertoires that have roots and histories across the grain of his lifetime and that afford him certain potentials for acting in support of others.

Conclusion

The elaboration of Chávez's lifeworld Discourse through a Discourse genealogy reveals how dispositions or repertoires of saying-being-doing-feeling that are rooted in primary Discourse get carried along, blended, extended, hybridized, and recontextualized in social scenes throughout a life. Gee's formation of Discourse foregrounds the relationships between socially constructed identities and the saying-being-doing-feeling combinations that allow us to get recognized as and recognize others occupying those secondary Discourses (farmworker, student, priest) within specific social spheres (work, school, temple). The connections between primary and secondary Discourses are characterized in terms of insider/outsider, dominant/marginalized relationships: some primary Discourses (such as those used by upper middle-class White Americans) share many characteristics with dominant secondary Discourses (such as law, business, academy).

Lifeworld Discourse, however, deemphasizes the importance of identities indexed to specific social spheres and underscores instead the importance of our socio-cultural roots as we move through contested social spaces. As Gee explains, lifeworld Discourse refers to our primary Discourse from the vantage point of adulthood, and the analysis of Chávez reveals how the dispositions and repertoires that come from our familial socialization shape our capacities to act as we move through adulthood.

We cultivate capacities to act (agency) by occupying thresholds between social spheres, moving and blending prior repertoires in response to emergent situations in order to create recognizable positions that fuse our prior experience with the socially and materially grounded rhetorical forces that face us. Thus, by the time Chávez completed his fourth year as an organizer for CSO in 1957, his lifeworld Discourse included repertoires from a range of identity kits, including land-owning Mexican-American farmer, Catholic practitioner, migrant farmworker, community organizer, and social/civil-rights activist Discourses. As Chávez occupied thresholds and moved through social spheres of engagement, he enacted a range of repertoires in the process of occupying the socially recognizable positions listed above. While these repertoires may have emerged out of specific social spheres, they represent potentials for Discursive action for Chávez in emergent rhetorical situations. Indeed, Chávez's Discourse history is rather like a tapestry in which elements from one social sphere get woven into the next.

For instance, Chávez's mother's Catholic upbringing of nonviolence and making self-sacrifices in the service of others links with the trainings of Father McDonnell, and this experience in turn provides Chávez with an exposure to a strategy of citing political texts in order to acquire legal agency, which later becomes central to his work as an organizer. This process of blending repertoires from Discourse to Discourse sets aside notions of mastery as Chávez seems to appropriate the Discursive potentials for action most closely aligned with his short- and long-term goals to make self-sacrifices in the service of the greater good. Moreover, while Chávez's efforts to fold in discrete elements from one Discourse to another may result in a stilted Discourse, to use Gee's term, this framing carries with it a negative connotation that emphasizes lack. In contrast, Chávez's experience demonstrates the importance of acknowledging the positive capacities for action that follow the appropriation of new Discursive potentials embedded in repertoires by engaging with multiple conflicting Discourses by dwelling in the borders between the social spheres implicated by those Discourses.

Better understanding how Discourses weave and tie together consonant and dissonant elements over time may allow us to develop pedagogies that afford spaces for the kind of blending evident in Chávez's lifeworld Discourse. For example, we often use metaphors like scaffolding and bridging that assume "education is a journey" through which one leaves behind one discursive world for another. These metaphors imply some sort of peril or danger in the process of literacy learning and development: bridges cross otherwise impassable terrain and scaffolds move the individual above the terrain from which they originate to otherwise unreachable heights. And further, border metaphors imply profound paradigmatic shifts as we move from one jurisdiction to another. However, threshold as a metaphor for literacy learning brings the contrasting discursive worlds closer together as two adjacent rooms connected by a secure between space that can be occupied in ways that allow one to be in both rooms at the same time, to pull resources together from both spaces in order to constitute new capacities to act discursively. Chávez's experience suggests that we find ways to recognize the continuities between disparate Discourses.

Thus, we might adopt and reframe new concepts of composition pedagogy like "thresholds" that allow conceptual space for learners to move between worlds, as suggested by Alvarez's argument for pedagogies grounded *en confianza*. As Alvarez explains, "Thinking of multilingualism as

translingualism celebrates the innovative and creative abilities of individuals to move back and forth among a variety of language resources, including academic English" (9). This analysis supports the creativity required to occupy thresholds between contested spaces and suggests that from a lifeworld Discourse perspective, sedimented repertoires that weave through an individual's primary Discourse and other secondary Discourses may emerge and be enacted or blended to forge capacities to act in response to rhetorical situations in contested spaces. We must conceptualize the social worlds and language resources students carry with them in ways that permit movement and growth without situating that learning process as a zero-sum game.

A Discourse genealogy attending to lifeworld Discourse represents a way of tracing out how our repertoires and capacities to act in discursive situations emerge from our rich histories of engagement, stemming from our first years, and offer possibilities for constructing identities and activating discursive actions from the thresholds that connect our diverse social spheres. As Guerra puts it in his work on translingualism and rhetorical flexibility, our students today need a rhetorical sensibility that allows them to see how various language orientations enable specific language practices (232), and I agree with Gilyard's assessment that we risk losing sight of competencies when we conceptualize languages as relative abstractions. Instead of conceptualizing competency as the mastery of a pre-existing Discourse or language, we should think of competency in terms of performance.

For Chávez, much of his discursive competency lay in his capacity to enact prior repertoires and extend them through processes of decontextualization and blending. We can't outline a literacy history in terms of primary or secondary Discourses as if they are distinct, yet perhaps we can articulate competencies without resorting to monolingual ideologies by attending to how individuals recruit sedimented repertoires to cultivate a readiness to act in contested social spheres that for some students may seem uninhabitable by dwelling on the borders of Discourses. Especially when we consider how seemingly stable Discourses are often racialized (Baker-Bell; Rosa and Flores), occupying thresholds may enable the kinds of movement and blending to achieve purposes and goals in those contested spaces, for it enables students to draw on, blend, and recontextualize their repertoires. Ultimately, as the Discourse genealogy of Chávez suggests, these elements collide into each other and coalesce into new formations that emerge as rhetorical situations arise in our daily life.

Threshold spaces are zones in which students have access (or at least have the sense or awareness that they have access) to mobilize already sedimented repertoires in conjunction with new practices across Discourse spaces. We can think about this as a sort of zone of proximal development in which repertoires from other social spheres can be made available to compose meaning. Lev Vygotsky describes zones of proximal development as the spaces in which learning is marked more by a potential for growth than the demonstration of prior achievement (87). Likewise, and following the critical literacy scholars cited above, threshold spaces are marked by their potential for creative (Alvarez), flexible (Guerra), politically charged (Baker-Bell; Rosa and Flores) and other movements between Discourses rather than the performance of previously sedimented repertoires.

Using a Discourse genealogical approach to map out repertoires throughout students' lives and

tracing the connections between their varied social experiences can be a way to cultivate an awareness of where the thresholds lie for students and how they can engage with those thresholds in order to motivate repertoires in new spaces and contexts. Identifying and analyzing the repertoires rooted in students' primary Discourses would be an important part of such a pedagogical approach. For some students, academic Discourse may already be such an entrenched and naturalized phenomena that gaining sufficient awareness of the discourse space as a threshold space may be more complicated than in engaging with other kinds of practices.[10] Thus, genres that are not specific to academic contexts might be better opportunities to identify, blend, or extend prior repertoires. Instructors might want to work to help students identify how prior repertoires might be consonant with the rhetorical situations posed by class activities. Reflective writing would be an important tactic to help students develop the kinds of awareness implied by Discourse genealogy and to further consider the competencies in their writing acts, including which repertoires to adapt or blend in order to occupy a threshold between social spheres of influence.[11]

NOTES

[1] Gee uses the term discourse/Discourse in two ways: discourse refers to stretches of coherent language like conversations, essays, emails, etc., and Discourse refers to the combinations of saying-being-doing-feeling that are tied to social identities.

[2] Gee's theory of Discourse has been influential in literacy and composition studies, but that record is marked primarily by the influence of the concepts of primary/secondary Discourses. Barton uses the concept of "lifeworld discourse" to describe a similar notion of one's non-specialized discourse practice in an analysis of ethical discourse practices in end-of-life conversations between physicians and patient families, but she draws that term from Mishler's analysis of medical discourse. Mishler's project has been influential in the medical field and may have been an influence on Gee, but it is not credited in Gee's explanation of lifeworld Discourse.

[3] See my explanation of how the practice of literacy practices cultivates a readiness to act in discursive situations in "Composing Agency."

[4] While Chávez's experiences, political success as a labor organizer, and public notoriety certainly constitute an exceptional life, I see the processes of Discourse practice catalogued here as critical examples of typical language development. Notably, the period I examine does not include Chávez's more storied career of organizing farmworkers that began in the mid-1960s. So while Chávez was "an extraordinarily skilled communicator" (Hammerback and Jensen 3), this analysis looks at the developmental period that led to Chávez's later successes

[5] Hammerback and Jensen's project focuses primarily on explaining how Chávez used rhetorical discourse to persuade others to take action. They ground their analysis on representative speeches, writings, and other materials produced between the early 1960s through Chávez's death in 1993. Hammerback and Jensen's work is important because it represents the first sustained analysis of Chávez's discourse practices. However, their work only briefly addresses Chávez's childhood and early adult work in the 1950s with the CSO My study thus contributes a more detailed analysis of Chávez's discourse practices during this formative period with attention paid to how Chávez's discourse practices connect with, extend, and are combined with a number of other discourses in his early adulthood.

[6] Chávez's daily activity reports forms the majority of the Fred R. Ross, Sr. Papers (1.5 linear feet). The existing archives include entries for almost every day between 1954 and 1956. The record is much thinner beginning in 1957, with significant gaps between sets of daily reports.

[7] Mishler's formation of lifeworld discourse, (which like Gee, draws on Habermas' work) posits a similar distinction between specialized and non-specialized language. For Mishler's project, he is interested in making a distinction between medical discourse and lifeworld discourse, or "the ordinary 'common sense' world of social reality . . . The self is the center of space and time coordinates in the sense that events are located and given significance with reference to ones own biographical situation and location in the world" (122). In contrast, for specialized discourses, such as medicine, the meaning of semiotic activities is grounded in an abstracted, theoretical, non-subjective disinterestedness (122).

[8] Marilyn Cooper also argues for an ecological translingual view, arguing that such an approach may allow us to better account for linguistic responsibility.

[9] As one reviewer helpfully pointed out, Chávez is working here to construct genealogies not unlike the Discourse genealogy project taken up in this paper. It is possible that this discourse

practice helped further strengthen Chávez's broader understanding and awareness of how discourse functions in social and rhetorical situations. As noted above, Hammerbak and Jensen discuss the presence and awareness of social discourse as an important part of Chávez's rhetorical career as a labor organizer in the mid-1960s through the end of his life. The experiences discussed in this analysis are undoubtedly the formative moments, as Chávez has noted that he didn't really start learning to read and write English texts until he started working with Fr. McDonnell and Ross.

[10] One of the challenges of adapting a Discourse Genealogy or tracing out lifeworld Discourse in first-year-writing courses will be that—at least for traditionally aged college students—they are often in the middle of emerging as independent adults. Of course, many students do not fall in this category and enter college on a more independent footing than other students. Still, it's an aspect to consider, since the analysis developed here has the privilege of looking at a life lived. Nonetheless, much of the analysis considers Chávez during his twenties, a period commensurate with many of our college students.

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Writing at the Interface: A Research and Teaching Program for Everyday Digital Media Literacy

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KEYWORDS

networked literacy; digital media literacy; design thinking; interface studies; new materialism; writing pedagogy; information ecosystems; information management

> "The twenty-first-century arts are the arts of interface."
> — Malcolm McCullough, *Ambient Commons*

At noon on May 21, 2016, two groups of activists squared off outside the Islamic Da'wah Center in Houston, Texas. One group, bearing Confederate flags and "White Lives Matter" t-shirts, was there to protest the "Islamization" of Texas. They'd been called to action via "The Heart of Texas," a popular right- wing Facebook group. Their opponents, Muslim Americans and their allies, were also responding to a call issued via Facebook, in their case by "United Muslims of America." According to the *Houston Chronicle*, counter-protestors outnumbered protestors five to one, and the event, though tense, was peaceful (Glenn).

Was the Houston showdown just another example of the power of digital technology to further connection and cooperation, for good or ill? It certainly seemed so until eighteen months later, when it was revealed that, in fact, both "The Heart of Texas" and "United Muslims of America" were operated by foreign agents. Over the course of many months, group members on both sides were fed a steady diet of twisted and outright false information (in addition to some accurate information, and numerous jokes and memes, of course). The event in Houston was the culmination of this programming, an attempt to convert online tribalism into real-world political action. "What neither side could have known," said Senator Richard Burr, "was that Russian trolls were encouraging both sides to battle in the streets and create division between real Americans" (Bertrand). Burr's claim is striking. Note how he positions the participants, though: neither side could have known. Is this accurate? Could the participants really not have known they were being manipulated? In short, I believe that they could and should have known. As a society, we have an obligation to ensure that they know. And as writing teachers and literacy scholars, we can help fulfill this obligation. To do so effectively, though, we need a more robust understanding of our current information environment

and what literacy in such a space might entail. In the following pages, I will attempt to articulate such an understanding.

I make several intertwining claims. First, I argue that composition studies should do more to understand and promote networked literacy as it manifests in everyday digital media engagement patterns. With smart phones and broadband internet, media—as in digitally mediated information—permeates every aspect of our lifeworld. Like those of the protestors in Texas, our students' habitual engagements shape how they think, write, read and relate. Digital media habits thus impact what happens in the writing classroom. Writing teachers need to recognize and respond to this new (mediated) reality.

Second, I argue that to understand everyday digital media literacy, we need to think the human and non-human in combination. When we engage the world through digital media, our tools shape our perception, thought and action. But tools never act alone. Recent writing studies scholarship has done much to illuminate the complex ways in which human and non-human intertwine in literacy activity. From this scholarship, I draw a set of concepts that I believe can help theorize everyday digital media literacy. In particular, I urge attention to the design of information ecosystems, defined as patterns of mediated connection that help shape how individuals determine what is good, true, and possible. These systems are accessible via the interface, where we encounter networks, algorithms, flows and bots, but also human minds and bodies. In practical terms, approaching literacy via the interface means we foreground the ways in which human thought and behavior are influenced (but never determined) by the design of our tools. Insights from design studies, as well as the work of media theorist W. James Potter, I argue, can assist with such a project.

After using interface analysis to better understand the events in Houston, I turn to the classroom. At the interface, most literacy behaviors are automated and habituated. They occur outside the realm of conscious thought. With this in mind, the focus of literacy instruction shifts from "fact-checking" or other goal-directed activity to the habitual patterns of connection that form one's information ecosystem. Using my classroom as an example, I argue that writing teachers can help students design healthy information ecosystems by encouraging study of digital literacy practices. By making students aware of their behaviors at the interface—and giving them the opportunity to evaluate and adjust those behaviors—writing teachers can help students both write better and avoid digital manipulation.[1]

Networked Individualism

With the dawning of the digital age, followed quickly by the mobile revolution and Web 2.0, writing studies scholars have naturally turned their attention to the digital. Surprisingly, though, discussions of what might constitute digital literacy, and the relationship of writing instruction to such a literacy/literacies, remain few and far between. From the New London Group, writing teachers know that literacy is a social practice, that it is always contextual and multifaceted. We know that literacies inevitably involve production as well as consumption, and that we must assiduously avoid the "great divide" (for an overview, see Brandt and Clinton). Within composition proper, perhaps

the most in-depth attempt to provide a pedagogically workable definition of digital literacy can be found in Stuart Selber's *Multiliteracies for a Digital Age* from 2004. Here, Selber provides a three-part taxonomy for a "computer multiliteracies program" (25). He argues that students need functional literacy, critical literacy, and rhetorical literacy; they should be able to understand computers as tools, cultural artifacts, and "hypertextual media," respectively (25). Ten years later, Mary K. Stewart, in an insightful yet little-cited webtext, proposed a similar framework. To be digitally literate, she argues, students need to be skilled in multimodal composition and also able to manage the dynamics of information flows and online collaboration. We see in these competing frameworks a movement outward, from "computer literacy" to "networked literacy." This movement continues in a 2017 special issue of *Literacy in Composition Studies* on literacy, democracy, and fake news, introduced by Thomas Miller and Adele Leon. Spurred by the impact of misinformation on the 2016 US presidential election, contributions—some of which are discussed below—wrestle with what it might mean to understand (and teach) literacy as a networked phenomenon.

The current essay helps further theorize networked literacies. It is informed by the belief that the cultivation of such literacies is essential to social wellbeing. As such, it reflects the ideals captured in the NCTE's position statement entitled "Definition of Literacy in a Digital Age." This document, first published in 2008 and last updated in 2019, holds that contemporary literacy includes the ability to use technology to build relationships and share information, in order to "solve problems collaboratively and strengthen independent thought" (National). In order to help students achieve this way of being, I'd argue, we first need a deep understanding of the socio-techno space teachers and students now inhabit. Close attention to "how we live now" can help us better understand both misinformation efforts and how we might conceive of and teach networked literacy.

The work of sociologist Barry Wellman is instructive. Wellman argues that over the past half-century, human social relations have moved from being centered around small, tightly knit groups (what he calls "little boxes") to being centered around more diffuse and far-flung social networks. Though the pace and scope of this movement varies, Wellman finds it is occurring on a global scale, driven both by changing social mores and steady technological advance. In this new social landscape, each individual is expected to act as the central node in their own personalized network. No longer embedded in stable groups, in other words, individuals now have to build and manage their own set of social relations. In this world of "networked individualism," Wellman writes, "the person has become the portal" (14).

The changes in our "social operating system" noted by Wellman manifest on a number of levels. Relationships are now more selective, driven by interest rather than obligation. Interactions are also more likely to be electronically mediated. Combined with a proliferation of information sources, the result is a massive increase in information exposure (Baron). With more information comes more responsibility. Rather than relying on gatekeepers, such as church, family or editorial board, each networked individual is expected to develop their own complex system of filters and sorting mechanisms.[2] Sources will likely include both interpersonal and institutional data streams. As Lee Rainie and Barry Wellman put it, networked individuals must constantly "exploit the networked information available to them according to their assessments of what is most beneficial and

efficient for their needs" (232). Because it demands a relatively more active approach to others and information, Rainie and Wellman hold that networked individualism is both "socially liberating and socially taxing" (9).

Raine and Wellman sketch a relational landscape that is likely familiar. Via a variety of digital tools, we keep in contact with a diffuse constellation of friends and acquaintances. We create and maintain relationships based on our needs and interests and, in turn, understand the world through these self-selected contacts. Our perception, in other words, is shaped not only by what is directly accessible to the senses but by our patterns of mediated connection. It is easy to forget the unique nature of this situation. As Mark Deuze puts it, as networked individuals we exist in a "'mediapolis . . . a comprehensively mediated public space where media underpin and overarch the experiences and expressions of everyday life" (137). According to Deuze, we live in, rather than with, media. Ironically, as media becomes more and more pervasive, it is rendered increasingly invisible. The steady merger of our tools and our consciousness leads to an "increasing immateriality of one's experience of society" (Deuze 143), but at the same time, a feeling that one is more "in touch" or "connected" than ever.

Networked individualism, a life lived in media—this, in short, is the social operating system that the agents who organized the Houston protests were able to exploit. The members of "The Heart of Texas" and "United Muslims of America" joined these groups voluntarily, as networked individuals pursuing individual interests (solidarity, entertainment). Through measured but repeated doses of digital misinformation, their "experience of society" was tweaked and twisted, until, in Houston, the mediated erupted into the material.

Though relatively small in scale, the Houston event is an important artifact. It acts as a tangible reminder of the dangers unsophisticated tool use pose to democratic politics and reminds us that poor practice is not necessarily an issue of political affiliation. Indeed, people on both sides of the political spectrum were fooled. The Houston event also shows the wide-reaching impact of everyday digital media activity. Of late, some scholars have argued we've entered an age of media convergence, in which distinctions between reading and writing, text and image, virtual and actual, have collapsed (see Jenkins; within writing studies see Purdy; Williams). I agree. And I argue that given the world sketched by Wellman and Deuze (my world), the distinction between digital media activity and the traditional concerns of the writing classroom has also collapsed. The digitally mediated web each individual weaves—whom we connect with and how we connect—shapes how we understand and engage. Though the literacy behaviors that constitute this space are often decidedly non-academic, taken together, they provide the knowledge and experience out of which our students create academic essays, and poems, and lab reports, and everything else. As such, to teach writing, I'd argue, must be to teach—at least to an extent—everyday digital media literacy.[3]

New Materialism and Beyond

In the previous section, I argued that due to social and technological change, it is no longer practical to teach writing without considering how non-academic literacy behaviors in general,

and digital media engagement patterns in particular, shape what and how we write. Networked individuals live in media. They use complex, highly personalized systems of "filters and sorting mechanisms" to carve reality out of the mediated flux. Taken together, these filters and mechanisms constitute an individual's "networked literacy." How might we best understand them? Of late, literacy studies, like the humanities in general, has undergone something of a material turn. While the social construction of literacy practices remains an object of inquiry, scholars have also come to recognize, to paraphrase Laura Micciche, that matter matters. As such, within the composition literature we find detailed studies of the relationship between literacy and place (e.g. Prior and Shipka; Rule), tools (e.g. Ching; Hass), and ecologies of all sorts (e.g. Hawisher et. al.; Syverson). This work can be grouped under the label of "new materialism."[4]

All told, I believe that materialist approaches are essential to understanding and teaching everyday digital media literacy. In the world of networked individualism, humans and tools are intimately entwined. We understand our world through phones and Facebook and myriad invisible algorithms. Therefore, any literacy program must respect the non-human. Fortunately, the composition literature contains a rich array of resources we can draw on to theorize the relationship between tools and selves. In this section, I would like to forward three concepts that I believe are particularly potent: the information ecosystem, the interface, and the user as designer. Taken together, these ideas can form the core of a research and teaching program for everyday digital media literacy.

While the first concept—the information ecosystem—is new to our field, ecological theories of writing have a long history (see Cooper). Such theories have gained traction of late for their unique ability to theorize the multiplicity of actors—both human and non-human—involved in the writing process. According to Antonio Byrd, an ecological approach to writing starts from the premise that each writer is "enmeshed in . . . a complex, constantly evolving system of relationships between the social and the material" (32). Byrd deploys such an approach to trace the singular "networks of support" African American computer programming students use to facilitate their literacy learning. My claim is that a similar lens can be used to think patterns of mediated connection. As Jacob Craig notes, when used in discussions of information literacy, the ecosystem metaphor hints at the dynamic, ever-shifting nature of networked information. It hints at the multiplicity of agents involved in information creation and distribution and the extent to which they are mutually defining. In an age of metastasized media, remember, individuals both act and are acted upon, create and consume. They use tools, discourse and social networks and are used by these entities. The idea that we each read, write and think from within our own highly personalized information ecosystem is thus central to understanding networked literacy.

The second concept I want to forward is that of the interface. For our purposes, the interface is the space where the human and non-human meet. It is the point where design—as in the arrangement of form—is actualized. As with ecological metaphors, references to the interface are not new to writing studies. Scholars in the area of computers and composition, in particular, have a long history of considering the impact of design on human minds and bodies (see Selfe and Selfe; Wysocki and Jasken). Kristen Arola, for example, in a 2010 essay, analyzes the competing constructions of self afforded by various social media platforms. In doing so, she models attention to what she calls the

"rhetoric of the interface." Digital literacy, Arola suggests, begins when we attend to the ways in which "interfaces are shaping our interactions and ourselves" (7).

Of late, scholars in the new materialist mold have followed Arola in seeking to trace the impact of design. Erika Sparby, for instance, examines the ways in which the design of 4Chan, an anonymous internet message board, guides the formation of user identity. Integrally, Sparby's analysis attends to more than just 4Chan's layout or appearance. Instead, she studies this tool's functionality, for instance, the fact that the site demands anonymity and does not archive content. The "technological design of an interface—manifested through the actions it allows or prevents—has just as much power, if not more, in constructing a collective identity as the users do," Sparby determines (87). Here we see simultaneous attention to both non-human and human, to both tools and their impact. Indeed, tools are understood through their impact. Approaching literacy activity via the interface, in other words, allows Sparby to capture the practical interaction of human and non-human in information systems. Interface analysis thus emerges as a powerful means to theorize everyday digital media literacy.

The third concept I'd like to forward focuses attention on the human component of information assemblages. At the interface, digital media users read, write, watch, share, etc. In an age of media convergence, these activities often blur together. What common attribute do they share? Tanya Rodrigue provides an answer. Drawing on the work of the influential New London Group (1996), Rodrigue suggests that digital media engagement itself is an act of design. Rodrigue's object of interest is digital reading, which she argues "is best positioned as a *design-oriented activity*, a meaning-making process" that involves combining multiple genres and modes (236, emphasis in original). This formulation draws attention to the inherently active nature of digital media use. Though the interface is a built environment, meaning here is never given; instead users must construct it out of a disparate mix of elements (text, image, shape, shade, etc.). Rodrigue is primarily interested in how users might combine elements at a single site, such as when reading a webpage. I would suggest, though, that her concept of user as designer can be productively expanded to capture multiple modes of engagement spread over time and space. To stay connected and informed, users design information ecosystems. They design identities and relationships and knowledge structures. In all cases, this process involves combining disparate forms as to make meaning, either for self or other. It involves carving legibility out of the mediated flux.

Understanding digital media engagement as design has numerous implications. Perhaps most importantly, it informs how we should think about the relationship between literacy practices and theory, rules or other forms of abstract knowledge. According to the New London Group, while design always draws on shared resources, any specific act of design is utterly singular. As Richard Marback puts it, design problems are "wicked," in that their solutions are always highly context-dependent, often turning on "visceral reactions," that can be "elicited and guided," but ultimately remain beyond intention (400). Because design solutions are so intimately local, the act of design, per this line of thinking, must begin not with "critical distance," but "with the immersion of the designer in responsiveness" (414). So, according to Marback, to understand literacy as design is to foreground context, contingency, and attunement. Abstract conceptual knowledge is not useless, of course, but engagement must come first. In other words, for both student and scholar, theory must

be allowed to arise out of practice.

Taken together, the concepts discussed here hint at a vocabulary that could be used both to research and teach everyday digital media literacy. We can imagine scholarly projects or student assignments that seek to map information ecosystems, or that closely examine behavior at the interface to understand how users design meaning. Such work would attend closely to acts of responsiveness. It would engage in careful, local analysis of everyday digital literacy practices, with an eye towards the various ways bodies, minds, and tools intermesh. What sort of literacy behaviors do digital devices and social media platforms encourage, discourage? How do our means of connection shape how we think, write, read, and relate? Such questions, I'd argue, could mark the start of a discipline-wide effort to understand (and teach) everyday digital media literacy.[5]

At the moment, the above research program is aspirational. Without a doubt, new materialist scholarship has made great strides in theorizing the role of things in the writing process. Likewise, scholars like Sparby have done much to help us understand literacy practices in what Rebecca Tarsa calls "digital participation spaces" (13). That said, writing studies as a whole displays several blind spots that as of yet have prevented the field from making real impact in the area of digital media literacy. First off, writing teacher-scholars remain hesitant to fully engage reading, watching, and other consumption-based literacy practices. As many have noted, for years following a highpoint in the 1980s, the study of reading largely vanished from the composition literature (Keller; Salvatori and Donahue). Though, as indicated by Rodrigue's efforts, interest in digital information consumption is now increasing, we still know very little about how users read, watch, and listen in digital environments.

Composition's lack of interest in cognition also limits our ability to theorize everyday digital media literacy. Reading-writing scholarship, at its highpoint in the 1980s, was heavily influenced by cognitive psychology, but with the social turn, the field's attention famously shifted away from how readers and writers think. Despite stirrings of renewed interest, the topic remains marginalized (Hayes). I believe that this is a problem. To understand and guide digital literacy practices, we need insight into how our tools shape reading and writing, and how these tool-mediated activities work together to create understanding. Such analysis will inevitably involve taking into account both literacy behaviors and cognitive processes. As noted cognitive theorist John Hayes argues, no theory can account for complex literacy practices without considering the interplay of the "cognitive, affective, social, and physical" (qtd. in Keller 30). My claim is that composition has focused too exclusively on the latter items in this list. Thus, while our field's new materialist scholarship is of great value, in order to effectively theorize everyday digital media literacy, we need to look beyond current disciplinary limits.

Literacy at the Interface

I have argued that to understand or teach everyday digital media literacy, writing scholars need insight into consumption and cognition, insight that, at the moment, our literature can't provide. To fill this gap, I suggest we turn to media studies scholarship. A good place to begin is with the work

of W. James Potter. The author of a popular series of media literacy textbooks, Potter in *Theory of Media Literacy* draws on a wide range of empirical research to explicate the theoretical foundations of his pedagogy. Its discussion of our relationship with media, and the ways in which educators can intervene to make this relationship more productive, is perhaps the most in-depth available.[6]

As noted, Potter works at the interface. "Any theory of media literacy," he writes, "must at its core be a theory about how people are affected by the media" (66). This formulation focuses on practice, habits, and the consequences thereof. The underlying idea is that individual thought and action are impacted not only by the content of media consumed, but also by form and means of mediation. Literacy scholars should trace the nature of this impact. Such inquiry, Potter believes, will reveal that some ways of watching TV or using your phone, say, are better than others, in that they lead to more desirable personal and social consequences. Media literacy education, in turn, promotes best practices.

To work at the interface means to pay attention to media, media producer, and media consumer. Indeed, these entities cannot be thought separately. Echoing Barry Wellman, Potter starts from the premise that individuals engage media to satisfy certain needs (to be entertained, informed, etc.). But the interests of media consumers and producers do not always align. In an extended discussion of the nature of mass media, Potter argues that media companies don't so much want conscious awareness as they want mere physical exposure. Through sensory overload and the radical decontextualization of messages, he writes, "we are being trained to tune down our powers of concentration" (14). The goal is "to condition audiences into a ritualistic mode of exposure" (44). Such exposure is ideally thoughtless and extended. Though Potter is speaking here of radio and TV, the parallels with new media are readily apparent. From YouTube videos that play automatically to the variable reward system that makes checking your email or Twitter feed so addictive, our current information environment operates largely along the same lines as traditional mass media. In both cases, the goal is to override conscious thought in order to grab and hold attention (see Harris). More generally, we must remember that all media environments are constructed—and constructed for purposes that may not align with the user's best interests. This idea, Potter suggests, should underlie any theory of media literacy.

Equally important is the idea that there are different types of media engagement. In any media environment, we can't possibly attend to all available sensory data. Instead, we have to apportion our mental resources. Potter differentiates "exposure states" based on the degree of attentiveness, and thus cognitive effort, required. Searching is an active process, motivated by a specific question. It entails conscious attention and is thus the most demanding exposure state. Scanning is less directed and hence less demanding, motivated by a generalized desire rather than a specific question. Screening is less demanding still. In this exposure state, we ignore most of the information present unless given a specific reason to pay attention. Integrally, modern media consumers spend the overwhelming majority of their time in screening mode: there is simply too much mediated information to handle any other way. "To protect ourselves," Potter writes, "we establish a default of avoiding almost all messages" (145).

To illustrate screening—and its prevalence in our lives—Potter presents an example of a trip

to the supermarket. Here we are confronted with hundreds of thousands of data points. But most are automatically screened out: we will perhaps attend to the labels of half a dozen products. A similar winnowing process occurs whenever we engage with media. Integrally, though, just because we don't consciously engage most television commercials or Facebook posts doesn't mean they don't impact us. In fact, according to Potter, advertising works precisely because, through habituated exposure, marketing claims are able to bypass our critical facilities. "Over time," he writes, echoing cultural studies scholarship, "images, sounds, and ideas build up patterns in our subconscious and profoundly shape the way we think" (10).

As the above indicates, the concept of automaticity is central to Potter's approach. Much of our behavior at the interface is automated, habitual, outside the realm of conscious thought. To my knowledge, writing scholars have yet to consider the role of automaticity in literacy practices. Attention here might be of particular interest to new materialist scholars, because automated behavior is heavily influenced by the design of our tools. As Cory Lawson Ching notes, "sometimes tools have their own agendas" (6). Exactly. And when we act without thought, we often promote those agendas. We might also promote fake news and other digital manipulation efforts.

To illustrate automatized literacy, let's consider the (mis)information circulated by Russian-controlled Facebook group "The Heart of Texas." Curated by St. Petersburg hipsters, the group's memes and postings are admittedly quite stylish. Upon critical review, though, some seem outlandish. In addition to promoting obviously false and misleading claims about a variety of political issues, The Heart of Texas homepage was riddled with what one reporter describes as "aggressively strange typos" (Michel). Posted content declared that group members are "In Love With Texas Shape," and urged members to proudly share a picture of a giant boot with the caption "Always Be Ready For A Texas Size." Studying these documents, it is clear (in hindsight) that there was something unusual about the group. Still, it had over 250,000 followers, with posts commonly getting hundreds, if not thousands, of likes and shares. Some of this traffic was bot-driven, of course, but a review of the comments section and follower list indicates a large degree of real engagement. How can this be? How could people (e.g. Jerry Herrmann, a patent attorney from Amarillo) not notice, or not care, that something was very obviously not right with The Heart of Texas?

For many humanities scholars, abstract concepts such as ideology or identity would be the go-to explanation for such inexplicable literacy behavior. Perhaps group members were simply blinded by tribal loyalty. Perhaps. But if we follow Potter, we are careful not to naturalize the interface. Instead of looking through Facebook to scholarly abstractions, we examine the nature of the tool at issue and its impact on the human mind and body. In particular, Potter would say that when using a tool like Facebook, we are usually not in "searching" mode. We are not seeking the answer to any specific question. Instead, we want to have fun, express ourselves, or feel a connection with others. The design of the platform encourages non-critical engagement. Unlike traditional mass media, Facebook wants (and needs) us to speak, asking "What's on your mind?" the moment a user logs in. With its colorful, crowded design, strewn with ads and links and engagement options, it doesn't encourage us to listen in any sustained way, though. On each user's "feed," mediated information appears in a torrent. If we join a Facebook group (an act that is itself incentivized), that group's content will, by default, join

the stream.

So Facebook's design encourages us to maximize our information exposure. By necessity, each user has developed a set of behaviors to manage the platform's demands. For some users, these behaviors originate in conscious reflection. They consider the design of the platform and how their interaction with it can be tailored to best serve their needs. Integrally, though, other users lack the desire or ability to perform this sort of calculation. Instead of actively evaluating and managing information sources, they use cognitive filtering to simply block out content that is not relevant or interesting. They skip from post to post, not consciously attending to much of the information presented. We can imagine that many of the subscribers to The Heart of Texas operated under such a paradigm. They subscribed without much consideration— perhaps because Facebook suggested it. They immediately noticed that much of the group's content was "off" but, rather than unsubscribing, simply proceeded to ignore that content.

Faulty information management can explain the spread of both comically misspelled posts and fake news. Recent empirical evidence indicates that false claims spread fast and far due to their novel nature (Vosoughi, Roy, and Aral). These are the sort of claims that break through a user's automatic filters, get noticed, and thus get shared. If Potter is right, though, the ideas and images that we don't notice are equally important. Beliefs can be shaped by mere physical exposure, remember. Building off this, we must assume that faulty information ecosystem design may actually help lay the groundwork for the acceptance of false claims. Consider the following example. We sign up for Facebook, connect with our friends and family, and join some groups relevant to our interests (Texas, guns, cats, Christ). Our feed is constantly full of anti-Hillary Clinton rhetoric (as is our television and the group chat we share with friends). We are not interested in politics and filter out most of these messages. Still, they exist in the background, creating a reality in which the figure of "Hillary Clinton" is capable of any number of misdeeds. Then The Heart of Texas—whose weird content up until this point we've largely ignored—shares an obviously doctored photo of Clinton shaking hands with Osama Bin Laden. This is striking, novel. We notice and we share, as do hundreds of other proud Texans. Now, if we would go into searching mode, we could easily determine that Clinton had never, in fact, met the leader of Al-Qaida. But nothing in our information ecosystem incentivizes this sort of energy-intensive behavior. As a result, for all intents and purposes, we now believe an obvious falsehood. Automated behavior has set the stage for belief.

The above analysis is clearly speculative; much empirical work (presently ongoing) is needed to verify the extent and precise impact of the literacy behaviors described. That said, in a world where media is everywhere, all evidence indicates that the schemas by which we make sense of reality—and by and through which we make arguments and essays—often don't come to us through conscious attention to authoritative sources. Instead, they are built up over time, through incremental exposure facilitated by automated processes. Recently, scholars such as Jacob Craig have called for a "network-specific information literacy." He and many other literacy scholars believe that it's no longer sufficient to understand (and teach) literacy through a print-based paradigm. The truth of that claim should now be apparent. But if we accept that mediated information is now everywhere, and our engagement with it is largely automated, how might that change how we teach writing?

Writing at the Interface

It seems to me that the first step in designing a writing pedagogy for the age of metastasized media is to rethink the relationship between digital media literacy and writing instruction. In short, I'd suggest that we need to dissolve any perceived boundary between the two. We can only write what we know. As networked individuals, we know through our connections, through the reality we carve out of the mediated flux. Thus, writing instruction must engage students' patterns of connection. It must engage the processes by which they filter and sort mediated information.

Of late, some composition scholars have begun to think in similar terms. Work in the areas of digital reading (Carillo; Rodrigue) and research-based writing (Craig; Singer) is particularly promising. A shared theme is that in a world awash with information, it is no longer sufficient to teach only engagement with academic texts. Instead, our pedagogies should attend to "everyday instances of research" (Craig 37). They should seek to provide students "transferable, user-centered tools" that can be of use both in the library and in daily life (Singer 154). I agree that instruction in non-academic literacy is essential. Students must be taught to use Google productively, judge the credibility of a website, etc. However, close study of consumption and cognition suggests that we need to go a step further. As my analysis of the situation in Texas sought to make clear, the schemas by which we understand the world are not built primarily through

> *"We can only write what we know. As networked individuals, we know through our connections, through the reality we carve out of the mediated flux. Thus, writing instruction must engage students' patterns of connection."*

goal-directed literacy behaviors (what Potter calls "searching"). Instead, the majority of our beliefs—especially about abstract or distant topics—are formed incidentally. They come into being as we pursue pleasure and escape, not knowledge in any direct sense. Writing pedagogy must account for that fact. To this end, the idea of the "information ecosystem" is particularly useful. Each individual dwells within a certain information ecosystem, defined by their habits and patterns of connection. These spaces can be more or less consciously constructed, more or less designed to serve that individual's needs, interests, and values. Writing instruction should help students move towards the "more" side of the spectrum.

Again, Potter's work is instructive. He writes that the "fundamental guiding principle underlying" his approach "is that individuals should be empowered to make their own choices and interpretations" (57). He believes that the modern media environment inherently robs us of choice. In the face of acceleration and information overload, we take shortcuts, trade the good for the fast. We let tools and design do our thinking for us. In an age of "dark patterns," in which website design urges us to spend, in which social media design urges us to engage, and seemingly everything urges us to reveal personal information, such concerns seem oddly prescient.[7]

Assuming we value digital media hygiene, the next question becomes how we should teach

it. Craig suggests that we develop and share with students "a technological discourse that provides a more complete account of how information is structured, promoted, and commodified within networks" (26). Now, I agree that greater knowledge of network dynamics is needed. But a long history of progressive pedagogies—particularly cultural studies approaches and the critiques thereof—tells us that simply propounding "the facts" is never sufficient (see Berlin; Rickert). Thus, we need teaching methods that make the facts real for students, methods that allow for incorporation and ownership of disciplinary knowledge. Here, I believe that thinking of digital media engagement in terms of design is useful. As we've seen, digital media users can be understood as designers and the navigation of digital networks as a design problem. Solutions to design problems, as Marback reminds us, are found via immersion. This being so, it seems that literacy education, like literacy scholarship, should begin at the interface, at the point where human and non-human meet. It should start with affectivity, responsivity. In practical terms, this is achieved when students make an object of critical inquiry out of their relationship with tools and the degree to which that relationship corresponds with their needs, interests and values. Knowledge about systems and processes and how information is "structured, promoted, and commodified" can grow out of such inquiry.

The idea that literacy education should entail the study of actual practices—noticing—runs throughout recent discussions of literacy in composition studies. Craig himself writes of the importance of "defamiliarizing routine behaviors" (37). In this way, he suggests, we can bring unconscious, habituated behaviors into view so that they can be examined and adjusted. Likewise, Miller and Leon advocate "slow rhetorics," arguing that we must "work with students to slow down our thinking and reflect on our (re)actions" (16). Christina LaVecchia echoes this idea when she writes that digital literacy begins when students can "see their practices as strange." A materialist program for everyday digital media literacy builds on the work of these scholars in positioning noticing as the key pedagogical activity. Students study their digital media practices, the web of connections they weave, and the consequences thereof. Knowledge arises from and returns to those practices.

Because it seeks to give students more control over their tools, and thus their world, the pedagogy I propose might be classified as "liberatory." It's important to note, though, the extent to which a materialist everyday media literacy program differs from earlier critical pedagogies. James Berlin, a critical pedagogue also concerned with media literacy, famously writes that the business of progressive writing teachers should be to "instruct students in signifying practices broadly conceived" (24). In his preferred pedagogy (which, I

"The object of inquiry is not 'signifying practice,' though. Instead, it is simply practice. Rather than signs and symbols and 'preferred narratives,' students read interfaces—the places where design is actualized."

would argue, to this day, represents the default progressive approach), students examine common patterns of symbol use to learn their origin, structure, and social consequences. In the pedagogy I propose, students also create knowledge via the study of everyday activity. The object of inquiry is

not "signifying practice," though. Instead, it is simply practice. Rather than signs and symbols and "preferred narratives," students read interfaces—the places where design is actualized. And they read not to understand what interfaces mean, but what they do. This involves attention to object, body, and mind, to tools and the thought and behavior they encourage. And the goal of such study is clear from the beginning—to organize one's information ecosystem more effectively. Abstract knowledge about networks or flows or ideology, in other words, is always subordinate to the practical task of construction.

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

In the above pages, I've argued that writing teachers can and should work to promote everyday digital media literacy. I've argued that we can do so by directing our attention (and that of our students) to the interface, to the places where design is actualized. The goal of such engagement is to help students construct and maintain healthier information ecosystems. As I see it, this goal is best accomplished not through abstract theorizing, but through careful study of digital tools and how they shape thought and behavior. Through study of the local and concrete, literacy researchers and writing students can gain practical insight into patterns of connection, into the filters and sorting mechanisms that, taken as a whole, constitute "networked literacy." Once visible, these systems can be evaluated and adjusted, allowing individuals increased control over their lives and minds.

To close, I'd like to discuss my attempts to deploy these ideas in the classroom. Over the past few years, I've taught versions of the pedagogy proposed at sites in both Europe and the Middle East. My students are typically high-achieving, non-native English-speaking undergraduates. The class is usually presented as an advanced writing course, offered as an English or humanities elective. Overall, student interest and engagement have been remarkable. Digital media these days is like water to a fish: everywhere but unnoticed. I've found that once students begin to notice, a wide array of research and writing opportunities emerge. Students quickly adopt the role of expert and are rarely at a loss for words.

Though developed in an international context, I believe my approach is easily transferable to the American first-year writing (FYW) classroom. In a FYW course focused on essayistic writing, for example, I can imagine students researching digital engagement practices and using their findings to "speak back" to popular commentators. Given the research component, my approach also seems well-suited to the second course in a two-course FYW sequence. In such a context, students could engage the scholarly literature cited in this essay. They could be introduced to concepts such as the interface and information ecosystem and use their immersion in digital media as a site from which to make original contributions to how these concepts are understood. Of course, the ideas in these pages will need to be adapted, rather than adopted. For example, some may feel that the study of personal habits makes for too intrusive of a pedagogy. If so, students could perhaps study the connection patterns of others. The general idea is simply that they attend to tools, habits of tool use, and the ways in which those habits shape how people think and feel, act and react. How best to do this will vary depending on context.

In my particular context, the study of tools and tool use takes various forms. Students may, for example, track their own digital media habits over the course of a day (or week), asking with whom they connect, how they connect, and what information they share or consume. They may also study tools directly: the design of popular shopping or gaming websites, for example, and the ways in which these environments are constructed to achieve certain ends. The results of such studies are often surprising. One student was shocked to learn that, driven by the variable reward system incorporated into the design of his mobile phone, he sometimes checked his device over 30 times an hour. Another realized, that via exhortations to "Doitdoitdoit," and flashy, convoluted design (a suspected "dark pattern"), she had been persuaded, that very morning, to buy an unnecessarily expensive gaming package. Of course, to work at the interface like these students requires some degree of technical knowledge (a familiarity with the discourse of variable rewards and dark patterns, respectively). But integrally, mastery of technological discourse is not the goal of such work. Instead, the goal is to use existing discourse to create new knowledge grounded in embodied practice. This new knowledge is localized and personalized. It is thus uniquely capable of feeding back into practice and effecting change.

An end-of-semester research project conducted by a student I will call Hamad provides an example of the sort of work one might do at the interface. Upon tracking his digital media habits, Hamad was surprised by the amount of time he spent watching videos on YouTube. He thus decided to research the design of the platform. Online research led him to a Google whitepaper (Covington, et. al) describing YouTube's use of "deep neural networks" and the two-stage process used to generate recommended content. Hamad familiarized himself with this process, then returned to the interface and put what he learned to work. Specifically, he performed an experiment in which he searched for a certain YouTube video (featuring Bruce Lee) on two devices with different prior usage patterns. He then allowed the recommended videos to auto-play. The goal of this experiment, Hamad explained, was to see for himself how the recommendation algorithm functioned. Given each usage pattern, what personal information about him would the machine be able to collect? How would this shape its recommendations?

Interestingly, Hamad found that by the third video the recommended selections had diverged. On one device, the recommended videos were related to martial arts (and in English). On the other, as he put it, they were "completely unrelated, clickbait Arabic videos." In his final essay, Hamad used information gained from the Google whitepaper, as well as class discussions, to explain this disparity. He writes:

> An interesting fact to note here is that I have never previously watched Arabic videos on [the first device], but after consulting some friends I was able to conclude that these videos were videos most Arab male teens would click on. The system was successfully able to label me as an Arab male teen, despite the fact I wasn't logged in, and instead ofrecommending videos related to my current selection, it recommended clickbait, meaningless videos to try and make me stay longer on YouTube….

This discovery led Hamad to conclude that YouTube's design may not be operating in his best interests. His experiment, he writes, shows that the platform "is more than happy to recommend any

video that will make you spend more time online, regardless of the content and whether it is useful or not." Here we see knowledge making of the most potent sort. Abstract ideas about data privacy, sorting algorithms and profit motive are grounded in lived experience and thus made real. As such, Hamad comes to better understand the mechanisms that work behind the scenes to shape his information exposure. Simply put, he catches a glimpse of the constitute structure of his information ecosystem. Once visible, I'd argue, that structure can be reworked. Indeed, Hamad later expressed a desire to manage his YouTube account more actively as to avoid "clickbait." My claim is that close attention to the interface—to our tools and the thought and behavior they encourage—is a potent way to facilitate this sort of active media engagement.

It's important to note the self-directed nature of Hamad's learning activities. Though the class did discuss recommendation algorithms (via a TED Talk by Eli Pariser), I did not guide him to the Google whitepaper. I did not suggest he research YouTube nor help him design his experiment. Instead, he made these choices himself based on his interests and experience. Whether we know it or not, we each have extensive experience at the interface. As Hamad's work illustrates, the pedagogy I propose is uniquely able to activate otherwise latent knowledge.

It's also important to note, especially in light of the recent "techlash," that an everyday digital media literacy program must involve more than simply proving to students that they're being manipulated. Indeed, many of my students, upon evaluating behavior at the interface, identify ways in which digital media technology improves their lives or the lives of others. An end-of-semester project by Igor offers an illustration. For his topic, Igor researched massively multiplayer online role-playing games, specifically World of Warcraft (WoW). He examined media reports that video games negatively affect mental health, along with empirical research about the social behavior of gamers. Drawing on his own experience, he then considered the design of WoW and the human impact thereof. He reports that the objectives set by the game encourage semi-stable groupings called "guilds." Because "co-guilders" play together over extended periods of time, and because the game allows for real-time chat, guild members often establish close personal relationships. Interestingly, these relationships can drive game usage. In describing his gaming activities, Igor writes:

> Most of my time in the game I was playing with my co-guilders. At the beginning we were just doing something on purpose together, [the game] activities held us together. But after several month I started logging in just to chat with my co-guilders. So, my relationships pushed me to do something in the game.

In the above passage, Igor reflects on his behavior at the interface. Like Hamad, he makes abstract knowledge real by grounding it in lived experience. In doing so, he too engages the web of connections that shapes how he thinks, feels, and acts. Igor's methodology is different (reflection vs. empirical research), as is his conclusion. While acknowledging that the company that makes WoW benefits from his increased gameplay, Igor decides that he is satisfied with the deal he has struck. He argues that playing WoW, in addition to allowing for new friendships, taught him valuable social skills, such as the ability to "interact with strangers" and "manage little groups of people." Ultimately, he concludes that video games can improve mental health.

Igor's conclusion is well-argued. More important, though, is the work that he did to reach it. He

considered his tools, himself, and the relationship between the two. He then weighed the extent to which his patterns of tool use correspond with his needs, interests, and values. This is a calculation, I'd suggest, that everyone should be encouraged to perform.

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An odd characteristic of technology is that as it becomes more ubiquitous, it becomes less interesting. Few scholars, for example, study word processing programs or hypertext anymore, though most of us use these tools every day. Overall, my claim has been that to understand and guide networked literacy, we need to reverse this dynamic. We need to attend to social media, smart phones, email, and other tools that have become so engrained in our daily lives as to become invisible. But, of course, writing teachers are not programmers or engineers. We are, most of us anyway, humanists. Thus we best engage these technologies not on the level of code or circuitry, but on the level of human thought and behavior. How do our tools shape how we think, write, read, and relate? How can we design better patterns of engagement? If my experience is any indication, the writing classroom is an ideal place to ask such questions. Now, of course, college writing classes that engage everyday digital media literacy practices can't single-handedly save democracy. But they do represent a tangible, imminently practical step our field can take to address one of the major problems threatening it. Simply put, when tool use is thoughtless and information ecosystems poorly designed, networked individuals cannot be informed and engaged. They cannot be good citizens. I claim that by directing attention to the interface, to the point where the human and non-human meet, we can reverse this dynamic. In doing so, we can help our students become not just better writers, but the type of writers our world needs most.

NOTES

[1] Other than arguing that "digital media literacy" entails the ability to design healthy information ecosystems, I won't endeavor to present a more detailed definition of the term. It seems to me that one can be called "digital media literate" whenever they can use digital media tools to achieve their goals. The specific skills and behaviors involved vary based on context.

[2] Individuals have always had to weigh competing data points and information sources, of course. The key difference now, though, according to Wellman, is that there is more potential data, more sources of data, and fewer agreed upon rules to parse that data.

[3] In making this argument I align with a small but vocal group of scholars currently arguing for more attention to reading in the writing classroom (see Keller, Carillo, Horning). As Daniel Keller puts it, reading and writing are "literacy components"—we can't teach one without the other (36). I totally agree. We also need to recognize, though, that much of the reading our students do might not register as "reading" in the traditional sense.

[4] I use this term simply to refer to recent writing studies scholarship that foregrounds the role of tools, spaces, bodies, and other physical objects in literacy practices. Such work doesn't necessarily bear any relationship to the philosophical school of new materialism, also called "speculative realism," associated with thinkers such as Graham Harman and Quinton Millexioux.

[5] Along with a move towards materialism, for the past twenty years or so literacy studies has favored what Beth Daniell calls "little narratives"—studies that examine literacy behaviors among certain subgroups (403). *College Composition and Communication's* recent symposium on literacy, edited by Thomas Miller, operates largely in this vein. Certainly, readings of these narratives from a materialist perspective have much to offer the networked literacy project.

[6] Published in 2004, *Theory of Media Literacy* deals exclusively with mass media. Potter's ideas, therefore, must be translated rather than directly applied.

[7] See www.darkpatterns.org; also www.humanetech.com.

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Book Review   *Food, Feminisms, Rhetorics*, edited by
Melissa A. Goldthwaite

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A publication of Southern Illinois University Press's series Studies in Rhetorics and Feminisms, *Food, Feminisms, Rhetorics,* edited by Melissa A. Goldthwaite, offers readers a wide range of rhetorical analyses of food-related fiction, non-fiction, television, art, and commodities from a variety of feminist lenses. Some of the offerings are substantial and satisfying, while others only whet the appetite, but collectively this work succeeds in illustrating the considerable breadth of cultural terrain touched by questions of food and feminism. The essays in the first section show how cookbooks and recipes serve as revealing objects for feminist historiographical work; the second section provides a primer on important female food writers and other culture influencers; the third section shows that contemporary food movements, while seemingly progressive, are also in some cases challenging feminist progress; and the final section confronts the fact that, especially as women, we cannot talk about food without also talking about bodies. These chapters together pose a kairotic question about the rhetorical representation of women's relationship to food: What rhetoric around food and bodies is most authentically empowering to women?

The book's first section, "Purposeful Cooking: Recipes for Historiography, Thrift, and Peace," asserts that traditionally undervalued objects of research, cookbooks, and family recipes are fruitful materials for rhetorical analysis. Carrie Helms Tippen argues that cookbooks are important sites for doing feminist historiographical work, referencing the point of Janet Theophano in *Eat My Words: Reading Women's Lives through the Cookbooks They Wrote* that cookbooks are "among the few documents authored by and for women that were protected and 'passed down' as heirlooms" (17). Jennifer E. Courtney writes about the rhetoric of kitchen thrift from the early nineteenth century to the present, asserting that "[d]espite the identified dearth of scholarship on thrift . . . kitchen thrift and discourses on kitchen thrift are alive and well, running parallel to and sometimes intersecting with mainstream consumer narratives" (51). Courtney briefly summarizes two books, a newsletter, a television show, and a blog, inspiring curiosity about this genre and ideas about how the rhetoric of thrift might intersect with the rhetoric of the contemporary local food movement. In "Promoting Peace, Subverting Domesticity: Cookbooks Against War, 1968-83," Abby Dubisar considers a more narrowly bounded set of texts to point out, significantly, that a feature of first-wave feminism was a rejection of having one's identity bound to traditional housewife duties like cooking. Cooking in the peace movement-based cookbook *Peace de Resistance* is framed as something to appease one's family so that a woman can then turn to her more important activist duties (68), while the 1973 cookbook *Peacemeal* frames cooking a bit differently, as "a necessary task to combat hunger and a way to

gather people at the Greenwich Village Peace Center" (69). *Peacemeal* also positions cooking as non-gender-specific and emphasizes how "food gatherings facilitate conversation" (70). In conclusion, Dubisar notes that the contemporary "new domesticity" movement makes a return to cooking its own revolution but that, as Emily Matchar has pointed out, baking your own bread and curing your own bacon is not "'going to solve the world's problems'" (72). Dubisar poses a salient question for today's rapidly evolving food culture: "How can activists write cookbooks that resist industrial processing while also resisting gendered power dynamics that construct cooking as women's primary responsibility?" (72).

The book's second section turns to the realm of published and produced female food writing and television, starting with the foundational work of M.F.K. Fisher. For those unfamiliar with Fisher, Erin Branch provides an introduction, noting that Fisher's style and approach to food conflicted with the gender norms of the time. Editors of Fisher's first book *Serve it Forth* were surprised to find out she was a woman because her epicurean tone was considered male (78). Fisher, while employing a feminine writing style, notably bucked gender norms by emphasizing the pleasure and desire that attend eating. Branch analyzes Fisher's text for examples of a concept she terms "gastronomical kairos," revealing moments in which a feeling of life's importance and meaning is brought about through food (79). Branch articulates what may be so appealing about Fisher to those examining food and feminism now. For Fisher, pleasure was food's greatest purpose, and she vividly conveyed this pleasure in her writing.

Four of the five chapters in the book's third and most eclectic section, "Rhetorical Representations of Food-Related Practices," focus on representations of food and drink in fictional texts. However, the first chapter in the section, "Not Your Father's Family Farm: Toward Transformative Rhetorics of Food and Agriculture," focuses on the problematic symbolism of the family farm in "sustainable food movements" (121). Abby Wilkerson aims to contribute to Eileen Schell's call for an "alternative agrarian rhetoric" by considering the "potential of family rhetoric in movements for food justice and sustainability to reinforce existing social hierarchies and inequalities" (120-21). Wilkerson writes that on the surface, the family farm functions symbolically to represent a kind of "rehabilitative consumption, a voluntaristic sensibility that tells us if we just 'eat this, not that,' we'll be saved" (122). Wilkerson's intervention is not to question the validity of the rehabilitative promise but to argue that the family farm does *other* symbolic work that comes "at great cost to women, people of color, and poor people" by connoting whiteness, heteronormativity and gendered roles (129). In contrast to the symbol of the heteronormative, white family farm, Wilkerson offers a portrait of the Farmway in Brightmoor, a twenty-two-block urban farm in a Detroit neighborhood comprising about thirty-five community gardens. Wilkerson wants to emphasize the significance of the ideological intervention of such projects over what they offer in terms of food access. She writes that such projects "generate spaces of conviviality and reciprocity . . . across a range of cultural divides" and "create oppositional spaces where food becomes a channel for community building and generating resistance to entrenched power" (129). Wilkerson's argument feels fresh but also rhetorically actionable. Farmers' markets can choose to brand themselves as more in alignment with newer, non-traditional modes of farming as opposed to the traditional image of the family farm.

The next three chapters in the section each look at the role of food in fiction as a conveyor of culture and gender norms. Concluding the third section, Tammie M. Kennedy's chapter "Boxed Wine Feminisms: The Rhetoric of Women's Wine Drinking in *The Good Wife*" looks at how "drinking practices function rhetorically" in the wider culture and then specifically in the television show *The Good Wife*. Kennedy asserts that "television representations normalize drinking wine as a way for women to navigate the tensions of their personal and professional choices" but calls into question what this normalization elides (182).

The book's final section, "Rhetorical Representations of Bodies and Cultures," begins with two chapters that look at highly specific representations of bodies within a cultural context, the images of Mexican women on Mexican food products and the artistic representations of Jewish women during the Holocaust. Goldthwaite compellingly chooses to conclude the book with a set of four chapters that present two opposing approaches to a feminist stance toward food and bodies. Rhetorical analyses of pro-anorexia websites in one chapter and the *Skinny Bitch* books in the next offer up a striking contrast with a chapter on the BBC's *Two Fat Ladies* cooking show of the late 1990s and the final chapter looking at detective novels featuring plus-size female private investigators. What these analyses do as a set is to illustrate that women are, first, longing to feel good about themselves, and, for many, that means revising the way they see their bodies and, accordingly, how they eat. And rhetoric plays a significant role in that "revision." On the far extreme of the food-control approach are pro-ana websites. Though author Morgan Gresham focuses on a now-defunct site called *House of Thin* which "seeks to provide a supportive environment for those who may wish to recover from an eating disorder," the chapter also serves to educate readers on the extreme conflation of identity with body size and eating habits that marks the pro-ana community, even those members who consider themselves "in recovery" (214). Gresham writes that *House of Thin* employs an "invitational rhetoric" that allows for those anywhere on the spectrum—from fully committed to pro-ana to those in recovery—to feel accepted there. Rebecca Ingalls looks at the *Skinny Bitch* books, which use what might be called the opposite of invitational rhetoric as the authors argue that cutting out meat, sugar, and overeating will yield a leaner, healthier, more ethical you. As Rebecca Ingalls shows, the authors' rhetorical style is borderline abusive, actively working to make readers feel guilty and disgusted by their current eating habits.

On the other hand, *Two Fat Ladies*, as Sara Hillin writes, celebrates taking unabashed pleasure in food and pushes back against 1990s cultural trends toward low-fat foods and vegetarianism. Hillin writes that the show's hosts made fatness "their rhetorical platform" and used it to further their project of "promoting more ethical manufacturing and sale of meats, educating oneself about health claims related to diet, and ending gender-based size discrimination" (247). Turning to fiction, Elizabeth Lowry shows how detective novels featuring plus-size female detectives "challenges stereotypes of fat people as being asexual or overly libidinous" (258). Lowry argues that fatness is often "negatively coded" as an "excess of femaleness" but that texts that show overweight women enjoying professional and personal success suggest we are moving past women feeling that they have to shed fat to be taken seriously (262).

The first two chapters in the book's final section show how rhetoric can be deployed to construe

both thinness and fatness as empowering to women. Rebecca Ingalls shows how the author of *Skinny Bitch* leverages rhetoric around issues with food production and the power of controlling one's eating and body size to persuade readers to lose weight. Hillin, in contrast, shows how the hosts of *Two Fat Ladies* leverage rhetoric around the freedom of taking pleasure in food and resisting misogynist critique toward an embrace of fatness. These two polar approaches to empowerment through food help reveal the schizophrenic stance on food that permeates contemporary western culture. On the one hand, the *Skinny Bitch,* as Ingalls suggests, gains power by rejecting the cultural norm of eating meat and junk food; on the other hand, the *Two Fat Ladies,* as Hillin argues, gain power by rejecting the cultural norm of dieting and fat-shaming.

Two of the important questions the chapters in this collection raise are, What relationship(s) to food are authentically empowering to women? and, in turn, What rhetoric around food and bodies is most empowering to women? It is fascinating that the last four chapters present such polar attitudes about consumption and body shape being construed as empowering. What is shared, though, across these divergent positions is the link between the female body and female self-value. To encompass both perspectives, one could say that *choosing* how one eats and one's body shape—whatever that choice may be—is empowering for women.

After reading *Food, Feminisms, Rhetorics*, I am led to wonder about the ways that progressive shifts in food system rhetoric might intersect with progressive rhetoric around female bodies. I want to take Abby Wilkerson's argument about family farm rhetoric along with Abby Dubisar's analysis of the peace activism cookbooks and try to sync it with the message of M.F.K. Fisher and the rhetoric of *Two Fat Ladies*. Let growing food and cooking be as significant to communities and all the members within them as they have been to families and mothers. Let food be a pleasure. Let a diversity of body types be positively-coded female. Unshackle women from being walking testimonies to someone else's food values, scrutinized for how they do or do not cook and for how they appear to eat. *Food, Feminisms, Rhetorics* shows us that attending more consciously to our choice of words around farming, food packaging, cooking, and female bodies is essential to a cultural shift toward a more feminist conception of food.

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Book Review *Literacy and Mobility: Complexity, Uncertainty, and Agency at the Nexus of High School and College,* by Brice Nordquist

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In light of the lasting, negative effects the autonomous model of literacy has had on educational policy throughout the United States, New Literacy Studies scholars have called for increased attention to issues of power and agency in studies of literacy practices. Brice Nordquist's *Literacy and Mobility: Complexity, Uncertainty, and Agency at the Nexus of High School and College* answers that call. As the result of a Kentucky Board of Education audit of "Hughes" public high school, the principal and a third of the teachers were replaced and the school was labeled "failing" (Nordquist 66). In the larger study that informed this book, Nordquist followed eleven students in three different tracks of English—regular (i.e., the developmental course), AP, and dual-enrollment—from their senior year at Hughes through two years of college or work. The book's focal participants are Katherine, a second-generation Mexican American honors student who is partially deaf and enrolled in the Dual-Enrollment course; Nadif, a first-generation Somali refugee in the AP class; and, James, an African American student placed in the regular class despite his good grades and writing skills. Through a three-year, multi-sited, mobile ethnographic study of these students' trajectories around and through high school, Nordquist reveals the complexes of literacies and mobilities through which students engage "education as a process of placemaking in the present" (129). While Nordquist is not the first to critique standardized testing, Common Core Standards, and restrictive definitions of so-called Standard English, he employs a novel theoretical framework that offers a more nuanced view of the effects of "the rhetoric of readiness" (46) in educational discourse and the agency constituted by students.

Nordquist interweaves methodologies and methods from place-based composition, mobility, and new literacy studies with feminist orientations to investigate "how students begin to see themselves as agents, as makers of places, literacies, and identities that constitute the educational systems in which they participate" (4). The theoretical orientations of the study focus not only on literacy practices in different spaces, but also on the physical and bureaucratic movements of educational materials, achievement standards, and students' bodies. The clarity with which Nordquist describes his methodology and orientations produces a valuable model for how other scholars may produce "an account of power-in-literacy which captures the intricate ways in which power, knowledge, and forms of subjectivity are interconnected with 'uses of literacy' in modern national, colonial, and postcolonial settings" (Collins and Blot 66).

In the book's introduction, Nordquist briefly traces his own complex trajectories across "six public schools in six different districts in four states" (2). This narrative highlights an experience of being labeled, assessed, and "placed" by education systems that is common to many students

in the United States. By reflecting upon his own educational and personal histories and "the roles literacy plays in maintaining and demarcating inequalities among social classes," Nordquist engages Gesa Kirsch and Joy Ritchie's feminist interventions and Powell and Takayoshi's attention to power asymmetries (4).

The book's first two core chapters, "Literacy in Place and Motion," and "Methodology for Mobile Literacy," further describe the methodological and theoretical frameworks of the project. To begin, Nordquist offers a salient critique of the prevalence of the deficit model throughout US education discourse and policy. Promotional materials for the Common Core Standards (CCS) depict a staircase representing the fixed points of each grade "level" and suggest that students' movements are necessarily linear, forward, upward, and ever future-oriented (10). Nordquist warns that literacy studies has not paid sufficient "attention to the seemingly mundane movements and stoppages of bodies along the systems that enable or disable their movements—movements of bodies across cities and counties, institutions and campuses, techno- and mediascapes, through hallways, on highways, and so on" (23). And he notes that even social practice models of literacy tend to reify certain aspects of the deficit model, such as the idea that movement occurs "between absolute places left behind and places of arrival" (40), such as grade levels or high schools and colleges. The answer to these issues, he suggests, is to deploy methodologies from mobility and place-based composition studies in order to attune ourselves to these complex movements and stoppages.

The third chapter focuses on the ways that schools establish, regulate, and maintain "Systems of (Im)mobility" that students must navigate to be successful. To analyze these complex systems, Nordquist presents "a range of data types—mobile observations and interviews, time-space maps, images and student texts—to represent three students' intersecting and diverging mobility narratives" (65) to demonstrate ways that the school system differently enabled or disabled each students' progress.

"Mobile Collaborations," the fourth chapter, provides a compelling analysis of one of the study's most engaging subjects: the mandatory busing of students from impoverished suburbs to the high school's location in an affluent, predominantly white neighborhood. More than just a means of transportation between the school and the students' neighborhoods, the bus is the site of a complex interplay of students' identities, literacies, and trajectories. Students exchange feedback on writing and other assignments and cultivate relationships that accommodate, resist, and alter the school's (im)mobility systems. Nordquist also investigates how mobile technologies intersect and shape students' composing and review processes.

Literacy and Mobility showcases several strengths: a rich theoretical foundation, revealing critiques of the American education system's future-orientation and "rhetoric of readiness," and a sobering account of the ways institutions of power continue to compartmentalize, marginalize, and suppress the mobilities of students on the bases of race, class, gender, and ability. The conclusion also provides some pedagogical tools and resources to bring mobility to the forefront of classroom praxis. The book will be useful to teachers in high schools and colleges, as well as to compositionists and literacy studies scholars broadly interested in models of literacy that inform socially just pedagogy. Although the scope of the book was understandably constrained, a shortcoming is that it does not

describe the movements of the study's other eight participants. Norquist argues that Nadif's success is due in part to the bevy of linguistic and literacy skills he accesses to navigate through the school system. However, several other participants, who are described in an appendix as monolinguals, also matriculate into colleges and universities without clear analogs to Nadif's skills. Including an analysis of one of these other participants may have offered a richer comparative perspective and further highlighted the power differentials between the (im)mobility systems schools create versus the placemaking and navigational skills of students. However, this minor limitation does not reduce the value of Nordquist's contributions. This book pushes against the myth that academic literacy guarantees a forward, upward form of mobility, and urges teachers and scholars alike to do the same while attuning ourselves to the ways that students are not merely passive inhabitants of fixed spaces but active, agentive placemakers and wayfinders. In a direct rebuttal of the deficit model of education, Nordquist advises that we recognize students' diverse linguistic, modal, and literacy practices as resources rather than as deficits that must be overcome.

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Preempting Racist and Transphobic Language in Student Writing and Discussion: A Review of Alex Kapitan's *The Radical Copyeditor's Style Guide for Writing about Transgender People* and Race Forward's *Race Reporting Guide*

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I n almost all cases, we give students explicit instruction before asking them to perform a task. We model, give prompts, explain grammatical logics, etc. However, we often stumble when trying to prepare students to work with course readings or assignments that deal with race and gender. In many cases, instructors and students are nervous about students' potential to say something inappropriate or offensive, and the tangle of heightened emotion around socially just (or "politically correct") language makes actual learning difficult. Alex Kapitan's *The Radical Copyeditor's Style Guide for Writing About Transgender People* and the nonprofit racial justice organization Race Forward's *Race Reporting Guide* alleviate student anxieties by offering definitive, easy to understand language guidelines and the rhetorical logics behind those guidelines. These texts are an invaluable supplement to course materials that ask students to engage with race and gender. I will often assign these texts as their own reading assignment during the first week of class in order to establish classroom norms, and then I encourage students to refer back to the guides periodically as we work with other texts and assignments throughout the semester.

Kapitan's style guide, the title often shortened in my classroom to *The Transgender Style Guide,* helps students to see the political nuances inherent in the practice of writing. As Kapitan says, "Radical copyediting isn't about absolutes; it's about context and care." This helps students to reframe their understandings of writing through the lens of discursive power in ways that carry over into discussions of other writing decisions and style rules. The *Race Reporting Guide* offers a similar sentiment, saying, "Language matters, and we need more tools to move our race conversations forward in more accurate, fair, and productive ways" (i). Both of these style guides frame their grammatical and linguistic instruction through practices of care and relation to power systems rather than prescriptive correctness for the sake of prestige. Ultimately, these style guides remind us of the true purpose of writing instruction—to communicate clearly with our peers through the establishment of shared understandings of language.

After the introduction of their frameworks, the two style guides diverge in format. The *Race Reporting Guide,* initially meant to provide instruction to reporters as a supplement to *The Associated Press Stylebook*, offers the following sections: 1) guidelines for covering issues with a racial lens, 2) guidelines for writing about specific racial and ethnic groups, 3) harmful racial discourse practices, 4) key terms and concepts, and 5) online resources for further reading. I ask my students to read this 36-page guide in full before beginning writing, rather than using it as an intermittent reference for specific writing rules. I do this because many of the students using the guide have not cultivated a

sense of careful attention to language around these issues like they have with grammatical concerns, and so they are less likely to actively seek out a reference for assistance. In the section "Seven Harmful Racial Discourse Practices," each of the practices is something common in white academic writing: practices like individualizing racism and prioritizing intent over impact. The guide then describes the effect of that practice on racial discourse and gives an example of the practice to help illustrate the point. Even though I have assigned supplementary theoretical texts that have tried to teach these lessons in the past, students have never shown as much growth over such a short period of time as they have when using this style guide. Students are quick to pick up the guide's linguistic/conceptual terms as a way of discussing race, and the guide helps set clear boundaries about what *is* and what *is not* up for debate, leading to richer collaborations and discussion with more active participation in class and less trepidation in students' writing.

The Transgender Style Guide offers a more familiar format to style guide readers—after the introduction, it is broken down into three major sections: 1) correct/current usage of transgender-related language, 2) bias-free and respectful language in reference to transgender people, and 3) sensitive and inclusive broader language. Each of these sections contains subsections, and each rule appearing in a subsection is accompanied by a paragraph or two of linguistic and cultural analysis, offering an explanation for why this rule would help the writer better align themselves with the style guide's goals of more inclusive and accurate writing. The guide is short enough to read in one sitting, and I advise my students to do so for the same reasons I ask them to read the *Race Reporting Guide.*

As a result of the guides being formatted as texts to be read front to back, students and I have had some difficulty navigating to specific rules quickly for reference. These texts are meant as supplementary style guides, and they therefore do not have the specificity of organization that the MLA or APA guides have. However, both of the guides reviewed here are available for free as digital texts, so using a computer's search feature became an easy workaround to this problem.

Although the guides are far more comprehensive than other language resources addressing similar topics, there are still moments where students have wanted to look to the guides for best practices only to realize that the writers had not given specific instruction for the writing situation the student was in. As pedagogical texts, however, this made the guides perhaps even more useful. Any "rules" that aren't in the style guides provide valuable opportunities for the class to discuss different motivations behind particular language choices, and ultimately to make a decision informed by the general instructions of the guides as well as the particular writing situation students are navigating.

Another outcome of assigning these style guides is more active engagement with discussions of social justice, particularly by students who have never had to discuss things like systemic racism, misogyny, or transphobia before. After a few weeks of using these style guides as the foundation for our language practices, students in my classroom have shared that they felt much less anxiety than when they discussed social justice issues in other classes. Having a set of guidelines at the outset alleviated much of their fear that various participants in a discussion were operating at different levels of "wokeness" and that one student's honest mistake would look to others like a deliberate act of linguistic violence.

Foregrounding these style guides has led to more expressions of curiosity and willingness to

ask questions—it has become assumed that if the answer to a question about socially just language is not in one of these style guides, the entire class would benefit from discussing the question. In this way, these style guides become an integral part in establishing a shared foundation of race and gender literacy at the outset of the course. In the first week of class, a student asked whether the term "transsexual" was ever appropriate and what its relation was to the term "transgender." It's worth noting the achievement of even developing a classroom space where students have the beginning literacy and confidence to ask a question like this in the first week of class, let alone being able to offer them answers to these often-difficult questions. I gave a brief version of my own understanding, but I asked the class whether they could go back and find an answer in the resource. One student mentioned a link in the style guide to the supplemental article "I Was Recently Informed I'm Not a Transsexual" (Wilchins), and another student captured the ethos of the guide, saying that we should be able to hold the reality that people might have different preferences for describing their experiences.

The discussion of gender in the first week of class has been particularly helpful for introducing a nonbinary author later in the semester. Students in earlier classes where I introduced a nonbinary author had immense difficulty engaging the transgender author, greatly reducing their willingness to engage the text. There was an implicit sense in the room that students should use their words carefully, but without specific guidance, they were self-conscious and more prone to accidentally making transphobic comments. For example, students who have not learned rules like "avoid language that reduces people to their birth-assigned sex" were more prone to use "biologically male" or "biologically female" to indicate various aspects of a trans person's experience including their current genitals, their genitals at birth, the gender in which they were raised, their chromosomes but not their genitals, the fact that someone was trans at all (e.g., "she is a biological male" in place of "she is trans"). Not only is this type of language a harmful reduction of someone's experience, it is a terribly confusing amalgam of signifieds that results from our assumptions about the constancy of biological sex.

Likewise, since I've included the *Race Reporting Guide* in my course materials, students have been more able to explore themes of race as critique of systems rather than a matter of the individual author's opinion or experience. This stems both from explicit instruction from the style guide to "Investigate issues from a systemic ('Is there an institution or a practice at work that has race-based consequences?') over an individual ('Is this person a racist?') perspective," and from the overall priorities of the style guide (2). Students become less preoccupied by questions of self-purity when the focus becomes systemic, and while the analysis is more difficult, students of all backgrounds have responded more positively to systemic analysis than to individualist interpretation practices. This systemic analysis paves the way for students to see matters of language and matters of race as mutually reinforcing and interconnected. Students less frequently ask, "Why are we talking about race in a writing classroom?" when they have read this document, as they have been primed to understand questions of language as questions of power, prestige, and ultimately, race.

These style guides help students to see the connections between socially just language and the traditional writing skills they have been practicing and will continue to practice in any writing

classroom. The *Race Reporting Guide* and *The Radical Copyeditor's Style Guide for Writing About Transgender People* are untapped resources for any classroom where gender or race may be a topic of discussion. By the end of the second week of class, my students are familiar enough with these style guides to talk (semi-)comfortably about issues of gender involving trans, cis, and nonbinary people and issues of race involving white people and people of color. These conversations will be difficult regardless, but the style guides presented here can offer important resources for making sure that the difficulty comes from intellectual growth rather than from the social discomfort around conversations of marginalization which so many students (and teachers) have been conditioned to feel.

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