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PEDAGOGY
IN THE 2020S

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Pedagogy in the 2020s:

Approaches to Student Engagement, Thought Provocation, and Fostering Socially Engaged Thinkers in a New Decade

Volume 17, Number 1
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<u>ESSAYS</u>

<u>REVIEW</u>

PREFACE

The St. John's University Humanities Review, founded in 2002 by Paul Devlin, is home to an extraordinary group of editors, guest editors, poets, writers, artists, contributors and volunteers. The importance of historical and political movements within the humanities continues to fill the pages of *The Humanities Review,* and we would like to thank everyone who has contributed to our publication over the last eighteen years.

In this issue, *The St. John's University Humanities Review* Volume 17, Issue 1, 2020, we seek to provide educators with invigorating, practical, and effective pedagogical methods to apply to their classrooms. This issue addresses the current state of the classroom and how instructors can use their platforms to promote and instill the drive within students to perform active anti-racism, societal reform, and to create a socially-aware population. The texts within contemplate how instructors approach topics including, but not limited to, effective student engagement, decanonization, decolonizing education, inclusive education, pop culture pedagogy, etc., and how these topics address aforementioned social issues including, but not limited to, racism, exclusivity, elections, human rights (and the violations thereof), and so on. These scholars write on the topic of student engagement and answer the following questions: how do we make students energized to engage in critical thought and conversation with their peers? How do we encourage students to see the importance in listening and acting to affect change? What pedagogical tools and practices encourage active thinking, listening, and discussion in today's classroom? We are excited to share these many talented voices with you including poetry by Tiffany L. Davis and Stephen Paul Miller, articles by Justine Nicole Wilson, Mel Michelle Lewis, Marie Gugnishev, Dasharah Green, Sarah Glessner, and Tina L. Margolis, essays by Regina A. Bernard-Carreño and Jordan Charlton, and a book review by Kainat Abidi Puetz.

We hope these texts inspire you and provide you with new methods of engaging your students!

Justin Lerner, *Editor*
Colleen McClintock, *Assistant Editor*
Maureen H. Daniels, *Consulting Editor*

POETRY

Tiffany L. Davis

Within Those Forty Minutes

Bell Rings

<u>Homeroom</u>

They—
     walk in
Tired—from late calls, throwing balls, Biggie Smalls
Blasting—through wireless things
How—technology swings
     the
minds of our youth, as they—
     walk in.
Tuck in—
     your shirt now!
Pull up—
     your pants now!
Did you iron your shirt? What length is your skirt?
Good—
Morning ------ What's wrong?
Tuck in—
     your shirt now!
Pull up
     Your pants are sagging, dropping, falling
Into their thoughts and patterns
Moods swing, Babies bring
Their issues, need tissues
Sit. Down. Now!

Quiet.
As the announcements begin, which sports team will win
And who will spend

Their time in deten-tion
Detain and refrain from what your world has taught you?
Are you prepared for what this world has brought you?
I pledge,
      We pledge,
                Recite pledge, but hold no allegiance
to those who scare your freedom
Those who dare to bleed them
      from the cradle to the grave

Just say the pledge and behave!

Proceed.

1ˢᵗ Period

Math sucks
when you—can't count them bucks
when you—can't keep them ducks
      in a row.

Math sucks
when your mom's coins don't add to
the value and price—
      of them Js.
      Carolina Blue.

It don't add up to—
The cents ain't common
When a fraction of moms and dads don't
Reciprocate
the love in their language, they sink to the
      bottom.
But mathematics will save them
Numbers
      Don't
           Lie[1]
Jigga's words, Brooklyn's Babes

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[1] See Jay-Z. "Reminder." The Blueprint 3, 2009. Genius.com,
https://genius.com/Jay-z-reminder-lyrics.

Math sucks
when you can't define those blurred lines.

2nd Period

Goggles hang next to white lab coats
That ain't for us
They say

Mister, Mister, did Rza bomb atomically?
Yo, Miss, Rza said,
"Socrates' philosophies and hypotheses
is how we be droppin these"[2]
crazy ass Science projects!

THEY play ball. Genetics.
THEY rap. Genetics.
The other *they,* say THEY ain't meant to do nothing more
cuz. Genetics.
Sit. Sit on stools.
Listen. Listen to lessons
Brought to you by a man, with a plan,
         But this ain't your field.

THEY say,
"I know the best scientist, chemist, and physicist
They live on my block
         Or, used to
Now, they live in Cell Block 00187
         Trapped
Trapping mathematics and science
mixing and flipping. Serving
The block is their Project."

Goggles hang next to white lab coats
"That ain't for us,"
They say.

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[2] See Wu-Tang Clan featuring Cappadonna. "Triumph." Wu-Tang Forever, 1997. Genius.com,
https://genius.com/Wu-tang-clan-triumph-lyrics.

3rd Period

Hunger pangs.
Don't nobody eat that schooly.
     I do.
Players' cards bang.
Stand on line, watching that packaged cookie.
     Come on!
Last one. Please bring out more.
Next!
     More please
as this is my big meal, the One meal.

So hungry, I feel
In the depths of my soul
I'm pretty sure I told
     this lady to put more fries
on my tray, the day has come and gone
with only one meal, because
     my mom said so.

Eww, mystery meat
Schooly still bussin
Yo, pass that
     Muffin!
Stuff it into my bag.
Later, the pangs play drums within my
     stomach this reality which leaves me
     hungry for more
         as
This can't be life.

Schooly will fool me, as this ain't grandma's cooking
But, she ain't here no more…

4th Period

Connect this lesson to my history.
Tell me the truth
Or let me go free.

Sun, be still
The fight is not over
Your cup will runneth over
      as they fill
           your head
               with lies.
Every month is February for us.
Nina Simone and Billie Holiday's
      Strange Fruit still hangs
but in disguise.

It has transformed.
Hands Up! Don't Shoot!
Oh, no longer a noose.

Still under attack
A date, which will live in infamy
      or days, like today.

A marriage of two histories,
American and Black
Which will they teach today?
Sir, go sit in the back.

You're late again, where's your pass?
This lesson ain't meant for me, this is your history class.

5th Period

Ain't ain't a word
Leave that at the door
Take your slang and bad habits
And tell them, Nevermore

The pen is your heart
      Be deliberate
Here is where you soar
      Creativity, use it.

Those who came before you
Chose words to carry on

The fire that raged within
The pen that's mightier than the sword.

C'mon, ain't nobody trying to read no Shakespeare.

Ain't ain't a word
Leave that at the door

Kendrick is their bard,
A poem better have a flow
How do you even spell
   O-NO-MA-TO-POE-IA
They've been dying to know.

C'mon, ain't nobody trying to read no Shakespeare.

Ain't ain't a word
Leave that at the door

Listen folks, I get what you're saying
Another assessment given
With classical Jazz in the background playing

Begin your narrative
You have a story to tell
Brooklyn is where you come from
Even a rose, still grows, through hell
   Or concrete
So let me repeat

Take out your pens and write
Don't stop until you're told to do so
Be inspired by those who came before you
Genetics blessed your rhythm and flow

C'mon, ain't nobody
   You got one more ain't
     And there's the door!

Fine. Othello!
Yeah, he's a Moor

Now we're talking flavor
Leave your prejudice at the door

But what about Hughes?
Who?
That's news to me
I, Too
Langston is who, I want to read

Yo, Teach, let's rap
My pops told me school is a trap
This stuff don't matter
I'm about this paper
Make these pockets fatter

Teach, make them see
The world is bigger than
   These Brooklyn
     Streets

Teach, pull a rabbit out of a hat
   dance, sing, rap
   do all of that

Don't lose them.
They don't love them.
You are them.
Make them – love them.

But, they aren't trying to read Shakespeare

So, make them feel Shakespeare
  make them feel the words they choose
  make them honor Langston Hughes

Words are your power, use them wisely
English class is where you can harness them
   Precisely
Cuz, ain't ain't a word.

I'll see you guys tomorrow. Ju heard!

Stephen Paul Miller

Honest Hope
about teaching and music, for David Shapiro, Justin Lerner, and Regina Avner

Everything inside me insists,
resists, and goes under.

You can't change the past
but everything else does.

Dreamy against a moment's skin,
like a building upside-down,

Scott Joplin and Irving Berlin meet
and the Great American Songbook opens.

I tell you this class is going nowhere
and you say that's what you like best about it.

Sometimes Joplin drops in,
but the connections are loose

and lie between two flowers
among other insecure texts.

Suddenly everything feels left to right
sliding sideways making me

forget all the chest pains
settling in.

Captive roses with their blooms cut,
we swing on each severed downbeat

becoming so nothing
it's hard to hear.

Chopin keeps his notes tight
And Brahms bubbles up

Through the milky Sergio Leone film.
shaping us. What we do is where we are.

I'm excited about not being excited.
Love's tirade is enough already already and

I'm just blazing it.
No one in this class knows how or when

Franklin Roosevelt was elected
but I feel warm spring air.

Do you want to say something
    with my pen
because all I do is take attendance.

To me that means
Putting more and more

quarters in the washing machine,
setting different cycles,

rinsing and drying,
softening and folding.

I don't invent fine distinctions
to make some better than others.

When I'm wild, the class controls me.
            This is such a good class

it doesn't notice the teacher falling asleep.

The class is calm and controlled
Yet warm and spring like.

        Bach volunteers
in a free health dispensary

playing late Joplin that's more like jazz
then segueing into a very proper 1890s

Joplin waltz that's
really jazzy Chopin.

I have to concentrate
    to get this right.
One two three. One two three.

Flourish and stroll. Flourish
      and stroll. Flourish and stroll.

You charge twice for "extra guacamole"—
once for "guac," twice for "extra."

What kind of sophistry is that?
Guac is always extra.

As Benjamin talked of buildings and architecture
these words are just somewhere

for your heightened attention to hang,
for I aim to hang-out

and like you being here with me.
        Could you unblock my valves?
That would be terrific.

Socialism is nothing
      but a human face.
You know, some lovely
      Brahms and dialysis.

Like everything else
you're made in a camera.

When you get the dailies back
your eyeballs animate,

they move back—
giving them some air.

Taking in each other's wash
    is only secondary,
The city's only real industry
    is shoplifting.

Horace said literature informs and delights
but when you inform you also delight

and delight brings balance
and dancing

ARTICLES

Justine Nicole Wilson

Pop Culture Canon:
Promoting Student Access and Autonomy
Through Non-Traditional Texts

The Pop Culture Canon as Inclusivity

When I stand at the front of a classroom and introduce myself to my students each new academic term, they are always surprised to hear that I am a scholar of *Batman* rather than Shakespeare. I do enjoy some of his works, but I am all the more interested in the living breathing mythology of *Batman* that has asserted itself in American culture. Although the study of American popular culture has become more widely accepted, the stigma attached to "lower literature" has yet to disappear. It seems to have become ingrained in higher education. The confused and almost betrayed expressions on their faces bring into memory the squinting eyes and furrowed brows of concerned classmates and professors who questioned my decision to write my master's thesis on Dante's *Inferno* in conversation with *Over the Garden Wall*[1], a children's cartoon. The most common student response to this information mimics the comments I've heard throughout my graduate study from many peers and some instructors. I have become accustomed to the typical questions and comments: "You aren't getting a degree in *that,*" "What a waste of time and money," "Why not study something practical/employable/marketable?"

It has never occurred to me that the study of stories that are consumed by massive audiences, often from childhood and continuing on throughout adolescence and adulthood, was impractical. The stories which are taught to entire communities are no longer told around a burning fire, passed down from elders. These non-traditional literary mediums makeup th*e new oral tradition*. However, it is immediately apparent that the great literary canon and academia's love affair with it are prominent factors in shaping the practice of excluding entire groups of texts. The great literary canon may be one of the most successful gatekeepers in our educational systems, especially where higher learning is concerned. Adherence to the praise and study of the canon and the exclusion of "lower" work prevents true diversity in any literature classroom. The canon is not sufficiently representative of the diversity of the twenty-first-century student populace. It does not only alienate and remove certain genres, writers, and mediums from academia, but does much to

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[1] *Over the Garden Wall* was the first mini-series produced by Cartoon Network. Its story borrows heavily from Dante's work, employing a spiritual odyssey of moral redemption.

alienate and exclude the students who are meant to study from the canon. They are taught that *these* texts are to be hailed as the standard for great literature. By showing a largely homogenized set of texts as what all great writing must aspire to be, the canon simultaneously demonstrates to our students that any sort of texts, narratives, genres, and writers that are not displayed or represented by the canon are not great writing. Non-canonical literature is portrayed as unacademic, low-brow, low-class, and unworthy of study. I reject this notion completely. The study of non-traditional texts and the pop culture canon work to build a bridge between students and literature, while allowing students to interact with and create their own canons of great works. This opportunity accomplishes two great things: firstly, students are encouraged to engage intimately with these texts, considering their own relationship with the texts that they study in a formal space and the texts that are excluded from formal educational spaces. In this way, the pop culture canon affords students the opportunity to reassess and to critique the traditional canon. Secondly, the study of the pop culture canon creates spaces of inclusivity across genre, culture, time, and identities. This is accomplished as students develop, edit, and interrogate the canon based on their own criteria. Rather than accepting what has been declared as great literature, students are tasked with determining which literature belongs in the canon of popular culture.

The pop culture canon consists of non-traditional texts. It is comprised of graphic novels, film, cartoons, videogames, music, songs, and traditional forms of fiction that have been written by groups which have been ignored by the traditional canon. The nature of this canon allows for more sufficient representation of the students who will be exposed to it. As the racial, economic, and gendered barriers of higher learning that once excluded most Americans from the college campus have been slowly dismantled over the last several decades, the student population has become increasingly diverse. The reality of diversity means that our campuses are filled with students from varying backgrounds. Many of these students will have made their way through K-12 without being exposed to literature that represents their own experiences or, perhaps worse, that have had their experiences prescribed to them as a limited and repeated selection of minority texts that have been deemed sufficient enough to sit beside a Eurocentric canon. I understand that it is important for students to be introduced to stories that are unfamiliar to them. There should be an exploration of narratives that will immerse young scholars in a world or a perspective that is vastly different from their own. While there is great value in exposing young scholars to varied experiences through literature, there is also a need to expose students to literature that offers some representation of the students' experiences. Carolyn Cocca describes the importance of representation in her work *Superwomen* as she writes:

> While you do not have to have a perfect demographic match with a character to identify with her or him, seeing someone who looks like you can have a positive impact on self-esteem and seeing no one who looks like you can have a negative impact on self-esteem. You are more likely to imagine yourself as a hero if you see yourself represented as a hero. Marginalized groups have been forced to "cross-identify" with those different from them while dominant groups have not. (Cocca 3)

Cocca's work speaks on representation in visual mediums such as the graphic novel. While this is the case, Cocca's argument for representation and its potential impact is certainly applicable in

conversation with the pop culture canon. Arguably, we as instructors are not looking to teach students to value themselves. Self-worth is not blatantly written into the curriculum. Cocca's message may be dismissed in this context. However, I caution that this is a mistake. If we are truly training scholars and professionals, how can we do so under a curriculum that either removes them from the conversation of scholarly study or affixes them to a limited and specific role?

Again, this form of exclusion drives a narrative that only specific *types* of stories are worthy of study. Sadly, those are often Western-centric, composed of mostly male writers and woefully underrepresented members of numerous groups of readers and writers. Issues of race, ethnicity, disability, neurodiversity, gender identity, sexual orientation, economic, and class status are not represented widely enough and in those rare instances are represented by writers who are not members of these underrepresented groups. This leaves the underrepresented to become stereotypical plot devices or, very bluntly, literary props. I would not claim that there no texts within popular culture that make these same mistakes; however, I do assert that the nature of the pop culture canon allows for the inclusion of more diverse writers and affords much more opportunity for the study of narratives about underrepresented groups that have been provided by its identifying members. This is one method by which we can combat and correct the issues of underrepresentation and negative representation that Cocca describes. We may not consciously set out with the goal of teaching our students to value themselves when we put together our reading lists, but we are very loudly sending the message that *academia* does not value them when those lists are exclusionary. If their cultures and experiences are missing from the canon on the grounds that they are not worthy of study, then those cultures and experiences are being actively invalidated. Simultaneously, validation and acknowledgment belong to a select few. The most common narratives taught, re-taught, and hailed as great literature focus on similar subjects. This further enforces a homogenous status-quo in the classroom.

Unlike the traditional canon, the pop culture canon allows simultaneously for more variety *and* more scrutiny, as it is subject to frequent change. The case must be made for the addition and removal of texts from this canon as it is growing and changing frequently, unlike the traditional canon, which remains stagnant. The inherent subjectivity of this canon also promotes critical thought and analysis. When confronting the pop culture canon, students are being asked to consider what makes literature great and how a canon is to be formed. Consideration must be given to time, space, and culture. What are the great works of that students' culture? Is there a canon of works that best demonstrates masterful writing in a specific decade and, if so, then what are the prominent mediums of that decade? Constructing their own canons demands that students confront the literature that they have been exposed to both inside the classroom and beyond its contained environment. Thinking much smaller and remaining within the classroom, the implementation of the pop culture canon has proven itself to be a valuable tool for helping students interact with literature in a meaningful and critical manner.

All institutions are composed of varying demographics. Throughout my career as an educator, I have consistently served institutions primarily attended by students from underserved

and marginalized groups. Often, my students describe their previous experiences interacting with literature and writing as unpleasant, uncomfortable, or in some cases extremely sparse. I was taken aback by the number of students who told me that they had not been made to read the full length of a novel. The task itself seemed equally unpleasant and uncomfortable. My demands that they interact with the text are also met with panic. Gone are the days of simple memorization and summarization. In my nearly five years of experience teaching undergraduate courses on composition and literature, the issue of confronting *any* literature at all rears its head as a daunting and overwhelming beast, leaving many students who had never been given the opportunity to put the proper skills into practice paralyzed. The study of popular[2] texts can serve as a bridge between the students and the unfamiliarity of traditional literature.

Leigh A. Hall's study, "How Popular Culture Texts Inform and Shape Students' Discussions of Social Studies Texts," explores the pairing of popular culture with the study of traditional academic texts. Leigh writes, "In school and at home, youths often engage with an array of pop culture texts for pleasure or to gain information that addresses issues important to them (. . .) Their experiences with pop culture texts also support their development as literate individuals [and help] them better understand themselves" (297). Leigh's work describes the use of popular culture aiding middle school students with diving into the critical analysis of academic or "social texts" (297). Leigh's chosen study group may be younger than the typical undergraduate student, but the concept employed here is similar. There is a connection being made between the familiar and the unfamiliar and popular texts are what allow the connections to be made. It should be noted, that in addition to this great benefit, that pop culture texts can absolutely stand on their own and need not aid in the introduction to more traditional modes. I have implemented the use of popular texts to this purpose in undergraduate literature and composition courses to great success. Exploring its use in the latter, I have found that encouraging students to revisit popular texts from their youth has been a wonderful tool for introducing them to the concept of literary analysis and the practice of critical thinking. Students are not as removed from literary analysis as they may believe themselves to be. I have made a habit of telling my students, half-jokingly, that they first became literary analysts when they sat around the table in their middle school cafeteria arguing furiously over the ethical dilemmas of *Avatar: The Last Airbender* (as one example). This work of animation is a popular text that deals very intimately with issues of environmentalism, fascism, ethnic cleansing, class struggle, personal trauma and a myriad of other very complicated themes, and its target audience is small children. As my students continue to age, I am sure that my half-joke will as well. I will have to replace *Avatar* with something more relevant as time goes on, but for now the half-joke is working.

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[2] The term "popular" in this instance refers to works within the pop culture canon. Graphic novels, cartoons, videogames, television series, films, music/lyrics, and other mediums are included in this description.

Animating the Classroom: *Hey Arnold!* as Analytical Exercise

     In the practice of using popular texts in the undergraduate classroom, I find that it is most helpful in building skills of analysis and critical thinking. I have repeatedly found success in using popular texts to introduce students to a variety of literary elements, genres, and themes. One exercise which I have used consistently is to introduce students to character study via what is admittedly one of my favorite popular works, *Hey Arnold!* The show is viewed in class and a group discussion follows. The show's short episodic stories require that students focus on a very contained narrative. There isn't any room for making broad strokes; they work with very little and thus must be extremely specific. For example, one of the series' few twenty-two minute-[3] stories, "Helga on the Couch" focuses solely on the show's bully, Helga Pataki. Her prominence in the series and the release of a Helga-centric episode furl the debate on her position as a possible secondary protagonist rather than an antagonist to young Arnold. True to form, this character study seeks to explore Helga's mindset and dive deeper into the reasoning behind her decision to lash out and ridicule her classmates, often in violent, borderline abusive manners. This behavior includes physical abuse in some instances. This is accomplished through the use of a simple setting: Helga is placed into therapy and the episode almost entirely exists as the actual therapy session. This is a very contained narrative in a series that succeeds in creating isolated stories that can be viewed in any order.

     Student reaction to this popular text varies, and the subject matter is upsetting for some. What is consistent, however, is that the students actively and thoroughly offer their analysis and critique of the work. Comments are made on plot, setting, character, and even performance. One student expressed that she noticed that therapy was treated with extreme aversion, taking note of Helga's teachers being fearful that the school psychiatrist may be observing their behavior. When discussing Helga's violent behavior, another student offered a critique of a scene in which Helga's parents are told that their daughter will be required to attend therapy sessions. She is met with anger and ordered to sit in the family trophy room to discuss it. As they broke down the scene the student noted, "That all important conversations happen in the trophy room. The family revolves around competition and winning. [Helga's father] is more concerned with image than he is for his daughter's mental health." The group discussions show a clear understanding of the task of thinking critically rather than offering summary. Through this activity, the students learn to engage with literature, to *read* actively, and to express their findings. I find that using these smaller texts allows for a group-based analysis in real-time. That is to say that students are all interacting with the text in class rather than reading off on their own. Obviously, independent work and reading are still valuable parts of their education, but these activities create a space of social learning. Although I have yet to pinpoint the reason, it has been my experience that many more students are willing to participate in the dissection of episodic texts. It may be due to their familiarity with shows like *Hey Arnold*. Whereas I may often find myself staring at the same hands

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[3] Like many cartoons of the mid-1990s through the mid-2000s, *Hey Arnold!'s* typical running time of twenty-two minutes included two distinct eleven-minute stories. On occasion, "special" episodes would devote the full running time to a singular story; i.e. "Arnold's Christmas" (1996)

that would typically participate, during these exercises I am instead left to juggle furiously eager students. Again, the subject matter in these works is often very personal and polarizing. I would suggest, with any work, that we as educators prepare our students to engage with difficult topics of discussion.

Popular texts can be studied independently of traditional texts both at an introductory level and in a very advanced mode. Simultaneously, popular texts may be paired with traditional texts. When teaching courses on the graphic novel, I will often pair each graphic novel with one or two short stories with which the graphic novel may share some connection. Initially, I had begun to do this in order to make it more apparent to the students that a medium that had been seen as frivolous is as relevant and academically valuable as any traditionally academic text. For example, when exploring J.H Williams III's take on the superhero story, Batwoman: *Hydrology*, students are also made to read Charlotte Perkins Gilman's, "The Yellow Wallpaper" and Kate Chopin's, "The Story of an Hour." All three texts explore themes of autonomy, free will, mental health, feminism, and arguably much more. Is William's approach to these issues somehow invalid because his representation of these themes is accompanied by colorful illustrations? It is not surprising that undergraduate students would hold tightly to what they have been taught about distinguishing high literature from its "lowly" counterparts. Helping students to move beyond this ingrained idea is key to allowing the students to have more autonomy as they study and continue to sharpen their skills of critical thinking and argumentation. Students should be encouraged to interact with the popular texts that surround them every day. While I do argue for the diversification of texts, I do acknowledge that several other reformations in higher education are needed in order to achieve true inclusivity. Factors such as grading policies, assessments, student access, and many more elements of learning will also need to be diversified. Still, to diversify texts in both form and genre is a step towards a wider breadth of inclusion and representation. It is with these goals in mind that I work to develop my use of pop culture literature in formal projects.

Student Autonomy: Building New Canons

To encourage the continued exercise of interacting with popular texts, I have developed two projects that require students to engage with popular literature. I refer to one as "The Narrative Project" and the other as "Building the Pop Culture Canon." The building of the pop culture canon is a semester-long affair. Students are asked to curate a list of what they consider to be the great works of their cultures, their time, and their space. The assignment requires that they revisit their list and consider: what constitutes great writing? Are there additional requirements as you move across your list? Can your list be split into multiple great canons? Students are tasked with examining their own criteria for the inclusion and exclusion of works from their literary canon. Students are also asked to review the traditional canon. A great source for in-class debate is the argument for or against the removal of a traditional work from the literary canon. A student may propose that we add one of the works that we have studied together during the term. This exercise of continuously revising the canon allows students to critique and question what they have been taught is the standard of great writing. They must think critically and methodically to both

articulate and apply their own standards. Additionally, this project allows for students to be active observers of the canon. They are able to see what is missing from the canon, to try to understand where the deficit originates, and they are active participants in correcting the diversity deficit. In doing so, students are given more autonomy as they are free to study texts beyond what they have been assigned. They are not simply being given a list of great works; they are made to go out, to find great works, and to share them with their peers.

This student autonomy and active engagement are further reinforced by the narrative project. This is an assignment that asks the students to research a narrative of their choosing. Their options are not limited to the traditional novel. Their narrative may appear in the form of a comic book, cartoon, film, videogame, painting, or any other form of storytelling that may peak their interests. I do ask that students email or meet with me to discuss their selected narrative and, so long as it is not inappropriate, they get the green light and are able to begin their research. While students are free to pursue their research topics, they are given some guidance in that they must make some sort of claim about the cultural and historical significance of their selected narrative. I find that I must always make time in class for the workshopping of the thesis. Students are often accustomed to responding to a question that is posed in the prompt of assignment instructions. In this instance, students are *not* being asked a specific question and are instead instructed to pose their own arguments. Sometimes the freedom of creating their own research topics on any narrative that they'd like can be overwhelming. This must be worked into feeling commonplace. As students progress through their undergraduate studies and move into professional or graduate studies, they will be expected to organize research projects to be the source of their subjects rather than being *given* a subject and commanded to pursue it. The format of this project requires students to build their skills of invention, argumentation, and organization.

The results of this project have made it one of my favorites and, while class prep time is precious, I have not been able to bring myself to stop assigning it. I have seen students engaged passionately with texts that they feel are worthy of academic study and actively make their case. Leaving the medium of text as an open and free choice has resulted in a wide variety of storytelling, but an equally wide variety of *storytellers*. The presentations have been largely memorable. I can recall very fondly a student doing a presentation on the theme song to the PBS show *Arthur*, reggae, and its connection to class struggles in Jamaica. I have had students use interactive texts that required that their peers participate in the presentation of their work. Notably, one student's presentation was on the videogame *Until Dawn*, an interactive storytelling experience in which players' decisions directly impacted the story. Proper demonstration of the game had two different students come and play through the same short segment. Naturally, the results of each playthrough were different. This project gives students an opportunity to learn from one another and to explore their own interests. It has also been a source of new information for me, exposing both the instructor and their students to texts they may have never considered spending any time with otherwise. This diverse exchange of information allows instructors to consider new ways to teach the texts with which they are familiar, as well as new texts that can be taught. Genre and theme may be crucial aspects of building a course curriculum, but they can be approached from a

multitude of avenues. If you are designing your course around Horror Lit for example, you may consider how and where Horror Lit appears outside of the traditional novel. If you are keen to remain in the bindings of books, consider who is writing horror and how that writing changes across culture, time, space, identity. This is applicable across genres.

The broadening of horizons goes both ways, so to speak. I have found that this project has been helpful in keeping my reading lists from becoming stale. I have switched around my popular texts of choice based around some factors of what my students decided to teach. It gives me the opportunity to see what voices are still dominant and which are still being silenced.

Conclusion: Closing the Deficit

The traditional literary canon is an insufficient and exclusionary list of texts. It fails to offer the level of diversity that is appropriate and reflective of the twenty-first-century college classroom. It is an outdated and harmful form of academic gatekeeping that signals the validation of a few select experiences and the invalidation of a multitude of others. The pop culture canon is one possible answer to directly confronting and correcting the diversity deficit of the literary canon. The study of popular culture is picking up. There are more instances of popular culture making appearances in scholarly study. Pop culture pedagogy is still relatively young and warrants far more research. The use of the pop culture canon and the study of popular texts creates moments for true inclusivity and diverse pedagogy. Students are given access to literature that they often lack in their K-12 education and that is often foreign once they begin their college careers. Simultaneously, the implementation of the pop culture canon affords students autonomy that is not available when they are simply prescribed texts. A complete and thorough educational experience must call for student choice, student engagement, and student inclusion. The pop culture canon is one method we may use to promote these invaluable and crucial practices.

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Mel Michelle Lewis

Liberatory Art and Design Education: Engaging Queer of Color Pedagogies for Creative Practice

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> Teaching is a performative act. And it is that aspect of our work that offers the space for change, invention, spontaneous shifts, that can serve as a catalyst drawing out the unique elements in each classroom.
>
> —bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*

As the first week of the 2020 spring semester at Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) begins, I reflect upon what Pedagogy in the 2020s will mean for me and for my colleagues at our institution. MICA is recognized nationally as a premier leader in art and design education, "redefining the role of the artists and designers as creative, solutions-oriented makers and thinkers who will drive social, cultural, and economic advancement for our future" (MICA, 2020). This is our articulated institutional objective. As a professor of Gender/Sexuality Studies in the Humanistic Studies Department, my training in Black feminist thought, Black queer studies, and intersectional critical pedagogies shapes my curriculum and pedagogical approach to teaching makers and to fulfilling MICA's vision through educational praxis that redefines the role of makers in our society.

This article examines the development of a liberatory queer of color pedagogy for creative practice. This pedagogy responds to new questions at the nexus of interdisciplinary liberal arts and art & design education. Engaging a 2020 turning point perspective, and emphasizing two of my courses, Queer Literature and Theory and Trans/Feminism, I interrogate the successes and pitfalls of employing course materials, theoretical framings, required assignments, and in-class discussions intended to educate and inspire art and design students and support their explorations of gender, sexuality, race, and social justice through the lens of "theory in the flesh" (Moraga and Anzaldúa 23), centering the lived experiences and material realities of queer and trans people of color (QTPOC).

Engaging in feminist reflexive practice, in both classes I was transparent about the fact that I was not only new to MICA, but also to an art and design institution, having taught for the last fifteen years in state research universities or private liberal arts colleges. I was also "out" to students, sharing that my personal identities as a Black queer intersex feminist and pedagogical investments as a scholar and practitioner of Black feminist thought and Black queer praxis. These perspectives shape my approach to curriculum design in two ways. First, I center a "personal is political" viewpoint, meaning that the content is not taught as theoretical or abstract. Rather, the

course content is taught as embodied, affective, and experiential. Next, although my identities and experiences align with much of the content in the course, I build cultural humility, reflexivity, and self-articulation skills into the lessons so that students are better able to develop their own voices, identify their own perspectives, tell their own stories, and share their own experiences.

MICA students have been very vocal over the last several years, calling for a more diverse faculty, as well as more opportunities to intensively study, race, sexuality, gender identity, and decoloniality. Students were welcoming and open, even as many were challenged by the course, having little to no foundation for the topic of queer literature and theory. The students who were more advanced in the subject area, or had a personal interest, were very enthusiastic about the course.

Central questions that I have for my own pedagogical project include: What happens when makers encounter humanistic studies courses in which queer and trans people of color (POC) author all central texts? How do makers respond to social justice "problem solving" assignments in the context of the 2020 political landscape? How can cutting edge "innovation" in 2020 incorporate foundational knowledges from feminist, civil rights, and gay liberation movements, and influence movements today? I begin with an overview of each course, then I explore these questions as they apply to the content and objectives of each class.

Queer Literature and Theory

In the fall of 2019, I taught the course Queer Literature and Theory, a 300-level class, with an enrollment of sophomore, junior, and senior students. The course description was a broad examination of queer literary works and theoretical perspectives. New to campus, I had not originally designed the course but was assigned the topic, given that it is one of my subject areas. I took the opportunity to re-develop the class for makers; among the majors represented in the class were large cohorts of Animation, Architectural Design, Illustration, and Game Design students. Given their studio majors (I had access to this information over the summer), I recognized the class as an assembly of storytellers. Thus, I selected texts by queer and trans writers of color that I believed would provide exciting creative inspiration, as well as opportunities to seamlessly engage theory and practice. The central texts for this course included: Gabby Rivera's *Juliet Takes a Breath* (2019), Kai Cheng Thom's *Fierce Femmes and Notorious Liars: a Dangerous Trans Girl's Confabulous Memoir* (2016), and Alexis De Veaux's *Yabo* (2014). In Teaching to Transgress (1994), bell hooks writes:

> Excitement in higher education was viewed as potentially disruptive of the atmosphere of seriousness assumed to be essential to the learning process. To enter classroom settings in colleges and universities with the will to share the desire to encourage excitement was to transgress . . . Students had to be seen in their particularity as individuals. (7)

It was excitement that I hoped would drive this transgressive class; each of the texts featured protagonists who were both close in age to the majority of traditional college age students, and who were on their own transgressive queer liberatory journeys. Like hooks, I seek to decolonize the

western teacher-centered model that relies on seriousness and discipline and encourage a passionate, personal, and political connection to the course materials. The response to each text in this class was one of excitement; each inspired students to examine their own abilities to make and/or support queer community, personally and through their creative practice.

The qualitative section of course evaluations at the end of the semester provided insight regarding what I call "liberatory art and design education." Students responded that learning new theories and hearing marginalized voices helped them to generate "new ideas" and "queer perspectives" in their artwork. Several also indicated that learning about the diversity of relationships and human connection through queer literature complimented their studio practice. A painting major noted that the material "directly related" to some of the subjects in their own artwork, which was affirming and inspiring. Thinking of themselves as storytellers, students responded that they felt it was "crucial" to hear stories and perspectives unique to queer communities. Several students concluded that queer literature and research is "important for any artistic practice," illustrating that all makers should have access to inclusive education, including queer literature and theory, regardless of their personal identity or medium.

Returning to hooks' statement above about "seeing" students, being present with them, and engaging their particularity and individuality, one student with a deep interest in queer animation noted that the course offered instruction on the practice of "queering interpretation and critique." The student felt this skillset was valuable for their own work. This student and others reported that by the end of the class they could more clearly help others interpret queer creative works. This skillset was particularly significant for those makers who identified as queer and/or who identified their creative work as queer. Many of these students indicated that they felt invisible or were unsure how to discuss the queer content they produced during critique in their art classes, when writing descriptions of their pieces, or showing their work publicly. This course offered them language, theory, and a body of queer creative work to reference when translating the queer content of their own work to others.

The final projects for this course helped students to synthesize our textual examinations and apply their own hand to providing a "creative response" or solution to challenges in queer literature, theory, and community. The final "creative response" asked students to reflect upon some of the problems we encountered in the texts throughout the semester, including racism, classism, sexism, cissexism, homophobia, heteroxesexism, xenophobia, and the challenges of telling queer stories, using an applied intersectional analysis, and responding with a "solution" in the medium of their choice.

Creative Practice for Queer Literature and Theory Makers

The "creative response" project instructed students to present a rigorous and dynamic project of their own design related to the course theme. They had complete artistic freedom regarding the problem and solution, as well as the flexibility to select the medium. Responding to histories of censorship of queer books and educational materials in K-12 schools, one student proposed a

clandestine system of informing students about LGBTQAI+ issues and books that would not appear in the library. Using graphic design and illustration, this student produced small pamphlets, intended for transgressive placement in library books in schools with strict censorship policies. Two other students animated fantasy worlds, queering familiar traditional roles, such as prince, princess, wizard, and witch. Another group of animators and fiber artists composed a complex and humorous shadow puppet show with a message affirming queer and trans young people.

All of the semester's projects featured the work of solutions-oriented makers, yet I was pleasantly surprised by the flexibility and creativity employed by design and architecture students. While reading *Yabo* during the semester, we explored the African Burial Ground memorial in New York City (NPS, 2020), which is featured as a part of the storyline in the text. Archaeological research, excavation, and the construction of a national park service memorial honoring enslaved Africans may not seem to fit as part of a queer literature and theory course, exploring queer time, space, and African ancestors in the text; but, *Yabo* made enslaved Africans and the interconectedness of Afrodecendants across generations a critical focal point for students who took the opportunity to think about the history of enslavement as both an element of queer history, and a subject of queer art and design. Students used *Yabo* as the inspiration for examining the aesthetics of memorials. Final projects engaged the example of the African Burial Ground memorial and yielded digital designs for queer space and place. One design was fabricated to appear as if a brightly colored square room had access to various other dimensions, below and above, signaling the nonlinear existence of ancestors and the future of the community. Another project provided a blueprint for a mobile education unit featuring digital humanities design for intersex activists to attend events like pride or protests. Final reflections from the class indicated that students felt the creative response project was "very insightful" and encouraged them to "incorporate their artistic practices" while engaging with queer literature and theory. With great success, the students in the Queer Literature and Theory course integrated their knowledge and incorporated their creativity, producing liberatory practices that spoke to them through their mediums of choice.

Trans/Feminism

The fall 2019 semester's run of Trans/Feminism took an intersectional approach to Trans/Feminism, also focused on "theory in the flesh," centering the lived experiences and material realities of queer and trans people of color (QTPOC). This course was a 300-level course with an enrollment of juniors and seniors.

I did not propose or design the original iteration of the course; I used the course description to formulate an entirely new syllabus of my own design, asserting an introduction to POC transgender studies curriculum, focusing on "theory in the flesh" and QTPOC. I utilized Susan Stryker and Talia Bettcher's *Transgender Studies Quarterly* (2016) double special issue on Trans/Feminisms and Tourmaline, Eric A. Stanley, and Johanna Burton's *Trap Door: Trans Cultural Production and the Politics of Visibility* (2017), as guides for the framing and thematic content of my course reinterpretation.

As Stryker and Bettcher lay out in their introduction, my course "explore[d] feminist work taking place within trans studies; trans and genderqueer activism; cultural production in trans, genderqueer, and nonbinary gender communities; and in communities and cultures across the globe that find the modern Western gender system alien and ill-fitting to their own self-understanding" (7). Highlighting connections between Black feminist thought, women of color feminisms, and Trans/Feminism, I borrowed from Stryker and Bettcher's framing regarding examinations of feminism. They write:

> We want this issue to expand the discussion beyond the familiar and overly simplistic dichotomy often drawn between an exclusionary transphobic feminism and an inclusive trans-affirming feminism. We seek to highlight the many feminisms that are trans inclusive and that affirm the diversity of gender expression, in order to document the reality that feminist transphobia is not universal nor is living a trans life, or a life that contests the gender binary, antithetical to feminist politics. (7)

With this framing in place, texts for the course included readings from *Trap Door (2017),* a decolonial focus featuring talks by Trystan Cotton, poetry by Cristina Pitter, and the article "Decolonizing Transgender: A Roundtable Discussion," published in *Transgender Studies Quarterly* (2016). Qualitative research examined in the course included Sean Arayasirikul and Erin C. Wilson's, "Spilling the T on Trans-misogyny and microaggressions: an intersectional oppression and social process among trans women (2019) and Kevin Nadal's "A Decade of Microaggression Research and LGBTQ Communities" (2019). Anonymous student evaluations indicated a very positive response to the class.

In the qualitative section of the end of semester evaluations for this course, students reported they gained "a more specific lens" with which to engage the practice of "decolonizing concepts of transness" and attending to hidden trans and nonbinary histories that oppose a colonized binary. Students also named that learning "how to educate about transness" was a skillset they gained in the course. Several students reported that they felt the course offered a "basic understanding of different theories in transgender and feminist studies," including "intersectional social justice practices" and a critical skillset with which to analyze the colonized academy and educational practices. Students universally responded that they "learned a lot about terminology" and were now primed to identify when communities are left out of or erased from the conversations and histories. In the qualitative comments, only one student of the twenty-five responded that they thought the class would be "more about feminism" and that their expectation included a separate conversation on feminism. Although the course assignments show that most students understood and engaged the overlaps between transgender studies and feminist theory, and the emergence of Trans/Feminism as its own framework and perspective, I recognize that all students may not have understood or affirmed that viewpoint.

Creative Practice and Trans/Feminist Makers

In this course, students produced creative work responding to Trans/Feminism. One group made a satirical skit in which a family was watching television; the students produced the television show

segments and commercials, all featuring storylines or products that provided an analysis of normative masculinity and femininity, gender roles, and trans rights that addressed the 2020 political landscape. MICA offers majors in Film & Video, Animation, Graphic Design, Game Design, and Interactive Arts; using their skills as makers, the students in this group reimagined media representation, designing a humorous, critical, and inclusive news and entertainment experience. Other groups took a transnational approach to Trans/Feminism, examining the queer work and influence of icon Walter Mercado Salinas, the Mexican astrologer, as well as a comparative project of LGBTQ experiences in urban areas and rural communities in China.

Individual presentations in this class included Trans/Feminist-inspired artwork by illustrators and graphic design students. One of these students discussed gender and storyline as it pertained to a superhero of their own design; another offered group photography as a way to think about community, role models, and mentorship. Additionally, a critical analysis of representations of masculinity and femininity in product design yielded discussions of perfume bottles and makeup compacts.

In my assessment as the instructor, the innovation exemplified by the individual and group projects in this class engage MICA's mission and vision to "redefine the role of the artists and designers." Each student took Trans/Feminist analysis and applied their unique creative, solutions-oriented skills as makers and thinkers in order to advance social commentary and political inquiry by incorporating foundational knowledges from feminist, civil rights, and gay liberation movements, and movements around the world today.

Love: Liberatory Queer of Color Pedagogy for Creative Practice

In closing, I will frame these courses as pedagogical enactments of love and liberation. Chela Sandoval writes, "Love as social movement is enacted by revolutionary, mobile, and global conditions of citizen-activists who are allied through the apparatus of emancipation" (180.4). I loved designing and teaching these courses and engaging in teaching and learning liberatory praxis. These courses exemplify new attention to fostering socially engaged artists, designers, and makers.

By engaging "theory in the flesh" as an approach that centers the lived experiences and material realities of queer and trans people of color, the courses Queer Literature and Theory, and Trans/feminism sought to foster MICA's newly articulated vision, nurturing makers and generating "a just, sustainable, and joyful world activated and enriched by artists, designers, and educators who are valued for their leadership and imagination." Pedagogy in the 2020s necessitates a liberatory queer of color pedagogy for makers that can be implemented to meet these goals. Queer Literature and Theory and Trans/Feminism are two examples that I hope will serve as models for future liberatory pedagogical projects in the new millennium.

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Marie Gugnishev

Capturing Students with Comics: Teaching Race and Identity in *American Born Chinese*

Gene Luen Yang's *American Born Chinese* is a critically acclaimed graphic novel that has often been a centerpiece of the discussion surrounding comics in the classroom. Due to its depiction of race and identity, with a focus on exploring the formative years of a Chinese American boy, Jin Wang, the novel lends itself as a teaching tool that has an accessibility advantage due to its manner of conveying content. The arrangement and movement of visual and written narrative through comic panels supplements students' experience of reading, making it the medium ideal to introduce and convey its subjects of stereotype and racism, both on a micro- and macro-aggressive scale. Despite the novel being published in 2006, these themes still resonate into the modern-day, as the fallout from COVID-19 has given rise to new anti-Asian rhetoric that requires acknowledgement and examination, especially students who may be experiencing this propagation for the first time. The medium of graphic novels lends itself to a classroom setting due to its ability to communicate story in a more approachable and multifaceted manner while subtly introducing complicated issues to students; *American Born Chinese* uses the combination of visual and written storytelling unique to comics to educate students through intertextuality steeped in Chinese culture and a history of brutal stereotypes while placing these difficult topics in the school setting.

   American Born Chinese combines three distinct vignettes: a tale of the Monkey King, a biographical story about Jin, and a sitcom-style story about Cousin Chin-Kee; these narratives all carry the overarching theme of identity, especially in a racial and cultural context. When used in classrooms, the novel serves as a powerful teaching tool due to its heavy symbolism and theming, as well as its medium's accessibility to students. In the minds of students, comics are associated with leisurely reading, with the reduced text making them more manageable for students of all reading levels (Combs). Comics can often be consumed faster and in one sitting, since the added use of images creates instant content absorption. As Derek Parker Royal points out, "(. . .) comics rely on a visual language that encourages a more immediate processing time within the reader and, on the level of interpretation, a more 'efficient' exchange between author(s) and audience (. . .)" (7), creating a direct transfer of interpretation, where the author can be more overt with their intentions to emphasize their subjects and themes. The exploration of identity through *American Born Chinese* through the transformation and interplay between the three stories lends itself ideally to this medium, as the directness of images and less reliance on text allows these stories to forego extraneous explanation and fixate on the necessary elements needed to convey the larger narrative.
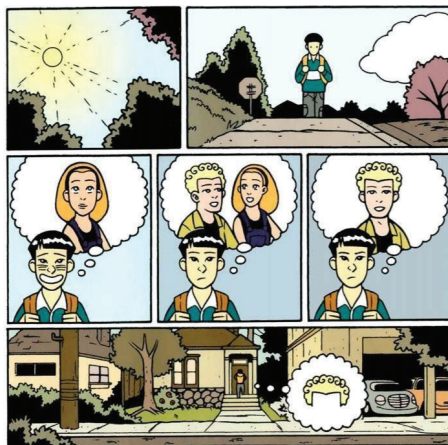
Figure 1 *From* American Born Chinese ©2006 by Gene Luen Yang

Using the graphic novel as a medium to tell stories adds a transformative aspect to literature by creating movement alongside its narrative. As comics theorist Scott McCloud expresses, "Comics [are] a mono-sensory medium. It relies on only one of the senses to convey a world of experience (. . .) Since cartoons already exist as concepts for the reader, they tend to flow easily through the conceptual territory between panels. Ideas [flow] into one another seamlessly" (89-90). Comics create a modern-day Kuleshov effect—a film technique in which viewers derive meaning from two (or more) sequential shots, as opposed to a singular shot—generating natural movement between panels akin to isolated shots in film. These panels create narrative in relation to one another, allowing the story to flow and be expressed easily to the viewer. Graphic novels are especially accessible to students that have been primed with cartoons at a young age to immediately see motion within a comic. Figure 1 (Yang 97) shows that movement exists not just physically, but narratively through Jin's thoughts as well. As he walks home, the reader can see his train of thought jumping from his love interest, Amelia, to jealousy over her friend, to associating their closeness with a characteristic of the friend—his hair. This narrative motion occurs within the reader's mind without a second thought, yet easily expresses meaning without the need for words. Jin's fixation on the hair and the novel's context allows students to extrapolate further connections to inferiority and internalized oppression, as well as the theme of transformation that pervades the novel.

Wei-Chen's introduction exemplifies the medium as a teaching tool that can subtly convey information without bogging students down with words; the novel connects themes with visual representation and uses the spatial parameters of the panels to implicitly reveal dynamics between characters. As shown in Figure 2 (Yang 36), Wei-Chen is introduced with an overt example of casual ignorance—the teacher does not bother with learning Wei-Chen's name or home country, belying the faults of simply diversifying classrooms without putting in practices to make them antiracist. From a visual perspective, Wei-Chen is displayed at the center of the panel, yet is portrayed small in comparison to his teacher and classmates, despite having his whole body in frame. This panel is done as a full horizontal spread, taking up the combined length of the bottom two panels to establish itself as a setting shot and to diminish Wei-Chen's presence while centering him. When the focus is back on Jin, he is level with his classmates in an attempt at assimilation. The thought square, "Something made me want to beat him up," clues the reader into Jin's emotions—he feels threatened by Wei-Chen's presence because Wei-Chen represents another general Asian body and, even though he is from Taiwan, Jin's internalized oppression has led him
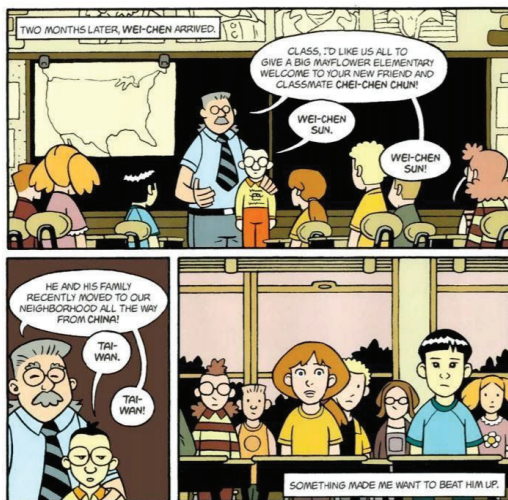
Figure 2 *From* American Born Chinese ©2006 by Gene Luen Yang

to adopt the point of view of his classmates and view Wei-Chen as another reason to feel shamed by his identity. The relationship between Wei-Chen, the class, and Jin is conveyed through the nuances of graphic novels; the visual elements provide implicit context to students that can then use the text to recognize themes of ignorance within both the class setting and Jin.

The obligatory images in graphic novels force narrative iconography, as images need to be simple and recognizable to be effectively reproduced throughout the novel; this requirement plays in favor to *American Born Chinese*, which provides students with ample opportunity to examine how caricature is often used to designate ethnicity and race. Historically, cartoons attempting to denote ethnicity often fall back on racist stereotypes, drawing big noses or buck teeth as shorthand for a racial other. The nature of the "(. . .) graphic narrative, with its relatively limited temporal space, must condense identity along commonly accepted paradigms" (Royal 7-8) and often falls into the trap of coding to economize narrative effectiveness. *American Born Chinese* uses this history to its advantage, simultaneously rebelling against this by creating distinct Asian characters without falling back on racially coded features, and bringing those caricatures to the forefront with Cousin Chin-Kee—drenching him with ugly racist imagery like buck teeth and yellow skin—to emphasize the grotesque nature of these identifiers and how recognizable they are due to their prevalence.

While the visual medium of *American Born Chinese* is, on its own, an essential facet of the novel's accessibility, the utilization of intertextuality brings in cultural and sociopolitical aspects that shape the text to a more contemporary classroom. Intertextuality involves the relationship and formation of meaning in one text through the use of other texts, which the visual aspect of comics employs to draw direct references between texts. This intertext can be both explicit and implicit; the Transformers and their slogan, "More Than Meets the Eye" is directly shown and referenced, while the overt retelling of the 17th century novel, *Journey to the West*, is only clear to readers familiar with the material. The explicit forms of referenced text are prominent in their appearance and make their thematic significance clear, as topics of transformation and self-search manifest throughout the novel, while the less conspicuous allusions to other texts do not detract from the novel and supplement the text for readers that recognize the references. While students may be more familiar with pop culture references, like the Transformers slogan, with help from an

instructor they can glean meaning and clarification on other cultural texts and how those themes are pivotal to the story, as well as learn to recognize how texts influence one another. Even so, Yang's intertextuality is ideally implemented from a story aspect, as it is overt only when the symbolism necessitates explanation to contribute effectively to the novel, otherwise remaining in the background to uplift the narrative. This allows students to understand most of the novel on their own without needing background information, while instructors can fill in cultural gaps in the classroom, using intertextuality to construct analysis that contributes toward meaning-making in literature.

  The most blatant example of racial intertextuality comes in the form of cousin Chin-Kee, who originally appears to just be a blend of brutal racist stereotypes meant to inspire discomfort, but his role in the novel evolves into a more nuanced narrative action than first implied. Chin-Kee is introduced as the cousin of Danny, who is later revealed to be Jin transformed into a white body. Jonathan Doughty describes how certain clues within the text point towards Chin-Kee's greater function within the overarching narrative: "In the (Mandarin) Chinese language, however, 'chin' (亲, 'qin' in modern pinyin romanization) may also mean 'blood relation' or 'relative' (. . .) Permitting a linguistic reconstruction, Chin-Kee becomes a qin-key to unlock Jin Wang's outward hostility, and inward shame, toward his heritage" (56). Though this is subtle, Yang's story is constructed around using Chinese transnationality to recontextualize Chin-Kee as an embodiment of the "inward shame" Jin fights as his white counterpart. Though these clues would pass students without a grasp of Mandarin, instructors can elevate the text to a higher plane of meaning for those students. When teaching this novel, the linguistic and historical elements of Chinese culture both supplement the text and introduce students to nuanced theming that ties into both cultural and social aspects of the story. While the narrative itself makes this conflict clear through writing and visuals alone, the added layers of cultural intertextuality allow for a deeper analysis and recognition of this text, driving home the themes central to the novel.

  Chin-Kee's character is most often used in conjunction with the most blatant stereotypes, forcing students to consider the impact of these texts in a new light. Even the most seemingly exaggerated actions are directly referencing Asian representations in media. The famous line, "clispy flied cat gizzards" (Yang 114) is a direct quote from a racially charged comic by political cartoonist Pat Oliphant. The old children's rhyme, "Me Chinese, me play joke! Me go pee-pee in his Coke!" (Yang 118) even makes it in, something Rosemary V. Hathaway comments on: "Yang seems to recognize that this folkloric intertext is lurking somewhere in the recesses of many of his readers' memories and needs to be dredged up and confronted for what it is" (46). Chin-Kee's existence creates a context within which all racist references, even the seemingly innocuous children's rhymes, are suddenly forced under a microscope and presented evenly. With Chin-Kee, the goal is to not simply expose the most horrendous imagery present in pop culture, but to turn a mirror toward the audience and ask them to consider what racist narratives they have viewed and never examined, along with which ones they have actively contributed to. The objective of creating Chin-Kee is to educate with no holds barred; a character like his is not born without a continuous, unexamined history stretching for decades before him. It is therefore imperative to utilize him as

both a tool and an opportunity in the classroom—as his honest and brutal depiction creates an environment that educates and invites analysis.

Chin-Kee's depiction is deliberately intense and indisputably racially coded, which lends him ideally as a teaching tool for students. Cheryl Gomes experienced teaching *American Born Chinese* in a Special Education English class and utilizing the overt stereotypical imagery that Chin-Kee represents:

> The character of Chin-Kee was the easiest symbol for students to identify because his actions and his physical appearance both contribute to the role he represents in the story. Chin-Kee's appearance, as mentioned earlier, is itself a brutal and ugly caricature—one that students must be adequately prepared for before being asked to simply identify symbols and stereotypes. (Gomes and Carter 72)

Much of Gomes's lesson involved teaching analysis through symbolism, since having a tangible element to analyze was best for students struggling with abstract concepts. Chin-Kee's existence as an undisguised stereotype—"a brutal and ugly caricature"—lends him easily to classroom discussion and learning. Not only is he a rendering of blatantly racist imagery, but his "role" at this point in the novel makes him a straightforward symbol that present-day students less familiar with historically racist depictions of the Asian community will still be able to contextualize within the narrative. Students have the rare opportunity to view the extent of stereotypes and harmful depictions, learning where they come from and how they have bled into American culture and depictions of Asian-Americans.

However, due to the sensitivity of racism as a teaching topic, there is often a fear that comes along with introducing Chin-Kee—the manifestation of decades of racism—to a classroom. Michael Gianfrancesco, in his introduction to his Teacher's Guide on *American Born Chinese*, writes, "Racism is a tough subject to broach and it takes a very gentle but firm touch to ensure that students don't walk away feeling offended or insulted (. . .) This novel is a teachable moment, and sometimes this type of learning can be precarious (. . .)" (3). If left unexplained or dismissed, Chin-Kee is relegated to a superficial role as a caricature; he necessitates discussion and exploration because his character is offensive with purpose. While he demonstrates that "(. . .) a stereotype needs to be dressed up in bright yellow skin and a queue in order for folks to recognize its severity" (Siegel), his appearance and actions warrant dialogue that honestly teaches and acknowledges the history of systemic racism faced by people of Asian descent. It is paramount for instructors to keep in mind that, as time moves society away from the blatantly racist depictions of characters like Mr. Yunioshi, students may not come into the classroom having seen or experienced blatantly racist Asian imagery until this novel. Thus, educating them on a history that is often buried is vital for students to perform accurate critique of historically constructed racial stereotypes. This character in a classroom is a rarity, as text is seldom this aggressive when highlighting racism and forcing conversation that, while "precarious" if done insensitively, is necessary.

Bringing race and identity politics at the forefront of his novel with the depiction of cousin Chin-Kee, Yang creates an opportunity for critical reading that serves as an introduction into the

novel's implications about racism against Asian Americans. On some people finding Chin-Kee hilarious, Yang stated that, "Cousin Chin-Kee isn't meant to be funny. He's meant to come off the page and slap you in the face. If you're laughing at him, I want you to do so with a knot in your stomach and a dry throat" (Siegel). This speech came from Yang realizing some younger readers do not have the racial context from which to understand Chin-Kee's historical roots. Thereby, analysis of this novel should not only integrate the graphic novel medium into its examination of story, but "(. . .) we also need to support students toward understanding the structural and economic underpinnings of racism that have carried these stereotypes into the 21st century" (Schieble 49). As the present moves away from a past that housed Yellow Peril and bred caricatures that no longer actively permeate media, the context needs to be taught to be understood. Without knowledge of the racial environment that gave birth to Chin-Kee, students only receive partial comprehension on why Cousin Chin-Kee haunts Asian Americans. Both past and modern-day stereotypes are paramount to an understanding of the novel and a society where Cousin Chin-Kee can exist at all.

Figure 3 *From* American Born Chinese *©2006 by Gene Luen Yang*

While Chin-Kee is representative of Asian stereotypes depicted in media that seep into a society's collective unconscious, the novel also provides plenty of subtler microaggressions that the main characters in Jin's biography experience. Internalized oppression is produced from a societal and personal level, as portrayals of racial caricatures diffuse into day-to-day interactions that continuously perpetuate discrimination; the characters of Jin's story are repeatedly shown to feel ashamed for their race and ethnicity, leading them to reject themselves and each other in turn. After Jin fixates on the hair of Amelia's friend (See: Figure 1), he projects his insecurity onto that singular characteristic and gets a perm (Yang 98). Figure 3 (Yang 96) shows direct discriminatory action, but the reaction of Jin and his friends highlights years of continuous intolerance. The stark change from them laughing, to going completely silent after being called racial slurs, then looking down at the ground in shame, conveys that this is a perpetual experience that has been accepted as an element of their life, despite its pain. This is made tragically clear later, when Suzy says to Jin, "Today...when Timmy called me a...a chink, I realized...deep down inside...I kind of feel like that all the time" (Yang 187). The continuous racist language and culture that surrounds these characters shows its toll to the fullest; having slurs thrown at her throughout her life, Suzy begins to connect herself to them. The result of internalized racism is that it not only pushes the characters away from their culture, but it makes them internalize bigotry as a core characteristic of who they are. Placing these burdens on high schoolers pulls the novel into a realm of familiarity for

students, leading them to empathize in a manner that is far more personal than a lecture on bigotry. Grounding these stereotypical depictions and words in narrative and historical context within the classroom forces students to come to terms with the uncomfortable racial weapons that they may have seen or even used, bringing the impact of leveraging hateful speech to the forefront of the lesson. In today's cultural landscape, where the term "political correctness" receives as much support as it does ire, exposing students to stories and art that frame the effects of racism in both easily digestible and sympathetic narratives results in a more engaged class that understands the basis from which oppression comes from and desires to act against it.

By bringing this aspect of consistent prejudice and racism and its effects on children as they grow up, Yang forces readers to confront the pervasiveness of daily microaggressions as an act that is not limited to a school setting. The concept, while not explicitly defined, is introduced early in the Monkey King's story when he is denied access to the party in heaven. The guard initially mocks him for not having any shoes, before finally telling him, "You may be a king—you may even be a deity—but you are still a monkey" (Yang 15). The Monkey King, before feeling angry and disrespected, feels "thoroughly embarrassed" (Yang 15) as his identity is brought up. This embarrassment is the same shame felt by Jin and his friends when they are called slurs publicly or isolated by their classmates due to their race. Min Hyoung Song describes the Monkey King's narrative as especially devastating because, "(. . .) it recalls how the image of the monkey has historically been deployed as a racial diminutive, a way to picture Asians as subhuman or beyond the realm of the human all together" (Song 85). The Monkey King is actively dehumanized and degraded in his narrative, bringing with him the history of equating racial otherness with simian imagery. This subtext lurks under the layers of humiliation the Monkey King is made to feel on account of just being himself. When he goes home and notices the smell of monkey fur, a smell he had never noticed before, "He stayed awake for the rest of the night thinking of ways to get rid of it" (Yang 20). Like Jin, the Monkey King is socially pushed to turn away from his own nature, because his nature actively excludes and defines him as other. The Monkey King's journey elevates the novel's themes to a higher plane, focusing on exclusion and the idea of never meeting an unachievable standard in conjunction with transformation. His story is, at face value, only a myth, yet it asks students to utilize the themes and motifs brought up in the other narratives to construct deeper analysis. Set in context among Chin-Kee and Jin's stories, the Monkey King's journey allows students the opportunity for intertextual and intratextual meaning-making, as they can learn about and recognize the cultural elements of the tale while making connections to the other texts within the novel.

The resolution of the novel presents a cathartic end to Cousin Chin-Kee's existence, celebrating self-acceptance as characters let go of personas adopted to distance themselves from the caricatures shaming them away from their own identities. The Monkey King lets go of his humanized form and shoes to find literal and personal freedom from being an "eternal prisoner of a mountain of rock" (Yang 149). While there is no quick fix for years of discrimination and internalized oppression, Jin makes steps to reconnect with Wei-Chen by spending weeks waiting for him to reappear. In the final panels, Wei-Chen is shown speaking Mandarin to Jin, in stark

contrast to their first meeting where Jin tells him to "speak English" (Yang 37). The true battle in the novel is shown as the fight against facades that force assimilation and stereotypes that perpetuate shame of oneself. The ending to this narrative is fundamental to the message the novel is conveying to readers, as it questions what personas they adopt and what they hide by doing so. Bringing this to a classroom, while students are still in their formative years, allows this message to resonate with its prime audience. Yang states, "(. . .) if I hadn't invited Cousin Chin-Kee (. . .) into the pages of my comic book (. . .) I would never have been able to behead him" (qtd. in Siegel), explaining that, despite Chin-Kee fulfilling his role as a magnifying glass to years of unexamined racism, he still needs to be beheaded by the novel's end. It is vital for students to read works that not only expose and analyze the inner workings of racism, but also violently oppose and confront them. Jin has to physically fight the manifestation of his internalized racism because Chin-Kee openly refuses to leave until Jin takes him apart and unmasks him. Simultaneously, Jin can only reveal his "true form" after he reveals Chin-Kee's—by recognizing Chin-Kee as the manifestation of his own fears and insecurities, Jin can finally begin the process of recognizing his true self. The novel educates students on issues of racism and oppression while teaching them to act against those very foundations. Otherwise, if left unchecked, Cousin Chin-Kee continues to come back and visit year after year as a reminder of the racial undercurrents that continue to allow his existence.

Novels like *American Born Chinese* belong in a classroom setting as they carry out the critical task of normalizing discussions surrounding race and identity for students. Graphic novels have an ease of access when connecting to students, due to comics having a recreational association and utilizing their dual-medium approach to narrative as a means of making text more digestible. By creating stories pertinent for students to read through a means they are more likely to enjoy, Yang explores avenues of racism in a manner that directly exposes students to these issues. Cousin Chin-Kee's impact only works within panels on a page, where readers have to confront his image for themselves, and the novel's intertextuality uses unambiguous imagery to concentrate decades of racism and xenophobia in the form of explicit references to everyday sayings and images. Through manifesting intense bigotry in the form of a character, and subsequently beheading him, the novel moves forward from embarrassment at one's identity to finding freedom in self-acceptance. The novel both presents and provides the opening for anti-racist pedagogy, prompting students to act against oppressive forces that may plague them or their classmates while asking them to examine what racist narratives they have played into. The recent threat of COVID-19 has awakened a new wave of xenophobic rhetoric targeted at Asian-Americans that only heightens the necessity for novels like *American Born Chinese* in the classroom. It is paramount for education to put students in contact with approachable narratives that highlight not only the actions that lead to and stem from internalized oppression, but celebrate freedom from self-imposed prisons, leading students to recognize and reject the still-present racism simmering under the surface of our society.

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Dasharah Green

Don't @ Me:
The Power Structure of Language &
Promoting Language Diversity in
Academia

"Black Twitter" is a viable resource for Black users to verbalize social and cultural critiques, promote wellness, and exercise cultural hegemony. Its users utilize Twitter's digital platform to allow for a flow of collaborative discourse. "Black Twitter" users have mastered the ability to convey a message through both formal and informal approaches. The formality is present within their rhetoric and socially conscious topics of discussion. The informality is showcased through their use of language, grammar, slang, and the platform on which it's displayed. In this paper, I will explore vernacular insurrections and the importance of implementing language diversity in the classroom. I discuss ways in which the classroom can be a site of change. I do this by analyzing tweets from "Black Twitter" users and their use of African American Vernacular English. The standardized power structure of academia prioritizes who gets to occupy space within institutions and politicizes language by dictating the type of English that is appropriate for use. The power structure of language ignores the intersections of student identities in deeming non-standardized English as unprofessional, non-academic, and informal.

Carmen Kynard's book, *Vernacular Insurrections: Race, Black Protest, and the New Century in Composition-Literacies Studies,* explores twenty-first-century literacies, specifically those created by Black liberation movements, and how they work to impact our personal lives and academic institutions. Kynard defines her use of vernacular insurrections by writing:

> By channeling my thinking toward vernacular insurrections, I can see vernacular discourses as not only counterhegemonic, but also as affirmative of new, constantly mutating languages, identities, political methodologies, and social understandings that communities form in and of themselves, both inwardly and outwardly. Vernacular insurrections then are not merely the bits and pieces chipped off or chipping away at the dominant culture, but a whole new emergence. Institutionalized discourses are always effected by vernacular discourses, but the impact that I am going for is when vernacular discourses function as an insurrection, not merely an effect. (10)

Kynard regards vernacular discourses as a cultural practice that ties communities together. This practice is both a conscious and unconscious effort to link ideas, theories, and shared experiences that result in vernacular insurrections. Kynard explains vernacular insurrections are not "pieces chipped off or chipping away at the dominant culture, but a whole new emergence" (10). Vernacular insurrections have caused in-depth discussions for how we prioritize and regard

institutionalized discourses. She argues that institutionalized discourses have always been affected by vernacular discourses, but her approach is to discuss its profound insertion into dismantling how we understand language in academia.

In 2018, basketball player LeBron James opened a public elementary school in Akron, Ohio. After the first year of its opening, the school was celebrated for having "generated 'extraordinary' results" (Zillgitt). According to a USA Today article written by Jeff Zillgitt, 90% of students who started the school year at least one year behind grade level met or exceeded their expected growth in math and reading. Several other statistics showcasing the students' astounding results for the year were also mentioned in the article. The school was created as a haven for at-risk youth to be subjected to a positive academic community. The biggest lesson James' school teaches society is that if young minorities were all subject to the same resources as middle and upper-class white institutions, they would all prosper. There is no surprise these students excelled; that's what the school is designed for. However, if students were subject to an institution designed for their prosperity that included diverse teaching instruction and allowed language diversity, they'd propel even further. The success of James' school begins at the institutional level, causing a positive trickle-down effect to influence teacher instruction and ultimately the prosperity of their students. While many institutions fail to restructure or, as Kynard proposes, dismantle its hierarchical academic system, change can be enacted at the teacher and student level. In their text *Austerity Blues: Fighting for the Soul of Public Higher Education*, Stephen Brier and Michael Fabricant explore the timeline of public policy, technology, and privatization that has affected public education. The fostering of an "open-classroom culture" places leadership into the hands of classroom facilitators. They write:

> This open-classroom culture is the one most likely to nurture critical thinking, the articulation of ideas, and transmission of learning from the classroom to the larger world of work, community, and politics. These learning experiences can help facilitate new forms of student agency, risk-taking, and individual as well as collective trajectories outside the classroom. At its best, a public higher education should offer students the opportunity to build the confidence and expertise necessary to engage intellectual ideas and the work world from a critical and analytical perspective. (250)

The "open-classroom" enables students to think critically and articulate ideas. This framework allows students to channel their confidence to fully assert themselves into learning. It may not diversify learning curriculum entirely, but the "open-classroom" works to diversify learning strategies in an academic system fostering diverse individuals. Brier and Fabricant's model of learning illustrates how systemic change can be done on the micro-level as we work to dismantle a historically oppressive system of learning.

Kynard's argument for a new approach to instruction, rather than to restructure it, defines the difference between merely allowing students to physically access institutions and allowing them to prosper by sharpening the intellectual tools they already own. Kynard's central argument is a call to action for instructors to help dismantle our current system and design a new way to instruct students. Just as she positions insurrections as having more than just an effect on

standardized language, instructors have to force a change in how they approach teaching the curriculum. Kynard's argument shifts from theory to practice as she includes teaching interludes into her overall point. The fifth interlude is a call to implement cross-language writing in the classroom. She writes:

> (. . .) no institution has ever been excited about my detailed analyses of how racism is maintained on the campus, how the most color-conscious students of color are denigrated and marginalized, how standardized English is a myth that we privilege, or how skillfully students deploy ethnic rhetorics. Few seem to imagine that critical pedagogy, cross-language relations, and the acts of teaching folk to read and write well can function simultaneously. (245)

By decoding how racism is maintained on campuses, institutions will be forced to dismantle its current system and create a new one. Simply restructuring the institution is a practice that has been attempted for decades. Kynard argues that the racism embedded into the bourgeois whiteness of standardized academia will do students of color a disservice by merely trying to sprinkle bits and pieces of vernacular language into the curriculum. After all, restructuring the institution will always leave inclusionary gaps and holes that are unfilled and unaccounted for. Even today, historically white institutions that restructured their policies to allow admissions for Black and Brown students still struggle with adequate representation of minority students, let alone inclusive course instruction. By recreating an institution that willfully accepts "new literacy paradigms" (195), students will be allowed to flourish in a historically exclusive system. It may also allow for diverse research methodologies, innovative fields of study, and new interdisciplinary frameworks into many disciplines by providing students the tools and articulation to explore their learning strategies.

The classroom should serve as a learning playground for both teachers and students. Implementing classroom instruction that approaches learning as a fluid exchange of discourse and action between teachers and students prioritizes critical thinking and self-exploration. In their text "Spinning out of control: Dialogical transactions in an English classroom," Bob Fecho and Kristi Bruce Amatucci explore the relationship between an English teacher and a student. By analyzing the give and take transaction of their relationship, Fecho and Amatucci uncover how classroom learning can orchestrate learning of the internal self. They argue that

> the teaching of reading and writing must be seen as more than the learning of discrete skills to enable future employment. On the contrary, all transactions with texts should be viewed as providing learners with a range of ways to scrutinize their lives and the lives of others. We suggest that by taking a transactional and dialogical stance on the teaching of English, teachers and learners become inquirers into and ongoing co-constructors of their individual and collective selves. (5)

Their argument promotes a mode of learning that develops skills for students to use outside of the classroom. This method of teaching refutes the classroom to professional life approach to learning. Instead, "all transactions with texts" should prompt students to think critically about how the words they engage with apply to their individual lives. By exchanging critical discourse reaching

beyond the text to inquire about oneself, teachers and students are given the agency to question themselves and their external world. Through this form of exploration, teachers and students are allowed to question the text, themselves, each other, and various levels of the institution. Not only does this make for a classroom setting designed to promote agency, but enables students to practice a fluid mode of learning outside of the classroom.

Kynard's argument for cross-language writing in classrooms helps to position instructors to "challenge the ways and reasons they [students] have internalized racial/linguistic inferiority and shame or, on the flip side, a superiority in not sounding like the other young people of color on the block" (245). Language diversity works in two parts: allowing students to use their "mother tongues" and understanding the power structures that rejected their use of language in the first place. In her book, *Sites of Translation: What Multilinguals Can Teach Us about Digital Writing and Rhetoric,* Laura Gonzales writes:

> Because language is always connected to power, history, and ideology, it is important to recognize that language diversity is tied to differences in our lived experiences, in our access to and benefits from privilege, and in our cultural and racial backgrounds. To speak ethically of language fluidity, then, requires us to acknowledge the rhetorical and historical contexts in which this fluidity happens. (4-5)

Gonzalez points out that language diversity intersects with our many lived experiences. Analyzing language as a source of power reveals the privilege in the ability to access it and its racialized hierarchy. Language diversity is a fluid practice. It situates language based on time, space, and audience, which intersects with who is utilizing language and for what purpose. Gonzalez argues, "language diversity can help researchers and teachers not only to theorize policies but to develop methodological frameworks and pedagogical practices that center linguistic diversity in and across cultural-rhetorical contexts" (58). The classroom setting is where most students utilize language diversity. The ways in which they translate instructor meanings of assignments, expectations and assessment methods illustrate a fluid practice of language (Gonzalez 60).

The majority of the Black population active on Twitter is referred to as "Black Twitter." Black users are most visible in the "trending topics," a real-time list of the most tweeted about subjects. Twitter's trending topics list frequently features topics in which Black users are the majority or have a direct association with Black American cultures (Florini 225). "Black Twitter" serves as a community for its Black users to share discourse centered around their cultural hegemony. In the article, "Tweets, Tweeps, and Signifyin': Communication and Cultural Performance on 'Black Twitter,'" Sarah Florini elaborates on the position of "Black Twitter" on the social media platform. She writes:

> However, I should be clear that Black Twitter does not exist in any unified or monolithic sense. Just as there is no "Black America" or single "Black culture," there is no "Black Twitter." What does exist are millions of Black users on Twitter networking, connecting, and engaging with others who have similar concerns, experiences, tastes, and cultural practices. Black people are not a monolith. (225)

"Black Twitter" showcases the diversity amongst Black identities who exist across the world. Intersections of geography, age, gender, and class from its users work together to concretize the fluidity of "Black Twitter's" platform. Although its users are based all over the world, there is a strong presence of African American Vernacular English (AAVE), or a variation of it, as the dominant language of choice. "Black Twitter" users exercise vernacular insurrections daily with how they express themselves within the social media platform. Similar to vernacular discourse as an insurrection on institutionalized discourse, Twitter's Black population has positioned itself as its own community that has a function and purpose far beyond the social media application.

AAVE utilizes the copy and deletion of words and sounds, an act present within all languages. In her article, Sarah Florini explores an interpretation of the act of copying and deletion of words as the practice of "signifyin'" by "Black Twitter" users. Florini defines the use of "signifyin'" as a mode to express Black cultural knowledge. "Signifyin' is a genre of linguistic performance that allows for the communication of multiple levels of meaning simultaneously, most frequently involving wordplay and misdirection" (224). The act of "signifyin'" is prominent within AAVE utilized by "Black Twitter" users. A tweet by user @niy_af states:

> "Until white people get sent home for straight hair, or get their hairstyles fucking cut off to participate in events. That argument will never be fucking valid. Yall are dumb. Straight hair is not limited to white people. Yall are blatantly ignorant" (12/5/19).

This tweet illustrates the intersection of culture, politics, and language used within most tweets by "Black Twitter" users. This user's tweet is in response to hair discrimination that targets Black people's, specifically Black women's, hair. The use of "yall," particularly without the apostrophe, is an example of the copy and deletion of language or "signifyin'" present within AAVE. This tweet also proves Kynard's point that language shouldn't exist to dictate what you know, but how you can relay a message. The tweet clearly expresses a critique of a racial injustice that has been studied by many academics. The positionality of the user within the argument is clear, and their use of formal and informal language is how many "Black Twitter" users express themselves.

Sarah Florini includes hashtags within her discussion of the prominent influence "Black Twitter" has on the social media platform. However, a more current form of interaction amongst Black users is mirroring the same message or style of a tweet to participate in a running joke, often without the use of hashtags. Twitter user @afrofutility tweeted:

> "you in her DMs im in her work cited page, we are not the same" (11/18/19).

And, user @sunisdoingokay mirrors the style by tweeting:

> "You in her likes I'm in her google docs via editing access" (11/20/19).

Verbal performance, linguistic resources, and modes of interaction are key ways that Black users perform their racial identities, individually and collectively, on Twitter (Florini 234). "Black Twitter's" main function is allowing discourse to flow rapidly between its users. Many tweets

become popular and replicated if it conveys a message or joke that is largely understood by the community. Most popular tweets or trends are those that are relatable to the majority. While some people outside of the Black community may also relate to tweets from "Black Twitter," the racial and cultural identities along with the use of AAVE makes the content hard to mirror successfully. The similarities of these two tweets illustrate: 1) cultural hegemony at play and 2) how AAVE is a full language that is easily used and understood.

June Jordan's essay, "Nobody Mean More To Me Than You and The Future Life Of Willie Jordan," details her experience teaching "Black English" to predominantly Black students in New York. Jordan assigned the class a text written in Black English. To the instructor's surprise the students regarded the language of the text as written "wrong" (162). She compared their inability to see the connection between the language in the text to their own oration as "probably akin to the shock of seeing yourself in a photograph for the first time" (162). The lack of Black English representation mirroring their use of language displayed within a classroom setting caused the students to unintentionally expose internalized biases of their own identities. Jordan had the heavy task of helping her students to unlearn the negative projections stigmatizing their use of language. Both Jordan and her students illustrate how the classroom can be a site of change. By exposing students to a fluid model of learning which prompted them to question their identities, Jordan provided tools to allow students to unlock diverse levels of critical thinking.

Politics play an important role in the hierarchy of language. In the text *History of Sexuality Vol 1,* Foucault argues that discourse links objects that are not naturally linked. The construction is not of knowledge but of the relationship between power and knowledge working together to link things and the practice applied to that knowledge. The most dominant type of knowledge is when it includes bio-power, the power over life and regulating life. Foucault's model of thinking negates the idea that representation is based on truth. However, discourse makes the connection that is not present, therefore there is no representation because there is no truth there. The way we see things as automatically or naturally connected is constructed by knowledge to form things together. Language is a social construct. The ways in which we understand language, learn language, and differentiate the use of language as correct or incorrect is socially constructed. The construction is based on a hierarchy to separate individuals based class, education, and, in this case, race.

Many academic institutions regard other types of English, which differ from the standardized form, as replicas of the language. However, each language is full on its own with markers of syntax, grammar, and word completion which is influenced by culture, geography, and historical intersections. African American Vernacular English (AAVE) is a language spoken by Black and African American people. As a whole, the language takes on various forms based on geography, but incorporates cultural identity markers that allow Black people to use it homogeneously. In "African American Vernacular English is Not Standard English With Mistakes," Geoffrey K. Pullum argues, "most speakers of Standard English think that AAVE is a badly spoken version of their language, marred by a lot of ignorant mistakes in grammar and punctuation, or worse than that, an unimportant and mostly abusive repertoire of street slang used

by an ignorant urban underclass" (40). In no way does it seek to reconstruct standardized English as an attempt to copy its form. AAVE is a language that utilizes many slang terms that already exist in language and assigns new meanings. It is a well-thought-out language and dialect used dutifully by African Americans.

The disregard of AAVE as a definitive language is due to its close relation to another language of higher prestige (Pullum 39). The politics of the Black subjects who utilize AAVE influences its stigma as an incorrect form of communication. Languages like Spanish and French are not subject to the same level of ridicule as AAVE because the politics are vastly different. To reiterate, AAVE is not merely "Black slang" or a poorly mocked version of English. Pullum elaborates on the stereotypical myths of AAVE by writing:

> We call an expression slang when it represents a vivid, colloquial word or phrase associated with some subculture and not yet incorporated as part of the mainstream language. No subculture's slang could constitute a separate language. The mistake is like confusing a sprinkle of hot sauce with dinner. Slang is by definition parasitic on some larger and more encompassing host language. It has no grammar of its own; it is a small array of words and phrases used under the aegis of some ordinary language and in accordance with its grammar. The majority of slang words and phrases are in the language already and are merely assigned new slang meanings by some subpopulation. (40)

To regard AAVE as merely slang is to disregard the fluidity present within language and disregards the fluidity present within English. Slang is not a language, and to regard AAVE as such diminishes the eloquent cultural practice present within its use. Standardized English is just one form of English, just as Patois and British English are its own form of language. It is also important to note that an incorrect utterance in one language can be correct in another (Pullum 41). This practice of language fluidity gets tricky to understand when two languages are extremely similar.

In a live discussion, fashion designer Kerby Jean-Raymond and writer and producer Lena Waithe sat down to discuss Waithe's film, *Queen & Slim*. The two spoke about their positionality within the entertainment industry as Black creatives. They tackled AAVE and how Waithe is able to construct dialogue to properly illustrate her Black characters; she states, "I do believe Black people have a broken English. It's a mix between southern, city and slavery" (04:17-04:22). Waithe's understanding of how Black history influences their articulation and communication allows her to construct dialogue. However, this quote illustrates the common misconception present within many people who aren't fully aware of the fluidity present within language. Black people's language is not broken. There shouldn't be an urgency or duty to fix Black people's articulation, because it is their own. The language is shaped by rich cultural experiences and histories. One can't fix history, because it has already happened. Similarly, the way Black people express themselves is rooted in centuries of their struggle to understand a language that was forced upon our ancestors. As Pullum argues, Black people's expression of slang does not encompass their mode of language in its entirety. The "mix between southern, city and slavery" present within AAVE represents the intersections of identity and the power structure of language.

Being able to conform to standardized English practices in literacy is a privilege. The construction of language is based on an individual's ability to perform it as it was intended. Those unable to perform the standardized form of language are ostracized or unable to flourish in academic institutions. In *Talkin That Talk: Language, Culture and Education in African America,* Geneva Smitherman argues, "what is needed in the English classroom and in all departments is a better understanding of the nature of dialect and a shift in attitudes towards it" (34). Just as most disciplines, English departments struggle with the ability to welcome colloquial language in its classroom and instruction. The bias of standardized English in academic institutions works to bridge the gap between the students who struggle to perform it and the access to knowledge. Early on in education, students are drilled with the idea that standardized English is the only form of English that is appropriate. Just like language in general, English is fluid and has been, and continues to be, reshaped by the copy and deletion of words.

In garnering a better understanding of the nature of language and dialect, academic departments can spend more time helping students critically analyze information and interpret work in their own dialect. Tests should not be focused on whether students can think, speak, or write in the institutional dialect, but on whether they can think, speak, and write in their own dialects (Geneva 34). Allowing students to use their own dialect can help them better understand course work in methods that help them retain information, rather than memorize material.

Language evolves over time. Understanding its evolution causes for interdisciplinary studies across multiple disciplines to explore various histories that have intersected to cause the constant evolution. In *Language Evolution* Christiansen and Kirby write

> We believe that at least part of the answer is that a deep understanding of language evolution can only come from concerted, joint effort of researchers from a huge range of disciplines. We must understand how our brains and minds work; how language is structured and what it is used for; how early language and modern language differ from each other and from other communication systems; in what ways the biology of hominids has changed; how we manage to acquire language during development; and how learning, culture and evolution interact. (2)

The study of language is a healthy task to uncover. This excerpt explains the need for researchers across various disciplines to work together in order to understand how language has become socially constructed and fluid. If the origin of language is so complex to track, how can we promote one usage of English as most appropriate? How can we teach students that language is an ever-evolving chain of culture and history, yet force them to disregard their interpretation of language? Academic institutions not only do their students a disservice, but also its ability to diversify its instruction and learning materials, by promoting a stagnant representation of language.

The power structure of language works to decentralize students' identities by prioritizing one spoken language over another. Standardized English forces boundaries on how students express their voice by categorizing other Englishes as unacceptable in academic settings. The

dismantling of this power structure can start with how teachers instruct their students. Learning is a transactional act that should push students and teachers to think beyond the text. At its core, learning should enable students to engage in critical discourse to aid in how they understand their identities. Education fails to implement student agency by stigmatizing language and instilling internalized systems of hierarchy. By allowing an inclusive learning environment, teachers will help students understand how language works and why the current language structure works to oppress them. Overall, the institution needs a completely new system to aid in empowering the voices of students. Communication is not just what you say, but how you say things. Allowing students to discuss materials in their natural dialect may allow for new ideas to come forth and help to diversify academic disciplines.

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Sarah Glessner

"Trying to Make the Personal Political" then Pedagogical: Building Writing Classrooms Inspired by Black Feminist Practice

Black Feminist praxis is rooted in a focus on the individual lived experiences of Black women. In order to make progress toward equality and justice, Black women writers and theorists have forefronted their own identities in their work rather than contributing to the feminist discourse through abstractions about a general "sociological phenomenon" (Sharpe 31). Examining *Trying to Make the Personal Political: Feminism and Consciousness-Raising* (an expanded reprint of *Consciousness-Raising Guidelines*) in conversation with Leigh Patel's *Decolonizing Educational Research*, Juan C. Guerra's *Language, Culture, Identity, and Citizenship in College Classrooms and Communities* and central concepts Bernadette M. Calafell unpacks in her essay "Rhetorics of Possibility: Challenging the Textual Bias of Rhetoric through the Theory of the Flesh" could illuminate the ways in which Black Feminist teaching and practices could inform writing classroom pedagogical practices and reshape how we think about identity in higher education writing spaces. Early Black Feminist groups saw the importance of taking hold of their own narratives and forming supportive spaces in order to effectively enact change in their communities and fight for the destruction of the overarching sexist, racist, and capitalist powers to attain freedom. College writing instructors could implement these practices inspired by Black Feminism so that they might encourage students to invoke their own identities in the writing classroom and use such practices to redefine what is valued as writing in academic spaces. Rethinking what constitutes valuable writing in the context of college classrooms allows students to implement their diverse literacies as a means to resist academic hegemony.

In 2017, Half Letter Press reprinted the "Consciousness-Raising Guidelines" section of *A Practical Guide to the Women's Movement* (1975). This reprint, entitled *Trying to Make the Personal Political: Feminism and Consciousness Raising*, includes the original consciousness-raising (C-R) guidelines developed during the women's movement in the 1970s as well as three contemporary additions: an analytical foreword and two supplemental sections, one for teenage women and another for Black women. Mariame Kaba, who wrote the reprint's foreword, refers to consciousness-raising as a "political education strategy" (8), implying that the conversations held within these spaces could lead to enlightenment and progressive action. These consciousness-raising groups, or "rap groups" (9), were formed by feminist communities as "forums for mutual self-discovery" (9). These groups existed as spaces in which women could "be free," "honest," and as places for "self-examination and for exploration" (10) to nurture female identities and personhood within the oppressive patriarchy. The guidelines encourage open conversation wherein participants prioritize discussion of their personal experiences and identities

within the larger sociological context. Some of the suggested discussion topics for these C-R groups include racism, power, and sex, and how these concepts impact the group participants. The authors pose questions that could lead to fruitful conversation grounded in personal connections, consciousness-raising, and potentially political strategizing within an intimate and like-minded group setting. Consciousness-raising is a means through which participants can articulate their own identities, perspectives, and places within certain contexts in order to learn about, and work to destroy, systems of oppression. In the context of writing classrooms, instructors can implement consciousness-raising techniques so their students can draw on their individual literacies to resist academic injustices through their writing practices.

Lori Sharpe, who wrote the "Supplemental Guidelines for Black Women" included in the 2017 reprint, saw both the value in the original consciousness-raising guidelines but also viewed them as but "one model.. (. . .) intended to spark ideas for infinite variations" (31), including one specifically for Black women. Her revised guidelines build upon the ones from the 1975 publication, but center Black women's unique needs in order to avoid projecting "into their C-R what Someone Else thinks they should be talking about" (31), with that "Someone Else" referring to the mainstream white feminists who implemented the original guidelines. The discussion topics Sharpe presents in her guidelines for Black women's consciousness-raising groups focus on the lived experiences of these women of color while making it clear that the feminist movement at large was not necessarily addressing Black women's needs in its original non-intersectional incarnations. Sharpe's new guidelines pose questions about the specifics of Black women's experiences, the place of Black women within and outside of the women's liberation movement, and the collective and individual priorities of Black women, which recognize and forefront intersectionality. Like the original consciousness-raising guidelines, Sharpe's encourage thoughtful and purposeful conversations about the participants' lived experiences and the value of these experiences to the greater movement for women's liberation and equality. Unlike the original guidelines, though, which Sharpe saw as not quite doing enough to meet the needs of Black women and address their positions within feminist activism, her "Supplemental Guidelines for Black Women" ask more specific questions that speak to Black women's unique and diversified identities. She deliberately uses the first person in these guidelines, she says, "to emphasize the concern in C-R for personalizing discussions" (31). This personalization makes it clear that these conversations are not to only be abstract and theoretical, but grounded in the personal.

In "Rhetorics of Possibility," Calafell explains how "theories of the flesh," or discourses based in one's individual experiences, "have been central to the survival of women of color and have been one of the primary ways in which we have been able to theorize about our experiences when we have been denied access to traditional forms of knowledge production" (105). According to Calafell's line of thinking, this centering of personal experiences is not only favorable to processing knowledge but integral to it. Integrating theories of the flesh into academic work is crucial to the survival of women of color within an otherwise oppressive system. The model provided by this Black Feminist praxis and activism speaks to and provides an example for the contemporary college writing classroom because of the ways it places the individual at the center of

the conversation and makes that individual the point of reference for meaning-making. By drawing from an activist and intersectional model, instructors can forefront students' unique literacies rather than emphasize a central academic "correctness" or colonial standardization in writing. A Black Feminist model shows that a writing classroom can be a place of activism wherein students and teachers can engage in conversations about process, literacy, and academic hegemony.

In *Language, Culture, Identity and Citizenship in College Classrooms and Communities*, Juan C. Guerra examines the various forms of writing that occur in college writing classrooms and how these classrooms should be places in which students' identities are valued and nurtured. He advocates for teaching practices that engage students' home discourses in the academic sphere and beyond. Guerra wants instructors to present to their students "varied choices on how to make use of the alternative discourses they bring to and the academic discourses they encounter in any classroom situation" (298). He writes that it is crucial "to consider how an understanding of cultural diversity in particular enhances [students'] ability to write" (Guerra 298-299). Like Black Feminist theorists and other women of color writers, Guerra sees the "theory of the flesh" (Calafell 106) and the intimate connection between one's identity and one's work as a lens through which we should view writing in the college classroom. One of Guerra's goals, which aligns his work in telling ways with Black Feminist practices, is to:

> (. . .) help educators figure out ways to learn about and integrate the plethora of lived experiences students bring with them into classroom activities (. . .) to identify the range of identity markers individuals may use in any community of belonging to represent themselves and to grant value to the kinds of rhetorical and discursive features students would likely display in our college writing classrooms, if these were not continually displaced by our institutional commitment to academic discourses and the English Only language practices that create and sustain them. (Guerra 76)

Opposing pedagogical hegemony and oppression through revised teaching practices is at the center of Guerra's work. He insists that writing instructors not only recognize but value the "range of identity markers" (Guerra 76) that students could bring to their work. These discursive identities are usually devalued or silenced because of the institutional value placed on academic English and standardized writing topics. If we rethink these practices as Guerra suggests, and consider Black Feminist praxis and consciousness-raising practices as one means through which we can do so by forefronting students' individual identities and experiences in the context of college writing, we can work toward abolishing harmful institutional measures that effectively silence students. We can implement instructional practices that place distinct value on student's diverse literacies.

Effective teaching, for Guerra, is based on a centering of students' experiences and languages and a purposeful integration of these facets of identity into college writing instruction. Guerra discusses Stephanie L. Kerschbaum's *Toward a New Rhetoric of Difference* to provide an example of revised teaching practices that forefront these values. He explains that Kerschbaum reframes how instructors think about and approach working with their students. She encourages instructors, in their college writing classes, to consider questions that "look at process rather than state of being" (Guerra 90) and elicit more complex responses than "learning about" questions,

which inherently assume that there is a single answer or set of answers toward which students are working. Asking "learning *about*" (89) questions (emphasis Guerra's) generates "stereotypical identity markers" (89). These superficial questions, asking things such as "[w]hat groups do individuals belong to" and "[w]hat names or labels can describe particular individuals or associate them with others" (89) can be harmful in the context of a writing classroom because they elicit surface answers from students. These inquiries do not consider the student as a complex and ever-evolving being, which in turn limits the student's ability to explore their own discursive and rhetorical possibilities. "Learning *with*" (89) questions (emphasis Guerra's), which imply process and evolution, consider students' "state[s] of being" (90) while encouraging them to consider their unique places within a community of learners and writers without "prejudging others" (90). Such questions, which speak to Sharpe's consciousness-raising guidelines for Black women, ask students to consider how they "position themselves alongside others," how they "acknowledge similarities and differences between themselves and others," and how they and their teachers are "learning with others in the classroom" (90). Guerra discusses Kerschbaum's (2014) questions so writing instructors can be mindful of how they attempt to build community and ask students to draw on their own experiences in the writing classroom. Guerra explains the importance of giving students "the opportunity to decide how they wish to invoke their language and cultural differences" (90) as they work to represent themselves in whichever ways they want through their writing, ways that may not necessarily adhere to standards normally considered "academic" or valuable in educational contexts.

Having students invoke their diverse identities in this way requires a reevaluation and restructuring of the power dynamics within the classroom and, more broadly, within higher education institutional spaces at large. In *Decolonizing Educational Research: From Ownership to Answerability*, Leigh Patel unpacks the implications of the relationships between subject and researcher in higher education spaces. Her work seeks to abolish the "settler colonialism" (35) framework that often describes work in academia and to reconceptualize research as a "relational force" (48) that depends on the contexts, material conditions, and what Patel calls the "intra-relations" (51) between subjects and researchers. For Patel, academia is characterized by a harmful binary that exists between those in power (professors, administrators, researchers, etc.) and those not in power (students of color, research subjects, etc.), which resembles the relationship between a colonizer and the colonized. Patel's work has enormous implications for the college writing classroom, mainly for how instructors attempt to value students' lived experiences in their writing. She writes that "the academy and educational research has codified knowledge as ownable, but (. . .) it is only property for some, namely those whose lineages are already readily visible within the culture" (35). It is clear that the culture to which she refers is the white, western culture that holds power over the academic institution at large. Thinking about Sharpe's consciousness-raising guidelines for Black women as a representation of effective identity politics practices that could lead to productive invocation of identity for students embodies Patel's central goal of dismantling harmful hierarchies in higher education institutions.

Consciousness-raising groups centered on the needs and experiences of Black women, like those outlined in Lori Sharpe's "Supplemental Guidelines for Black Women," provide a valuable framework for structuring college writing classrooms. These revised consciousness-raising guidelines complement the strategies for writing classroom pedagogical practices described by Guerra because of how they rely on the students' lived experiences. Both the guidelines and Guerra's work are anti-colonial, to put it in Patel's terms, in that they seek to dismantle the hegemonic structures characteristic of the academy and redistribute power so it falls into the hands of those individuals—the students and learners—that these higher education institutions claim to serve. If we mesh the praxis of Black Feminism with that of decolonizing educators such as Guerra and Patel, we can make the personal both political and pedagogical by redefining what the academy values as acceptable writing.

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Tina L. Margolis

Using Close Reading, Frame Analysis, and the U.S. Immigration Debate to Provoke Independent Thinking and Engaged Social Participation among First-Year Community College Students

I.   Introduction: Conceptual Overview

I introduce this unit by orienting students to its overarching aims, which are to understand that "sympathy, empathy, and mutuality are the foundation of human society [and] we cannot understand our own interests unless we understand the interests of others" (Rosenthal, "Common Good"). Using this critical lens, I submit that "ethical values and principles [need to] always take precedence over nonethical ones" because they fulfill our social contract to create a more equitable and inclusive social order ("Making Ethical Decisions"). I suggest, too, that to become ethically aware thinkers, keen writers, and informed actors, we need to educate ourselves on how communication, for example, logical fallacies, rhetorical devices, and framing techniques, may be engaged for persuasion and ideological ends. Specifically, it has been widely substantiated that in oratory and writing, the manner in which information is presented affects attitudes. Experiments in behavioral economics have found that theories of rational choice do not hold in everyday life and that individuals "systematically violate the requirements of consistency and coherence" (Tversky and Kahneman 453). Perception and social variables that inform attitudes and behavior include cultural norms, personal preferences, experiences, cognitive biases, and more (Ert and Erev 214). The most central finding, however, is that individuals react more intensely to the fear of losses than to the possibility of gains (Tversky and Kahneman 454). In terms of immigration, Trumpian rhetoric asserts that immigrants threaten our national character and economic order, which make losses loom large on the horizon (Johnson and Hing 1348). From an ethical perspective, this creates what Hannah Arendt has called in her writings on statelessness "the calamity of the rightless," where some people's welfare is seen as irrelevant and their lives disposable (qtd. in Lechte 227). It is important to focus on the immigration crisis, therefore, because it may be seen as not just a crisis of numbers but a crisis of national identity, given that recent executive orders targeting migrants at our southern borders in Texas, California, and Arizona were previously held unthinkable, un-American, and illegal. Democratic philosophy at its best refers to what Dewey has termed a "mode of associated living" (qtd. in Festenstein). Yet, asylum seekers have been turned away and unaccompanied minors have been caged without adequate care and attention. It is part of a political trajectory that Richard Wolin calls a "new age of regression" (xiii). That is why I foreground the notion that "we need to ask a basic question that

we have evaded over these last decades: What do we owe one another as citizens?" (Sandel). The issues involved are far from abstract constructs or limited to the issue of immigration because they literally involve life, death, and the habitability of the planet. They are questions that relate immediately to whether we will accept "a new 'politics of unreason'," or if we commit to resisting it (Wolin xxx). To adopt this new tribalism seems to me that "that way madness lies" *(King Lear* 3.4.24). If we and other liberal democracies allow ourselves to be swept into the vortex of what Wolin calls "'designer fascism,'" we risk, in the future, creating a Hobbsian state of nature. The hope and the belief in possibility that I bring to this unit and my teaching in general revolves around identifying how each of us might choose to defend and enlarge ethical action. This involves direct participation. As Richard Wolin lays out:

> [t]he remedy for these omnipresent signs of authoritarian political regression is a reaffirmation of the values of "active citizenship": a return to the precepts of participatory democracy at the local, regional, and national levels. This means simultaneously cultivating the values of enlightened citizenship: nurturing a network of horizontally linked, informed political actors who are capable of counteracting, at every turn, the blandishments and chicanery of today's "prophets of deceit." (xxx)

The pressing purpose of this unit is to illuminate how the Trump administration uses rhetoric to affect our thinking about migrants, but its more comprehensive objective is to help young people learn to distill the intentions behind discourse, making the invisible visible. It is to support them in thinking their own thoughts—according to Fredric Jameson, to crack the "'walls around our minds'" in order to engage in "'genuine thinking'"—and to realize their own sense of agency to affect principled change (McPheron).

II. Priming

Philosophically, I inform my teaching based on theories consistent with "cosmopolitanism on the ground" (Hansen). As such, in order to resist oversimplifying the U.S. and world immigration problem, and other frames that deny our shared humanity, I state that it is vital that we become sensitized to the arts that are employed to influence, incite, and undermine our duty to others. "Ethics really begins with awareness and sensitivity to our responsibilities" (Rosenthal, "Patriotism"), and I approach teaching based on the idea that moral duties transcend borders to include the most vulnerable wherever they reside because our "moral obligations to the rest of the world (. . .) are real" (Nussbaum). Without a moral and political core and a commitment to act with time-honored virtues, I assert, we may overlook abuses that corrupt the body politic, shrug off individual responsibility, and leave governance on all levels to others. Drawing on historical references, I note that in times when people are not vigilant and do not provide checks on power, dictatorial personalities "full of passionate intensity," as Irish poet W.B. Yeats phrased it (8), will find their way to podiums, and too often their subjective fetishes and ruthlessness can lead to genocides carried out in daylight before our eyes. We have seen this with figures such as Mussolini, Stalin, Kim Jong un, Omar Al-Bashir, and Hitler. One of the most essential ways to guard ourselves

against manipulators who employ ingenious linguistic strategies, falsehoods, and highly-charged symbols to normalize what is unacceptable is through education. I note that omissions as well as exaggerations divert and mislead, and that rhetoric that boldly demonizes and dehumanizes others as well as rhetoric that elevates and mythologizes individuals or groups are equally dangerous; they create distortions that lead to conformism, social exclusion, oppression, and inequality (Horkheimer 399).

Labeling and learning the strategies of persuasion are teachable. Therefore, to understand the concept and practice of applied ethics through U.S. immigration policy at our southern border, I structure the unit from "smaller to larger," starting with critical thinking skills and the fundamental values of the academy. I present that facts are considered current knowledge and information needs to be balanced in order to be considered reliable. We review the subtopics we will cover, including learning vocabulary, engaging in close reading and listening techniques, focusing on formal outlining methods, and interpreting media messages. We build on this in order to "study language not as an abstract system, but [as] (. . .) concrete lived reality" (Maybin 64), to decode framing devices in rhetorical and visual sources, to sort assumptions from facts, and to identify "the moral dimensions of (. . .) issues" in policy debates (Rosenthal, "Rising Fences"). The culminating student projects are a 1000-word argument essay on a controversy related to U.S. immigration policy and a search for organizations—school, local, national, or international—that are dedicated to social issues that are of concern to them. What I recapitulate is that the more far-reaching objectives of this academic work are to help them to recognize their own availability biases and thinking processes, to analyze how influence is constructed in personal appeals, popular culture, and sociopolitical discourse, and to discover their own sense of agency and ability to enact change by joining with others within society.

III.   Selected Readings

As a way to establish the importance of ethical thinking and action, I ask students to consider the following quote by Simon Critchley: "There [is] no absolute knowledge and anyone who claims it—whether a scientist, a politician or a religious believer—opens the door to tragedy. All (. . .) information is imperfect and we have to treat it with humility" (388). I then ask students to paraphrase, interpret, and find relevant examples of this assertion in news articles. Currently, conversations have revolved around data on the COVID-19 pandemic and emerging statistics on global warming. Student-generated topics serve as an opportunity for me to reflect on relevant examples of how and why the date and the country of publication of sources are critical to perceiving their historical and contemporary significance. Similarly, I am able to reiterate that scholarly language is qualified and information is provisional. We then re-enter the entire essay to understand its subtext and open questions. Decoding subtexts, I believe, is one of the skills that is foundational to understanding framing but, based on my observations, it has not been stressed in some high schools. I try to address this deficit because "the subtext expresses the author's aims, agenda, and voice" (Amir and Mazuz). Accordingly, we analyze the title of the essay, its historical details, its first-person point of view, its symbols, and its inferences. By doing so, we confront the

unstated, hypothetical inquiry that Critchley makes, namely, "What would you do if you were a non-Jewish citizen living in Nazi Germany under a regime that totalized others and pursued racial cleansing through a 'final solution,' and what do you imagine citizens could have done under such circumstances?" This is a starting point for discussions about competing goods, our ethical responsibilities to marginalized peoples who are voiceless and powerless, and "[h]ow should one live?" It offers the opportunity, too, to introduce the think-pieces of Jacques Ranciere in *Aesthetics and its Discontents.* Ranciere is concerned with the way governments have erased individuals and, conversely, how marginalized groups have fought to be recognized and treated with human dignity. In considering power structures, he states that "the whole question, then, is to know who possesses speech and who merely possesses voice." He continues by saying, "[f]or all time, the refusal to consider certain categories of people as political beings has proceeded by means of a refusal to hear the words exiting their mouths as discourse (. . .) [because they have] been perceived as noisy animals" (24). This vocabulary of "othering" is precisely what we will hear when we listen to Trump's rhetoric on immigration.

Next, I discuss that knowledge is not value-free or static by assigning the *New York Times* article "Two States. Eight Textbooks. Two American Stories." Author Dana Goldstein reveals that middle and high school history textbooks by the same authors and publishers are customized for different school districts in the country. She reports that the numerous editorial accommodations that are demanded by large public systems, specifically those in Texas and California, center on some of the most divisive issues our country faces. For instance, information and perspectives on Reconstruction, abortion, LGBTQ rights, and subsidies for environmental initiatives are contrasted. Goldstein goes on to predict that these longstanding flashpoints have and will continue to affect social attitudes, cement political beliefs, and impact voting patterns for the next generation (A1). The larger academic point that students learn is that although history and other narratives may be based on primary sources, compositions are always informed by the sociopolitical worldview of their creators, publishers, and communities. According to works on discourse analysis, this is crucial to teach so that students can build neural connections and memory. It offers them insight into the ways that language is socially rooted, ambiguous, and context-dependent (Maybin 64-65; Bernard). This introduces how context, framing, repetition, codes, and imagery inform communication. Because Goldstein's article focuses on middle and high schools, something in their not-so-distant past, students can relate to the information on a personal level. As they consider Goldstein's evidence, I am able to highlight that "the greater part of truth is in that which is absent" or suppressed (Marcuse). One of the factors that has determined whether students are willing to read closely and take intellectual risks hinges on the culture of the in-person or virtual classroom. Based on personal experience and research studies, communication and cohesiveness are critical ("Honoring Student Experience"). By appealing to their curiosity, valuing their participation, and engaging in exercises of metacognition, I attempt to create classrooms as places of hope, an expression coined by Wayne Au et al., where students become more open to exploring the small and large questions of how we should live, how we can make choices given competing claims, and what our obligations are to others in our globalized world. The responses to these

intertwined questions impel students to think abstractly, listen respectfully, and draw judgements incisively. It sparks many of them to begin to see themselves as capable of acting within a wider sphere of influence.

IV.   Close Readings: Argument and Counter-Argument

Before moving to frame analysis, I have students focus on the structure of argument and counter-argument in the context of immigration texts as models for their own upcoming 1000-word essay. We explore the debate among public intellectuals Mathias Risse, Ryan Pevnick, and Philip Cafaro in the Carnegie Council's *Writing in Ethics & International Affairs Journal.* The authors cite statistics, question assumptions, and contest assessments about the greater good. By outlining one article, students can have a visual organizer with which to work. We examine how the essays are built from the sentence level up, noting how refutations are indicated with signal words and transitional phrases. To help students synthesize this learning and build schema, I assign a short "Immigration and Ethics" paper on one of the topics we have just covered. This provides scaffolding for their longer work to come (Seifert and Sutton 33-40). A number of my students hold strong feelings about U.S. immigration policies—many are immigrants, international students, first generation citizens, or Dreamers—so most immerse themselves and produce strong work. They engage in finding, organizing, and integrating evidence into a well-developed and carefully constructed paper, and they learn vocabulary that assists them in joining larger scholarly conversations in the future.

V.   Framing

Framing may be conceptualized as a superstructure that includes the different strategies used to influence peoples' points-of-view and preferences. Based on the work of Erving Goffman in the 1970s, sociologists, psychologists, economists, and neuroscientists have since expanded the field by conducting experiments on responses to different types of stimuli. Today, framing, which is used ubiquitously in business, medicine, politics, and other fields, refers to the art of deliberately shaping stories to produce effects and decisions. By reading excerpts from recent journal articles, we perceive how priming, repetition, inflammatory language, information asymmetry, anchoring, the status quo bias, and appeals to fear and uncertainty create tunnel vision (Walker-Wilson). We learn that fear "floods (. . .) consciousness," distorts perceptions, and magnifies anxiety, freezing beliefs to the extent that "even sophisticated actors are subject to the framing effect" (Bar-Tal 7; Walker-Wilson). Highly relevant in terms of social justice, we focus on information asymmetry (Walker-Wilson). The concept of valence framing is where "the frame casts the same critical information in either a positive or a negative light" (Levin et al. 150).

VI.   Framing in the Immigration Debate

When watching press briefings with Trump administration officials, we hear them repeat oversimplifications, overgeneralizations, and inflammatory language to create images of asylum

seekers and economic migrants as marauders or "the wretched of the earth" (Fanon). Similarly, we discover that many proponents of more lenient immigration policies use analogous devices, extolling the benefits of immigrants to the U.S. culture and economy. Realizing that social and political stakeholders on both sides of this and other debates employ asymmetrical framing is, I rehearse, of central concern because it is only by identifying a creator's intent and the aesthetics employed to advance that intent that we perceive masking (Galasinski 72).

For example, beginning with Trump's characterization of third-world countries as "shithole" nations catches the attention of students because of the incongruity between the social expectations of the office of the presidency and the unsophisticated colloquial language that he uses (Silva). We then read Trump's assertions about the immigration lottery; he said: "'They come in by lottery. They give us their worst people, they put them in a bin (. . .) the worst of the worst'" (qtd. in Valverde). Here, Trump confuses the operation of the lottery system and denigrates those applying and arriving to the U.S. through this legal program. In reference to undocumented individuals, he has referred to them as sub-humans, saying that "'[t]hese aren't people. These are animals,'" reminding us of Ranciere's insights into concepts of domestic colonialism, power, and powerlessness (qtd. in Korte and Gomez). Because using dictionaries and thesauruses in teaching has been shown to be valuable learning tools, we use these to understand the denotations and connotations of his expressions (Campoy-Cubillo 119). In doing so, we find that one may interpret Trump's statements literally and derive from "animals" and "bin" that he perceives Hispanic migrants and immigrants, legal or not, as herds to tame, inanimate refuse, dirty laundry, or garbage.

Conceptually, these linguistic examples sharpen the contrast between the ethical principles we have been discussing that argue for our interconnectedness and the "equal moral worth of every human being" with the othering and reification of migrants at our southern border (Rosenthal, "Patriotism"). In opposition to ethical tenets of cooperation and obligation— "placing globality at the heart of political imagination" —the administration shows that it calculates human value in terms of monetary value (Beck 484).

Other quotes by Trump, where he presents distortions as objective fact, provide additional examples of his appeals to ethos and pathos where he conjures the fear of potential economic and cultural losses due to immigrants (Galasinski 85). For instance, he has argued that, for the most part, those seeking refuge in the U.S. from Central America and Mexico are drug dealers, rapists, murderers, or terrorists (qtd. in Williamson and Gelfand). His administration has insinuated that many asylum seekers are frauds who try to game the system to take advantage of America's social welfare programs (Woods 110). As a group, Trump has labeled those presenting themselves at the southern border as an organized "invasion" or a "caravan" (Varela). Taken together, his repeated warnings foretell the "last ding dong of doom" for our republic if these migrants were permitted to enter (Faulkner). By sounding alarms about existential extinction, we see framing in action. I ask students to recognize that disconfirming examples are suppressed, improbable negative outcomes are amplified, and an ontological sense of our responsibility to act on the greater good is lacking.

This is foregrounded so students learn how to pull back the curtain on the wizard, because once they gain the skills to isolate ideological schema, they will be able to assess whether to support or oppose high leadership, they will be able to consciously organize and put into practice Foucault's idea that power is distributed throughout society and can shape institutions, and they will be more prepared to act on behalf of others.

In contrast to many of Trump's portrayals, "Little America," published in *Epic.com* and released as a book in 2020, offers a positive, inclusive, and optimistic counter-narrative to the role and value of immigrants in everyday American life. Its aim is to explode the messages of blame and fear by celebrating the stories of newcomers who have attained personal and professional prestige for their grit, achievements, and contributions to the nation. Starting from the top of the magazine page, the title is arresting because it is unassuming but paradoxical. Before one enters the world of the "Little America" essay, its title announces dichotomies. According to Jacques Derrida's theories, "even the most apparently simple statement is subject to fission or fissure," so, by explicating the title through a deconstructionist lens, one may perceive its complexities and contradictions (Royle 26). I ask students to brainstorm and, as needed, I add suggestions; for example, I submit that the fifteen people showcased in the article symbolize American immigrants in general. Simultaneously, by engaging in a symptomatic reading, I offer that "Little America" may be viewed as a reference to those whose voices and judgments are small-minded and who accept the image of non-native born individuals from third-world nations as uneducated, childlike adults whose impulses and drives tend to place others in danger. Alternatively, I pose, the reference to "little" may allude to the fact that within our geographic borders we function essentially as small, self-governing communities. One may see this through name designations such as Little Italy, Little Cuba, Koreatown, and Chinatown. On the other hand, the entire phrase "Little America" could be an homage to Jean-Francois Lyotard's post-structuralist philosophy that "legitimacy can only reside in what he [Lyotard] terms '*petits recits*,' or 'small' or 'localized' narratives which are provisional, contingent and make no claim to universality" (qtd. in Cuddon 432). The title, additionally, may signify that we all play a little part in the larger mosaic of the nation. Through my students' free reflection and my cues, therefore, this multilayered title is analyzed. It is an effective exercise because it jolts students to ask the larger questions about their identity, belonging, privilege, and ethical responsibility.

Structurally, "Little America" falls loosely into the category of group profile multimedia journalism packages and is an eclectic assemblage of color portrait photos and brief, edited autobiographical statements by fifteen immigrant or first-generation individuals across the nation (Jacobson et al. 527). The work coheres thematically versus through plot. It incites tension not only through its title but also through the way its cutting-edge digital design is juxtaposed to traditional modes of storytelling. In essence, it mixes genres and aesthetics, attracting, holding, and entertaining readers as a piece of literary performance art.

The opening text begins: "Everyone here came from somewhere else. Even Native Americans crossed the Bering Strait at some point. This is the basic American idea—an identity

open to all—but it can be easy to forget from inside" ("Little America" 1). It rejects the lens that migrants and immigrants are "less than," and its subtext prompts our recognition that acculturation and assimilation are ongoing, dynamic, and comprehensively inclusive processes. Likewise, "Little America" focuses on specific individuals as opposed to the Trump administration's ethnically-driven group caricatures. Those featured in the piece include Daniel Pohl who, with his "mad scientist" friend Marcus, built a contraption and zip lined out of communist Czechoslovakia. His homemade chariot is now on display in the Checkpoint Charlie Museum. Also featured is Reyna Pacheco who entered California as an undocumented child, discovered the game of squash at age thirteen, and has since become a legal resident and a nationally ranked player representing the U.S. at home and abroad. Additionally, there is Elizabeth Kizito from Uganda who built a business, became a local legend in Kentucky, and sells gourmet baked goods online and in stores. In "Little America," these three and the others that are included personify what Paul Slovic has coined as the paradox of empathy—"Little America" puts a human face and voice to immigrants through particular profiles, depicting that they are everyday heroes who have not diminished America but enhanced her. It highlights the reciprocity among people and advocates that we reject protectionist attitudes in favor of "moral commitments [that] extend to the least well-off wherever they are" (Rosenthal, "Patriotism"). It implies that we each have a role that we can fulfill in the real fight for greater equality and dignity for others, and that we recognize that, as Gershom Scholem stated, "'justice is the elimination of fate'" (qtd. in Lesch). We do not need to acquiesce but can act to contest inclinations and policies that tend toward totalitarianism. Thus, it presents, in the form of a parable, why it is everyone's interest to relieve suffering and champion inclusion.

Clearly, it is uplifting to hear these Horatio Alger-style success stories and to be inspired to action by noble causes. Yet it is important to realize, too, that "Little America" employs valence framing techniques as a way to influence and enlist others to its point-of-view. I ask students to contrast and compare the collection of Trump's assertions with the narratives and portraits in "Little America." I ask them how these distinctly different representations of immigrants may be considered similar. Depending on the responses, I return to the concept of symptomatic readings, or searching, as Marcuse suggests, for what is suppressed or absent. What I help tease out is that counter-arguments and counter examples are erased from Trump's and from "Little America's" depictions. Both offer an incomplete, "single story" (a term Adichie used in the title of her 2009 *TedTalk*), so both may be considered biased and unreliable. They both exploit asymmetrical framing to impress and persuade.

To delve into this analysis more deeply, I reference Walter Benjamin who, with the rise of fascism in Germany in the 1930s, originated the phrase the "aestheticization of politics," (qtd. in Hillach et al. 99). This may be applied to the spectacle of Trump's rallies and the political souvenirs Trump sells along with the idea that he is "'the only one who can make America truly great again!'" (Campbell; Cillizza). His events bait crowds to abandon rational thinking and join an "in-group" (Aronson 28-31). Under these circumstances, frames go unanalyzed. What President Trump's tent revival meetings show is what research has exposed—compliance and conformism are

catching. Trump's efforts at colonizing the population, an idea that is important to teach based on recent research on "the colonization of democracy," offer new insights on social dynamics (Allan 251). As such, I promote that if we are not aware of cognitive biases and sleight-of-hand omissions, we will not know what questions to ask or gain any insight into others' calculations and aims. We will, instead, be part of a "susceptible circle" that is vulnerable to being persuaded by the loudest voice in the room or the best Method actor on the stage (Thoroughgood et al.).

The Trump administration's use of asymmetrical framing relies not just on ideas but also on images. I begin, therefore, by teaching that deciphering visual material involves analyzing a vocabulary of symbols through which creators construct values and worlds. Photos and documentary news coverage are too often, I suggest, accepted as unambiguous factual representations. Criteria to interpret pictures include angles, color, perspective, costuming, lighting, background, context, the creator's reputation, and more (Struken and Cartwright 9-48). If we return to "Little America" to concentrate on the pictures individually and as a group and use the principles explained by Struken and Cartwright, we can see what Jacques Ranciere terms "relational aesthetics," or how context and the interaction between spaces and forms affect perception and worldview (22). Specifically, we see that each person is well-groomed and dressed in the way they chose to be viewed. The figures are centered in the frame and pose outdoors. Each person's face is seen clearly, and each character's physical presence is unique. The interviewees are essentially very different in terms of age, ethnicity, gender, and location. There is no underlying sense of urgency, disorganization, or desperation about them. And, of course, they are not in a large group but shot singly, suggesting that they need and deserve to be seen as individuals. This is a metaphor for the idea that all migrants and immigrants need to be perceived as humans and should be treated with dignity and human rights. From this short analysis alone, the signifiers within each photograph, the accompanying texts, and the publication of the piece in a respected on-line magazine suggest that potential immigrants will be drivers of innovation and stability in the nation.

In contrast, when one views news footage and hears Trump's descriptions of the migrants en route from Mexico to the U.S., we are immersed in a different sense of reality. In these pictures, streams of weary and bereft individuals pouring toward ports of entry are filmed in motion. Through valence framing, by calling these foreigners a potential incursion, the administration asks viewers to regard them as imminent risks to our economy, our bodies, and our homes. Trump's rhetoric is designed to strike revulsion and anxiety in the populace. However, if one visualizes the world map and establishes that the U.S. is an idealized free-market democracy that is mythologized in the popular imagination, one is prompted to remember the motives of one's own immigrant ancestors, respond with empathy, and see these migrants more as pioneers than rural undesirables. If we envision these aspirants as suppliants on a kind of sacred pilgrimage—individuals making an exodus-based faith and hope—we are more likely to identify with them and recognize our spiritual selves in them and their holy quests.

Re-imagining and rewriting the commentary around these migrants that are crossing hundreds of miles toward the U.S. is a framing thought experiment. It serves as a reminder to analyze framing. It forces a conversation about ethics and our obligations toward those in need. In this context, Paul Bloom reminds us that "it is impossible to empathize with seven billion strangers [but] (. . .) our best hope for the future (. . .) lies (. . .) in an appreciation of the fact that, even if we don't empathize with distant strangers[,] [we acknowledge that] their lives have the same value as the lives of those we love." By redefining the people Trump has labeled a caravan and embracing Bloom's ideas about human dignity, questions about ethics are intentionally placed at the forefront of our conversations and held as a precondition to analyzing dynamics with any degree of objectivity and empathy.

VII.   Moving Forward

To inspire the idea that ethical and meaningful action is available to everyone, I ask students to research the *Time Magazine* 2019 Person of the Year cover story on sixteen-year-old Greta Thunberg. A kind of modern day Joan of Arc, I show the class news clips of her speaking to large gatherings, and I reiterate that in 2018 "'she was a solo protestor with a hand-painted sign [but] (. . .) she's now led millions of people around the world, 150 countries, to act on behalf of the planet'" (qtd. in Flynn). We learn, too, about seventeen-year-old climate activist Howey Ou who, inspired by Thunberg, continues to violate China's ban on publicly discussing climate change, and whose bravery has earned her international recognition. Building on this, I ask students to identify areas in their own worlds—school, local, national, or international organizations—where they might engage with others on issues relevant to them and join organizations in order to act for greater social justice.

VIII.   Conclusion

In summary, my efforts are to use the immigration debate as a way to provoke students to become more cognizant of asymmetrical framing and its powers of persuasion. I endorse Dorothy Smith's thesis that facilitating change involves "negotiat[ing] with structures rather than simply submit[ting] (. . .) to them" (Mills 29). We listen to the *TedTalk* by the recently elected president of Belarus, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, who embodies hope and models paths forward to fight authoritarianism together; she states, "Fear is the province of one. It feeds on isolation (. . .) Fearlessness takes two. It only works if and when we show up for each other." I urge that this is doable within the context of what Foucault has called "the transformative possibilities within the present" (Mills 16). These affirmations correlate with the investigative findings of Noble Laureates Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman who make explicit that understanding frames is of metaphysically consequential importance because "the adoption of a (. . .) frame is an ethically significant act" and ontologically definitional to who we are as individuals and a nation (453-58).

During the course of this project on immigration and ethics, I am very privileged to witness and contribute to students' academic and personal growth as writers and deep thinkers.

Their argument essay on immigration related to those from Central American and Mexico is due at this point, the conclusion of this unit. Reading their papers, I am continually gratified to hear their syntheses of the psychological and philosophical ideas we have studied together, and I find myself renewed each semester by the collaborative and transformative power of education in all of our lives.

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ESSAYS

Regina A. Bernard-Carreño

Intellectual Awakenings:
Thinking, Walking and Teachings in
Social (In)Justice

The challenge of being an educator has a multitude of layers. First, there must be a consideration of both where we teach and who we teach. Second, but perhaps always looming over our work, has to be a shift in how we design our personal narratives and our pedagogical philosophies. While either of those will have its bare bones, we must be willing to add, move, and rearrange its parts in order to meet the needs of the students but also to assist us in continuing our own journey as educators. When I first began teaching, almost twenty years ago, one of my fears was that I would find one of my exams circulating through the building, either for sale or just because I overlooked its (de)value. The students, in search of other pricey exams, oftentimes knew the material but were made to feel overwhelmed by the sheer intensity of being asked whether they knew what their professor knew. Like a boat gone too far out into the sea, the students are pulled from the idea that their college-experience is supposed to transform them into the intellectuals they hoped to become. Instead, they were morphing into vessels that held regurgitated information and could periodically repeat it on command. They were no longer considering how what they were taught could be applied to their lives, their jobs, and to ways they thought about the world. Rather, they were hoping to do all possible to memorize "facts" and repeat them as best they could.

In my first year of teaching, it made me uncomfortable when colleagues suggested that their multiple-choice exams always had "tricky questions" just to "shake things up a bit." I found teaching tactics like that to be useless and oftentimes rewired students into second-guessing themselves about things they already knew to be true. After my first two semesters, I did away with the traditional exam and never looked back. This essay then examines my work as an educator in various classrooms dealing with sensitive topics like race, racism, class, gender, and justice, but it also serves as a reflection of my ever-evolving pedagogical praxis. Throughout the piece, I reflect on the narratives of my students who help to not only inform my work but also assist in how they too learn from said experience. This is how we transform the norm.

The beginnings of every semester have fallen into a perfectly-packaged routine, particularly if you've taught summer classes and one term is rushing into the other, it seems. The weather here in New York City sometimes doesn't quite shift yet in early September and we professors don't

always realize we are competing with several human emotions as well as warm weather. Many of the students would rather be anywhere else, but there they are: friendless, anxious, awkwardly timid, accompanied solely by their new knapsack and awaiting their professor. *I get there early and close the door behind me as I get ready for the bum-rush into the room, straight past me into seats somewhere at the far back.*

Almost like preparing for a date, I try to set the mood before the students arrive in the classroom. I put on some jazz and organize all of my materials on the small podium in the quiet of the empty space. When the door opens, I hold it ajar with my foot and greet each one of them. Many of them bid me a courtesy of a good morning or afternoon as many others remain silent and make no eye contact with me. I chalk it up to nerves, but the disconnect in our humanity worries me. I realize when I began the journey of becoming a college professor the students had a different pulse to them, but the world has gotten colder, crueler, and younger people are caught in between technological relationships and their assumptions about what lies ahead for them each semester they remain in school.

The composition of the syllabi over the years has taught me to leave off some of the ingredients to the final recipe, limiting the anxiety for all of us. Over the years I've noticed that the students are plagued by too many details and get lost between the required words, and the commands of what they are supposed to do. A colleague once schooled me on how to make a smaller class so that my life might be easier. *Black Studies will not make life easy even with just one person in the room.*

"Make the syllabus impossible. Include tons of work all over it and you'll see how fast your class dwindles down to a manageable amount. In no time, you'll have half the population," my colleague said. "Maybe you get lucky and even have people who want to be there," she laughed.

"So wrong," I replied half-jokingly. "I have only twenty-five in this one class. It's better than usual," I said, trying to defend students I didn't even know yet.

"C'mon. That's way too many in a single class and it's not like we have just the one class to teach," she scoffed.

She was right about over-enrollment, but I didn't think that our syllabi should pre-define who we were as educators, and ultimately create an identity for any of us that was untrue. Additionally, the overburdening of a syllabus just posits that the course from its outset has a shadow of impossibility and bears no mark on the quality of the course or the instruction itself. The students can also sniff-out random assignments and recognize the disrespect to their abilities when their required work has no impact on how they consume or produce information. The "busy-work" as I call what my colleague suggested I add to my syllabus would have no impact on the student and would create the arduous task of trying to sincerely define a legitimate pedagogical benefit. Once I distribute a syllabus, I ask the students to go over the assignments that are already listed (more or less will come as the term moves forward) and ask if they wish to tweak the actual

process of completing the assignment. Having the students work on the structural design of the assignment allows them to share their expertise in particular places and gives a variety to the assignments we are to assess. Here is where I employ a simple idea that quality over quantity will always give you something of great meaning. *Didn't we get into this game because we believed we had something to teach and ultimately we wanted to enlighten the learner?*

"These things matter when you are a faculty member of color teaching in a discipline that by name alone is a sign of resistance," I said to another colleague as I shared the just-learned tidbit of how to shrink the class enrollment.

"That's true," said the older Black professor. "Never turn a student away who wants to learn from you," he said. "That's a mistake we can't afford."

There is, of course, a crippling effect of teaching too many students at once. The sometimes unnoticeably automatic result is our creativity as educators being stifled, leaving us all feeling cramped in spaces of discomfort. That particular semester, I had decided to teach the introductory class on "expressions of racism" which generally comes with a heavy first-year enrollment. I was assigned multiple sections of the course as well as an additional course on Black New York City. The latter is host to upper-level students nearing graduation. Black New York City hadn't been offered in over ten years, and the senior students who had taken me for the introductory course years prior urged me to offer something new before they graduated. I almost always take those special requests from students. Among many of my colleagues, it's easy to assume that because my courses are in Black and Latino/a studies that the students would mostly be Black and Latino, but they aren't. Our college no longer holds a large population of Black and Latino students as it once did when I was hired many years ago. It is not rare to teach a Black Studies class with thirty-five students enrolled and have under ten students of color among the seats. I can recall several recent semesters in which I taught a Black studies course to packed rooms of close to forty students and had two-three Black students among the roster. Many times, the students of color are outnumbered and feel isolated in a class that is supposed to address the issues some have personally faced. Being the numerical minority in the room creates a silencing and positions the students as experts in areas in which they either fiercely embrace and become the "voice" or quiets their expertise and helps to foster resentment for the topic altogether.

The first assignment, a self-reflective narrative, is one that requires the student to sit with themselves and think about who they really are as individuals within our larger learning community and their lives outside of the classroom. I usually ask the students to also include an encounter with racism and how they managed during that time. Some of the students describe painful memories filled with hate, fear, paralysis as a bystander, violence, abuse and general oblivion about the world. Others saw too much before the age of twenty-one. *What happened to the fun of being a young adult?*

"I learned of Black people watching *Boyz N the Hood*," said one of the white students during one of the first class meetings.

"What's that?" her classmate nearby responded.

"*Boyz N the Hood*? A movie about black boys in bad neighborhoods and how they all are in gangs and stuff," she said.

"How did *that* teach you about black people?" one of the black students called out.

"I guess because I'm not from America, I didn't know anything about blacks. I learned a lot from that movie," the student said, defending Singleton's work.

The black student lowered his Knicks cap on his head, outstretched his long legs, and gave me a knowing expression, "This is your class. Please handle that, Dr. B," he said with a smirk that hid the anger I knew was slow steeping.

"You mad?" a black female asked the young man.

Before he could answer, she followed her question, "Don't be mad at her. I cross the street when I'm by myself and see a black man coming my way too. You have to blame society for that. Blame the media. It's not her fault, she's not even from here."

"But you are. You're from here, and you're tellin' me you're afraid of me? You come from a worse neighborhood than I do. I should be scared of you," the young black male student retorted. He was becoming visibly upset though he masked it well behind his comedic responses. My male student was angry because he believed that as a black female, his classmate should've understood his position and depiction in society as "their" struggle, as opposed to her defense of non-black students who had no frame of reference at all about such experiences. After class he whispered to me that his black female classmate was a "sellout" and would always be until someone like me could "wake her up."

Boyz N the Hood certainly wasn't the worst reference made by a student about exposure to black identity, international or otherwise, but it meant we had work to do, particularly as the class had a slim population of students of color and I had been commissioned with the responsibility to enlighten her and others like her.

"You're my first brown teacher—professor, I mean. Well, this is my first semester, but you're my first," a young Asian boy called out.

"He's about to get his Black Studies cherry popped!" another student called out.

"Let's hope the experience is a good one then," I said as the room began to giggle at the subliminally vulgar statement that didn't acknowledge whether or not I had been offended. His comment about me being his first was shocking. Here we were in New York City and they were in their first semester of college, and I was the first person of color to teach this young man. *We should all be worried about that alone and first.*

Assignments like the self-reflective narratives as well as genealogical research projects revealed things I wish I hadn't known. One of the students disclosed an unhealthy fear of the police wherever he went, though he was born and raised in Queens, New York and shared his community with cops all the time. He wrote in his paper that it didn't matter what state he went to as part of his athletic training; he was petrified of cops. Another student shared that she was probably going to drop out of school because of her older brother's imprisonment. Her family just couldn't afford for her not to work full-time as the legal fees continued to pile up and her brother's innocence was looking slimmer and slimmer as the months of his incarceration increased. Other students had shared that they bridged suicide multiple times because the world was too chaotic to live in and they had not yet fully decided that remaining here had a valid point. The stereotype of the "model minority" was still enforced at home and all they wanted to do was see the world and read things of interest, not of requirements. The truth was, "I hate math and I despise science, and I don't care to get a great paying job. There's so much to see and I don't think I'll see any of it," read one paper. I sat with each of the narratives which collectively were about a hundred and instead of being excited about teaching them I was weighed down with worry and conflicted emotion about my work. *Someone needs to reach them differently. Many of them feel forced to be here and their success will be measured by someone else's happiness and the size of their assumed paycheck.*

I first assigned selections from Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* to give them a foundation for understanding how we would look at oppression and interpretations of liberation. We would try to understand the functions of oppression with a variety of players and move away from blaming individuals and simple "society" as they referred to things unknown and other variables. The text proves hard for most of my students who had never been exposed to concepts the way Freire presents it. Once we began to break the text down and connected it to real-life examples, the students were quickly empowered as they suddenly changed their vocabulary to make sense of the world in a philosophical context. For example, a major thread woven into *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* is the call to re-establish one's vocabulary. The power of vocabulary has been overlooked and places us into a space in which we cannot identify our oppression or liberation. Simply put, we don't have the words to define our experience. I implore the students then to consider the use of their vocabulary when identifying examples of oppression. We move from "the white man" to terms like power, privilege, institutional racism, and so on. Use of these terminologies allows for further work in defining both historical and contemporary cases of oppression, even perhaps at a domestic level to international. For those who found themselves outside of the margin of oppression, living in a privilege others envied, they almost as quickly wanted to identify as allies and human solutions to the problem and not part of the larger issue at hand.

Moving into the middle of September, the weather still had not shifted and as New Yorkers walked around in shorts and t-shirts. I decided to move the classroom outdoors into various places within the city, almost entirely abandoning the syllabus I had spent so much time creating. We had been discussing food access in low-income communities that were heavily populated by Blacks and

Latinos across New York City. I wanted to drill into the students that eating green was not far away from the original diet of people of color and to stray them away from believing that the fast-food restaurants packed into economically stressed and socially challenged neighborhoods was purposefully designed. Given free admission to the Brooklyn Botanical Garden, I moved our class into the 52-acre green space as I introduced the students to edible plants native to Black and Latino places across the globe.

"They drink this in a punch or like a tea back home in my country," one student said as she stroked a sorrel plant.

"Where is back home?" I asked.

"Jamaica. I didn't know they had this here too. Do they drink it the same way?" she asked.

"We'd have to ask one of the gardeners but I drink it the same way as you do," I smiled.

"Me too," said a baby-faced young man who was late to arrive to class that morning.

"Get out of here, professor! Really?!" The Jamaican student said feeling an instant connection as did I.

Continuing to take advantage of the peculiar fall weather, I took my students to Central Park for a walking tour of the lost Seneca Village the following week.

"I wish I went to a school where the teachers did that," one of my black female students whispered to me as she pointed to a group of little white children and their black gym teacher playing ball on the great lawn.

"Me too," I said.

"Well at least I'm here with you now," she laughed. *Our pain was real. It hurt. We wanted to be outside too. We played on concrete but we would've loved to run on grass just part of the day. Our public schools were nowhere near Central Park, and our teachers back then didn't think to take us there for a field day.*

Not funded for these types of escapades, the students and I each chipped in three dollars a person to learn more about the missing population of Central Park. The park's tour guide talked at length about the first and lost black community that lived in Seneca Village which was once a thriving and organized collection of churches, schools, and homes. He showed us pictures of porcelain wears, discovered children's shoes, and toothbrushes along with other artifacts.

"The rich wanted to see green and enjoy that green space for their leisure so they mowed down Seneca Village for their pleasure," the tour guide said.

"So what happened to the black people that were here?" one of my students asked the guide.

"Gone. You can imagine that if they come with money for your neighborhood most likely you are going to get gone," the guide responded.

"A first example of gentrification right, Dr. B.?," another student asked.

I shook my head in silent agreement.

"We're walking on top of someone, you know that right?" A student said as we moved from one spot to another in the park.

The following couple of weeks we went to the African Burial Ground which faces directly across the street from one of New York City's federal buildings. I told the students that while we are spending so much time outside of the classroom, they were to continue engaging with the assigned readings and we would discuss through our online discussion board about them. The students didn't mind abandoning the syllabus, but they also dutifully completed the readings and actively interacted online which folded our class into the newer pedagogically challenging hybrid model.

At the burial ground, the students and I were hosted by a Park Ranger who treated us to a film about the struggle to reclaim and recognize the African Burial Ground being underneath our city's financial epicenter.

"Did you see this coffin, Dr. B.?," one student asked as she hooked her arm into mine and pointed towards an intricately hand-carved wooden box.

"I didn't," I replied, my eyes fixated on an illuminated frame holding hundreds of pictures of skeletons lying in dirt, being solely identified by number.

"I think I might go to Ghana and have a coffin like this made just for me. I'd feel closer to my ancestors I think," she said smiling.

"Aren't you from Barbados?" her classmate teased.

"We're all from Africa," she said, punching him in the arm.

"You are not from Africa. I am from Africa," another student said. "You must do some research around your lineage, nwanne" the student said. "Then I will buy you a coffin from Nigeria instead. Ours look better."

"Very morbid, very. Talk about life," I said, my eyes still fixated on a picture of a slave discovered under the very ground I stood upon. "You found Mr. 101. He's special," the Park Ranger said to me in a whisper as we stood side by side in silence.

The Park Ranger took us outside of the building next where we stood in front of mounds of fake grass that were elevated into heaps.

"These bodies came back to reclaim their land. They want respect," one of the tour guides said.

The student standing next to me tightly squeezed my arm.

"Say that again," one of the male students said to the tour guide.

"Don't you see? The mounds are rising. The ancestors want recognition and want people to remember that they are here," the guide said again.

"I'm super freaked out," said one of the white female students.

"It's a bit jarring, but ask questions," I whispered to her.

"What do you mean they want to reclaim their place?" she asked.

"So, people don't want to admit this is true, and the city won't do the measuring, but the federal building across the street is sinking. It's on a slope, although the sidewalk looks level. Really, though—it's sinking and the mounds over here—the graves—they are rising. The slaves want their rightful place and want people to see they are here no matter how hard people try to hide the dirty history," a stranger who joined the trip said in the most stoic and believable voice.

As we continued walking the burial ground, we headed down a small set of stairs and landed in a crowded space under a large marble hanging structure not very high above our heads. Our bodies were touching, meshing into each other as small gnats flew into our faces and away again. *No one is breathing.*

"Do you know where you are?" the Ranger asked.

No one uttered a word.

"In a slave ship," she said.

Just then, one of my students who had taken several classes with me before, and who I cared very much for, grabbed my hand and began to cry. Even in the dark shadow caused by the ship's structure and the tightness of our standing positions, I watched as tear after tear rolled down her cheek dragging her blush with every stain.

After those trips, the weather finally began to nip at us and we retreated to our classroom for several weeks to continue discussing assigned readings. Our first return indoors confronted us with the written words of Trayvon Martin's mother who successfully humanized her son so violently taken from her. Passage after passage in her book demanded that the students reckon with their mortality and their positions in the world. *You can't un-think any of this now. You can't un-know it. What will you do with this information? Will you think more of Trayvon as a human being now and less of a case study?*

By the end of the semester, the social and emotional movement of the students was taking place. We had all been touched in different ways by what we learned, the themes we explored, what we saw together, and the spaces in which we stood that we had previously been taken for granted every day.

For the final assignment, I asked the students to purchase a sketchbook from a local art store and document their journey in our Black Studies class. The size of the sketchbook frightened many while it inspired many others.

"Those blank pages should serve as a reminder of how we all walked in here. We've done so much, seen so much, and know so much more now that we should be able to fill this book with no problem," I said smiling.

What resulted was a small library of sea-foam colored sketchbooks that would give readers an eye into the lives of transformed undergraduates who depicted their traveling somewhere between a first semester studying racism and a last semester of university education. There were letters written to Sybrina Fulton, Trayvon's mother, pictorials of lives lost to racism and violence, confessions of ignorance and awakenings and, among most, self-reflections of walking in social (in)justices.

In this essay, I shared just a few of my pedagogical examples, though there could have easily been hundreds more and that many more to be had. Our pedagogical philosophies are not just our own; they impact the way our students begin to think about the world. Through our teachings they are either seeing the world through murky funnels or developing new vocabularies that will help them embody their intellectual growth. Transformative pedagogy, one that seeks a social justice, begs of us, demands of us, to place our students at the center of our work and consider not just what we think they ought to know, but what they come knowing already and just how thirsty they are for more.

At the time I submitted the original essay, my students and I had been examining constructed ghettos in New York City. Many of them had uninformed and baseless ideas about what Harlem looked like. After reading scholarly papers that hued multiple stereotypes based on "expert" theories that they were unable to fully dispel, I told everyone to pack their bags and we abandoned the classroom to take the city bus some hundred blocks up to Harlem. The students were astonished at the bustling of the community, and the legitimate involvement in a variety of things its residents seem to be deeply into when we arrived. People were working, teachers and students were heading to field trips, stores had customers, and restaurants were preparing for service. Despite the grimness of some of the neighborhood's pockets of lack and neglect, it was unlike what they had imagined, and more in contrast to the theoretical paper we were deconstructing while in the classroom. Heading back to campus via the train, it was the last time I saw my students in that class, in person. The following week COVID-19 hit our city, and the students and I were no longer together in our learning community but were behind our computers trying our best for social and human engagement. I used the opportunity not to become

overwhelmed by the massive workload and life-shift ahead, but allowed for the students to talk about and embrace their new lives under quarantine. We still had much to talk about when it came to race, class, gender, community and social justice, particularly in a heightened-awareness moment of our lives. I am currently reworking our syllabus with only two months left for the semester to write and design assignments that incorporate our current realities within the context of the social dynamics that we are thematically responsible for as per the course description. We have spent several days re-examining our readings as well and trying to make connections between the past and our present as we look to build our future. Despite the forcefulness with which our lives have just been upturned and re-arranged, this is a defining moment of what we will do and can do for our students to transform their educational experiences and leave a lasting impact.

In more recent days and alongside the pandemic's shift in our intellectual lives, we have had to tend to the global obviousness of inequality. In Black Studies, in particular, the particulars of our training and our class methodologies have been overwhelmingly recognized as a kind of familial and safe space. In this carved out community that serves as shelter to so many, students feel freer, protected, and able to articulate ideas and experiences others may not ever understand. Students are once again constricted in a new type of fear, confusion and rage. For many, it is their first time confronting racism in this type of way. Though we continue to mourn the loss of so many of our brown-skinned American citizens, the press upon us to both intellectualize and soothe our learners is ever more present and pensive.

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Jordan Charlton

Reality Pedagogy in the First-Year Composition Classroom

> Writing instructors need to assist their students to discover public writing as a way of 'taking part in a community of discourse' and private writing as a means for writing better reflectively.
>
> —Peter Elbow, "Closing My Eyes as I Speak: An Argument for Ignoring Audience"

In this essay, I take lessons from Christopher Emdin's 2017 book on reality pedagogy, a book that includes his experience teaching in urban classroom settings in America, and implement some of the methods in my own class of first-year composition students in Lincoln, Nebraska. Teaching there, and with this pedagogical lens in mind, I realize I must often consider the personal histories of my students, many of whom come from rural backgrounds that are very different from the ones described in the text. My interest in utilizing this pedagogical practice is to develop a pedagogy that is relevant to students in methodology and practice, allowing them to understand the deeper issues at hand in their daily interactions with the world and with what they consume in various forms of media. I will also consider how these issues interact with each other and as a way to empower students to understand critical thinking as an adaptable skill set that works outside of the classroom just as intentionally as within. One of the leading challenges with this approach regards interactions that, in secondary education, affords the teacher many more opportunities to engage with students. Throughout the course of my exploration, I've noted the challenges and successes that have come with adapting this model of learning to this context.

I first became aware of Christopher Emdin's book *For White Folks Who Teach in the Hood...And the Rest of Y'all Too: Reality Pedagogy and Urban Education* during my time at the 2019 PAMLA Conference in San Diego, California where I attended several panels on composition and rhetoric. As a first-time teacher of composition, the panels gave me the opportunity to learn more about the field I was entering, and one presentation that struck my interest in particular was focused on composition in high school dual-enrollment classes in which high school students are allowed to enroll in college courses for credit prior to their graduation. I tried my best to scribble what I could remember from the panelists' speedy talk. Words like "white people" and "teaching" and "hood" were scratched down in pen markings on a little note pad. Between notes, I listened as the panelist explained the ways that Emdin's teachings worked effectively to reach high school students in urban areas of Southern California. What I wondered as I sat in my seat was about how effective these same lessons might be for my own teaching situation as I would return to a life as a graduate teaching assistant at a predominantly white institution in the Midwest, seemingly the exact opposite terrain to Emdin and his course of study.

Once I returned to campus with the ideas of reality pedagogy lingering in my mind, I placed an order for the book shortly after.

Christopher Emdin's book *For White Folks...* focuses on high school educators whose classroom environments are situated in low-income communities across the United States. *For White Folks...* begins with what can be learned from the Carlisle School, a Pennsylvania boarding school built in 1879 whose intention was to make Indigenous Americans "as close to the white man as possible" (4). Emdin suggests that the teachers of The Carlisle School are not very different from the "white folk" who teach in the hood today. In the preface to his book, Emdin explains how the "white folk" that he refers to throughout are not only white people. Instead, Emdin explains that "white folk" can include anyone and should be understood as an individual who chooses to "maintain a system that doesn't serve the needs of youth in the hood" (viii). This distinction makes clear that the teachers of the Carlisle School were misguided in their approach to education and that those who teach in a similar manner are not too far off, either. Though they exist at very different times, they are both misguided. His explanation is that anyone who teaches with a Eurocentric pedagogy is doing the work of an oppressor and are therefore said "white folk." Emdin's book is not only targeted at teachers. He also draws attention to the failings of educational systems that result in well-meaning individuals not being able to fully carry out their intentions of doing good and making a difference. Emdin does not suggest complete educational reform; instead, he writes the book "for those who work with them ["white folk"], hire them, whose family members are taught by them, and who themselves are being, or have been, taught by them" (vii). By doing so, I believe Emdin's desire is to trade any savior complex that these teachers might enter the classroom with in favor of a model that is best intended to serve these students.

Emdin details the failings of The Carlisle School and goes on to claim some of the major failings of that administration before making a connection with students in "the hood." He describes the similarities between the Carlisle students, identifying them by their indigenous history, and the experience of students in urban areas, identifying them as the neoindigenous. Emdin states, "as long as traditional teaching promotes an imaginary white middle-class ideal," these students should be seen as being from a perspective outside of the majority, thus the neoindigenous identity (9). The hood, in Emdin's opinion, is a space that "may be urban, rural, densely or sparsely populated, but it has a number of shared characteristics that make it easy to recognize. The community is often socioeconomically disadvantaged, achievement gaps are prevalent, and a very particular brand of pedagogy is normalized (viii)."

Just like the students from The Carlisle School, Emdin writes, "the neoindigenous often look, act, and engage in the classroom in ways that are inconsistent with traditional school norms" (9). In specific ways, this relates directly to students in urban areas and I think of whether this can be attributed to students from vastly different backgrounds or first-gen college students as well. In the effort of feeding this interest, I begin to implement some of the methods that Emdin suggests in my own classes. Emdin credits the work of Gloria Ladson-Billings' culturally relevant

pedagogy— an approach to teaching that takes into consideration the culture of the students to determine different ways they should be evaluated.

As an instructor of first-year composition at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, my classrooms have included students with a litany of backgrounds. Students come from rural communities, metropolitan communities, and even from abroad to study here, leaving me with the earnest intention to design a class that remains relevant and engaging with students. Emdin suggests that through "classroom colonialism," students have learned to conform to the expectations of historically oppressive systems of learning (14). What stands in the way of being fully able to take into consideration the approaches of Emdin's book is the differing landscapes of education in high school and college. With the experience of first-year writing being so close to students' previous high school experiences, these classes are among the first that many of them take. At the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, graduate teaching assistants do not assist with teaching; they are instructors of their class and can operate, within reason, how they see fit. Because this is the case, knowing how I could best approach teaching that meets students on their own cultural turf has been an interest from the onset. We start off with a guide on how to read like a college student. I assign Gita DasBender's "Critical Thinking in College Writing: From the Personal to the Academic," a chapter from *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing,* Volume 2. DasBender focuses on core elements of critically engaging with a text, some of which include practicing attentive reading, listing important ideas, and writing a personal response as a method of furthering one's understanding. I tell the students that this guide will be one we come back to often throughout the semester. The document is denser than I take into consideration. On the first day of discussion, students are hesitant to raise their hands and participate. Even after asking if they've read the work, there aren't any volunteers to offer up ideas. The reading for the day suggests strategies on how to apply skills of critical thinking to rhetorical analysis, the first writing project of the semester. In this moment, in that silent classroom, I learn to offer my own difficulties with understanding a text and see a change in our conversations.

I decide against asking questions with finite answers and choose instead to ask about questions regarding the process of reading and comprehension. Instead of asking a very pointed question about subtext or meaning, I ask the students to think about what they believe they know about the text and how or why. Both questions, while simple, remain rooted in analysis while weaving elements of close reading and discussion of finding evidence to back up our beliefs, even if—or especially when—those beliefs change. Some of the value in this activity works to highlight the ways their ideas are fluid.

The class moves away from academic text to a work of fiction in the next lesson, and this time it's Zadie Smith's "Martha, Martha." We discuss the ways that Smith paints a picture of race and wealth with how Pam treats, misinterprets, and is concerned about Martha as she's looking for an apartment. The story has some appeal to the class because Pam is described as being from the Midwest, like so many of my students. The learning objective for this session is to deconstruct this piece of fiction to see how it works. I start with story because narrative arcs possess universal

elements to their composition: a beginning, a middle, and an end. What I'm interested in my students paying close attention to is how a writer like Smith moves through her ideas, focusing on character, themes of trauma, and place. When I work at the whiteboard with students, I ask them about what "moves" the author makes throughout a text, whether this is with a student text or published text. I stop to highlight parts of the text that are strange. I bring to their attention how Pam's Midwestern nature manifests itself in the text. Some of my students identify with the ideals she carries, claim that every subject is not open for discussion in this region, and, because we are in a classroom discussion, I hope that these students feel more comfortable acknowledging these tensions. We spend time working with close reading, going from paragraph to paragraph charting the clues the writer leaves until we've constructed a web of connection through the plot. I tell the students this story is about life after the September 11th attacks – many of them have no memory of this tragedy. One student was actually born on that day. This is just another story to them. I don't know how to rhetorically analyze this information.

In terms of cosmopolitanism, Emdin writes, "the goal for the teacher is to create a classroom environment where the same joy, celebration, and camaraderie that come at the end of the school year are present in the classroom throughout the academic year" (113). This seems more of a daunting challenge in the first-year writing classroom because of the different ways that students enter the space. Students might come to the class on nontraditional terms, they might be part-time, they could be older than their peers, have families, or they may be going back to school instead of attending for the first time. Though, Emdin's idea of cosmo duos might be more adaptable. Cosmo duos are pairs of students that come together to keep one another accountable in their work. One way to create this kind of environment is to assign students to be peer-review partners. After the first few weeks of class, after observing the different personalities the students have, I like to pair of my students into peer-review partners with the responsibility of championing for each other's work. This means that each partner will be working to carefully read their partner's writing, give generative feedback during the drafting stages, and write a detailed response to their peer's writing before they submit their final draft to me. Along the way, the reviewer will submit the work to me so that when I read the final draft I can also understand how the student was responding to the feedback and what challenges they were working through in this assignment.

Part of the feedback students give appears in the form of a peer-review letter. The peer-review letter functions as a space for the students to converse with one another about their observations and remaining questions about each other's writing. Because this is also a text worth a grade, there are still required elements that need explanation, like that each should be a particular length, that students should quote directly from their peer's work, and that each student should provide an explanation of what they believe is motivating the essay. Generally speaking, there seem to be two ways that students approach this undertaking. There is the overly-personal approach, which includes students writing in direct response to their peer who is maybe a friend or someone they only want to give praise to. These papers will say things like, "I don't know exactly how you plan to do the thing you've set out to, but I know you'll kill it." Then, there is the overly critical

approach, an approach that only sees this requirement as another task that is to be turned in to the instructor. Students with this method will write letters that fail to address their peer at all and only highlight the failings of their draft, which I remind them is only a draft. I want students to learn that critical thinking and kindness are not mutually exclusive and that they can be critical of the people and things that they care for. Students do not hold their tongue when critiquing a former student's writing and, though I have removed the names from these essays, I remind students that these papers have a person and a mind attached to them and that they should remember that no act of writing is disembodied.

In terms of context and content, Emdin suggests further learning the ways of the neoindigenous to learn how they communicate and what is important to them. This applies to lesson planning and what material is used in developing ideas for the classroom. For one class period, I chose "Feels Like Summer" by Childish Gambino as our focus for the day's class. The song and the music video served as the two primary texts for our analysis. Most of the students were familiar with the artist and the song, but the articles and video essays I had them watch to accompany the text were new for all of them. By bringing in this kind of text, students were able to further understand that rhetorical analysis could be adapted to every context we come across in life, whether an essay or a Billboard top-100 record. This has led to students bringing ideas and topics that I might never have made connections to myself, like the one student who wanted to write about the connections between mental health issues and online video game streamers, or another student who wanted to analyze the political implications of a Taylor Swift song. By having texts like these lead our discussion, the world-at-large became more dissectible. Soon, we were able to have conversations about non-literary texts more frequently. I found this effort effective in understanding what my students enjoyed, such as what kind of music they listened to and their activities with gaming or recreational sports. In their assignment feedback, many of them wrote that they were thankful to write on subjects that interested them and that this freedom kept them more engaged in the drafting stages.

Emdin's writing about competition in the classroom compels me. He writes, "I suggest that educators implement a teaching and learning model that positions novices as no different from experts. . .By implementing this model, the individualistic and competition-driven nature of traditional schooling is replaced by teaching and learning that creates cultural learning experiences" (157). Perhaps this is the greatest place of contention I have come to in the book. The university model does not currently provide a space for these students to achieve what Emdin has set out.

Curation deals with a lot of the material context that is already present in college classrooms. Curation deals mostly with adapting ways that students can learn and participate with multimodal projects and points of reference like video or computer and internet access. This is more important to the contexts within which the author writes than the one in which I currently teach, though it is worth reconsidering how students will get credit for the work that they turn in. One of the most effective ways to undertake this opportunity has been in utilizing online

discussion posts and responses. In my classes, I've given students the opportunity to look back to some of the themes we've already addressed in the syllabus and find their own readings or articles that interest them to bring to discussion. Then, students read and respond to their peers' readings and I choose a variety of postings to bring into class for large-group discussion. I choose a handful of students each day to add to the large-group discussion we have in person.

I choose to sit in the back of the classroom during student presentations, and what I notice sitting amongst my students is how much they expect me to be the only voice they are addressing. Most of them look directly at me and I try to look across the room at their peers—a reminder that their research is in conversation with the world around them and that they are also contributing to others' understanding of how to undertake the project as well. Perhaps the greatest result of having the student at the front of the classroom during their presentations is that we all can raise our hands with questions or comments. I'm pleasantly surprised when, in my class of sophomores, I often have to worry about how many students can present in a day because the conversation between students is so lively. These students have taken a sincere interest in the work of their peers, many of whom they have had the opportunity to work with in small groups. The groups my students work in are often varied. The ideal situation is to get students with disparate topics to work together, as was the case with two of my students—one writing about masculinity and the other about feminism.

At other times, I've held student-facilitated discussion days where I'll assign readings for the class, separate the students into groups of three, and then task them with analyzing their assigned text and generating questions for discussion. In these student-facilitated discussions, we all rearrange the seats into a circle so everyone is facing each other. The intention of getting students to work in this way is to allow them to understand that their audience goes beyond just me as the instructor. When they have to look at one another while sitting in a circle, I can see the empathetic faces of students who abhor the awkward silences. In these moments, students who have been silent most of the semester chime in, not because they feel obliged but out of respect for their fellow student. I come to understand, as Emdin suggests, "the key to becoming an effective educator is acknowledging the differences between students and teacher and adjusting one's teaching accordingly, which often requires nontraditional approaches to teaching and learning" (83).

I love playing the role of student in these discussions as the leaders occasionally try to pick my brain for thoughts. I refrain from being too leading, and even outright deflect some of their questions when too many are fixed my way. I hope to develop lines of communication between students that will help those who might not understand the material on any given day to build a rapport with a classmate to study. During individual conferences, the students all respond that the additional feedback on their presentations helped them in working toward their project and gave them questions to answer.

What Christopher Emdin has given us with his book is insight to realities we can often overlook. Seeing how to improve student engagement must begin with a student-centric pedagogy, and reality pedagogy is an effective way to understanding how to put your students at the center of lesson planning. I would recommend Emdin's book to those who teach first-year composition and advise they look for what is most adaptable to their situation at hand. The most effective mode of getting students involved is centered on shifting the power dynamic in the classroom and learning as the neoindigenous.

Works Cited

Emdin, Christopher. *For White Folks Who Teach in the Hood - and the Rest of Y'all Too: Reality Pedagogy and Urban Education*. Beacon Press, 2017.

REVIEW

Cheryl Glenn. *Rhetorical Feminism and This Thing Called Hope.* **Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2018. 296 pp. Print. $40. ISBN: 0809336944**

Reviewed by Kainat Abidi Puetz, St. John's University

Students enter the classroom with a diverse set of identities and interactions with the world: culture, society, history, and politics. In the face of the political upheaval resulting from Donald Trump's presidency since 2016 in the United States, students live different emotions and experiences informed by their identities, histories, and the rhetoric of this nation's leadership. Scholarship in feminist rhetoric has long argued the tenants of inclusivity, open and authentic dialogue, respect, and progress to realize a society where people of all identities have the same rights and opportunities. In her book, *Rhetorical Feminism and This Thing Called Hope*, Cheryl Glenn introduces the concept of rhetorical feminism through the contexts of activism, identities, theories, methods and methodologies, teaching, mentoring, and writing program administration. In each of these chapters, Glenn presents rhetorical feminism as a tactic to meet the goals of feminist rhetoric by disidentifying with hegemonic discourses of power that marginalize voices based on identity characteristics; speaking to and from these margins; respecting vernaculars, experiences, and emotions; and engaging in rhetoric that is dialogic and transactional (5). As we consider the manifestations of identity and diversity of experiences and emotions present across our classrooms, Glenn's rhetorical feminism presents a way to engage our students in collaborative knowledge building practices, prompting them to speak as authorities from their positions and intersection of identities to claim their education and create a feminist classroom alive with agency, inclusivity, and, ultimately, hope.

Glenn establishes the importance of rhetorical feminism through showcasing the work of early Sister Rhetors fighting to secure the right to vote. By sharing pieces from Maria W. Miller Stewart, Angelina Grimke, Lucretia Mott, and Sojourner Truth, she demonstrates the tactic of rhetorical feminism in action in the United States public political arena that silences women and those Glenn refers to as "Others," individuals who possess identity characteristics that keep them positioned in the margins. These Sister Rhetors disidentified with hegemonic discourse through their rhetoric, called on their own experiences and emotions, and established their own authority and credibility as they spoke from their marginalized positions. Hillary Clinton, similarly, filtered feminine traits through rhetorical feminism in her "Listening Campaign," using emotion, experience, and silence to listen to her constituents and call young girls and women to action (21). These Sister Rhetors used the experiential knowledge of their identity in their rhetorical feminism. Authority to speak (who can or cannot speak, or who will or will not listen) is grounded in

identity, and women are still limited in their access to the public political arena. Many subalterns, who are denied voice or audience because of their status, must rely on someone with agency through their identity to speak for them, as in the example Glenn offers of Angelina Jolie. The sociocultural power of Jolie's identity as a celebrity and Goodwill Ambassador for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees gives her voice to advocate for refugees. Rhetorical feminism considers such identity, agency, comparative agency, and who is speaking for whom (28), while also considering multiple oppressions associated with intersectionality. Tradition rhetorical methods and earlier waves of feminist rhetoric fail to adequately consider other identity characteristics and intersectionality, and Glenn offers her tactics of rhetorical feminism as strategic actions to fill this gap and achieve the ultimate goals of feminist rhetoric. As such, students can utilize the tactics of rhetorical feminism to approach identities "as epistemic resources for rhetorical transactions rather than as sources of contention (. . .) readily [tapping the] diverse perspectives they provide" (Glenn 48). Identities are knowledge-accruing locations, and each student is an authority on their own identity, which they can access to speak across differences and margins in the classroom to build a larger understanding through dialogic rhetorical transactions.

Rhetorical feminism embraces intersectionality and accesses identities as resources for dialogue and knowledge building. As such, it allows for more inclusivity of everyday rhetors and rhetorics. In her review of theories written by and for women and Others, Glenn maps theories to highlight how they disidentify from hegemonic discourse and speak to and from the margins to move towards a more inclusive rhetorical future. The rhetorical feminist theories Glenn covers were developing dialogic and invitational theories that prompt the reshaping of traditional rhetorical concepts to open up the field to hope for equity and inclusivity through rhetoric. Glenn reshapes the concepts of delivery, incorporating silence and listening as strategic rhetorical arts (83); the rhetorical appeals, arguing emotion (pathos) and reason (logos) are interdependent and supportive of each other (91), and argument. The goal of arguments in traditional rhetoric is to persuade the audience to the rhetor's view. Glenn describes peaceful persuasion as an alternative, where the goal is to educate and exchange knowledge rather than satisfy the argument. By introducing peaceful persuasion as the rhetorical goal in the classroom, students are offered more hope for dialogue and knowledge building through their argument (76). Further, rhetorical feminism allows rhetors to assess the power and emotion at the scene of the argument. People use strategies, woven with identity characteristics such as gender and race, to delegitimize or tear down feminist inquiry, and students can identify and negotiate these strategies through rhetorical feminism. The tactic of rhetorical feminism assesses the scene to determine what the constraints are, what the resources are, where the power is located, what the power imbalances are and where they are hidden, and what is unacknowledged or covert. From there, the rhetorical feminist classroom can bring what's hidden to the forefront, open up the possibilities of equity in arguments, power, collaboration, emotion, experiences, and knowledge (77). Glenn shares an example of such a rhetorical feminist approach to leverage power imbalances through Cynthia K. Gillespie, an attorney for battered women who killed their husbands. Gillespie understood the

power imbalance of the masculine courtroom nullified women's testimonies and, as such, rather than arguing with decisions, violations, or relaying her clients' fear, she disidentified with the practices of the courtroom and instead catalogued the instances of abuse her clients suffered. She, thus, strategically retold a story instead of arguing a case (78). By rethinking the rhetorical transaction, Glenn does not argue we would fix or overcome all and every issue, but rather these rhetorical feminist tactics open rhetoric to and from the margins and create hope.

As she reconsiders tenets of rhetoric, Glenn also returns the teaching of rhetoric to its ethical and artful goal of good speaking, writing, and being. She elaborates:

> Like the goals of the paideia, the collective goal of feminist teaching is to articulate a vision of rigorous scholarly preparation, high scholarly expectations, critical reflection and exchange, and ethical, civic participation aimed toward progress—all anchored in a distinctly feminist politics of hope for a more equitable future across and among differences. As such, feminist pedagogy can be the performance of rhetorical feminism: it is self-aware, purposeful, invested in dismantling hierarchy, and both cognizant and respectful of the practices of women and Others. (Glenn 126)

The rhetorical feminist teacher encourages engagement of her students through their own vernaculars, experiences, and emotions, as well as calls on the knowledge they already bring to the class. She is aware of hegemonic discourse and pedagogy, unequal power relations, and the intersectional identities in the room, and creates collaborative transformation and hope through productive struggle (130). The rhetorical feminist classroom embraces the many different positionalities and intersectionality of students, understanding that these positionalities influence our experiences, are constantly in flux, and are relative to others, economics, culture, politics, and ideologies (131). Through this approach, the rhetorical feminist classroom is focused on engagement towards mastery and creates opportunity to learn from other positions, intersections, and identities (133). The teacher and students constantly see themselves as positioned subjects of race, class, sexual orientation, culture, gender, socioeconomics, and each have authority in their identity, which gives them transformative potential—potential to build knowledge, speak from and to the margins and positionalities and, through dialogue and collaboration, create hope and engage in the productive struggle to make that hope a reality.

Glenn is deliberate in not confusing hope with utopia in *Rhetorical Feminism and This Thing Called Hope*. While she argues for the rhetorical feminist teacher to respect vernaculars, experiences, marginalization, she cautions teachers not to necessarily expect the same in return (133): "Rhetorical feminism compels us to maintain hope. Maintaining hope is not the same as wishful thinking or mindless optimism. Rather, hope is *will*ful thinking combined with willful action" (Glenn 129). As we consider the current political climate and the impact of Trump's rhetoric surrounding identity characteristics on students entering the classrooms and their identities, rhetorical feminism's hope is very much needed. Further, Glenn's approach is more pragmatic as it calls on the essence of feminism to build a world of equality, equity, and inclusivity for women and Others, and a weaving together of feminism, rhetoric, and identity to make both feminism and rhetoric stronger and more inviting. Rhetorical feminism ultimately provides tools

that students can access across varying rhetorical situations to open up dialogue. Glenn offers useful actions and rhetorical strategies for the feminist classroom that will allow our students to reach a place of hope—hope for building knowledge, hope for agency and inclusivity, and hope for empowerment through identity, intersectionality, and positionality. Feminism is not without its problems, nor is feminist rhetoric considered mainstream in rhetorical studies but, through these opportunities of coalescing rhetoric and feminism, we can move to a future where we empower each other and our students through action and hope.

CONTRIBUTOR BIOGRAPHIES (in order of appearance):

Soannie Maldonado is currently a student attaining her Master of Arts (M.A.) in English at St. John's University. Her main field of study is Literacy in Foodways, the power dynamics of Literacy, as well as Composition & Rhetoric. She's always been intrigued by the artworks of Impressionist or Abstract artists, which have influenced her own artwork. As seen on the cover, the colorful swirls are meant to portray the creative flow and environment that many educators may feel in an academic environment. The fact that the swirls first start off from the mind and then spread out to the whole display shows how knowledge of any kind can be spread throughout the world. However, just as knowledge can be spread to many, it could also be received back because the world is always gaining new information and awareness on a daily basis. As educators, they are always constantly experiencing, learning, and imparting different schools of thoughts or notions. The main figure in the center was purposefully chosen to be a woman of color educator since there are many minority educators who don't get the recognition they need in an academic environment. Especially when taking into consideration how school environments and structures are typically White-centric. However, such institutional spaces are filled with individuals of a variety of backgrounds, so this figure represents the necessity for proper representation in the academy—that the academic world is not just one entity but is multifaceted.

Tiffany L. Davis is currently a high school English teacher at Nazareth Regional High School. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from Stony Brook University. She has been an educator for 15 years and has used her experiences inside the classroom to shape the themes in her poems. Born and raised in Queens, New York, Tiffany infuses a coming of age concept with an authoritative view that captures the voices of the inner-city youth as well as the educators who teach them. Inspired by a wide range of writers such as Agatha Christie, Langston Hughes, and even the Bard himself, Shakespeare, Tiffany credits her motivation to create poems to the writers who dared to reveal themselves on the pages long before her.

While completing a graduate course on Contemporary Poetry at St. John's University, Tiffany was inspired to create a series of poems focusing on the current state of education and how it affects each person who walks through a classroom door. The interesting and thought-provoking discussions held during the graduate sessions helped reveal the necessity within, to create poetry that conveyed some of the thoughts and feelings regarding the issues currently plaguing the school system. Tiffany is currently working on completing a short story and adding more poetry to her catalogue.

Stephen Paul Miller: "Teaching and music inspire 'Honest Hope.' It's dedicated to one of my teachers, David Shapiro; my student, Justin Lerner; and Regina Avner, whose piano playing prompted much of the poetry," says Stephen Paul Miller, a Professor of English at St. John's.

Charles Bernstein writes, "Stephen Paul Miller's anecdotal sparkle opens onto philosophic muscle: before you know it you're knee deep in koans about koans. These poems are as wiry as a Jew playing shot put with history and as wry as whiskey sour." His fourteen books include *The Seventies Now* (Duke UP).

Marjorie Perloff writes about his forthcoming book, "Throughout this irresistible series of imaginative intimacies and confrontations, Stephen Paul Miller never loses his cool, his ability to see contemporary issues and dilemmas from all angles and survive to laugh about them. *Beautiful Snacks* is a delightful book, full of what Wallace Stevens called 'the pleasures of merely circulating.'" David Shapiro notes, "Stephen Paul Miller goes beyond the so-called New York School Poetry to establish a strange critical poetry that is itself a flexible and philosophical medium. He has a new tone and a new voice, non-parallel in his generation. Miller's work is an amazing synthesis of experimental and narrative modes. An astonishing critical and creative force, Stephen Paul Miller is the most radical poet-critic I know." Eileen Myles observes, "Stephen Paul Miller's poetry never forgets to be entertaining, because it just happens. He's as New York as poetry is. Stephen writes his poems on an invisible surface that breathes and grows. It's like watching great poetry happen."

Professor Justine Nicole Wilson is a Ph.D. Candidate at St. John's University where she is drafting her dissertation project, Madness is the Emergency Exit: A Survey of Super Trauma. Her work explores trauma and mental illness in the Superhero genre with a special focus on the Batman family of comics. She started teaching college courses almost five years ago and her experiences both teaching students who have been labeled as "non-traditional" as well as her experiences studying "non-traditional" texts are the greatest influences for this paper. Just as there is no singular mold for what constitutes great literature, the same can be and must be said about the mold of the model student in academia. Neither of these can be homogenous. She is fascinated with our new oral traditions. Our folklore isn't told around a campfire anymore. It is consumed in mass by millions via television, film, comic books and videogames. More people have access to the same stories than ever before and those that have jumped out of themselves and manifested into a modern mythology are those which we find in popular culture. She will never believe that they are not worth studying.

Dr. Mel Michelle Lewis is Associate Professor of Gender/Sexuality in Studio and Humanistic Studies at Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA), articulating a queer Black feminist intersectional social justice pedagogy for liberatory art and design education and creative practice. Previously, they directed the transdisciplinary Center for Geographies of Justice at Goucher College and served in numerous leadership positions within the National Women's Studies Association. Originally from Bayou la Batre, Alabama, their creative work explores queer of color themes in rural coastal settings. The article, "Liberatory Art and Design Education," is a rumination on how best to respond to the needs and viewpoint of makers, from a 2020 perspective, while fostering MICA's newly articulated vision, nurturing makers and generating "a

just, sustainable, and joyful world activated and enriched by artists, designers, and educators who are valued for their leadership and imagination."

Marie Gugnishev is pursuing a bachelor's degree in English at Stony Brook University as part of the English Honors Program. This piece was written in response to reading *American Born Chinese* in one of her English Honors seminars, sparking an interest in researching the connection between the novel and the pedagogical world. Marie has had experience working with and teaching students at an elementary and university level as both a teacher's aide and a writing tutor. She has also had experience teaching English abroad in South Korea as part of the TaLK program while doing independent research on higher education

Dasharah Green is a current English PhD student at The CUNY Graduate Center. Her intellectual interests include Black feminism, urban education, pedagogy, abolitionist writings and rhetoric and composition. She is interested in how the classroom can provide a site of change for learning practices involving both students and instructors. Along with academic writing, she is the lead writer and founder of the Blaque Ratchet Imagination blog and website. A Black ratchet imagination, as a methodological framework, serves as a fluid approach to explore Blackness. Her avocation allows her to tackle topics within her vocation with each influencing the other. The safe space within Blaque Ratchet Imagination gives her the confidence to challenge the formal structure of academia. Her purpose is to allow the separate visions of her blogging and academic writing to informally come together.

Sarah Glessner is a PhD student in English at St. John's University. She is currently reading for her comprehensive exams. Her research interests include composition pedagogy and history, literacy, feminism, and writing centers. She wrote the original draft of this paper during the Spring 2019 semester for her Black Feminist Theory and Praxis course with Dr. LaToya Sawyer and she's thrilled to have it included in this journal. When she's not reading, writing, or teaching, Sarah can be found walking her pit bull in Central Park or planning her next road trip.

Tina L. Margolis holds a Ph.D. in Performance Studies from New York University. Her writings have appeared in Gender and the Media, Afterimage, The Drama Review, the Encyclopedia of New York City, and more. Since 1999, she has been an adjunct professor of English at the State University of New York, Westchester Community College. Her research interests are at the intersection of performance and visual culture and their implications and effects on identity, perception, and historical interpretation.

She began to explore the topic of immigration with her students because, for many of them, the themes and issues surrounding visas, green cards, opportunity, assimilation, typecasting, discrimination, language, and related realities were not theoretical, but personal. With her classes, she analyzed short fiction and essays. Watching the Republican Convention in 2016, she became deeply affected by the mothers of victims killed by undocumented individuals. Simultaneously, she recognized that totalizing entire populations was distorting and unjust. As public debate escalated

and policies such as family separation at the southern border were implemented, the stakes became higher, and she wanted to address the rhetoric, images, and techniques informing arguments on immigration through more formal, socio-political lenses. Although uplifted by the tales in "Little America," she could not help but continue to hear the voices of the mothers who lost their children. Intentionally absent from "Little America" was balance, in order to counter the narrative of "blame and fear" permeating the airwaves. As a result, she arrived at the idea that asymmetrical framing and discourse analysis could prime students to strategies of persuasion and the necessity of skepticism regarding all frames, leading them to become more ethically aware and socially engaged thinkers as well as concerned interrupter-advocates for social justice.

Dr. Regina A. Bernard-Carreño was born and raised in Hell's Kitchen, NYC. She was the first graduate of the African American Studies Master's Degree Program at Columbia University. She is also the first graduate to complete her M.Phil and Ph.D. Degrees in Urban Education at CUNY's Graduate Center. Dr. Bernard is currently an Associate Professor of undergraduate Black and Latino/a Studies, as well as a member of the doctoral faculty at the City University of New York. Her courses are particularly focused on identity, radical ways of being schooled and finding innovative teaching methods for diverse learners. She is author of three books dealing with undergraduate education, Nuyorican poetry as a teaching tool and feminist practice.

She has written pieces for a wide variety of texts, collected editions as well as quarterlies and journals. She has presented her work at numerous places including TEDx Manhattan where she screened her film, Ethel's Magical Hands, about Guyanese feminism, culture, and food production as a vehicle to understanding organic intellectualism.

As her more pedagogical and hands-on work in the classroom is focused on alternative and innovative pedagogy she is delighted to be contributing to this issue of the St. John's University Humanities Review.

Jordan Charlton is a Ph.D. student in English at the University of Nebraska. He works with the Nebraska Writers Collective, working with both high school youth poets and incarcerated writers through the programs Louder Than a Bomb: Great Plains and Writers' Block. He is currently at work on a manuscript interrogating the troubles of black masculinity, a culture of silence, and personal history. His poems have appeared or are forthcoming in Poets Reading the News, Typehouse Literary Magazine, and Shift, amongst others. His essays and book reviews have appeared in Prairie Schooner, F(r)iction Lit, and elsewhere. In addition to this, he is also a teacher of first-year writing at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, as well as a teaching artist with the Nebraska Writers Collective, working with high school poets and incarcerated writers through the programs Louder than a Bomb and Writers Block.

He wrote his piece, "Reality Pedagogy in the First-Year Composition Classroom," because he was first enticed by the lessons that could be learned from Christopher Emdin's 2016 book on the subject. Though Emdin's approach is not wholly adaptable to the college setting, what he goes on to suggest is radical in that he knows it could have been helpful if his own teachers thought to

incorporate these ideas in their classrooms rather than continue on the cycle of "classroom colonialism."

Kainat Abidi Puetz holds a PhD in Rhetoric and Composition from St. John's University, specializing in feminist rhetoric, digital rhetoric and pedagogy, and compositional theory. Her book review, "Review of Rhetorical Feminism and this Thing Called Hope by Cheryl Glenn," considers how to engage students in dialogue around and through their own identities in the classroom. Glenn explores the action of rhetorical feminism and the voice of Others whose rhetoric, emotions, and experiences of identity speak to and from the margins to reach a place of hope and achieve the goals of feminist rhetoric. Puetz wrote this book review to bring Glenn's work on the practices of rhetorical feminism and the agency of feminist rhetoric to the classroom, where our students can also realize hope at this intersection of rhetoric, pedagogy, feminism, and identity.

      Puetz also holds a Master of Arts in Rhetoric and Composition from Montclair State University and a Bachelor of Arts in English from Drew University. She taught First Year Writing in the English department of Montclair State University.