

6

Imagining a Transnational and Translingual Past, Present, and Future

In this final chapter, I synthesize the historical accounts illuminated in the previous chapters in order to argue that a careful examination of the writing practices and policies at Syrian Protestant College (SPC) moves the discipline of rhetoric and writing studies from a primarily Anglocentric and monolingual view of the history of literacy education to one that is fundamentally transnational and translingual. The decolonial frame through which I have analyzed the historical evidence allows for rhetoric and writing studies to be refracted through a new lens, offering members of the discipline opportunities to understand their work and scope more expansively. Studying non-Anglophone cases of literacy education such as SPC presents opportunities for teachers, administrators, and scholars in Anglophone contexts to apply what they learn to their own writing pedagogy, programs, and research going forward.

Additionally, the history investigated in the foregoing chapters points to the high stakes experienced by students, teachers, program administrators, and communities involved in the transnational knowledge economy of higher education. These stakes have been produced as a result of colonial epistemology and its historical hold on English-language literacy education. This history holds implications for students today, particularly their ability to occupy specific national, religious, linguistic, and cultural identities while pursuing literacy development that complements, rather than corrupts, those identities. Ultimately, I argue, understanding the colonial epistemology underlying an imagined America in relation to the development of literacy education around the turn of the 20th century can lead to a more nuanced understanding of contemporary processes and power relations of globalization and transnational exchange, particularly as flows of knowledge—in this case, American-style literacy education—intersect and move across national, linguistic, religious, and cultural borders. The case of SPC equips us with a new historical understanding of the stakes and complications of contemporary literacy education, leaving six key takeaways, which I elaborate below.

Power, Language, and Literacy Education

First, the history discussed in this book throws the relationship among power,

language, and literacy education into high relief. Chapter 3 discusses SPC's decision to shift from Arabic to English as the primary language of instruction less than 20 years after its founding. The justifications provided by administrators suggested that this shift was meant to benefit students, to give them direct access to Western knowledge. Upon further examination, however, the justifications offered for teaching in Arabic when the college was founded, and in English later, were grounded on maintaining the needs and power of the college's American administrators and faculty. The college's founders, who were previously missionaries, initially followed the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions' (ABCFM's) approach toward proselytization in the region by choosing Arabic as the language of instruction: Arabic was believed to be the more powerful means through which students might be converted to Protestant Christianity (see Chapter 2 for a fuller discussion of the ABCFM's approach). Additionally, focusing on Arabic would mean that new graduates (potentially new converts) of the college were more likely to stay in the region and even work for the college. As the college grew and new faculty were needed, SPC administrators sought to hire American and European faculty rather than looking to their own Arabic-speaking graduates. Faced with the choice of providing years of Arabic-language training to new faculty or shifting to English as the language of instruction, SPC administrators chose the latter, with justifications that differed from those offered previously but which ultimately upheld the centrality of Western or American identity and knowledge.

As discussed in Chapter 4, SPC students' protests against college decisions show that students held a keen understanding of how to rhetorically navigate the politics of language and literacy education, even as they aspired to perform the American "cultural citizenship"—citizenship through behavior rather than by law—valued at SPC. Specifically, when students protested the administration's decision in 1882 to force the resignation of Edwin Lewis, a professor in the medical school, they drew from their understanding of SPC's American educational context to make their case: In their petitions for Lewis' reinstatement, the students specifically appealed to the college administrators' sense of Christian morality and values, and, relying upon a Western definition of justice, the students argued that they had the right to a specific kind of (American) education, a right that the college had taken away. Later, in 1909, students protested the college's insistence that they attend Christian religious services at the college. During this protest, which lasted for several months, students communicated with SPC administration in English while debating the conflict with local and regional community members in Arabic-language magazines and newspapers. Student writers, while holding various perspectives about the

conflict, ultimately relied on their literacy education at SPC to construct an imagined America through their writing, which contained both positive and negative references to American laws and Christianity, as well as contrasts between the “West” and the “East.” Of course, in spite of students’ best efforts to appeal to American faculty and administrators at the college and to demonstrate their ability to belong to the college as cultural citizens, in the end neither of the protest movements succeeded. While students felt empowered to protest because they believed that they belonged to the college and implicitly to the America it represented, college administrators made it clear that they could never be American enough to negotiate their power.

We can also see the workings of power in relation to language and literacy education by analyzing the publications produced by SPC students around the turn of the 20th century, as described in Chapter 5. The writing contained within these publications, in Arabic and English as well as in other languages, shows how SPC students understood and navigated the power associated with specific languages and how they used their literacy education to work with(in) those languages. In English, SPC students occupied a learner identity and understood that their writing would be on public display, easily accessible to the predominantly English-speaking faculty. Perhaps it was for this reason that the English-language publications tended to contain expository essays as well as stories or essays praising the West. In Arabic, SPC students seemed more comfortable composing analyses and arguments; these publications contained articles that were less informational and instead more critical of their peers or (Western or Eastern) society. Students were well aware that their Arabic-language publications, while available to the public, were unlikely to be read or understood by their American professors, and their rhetorical approaches reflected that reality. This awareness demonstrates students’ ability to negotiate conflicting and sometimes contradictory epistemologies, resulting in the articulation of their own (Arab) identity or the performance of (American) cultural citizenship in an effort to belong both to the college as well as to greater Syria.

The Weight of English

Second, this historical account illustrates the different “weight” or value that English can carry depending on the context, and it highlights the consequences of this weight for literacy education (see Arnold, 2021; Vieira, 2019). The weight of English, this history reveals, depends on one’s past, location, identity—and perhaps one’s future too. As discussed in Chapter 3, the opportunity to learn and use English within the Ottoman Empire around the turn of the 20th century

meant, for students, having the chance to communicate and work across cultural and national boundaries at a time of great geopolitical change. At the same time, English presented risks for students, in that the language could signal a psychological or physical move away from their home culture and identity. SPC administrators and faculty were aware of this, and the question of whether students should have access to the language, and to what extent, was key to the decisions made about the college's language of instruction.

The historical accounts of student protests conveyed in Chapter 4 illustrate English's weight. Although Edwin Lewis' dismissal, which sparked student protests in 1882, was justified by SPC administrators on the grounds that he discussed Darwin during a commencement address, the dismissal can also be understood as an attempt to force the departures of most of the medical school faculty, who were also the last holdouts at the college teaching in Arabic in the early 1880s. SPC had already made the decision to transition fully to English as the medium of instruction, but medical school faculty continued teaching and writing in Arabic. In fact, Lewis' address was later published in an Arabic-language journal, meaning that the Western scientific knowledge represented in and through Darwin would have been transmitted directly to the local population. This connection to the local population likely bolstered the medical faculty's insistence on maintaining its curriculum in Arabic. Dismissing Lewis, which resulted in the resignations of four out of the remaining five medical faculty, meant a complete shift to English as the medium of instruction throughout the college and maintenance of the institutional and ideological hierarchy that privileged English and the Anglo-centric knowledge carried with it. This privileging manifested itself again in the 1909 "Muslim Controversy," during which students and administrators negotiated in English over the college's requirement that all students attend Protestant chapel services. While the protesting students temporarily managed to disrupt the college's status quo, the balance of power always tipped in favor of SPC's American leaders. In order to make their case effectively, the protesting students had to cross into linguistically foreign territory to be heard. Forced to use the foreign language of English to persuade American faculty and administrators, and facing impossible odds, they must have found relief debating the merits of their case—and finding affirmation of their concerns—in Arabic-language journals and newspapers.

The weight of English is also tangible when exploring student-authored publications, as highlighted in Chapter 5. I have already mentioned the ways in which students' writing identities and purposes seemed to change depending on the language in which they composed. The weight of English can be further understood by considering the example presented in Chapter 5

of handwritten marginalia surrounding one student's poetry published in an English-language publication called *SPC Commercial Paper*. While the marginalia surrounding the poems can be understood on the surface as immature bullying by the writer's peers, looking more closely reveals a politics of language: The writer's peers questioned and ridiculed the writer's identity because, ostensibly, he could only write in English and probably French but not in Arabic, and because he was born in a rural area in Syria with deep connections to France. English in this case marked the student writer as an outsider, even within the American college—he could not be Western, nor could he be Arab. English separated him from his peers, many of whom would have come from socially privileged Arab families. At the same time, as his peers pointed out, his Arab and lower-class positionality meant he would never fully belong to the West or to the America represented by the college. Thus, English was both a burden and a barrier for this student, and he would never truly belong to the American or Arab world because of it.

Colonialism and English Literacy Education

Third, this historical account provides further evidence of Phillipson's (1992) and Pennycook's (1998) arguments that English literacy education outside of Anglophone contexts is deeply, perhaps inextricably, tied to colonialism. While Syria at the turn of the 20th century was not yet colonized by a European nation, SPC's curricular decisions, as described in Chapter 3, foreshadowed the geopolitical shifts that would soon propel Europe into the region and through which American influence would also grow. I have already summarized the colonial logics that provided the grounds for the college to shift to English as the medium of instruction. Beyond this macro shift, however, micro decisions about the language curriculum also reflected the larger geopolitical and colonial contexts in which the college operated. Until the mid-1880s, Greek and Latin were offered as electives; these languages would have allowed students direct access to key Western rhetorical texts, supplementing their study of English. After the shift to English, other languages never left the curriculum. Students continued studying Arabic and French intensively, alongside English, until the end of the 19th century. Turkish was later offered as an elective to substitute for French, reflecting larger geopolitical developments. Extracurricular activities such as literary societies and student-run journals engaged students as they developed fluency in multiple languages. Together, this evidence suggests that multilingualism was well understood by students and faculty alike to be necessary for professional success in the region. This reality is another marker of colonial ideology at

work, exemplifying Benedict Anderson's (2006) point that multilingual brokers served key roles in the functioning of colonies. At the same time, English remained a priority at SPC, justified in part because it served as a signifier of American or "civilized" society. As Phillipson (1992) pointed out, colonial discourses linking English with "civility" have more recently transformed into discourses linking English to progress and social mobility.

Colonialism's ties to English literacy education can also be seen in relation to the 1882 and 1909 student protests at SPC that constitute the focus of Chapter 4. In 1882, Edwin Lewis' dismissal was instigated as a result of his reference to Darwin during a commencement address. The address, which also discussed the work of Western scientists Charles Lyell and Louis Pasteur, was later published in an Arabic-language journal. At the time, Darwin was controversial in the Christian Protestant world because the theory of evolution he advanced challenged the Christian story of creation. Although Lewis described Darwin's work in neutral terms,¹ his reference to evolution was enough to produce the grounds upon which he was forced to resign. Another dimension of the controversy becomes apparent through the lens of colonialism when considering that Lewis' address was published and disseminated through Arabic: In this case, Lewis transmitted a controversial theory—one that called the Christian mission into question—directly to the local population in and through Arabic. As a result, English was not required for the local population to gain access to contemporary Western knowledge, nor could English be used to mediate how it would be understood. SPC students and other locals were given the tools to work with Western ideas and knowledge in their own language. They could use these tools, potentially, to subvert the authority of the college and the value of English literacy education. We can imagine how Lewis' Christian counterparts may have viewed this unsanctioned transmission as a betrayal of sorts, an effort to weaken their power—a view manifested out of colonial epistemology.

Colonial epistemology also triggered the 1909 student protest that is also discussed in Chapter 4. The protest occurred when a visiting missionary characterized Muslims as "enemies await[ing] the opportunity to devour [Christians]" (Nickoley, 1909). Students relied on their SPC education to guide their conduct throughout the protest. Their writing shows that they were well aware of the colonial mentality that gave the speaker the freedom to denigrate the local Muslim population so openly in front of an audience that contained Muslim SPC students. As faculty scrambled to contain the

1 Ironically, Darwin's work eventually formed the foundation for the eugenics movement and scientific racism, ideas grounded upon colonial epistemology (Helfand, 2020).

crisis, records show that they never put any blame on the visitor himself, with one faculty member describing the students' interpretation of the speech as grounded on the "wildest rumors" (Hall, 1909). While some of the faculty seemed to sympathize with the protesting students, this sympathy always came with a caveat that relied on seeing the Muslim students at SPC as different than the surrounding local Muslim community; faculty saw the surrounding community as a threat (just as did the visiting speaker) that could push the students toward "mob violence" (Moore, 1909a). In order to escape criticism that they were not "civilized," the striking students comported themselves professionally throughout the protest, attending every class and meeting except religious services. Their understanding of the behavior that was expected of a cultural citizen of the college was learned in and through their American-style literacy education at SPC.

Student writing at SPC also highlights the connection between colonialism and English literacy education. As discussed in Chapter 4, students wrote about the 1909 crisis in various Arabic-language publications and made explicit reference in their writing to SPC's position as a foreign college funded and founded by missionaries. They criticized the ways in which the college's religious teachings and Western curriculum conflicted with the local Muslim population. These writers understood that "The Occidentals erected schools to educate the young not for our benefit but for theirs, and not to augment thereby our power but their own" (*The Mohammedan Nation*, 1909). Likewise, student-authored publications at SPC reveal similar connections, as Chapter 5 attests. Students used both English and Arabic to offer social and cultural critiques of both the Arab and Western worlds. However, this criticism was more severe in the Arabic-language publications, suggesting that students understood English to be a medium through which such criticism would not be as welcome, or through which they struggled to find language that would fully convey the nuances of their critique. Students' deployment of different language(s) for specific purposes illustrates how they negotiated colonial epistemology as it entered their social and intellectual worlds through Western education and the English language.

Language Constructs Place, Identity, Nationhood, and Belonging

Fourth, this historical account demonstrates the ways in which language constructs place, identity, nationhood, and belonging. As Chapter 3 explicates, when SPC was founded, it was decided that Arabic should be the medium of instruction in part to emphasize the "place" of students in relation to the

college and to Western knowledge. The college's founders thought English would "corrupt" the minds of students because knowing the language would draw students away from Syria and toward opportunities outside of their homeland. When English became the medium of instruction, students were expected to aspire to American culture, values, and beliefs—in and through the language of English. At the same time, the college's structure and hierarchies proved time and again that its students could never actually *be* American; they would always be foreigners inside of the college's American walls, no matter how well they acquired the English language or mimicked American behavior (see also Chapter 4).

While English held a great deal of power within the college, its power was not ubiquitous (nor is it today at the American University of Beirut). Students and faculty alike negotiated multiple languages inside the college's hallways, classrooms, and on the hills leading from the college grounds to the seaside—a linguistic reality that continues to this day. Multiple languages held prominence in the curriculum, too, and they have never disappeared. The complicated linguistic situation at SPC then, and at AUB today, reflects the larger geopolitical context, in which multiple languages construct the space and where translingual practice is an everyday, almost mundane activity. Multiple languages were (and are) necessary for navigation through everyday life. This history shows how language can both construct and expose the geopolitics of a place. Both today and in the past, when someone on campus speaks in Arabic, they signal their belonging to a locally diverse Arab community and culture; when they use English, they signal an economic and intellectual agility valued in the West; when they use French, they signal a religious and cultural identity that is both distinct from and an integral part of the local culture—and connected to the French who colonized Syria after World War I. Turkish too, at the time, signaled a connection to the Ottoman colonizers who ultimately controlled the region until the Great War. As such, language serves not only as a marker, but also as a builder, of the spaces people occupy as well as those they imagine. Viewing the college's curriculum in relation to the larger geopolitical context highlights how language constructs identity and nationality, serving as a tool for inclusion and exclusion.

The work of language and writing in constructing place and identity can also be seen in Chapter 4, where I discuss SPC students' efforts to perform a kind of American cultural citizenship while also protesting SPC decisions and policies that they felt violated implicit promises the college had extended to them through its education. In the 1882 protests against Edwin Lewis' dismissal, students pled their case to the administration in Arabic, the language they were most comfortable using even as the college shifted the language of

instruction to English. In their arguments, they signified their belonging to the institution rhetorically, appealing to their American audience through “rational” argumentative strategies that would have been promoted in the college’s rhetoric curriculum. Their writing in the petitions suggests that the students believed they possessed a kind of American identity, one in which they had agency and deserved to be heard. In the 1909 protest, students appealed, in English, to what they knew to be American values—liberty and freedom—in order to argue for their own religious freedom. In Arabic, some students constructed an identity that was Arab and specifically Muslim; others also identified themselves as members of the Ottoman Empire, a state that supported Islamic values and beliefs. Still others defended the college or suggested that Christianity would never hold any sway over Muslims, who were unified in their beliefs. In all of these examples, students constructed their own identities and an imagined America in and through their writing. For these students, “this [was] the meaning of the American College”: To be American, or to truly belong in the American college, was to be Christian and to adopt Christian views of morality and behavior, and to learn in English (Abu Raad, 1909). In both of these protest movements, even as students complained about the college, their good behavior exemplified their desire to be seen as cultural citizens, to remain a part of the college community, and to belong to a distant and foreign America that was constructed, in part, through language and literacy education at SPC.

Similarly, the student publications at SPC analyzed in Chapter 5 show how language was used to construct identity and a sense of belonging. Using the Arabic language, students spoke directly to their peers and their Syrian instructors. In this language, students articulated their identities as Arab and emphasized their belonging to the region. This is exemplified particularly in the liberty they took to critique their homeland and their culture. Positioned between their home culture and the American culture represented in and through the college curriculum, students brought a new perspective about their geopolitical positioning to their readers. Students writing in English, on the other hand, knew their audience would include college faculty and administrators, and they used the language sometimes to praise Western culture and to critique Arabs or Arab culture. English was a tool through which students could construct an identity that they believed would belong to their imagined America, in which they knew Arabs and Arab culture were often contrasted negatively with the West. In the various examples presented in Chapter 5, we can see how writing and language were used to communicate cross-culturally, to demonstrate transnational engagement and “worldliness,” and to establish identity and a sense of belonging to different, sometimes competing, communities and the epistemologies attached to them.

The Implied Promises of Literacy Education

Fifth, this historical account reveals the high stakes and implicit promises constructed in and through literacy education, which are particularly well highlighted in transnational and translingual contexts of education such as SPC. For example, the shift to English as SPC's language of instruction, discussed in Chapter 3, further underlined the Western knowledge and values that were already tied to the Protestant Christianity of the faculty. The shift to English implied that students would be successful only if they became proficient in the language and adopted the values and behaviors that the language represented. It was further implied that students would have access to opportunities through their education in English, such as being able to teach and work at the college after graduation. While some graduates did eventually teach at the college, they did not gain equal status to their foreign counterparts as faculty until 1920, when the institution changed its name and shifted to a new, secular identity. The college, in other words, failed to live up to the promises implied by its English-language literacy education.

Examination of the documents surrounding the SPC student protests in Chapter 4 makes clear that students took up the democratic ideals of freedom and liberty espoused in their American education and held them to be true, leading to their efforts to behave as cultural citizens of the college. The students referred to specific elements of American culture and law that they understood from a distance, including freedom of religion and the separation of church and state, and then attempted to apply these principles to the problems at the college. The students' literacy education suggested a version of American education—and America itself—in which they had rights and agency within the college. These assumptions empowered them to protest. Unfortunately, students found that their attempts to belong to an imagined America remained a promise that could not be fulfilled.

The implied promises of English literacy education are similarly on display in the English-language student-authored publications analyzed in Chapter 5. These publications reveal who students thought they were supposed to be and how they thought they were supposed to behave *in English*—in their writing, students positioned themselves as learners of the language, and the publications featured informational and expository writing on topics such as business, world events, and hobbies. In marked contrast to their writing in Arabic, in English, students apologized for mistakes in advance and invited readers to correct anything that they found problematic. This suggests that the students assumed themselves to be inferior users of English with much to learn. While students at SPC were indeed relatively new users of the

language, the explicit positioning found in their writing underlines assumptions about their capabilities learned in and through their literacy education in English at the college. These publications reveal that students had internalized a belief that they were always-already English language *learners* rather than agentive *users* of the language. Even as they were promised opportunity through the language, they were reminded that they would never be enough. Students were keenly aware of their English-speaking audience, and their writing reflects the colonial beliefs that this audience likely had about them.

Agency in Literacy Practices

Finally, this historical account reveals that despite the powerful colonial epistemology underlying English literacy education in Syria, this set of beliefs was neither homogenous nor totalizing. As I describe in Chapter 3, multiple languages remained a key part of the curriculum even after English became the language of instruction at SPC. While the logics underlying this shift to English were certainly colonial, translingual practices were a necessary part of students' and faculty members' daily lived experience. In a richly multilingual environment such as SPC, other language practices could not be erased.

There are parallels between SPC students' use of English and Spack's (2002) study of Native American writers who were educated in English in U.S. government schools during the second half of the 19th century—for Spack, these writers “used English to speak for themselves and represent their own lives [they] manipulated the English language for their own purposes and played with it” (p. 112). Similarly, SPC students used their literacy education, as evidenced in Chapter 4, to speak out against the college's decisions and to appeal to administrators' values and beliefs. In the student-authored publications at SPC described in Chapter 5, students manipulated language to reflect the values and beliefs of their audience. Students ultimately drew on their own knowledge and identity to engage and negotiate with(in) the imagined America represented by the American college and through the English language.

Reconceptualizing the Past, Present, and Future of Rhetoric and Writing Studies

On its face, the account in this book most obviously complicates traditional narratives about the history of rhetoric and writing studies, narratives that tend to assume that the discipline's history is based primarily in the United States and is primarily monolingual. Such Americentric and monolingual views can be traced to the colonial foundations of English-language literacy

education. The complications offered in this book reveal how these historical narratives have limited what we as rhetoric and writing studies scholars, program administrators, and teachers conceive of as the scope of the discipline. Examining its history through a decolonial lens encourages us to locate transnational and translingual writing practices and pedagogies even within seemingly monolingual and homogenous contexts. This lens suggests we need to confront the deep ties between colonialism and the English language that inextricably bind us—and our work—to this legacy.

The history of literacy education at SPC underlines the ways in which language ideology is deeply intertwined with literacy education, particularly literacy education in English—a phenomenon that Phillipson (1992) called linguistic imperialism and which I describe more thoroughly in Chapter 1. Throughout this historical account, SPC students and faculty are seen navigating colonial epistemology and problematic monolingual and nationalist ideologies that emerged out of it. As a result of colonial epistemology underlying the American-style education offered by SPC, students and faculty carried markedly different assumptions and values about literacy and education into their classrooms. They repeatedly tried and failed to co-construct an imagined America that could never materialize and to which students could never fully belong. So, too, do students and faculty today meet in classrooms with competing ideas about what literacy education can or should do and what literacy in English means or represents.

In the United States, where rhetoric and writing studies as a discipline was born, students arrive to classrooms carrying invisible, but weighty, legacies of colonialism and slavery on their backs. These legacies impact how students—particularly but not only international, domestic multilingual, and students of color—understand, receive, and accept what is offered, and as Milu (2021) pointed out, many educators do not interrogate how these legacies alter students' experiences. Just as SPC students navigated the misaligned visions and false promises of literacy education offered at the college, so too do students today navigate histories and futures that weigh down their relationship to literacy in English (see Lagman, 2018; Lorimer Leonard, 2013; MacDonald, 2015; Pederson, 2010). Students may have no reason to trust the promises made by writing curriculum or their instructors, implicitly or explicitly, about literacy education, and this lack of trust can help explain why students so often resist taking up the risks asked of them in writing classes.

In short, as educators and program administrators, we must critically consider the epistemologies that we promote in and through literacy education and the consequences thereof: What do we assume about what English and/or literacy represent or can do for students? How can we better account for

these assumptions and ensure we are making these assumptions explicit in our daily practice? What do we explicitly or implicitly promise to students about what literacy can or should do? In what ways can we recognize and rectify the factors that may disrupt or impede these promises?

Willinsky (1998) argued that imperialism's "will to know became an integral part of [its] economic and administrative apparatus ... dedicated to defining and extending the privileges of the West" (p. 27). This "will to know" included a "conquering, civilizing, collecting, and classifying" approach to the world that was marked through the constant identification and highlighting of difference (p. 13). This marking out of difference operated to *master* the world through the production of a supposedly universal knowledge that inevitably favored the West. Today, that marking out of difference can be seen in programmatic and pedagogical approaches that promote final products rather than processes of writing; that prioritize Standard American English without interrogating the monolingualism supporting its prioritization; or that decontextualize writing practices, such as through generic five-paragraph essay or research paper assignments that assume there is such a thing as a universal reader (or writer). And that marking out of difference can be seen in research practices that rely on so-called foundational scholars without identifying how their work is grounded in Western colonial epistemology or that fail to seek out and engage with scholarship produced by transnational and/or multilingual scholars, and/or scholars from historically minoritized backgrounds.

Decolonial and Indigenous scholars in rhetoric and writing studies have proposed a number of alternative pedagogical approaches that work to delink literacy education from its colonial underpinnings. Canagarajah (2023) defined decolonial pedagogy as one that "focuses on developing the ethical, relational, and critical dispositions that will help students negotiate very diverse and unpredictable communicative contexts for meaningful and inclusive communication, drawing from the semiotic resources in the environment" (p. 283). There are a number of strategies that have been proposed by scholars to support such a pedagogical approach, some of which I have outlined at the end of Chapters 3, 4, and 5. Most importantly, we as writing instructors and program administrators need to educate ourselves about language ideology and literacy education in the context of colonial history. Program leaders and literacy educators should be able to articulate ways in which colonial epistemology has influenced their own thinking about what writing is, what it can do, why it matters to students, and how it should be assessed (see Poe, 2022). Administrators can provide professional development to promote this learning, to complicate curriculum, and to provide practical tools that will help instructors support student writers' specific identities, needs, and goals. In the

writing classroom, teachers can provide instruction about language ideology and coloniality, followed by opportunities for students to explore how these ways of thinking have and continue to influence their own writing practices and rhetorical choices (see Arnold, 2018; Jackson, 2021; Milu, 2021; R. Shapiro & Watson, 2022; Zhang-Wu, 2021, 2023).

Additionally, program leaders and writing instructors can update curriculum and pedagogical practices to better account for the contextual, embodied, semiotic, and relational nature of all writing practices (see E. Lee, 2024). This can problematize existing curriculum and individual classroom discussions about developing authorial voice and integrating research by framing these practices as communal rather than individual (see Arola, 2018). Multimodal composition should also be considered as a potential site of decolonial and translingual meaning-making, especially as such practices integrate and place value on non-alphabetic forms of communication (see Jiang, 2024; E. Lee, 2022; Rivera, 2020). Program administrators and individual instructors can promote curriculum that engages students in experimentation with translingual and translation practices, placing explicit value on multiple modes of communication and risk-taking. This curriculum can include investigation into how these practices are connected to colonial history, nationality, and race (see Cushman, 2021; Do, 2022; Milu, 2021; R. Shapiro & Watson, 2022; Wang, 2020; Zhang-Wu, 2021).

The decolonial historiography implemented throughout this book is one step along the path to delinking from the colonial “structuring tenets” (Cushman, 2016, p. 239) that lie at the heart of the discipline of rhetoric and writing studies, particularly those tenets that place America and the language of English at the center of focus. As we in the discipline expand our scope and reframe our history, we can better understand the value of program curriculum and pedagogical practices that centralize the politics of language and promote transnational exchange, rather than ignoring them in favor of seemingly more efficient and practical approaches toward writing instruction. Indeed, decolonizing the discipline’s past as translingual and transnational provides a pathway to more effectively build a decolonial, transnational, and translingual present and future.