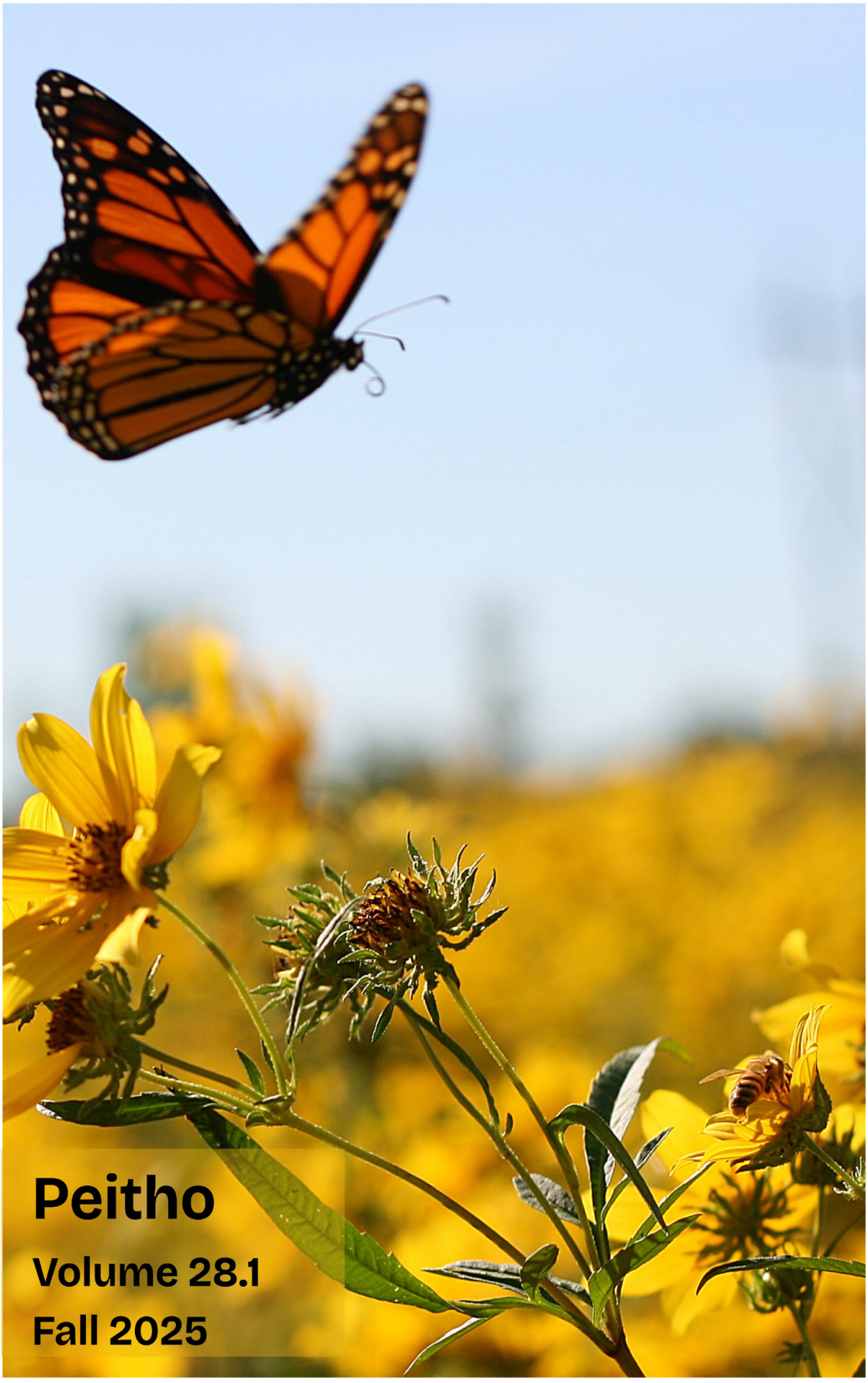

Peitho

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About the Journal: Peitho seeks to encourage, advance, and publish original feminist research in the history of rhetoric and composition and thereby support scholars and students within our profession. For submission guidelines and requirements, please see http://peitho.cwshrc.org/submit/.Peitho (ISSN 2169-0774) is published twice a year, in the Spring and Fall. Access to back issues of Peitho are part of the Coalition membership package. Coalition membership is $10 for graduate students and $25 for faculty; more information is available at cwshrc.org.

Cover Art: Photo by Dr. Jennifer Nish. A photo of an orange and black Monarch butterfly. The butterfly is in flight against a light blue sky and field of yellow wildflowers. The butterfly is situated toward the upper left hand corner of the image. The background of the field is out of focus, while the butterfly heads toward a foreground of yellow flowers in focus.

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Toward a *Peitho* Citizenry: A Welcome and Introduction

Jamie White-Farnham, Bryna Siegel Finer, and Cathryn Molloy

Doi: 10.37514/PEI-J.2025.28.1.01

Welcome to the Fall 2025 issue of *Peitho*, our first as the new co-editors team. We are excited to be here in these pages, and we could not be more grateful to our predecessors, Drs. Rebecca Dingo and Clancy Ratliffe. We have participated in a nearly six-month transitional period of learning from them and gaining insight into the many processes and logistics of running the only academic journal on the history of feminisms and rhetorics. To say that we are humbled and proud to take the reigns from these esteemed scholars and their team is an understatement: Thank you to Rebecca and Clancy, editorial assistants Rachel Smith-Olson and Jade Onn, and the outgoing editorial board, chaired by Tarez Graban, for your service and commitment to the excellence we hope to carry on.

We join *Peitho* editorial team members Dr. Jennifer Nish, who remains the associate editor, and Hannah Taylor, who will stay on as web coordinator. We'd also like to introduce Holli Flanagan and Taylor Hughes as our graduate editorial assistants. The WAC Clearinghouse and, in particular, Mike Palmquist has also welcomed us into the technical aspects of the journal, and we thank him as well. We are honored to have been entrusted to lead this team, and we are thrilled that Rebecca and Tarez will stay on as members of the newly composed editorial board (view the full list here), bringing with them their expertise and historical memory of *Peitho*.

We also hope that the continuity they will all bring will help us nurture what we're envisioning as a *Peitho* citizenry, *Peitho* as a place where authors, reviewers, and editors collaborate to create knowledge that supports a well-informed public. In the second issue of the Coalition newsletter (the first one to be called Peitho), editors Kay Halasek and Susan Jarratt (1997) describe Peitho, the Greek goddess of persuasion, as one who "crosses from a feminized world of seduction into the public life of communities" (p.7). They continue, "her power is necessary for establishing civilization and democracy"; she is "of the people" (p.8). Now, more than 2000 years later, we take it seriously that the work of academic journals is to produce scholarship that does nothing less than use its power the way *Peitho* did, to establish the standards of civilization and democracy. We see it as our duty as editors of *Peitho* to provide a space where the link between feminism and public action can continue to be strengthened.

Feminisms and rhetorics are important to the three of us as scholars, teachers, and people. Feminisms have inspired us throughout our lives, as we grew from girls observing the limitations apparent in life and the messages aimed at us into women who wished to think critically and deeply about those things, to learn from others' perspectives, and to influence our contexts and make improvements for others. Rhetorics brought us together as students and lovers of language, writing, and people. Rhetorics help us "do" our lives—understand situations, speak up, take action. Together, of course, the combination is potent. In our roles at the journal, we are taking the two forces as a way to listen and learn more—about our histories, about our read-

ers, about the scholarship of the next generation percolating "out there." We invite you to tell us so we can listen and learn: What are you learning? What is there to know? What haven't we heard of yet? How can things change? As mothers of grown and still growing children, ages 7 to 23, we say: Our listening ears are on.

In addition to calling for your feedback, we have calls to make for new types of journal submissions. One of the best aspects of *Peitho* is its expansiveness; many subjects, contexts, topics, people, histories, stories, methods/methodologies, and types of arguments and evidence fill these pages. Some themes over the past five years that have emerged within the journal, and which we are happy to see evolve include: archival research, activist research, transnational feminism, microhistories of feminist politics/political movements and political people, counter-narratives and alternative rhetorics, rhetorical analyses, work on women's safety, rhetorics of the body, and much more. We will continue the tradition of publishing rigorously reviewed traditional articles, book reviews, and Recoveries and Reconsiderations. Additionally, we are happy to announce that we are launching two new submission types for future issues.

Overlays: Citizens with New Insights

Peitho is a feminist citizenry that values how archives provoke new and more complicated understandings of people and pasts. We envision "Overlays" as short, exploratory essays that make room for presenting interesting archival finds, learning, or insights that help researchers explore rhetorics further; work out ideas they are gleaning from historical feminist research; or share something relevant that perhaps "didn't make it" into a more formalized or finalized academic writing product. Inspired by Michael R. Hill's (1993) description of "overlay channels," or artifacts that show layers, reveal connections, or speak to multiple points of view simultaneously, Overlay essays:

- Are short, first-person or otherwise less formal academic essays of up to 3,000 words
- May be artistic and feature narrative and dialogue conventions as appropriate
- Should nod to appropriate theories or extant scholarship
- May contain original photography of archival finds that fall within permissions of their archives of origins and/or IRB permission
- Should be clearly linked to the aims and scope of Peitho

Prompts to encourage your Overlays:

- An archival research challenge, struggle, tangle, or unclear, frustrating experience that you cannot yet understand, that flies in the face of your assumptions, that complicates what you thought you knew
- An archival find that doesn't fit, that extends thinking, that challenges our paradigms, that is not expected, or that can't yet be easily categorized or understood in our field of feminist rhetorical research
- An "a-ha" moment you had in the archives, how archival methodology's limits and affordances

pushed you to learn, to make connections, or to understand something in a new way

- Commentary on archival experiences that underscore the limits of whose lives are recorded, saved, and archived, and how and whether we can resuscitate more and different artifacts
- A research experience or story that encapsulates why archives remain important to feminist rhetorical research, and/or what new affordances there may be in conceptions of 21st century archives as mediated by technologies

Please read more about Overlays at our website. We look forward to the possibilities of this kind of submission.

Pedagogies: *Peitho* as a Teaching Citizenry

Feminist rhetoricians are often citizens who teach. Therefore, our second new submission type is *Pedagogies*. *In Teaching Rhetorica: Theory, Pedagogy, Practice*, Kate Ronald and Joy Ritchie (2006) lamented that feminist rhetorical practices and theories had not yet been integrated into curriculum and pedagogies the way the classical rhetorical tradition had (p. 5). In the nearly 20 years since then, in our practices as teachers and among the many colleagues we know working in feminisms and rhetorics, things have changed greatly. Therefore, *Peitho* welcomes written submissions on the teaching of feminist rhetoric; we encourage you to send us pieces that describe and reflect on innovative teaching practices in courses where the focus is feminist rhetoric and where you, as a teacher, implement feminist pedagogies in innovative ways.

Pedagogies can take shape in two ways: course designs (adapted with permission from our colleagues at *Composition Studies*) and instructional notes (adapted with permission from our colleagues at *TETYC*). While adapted from writing studies journals, our call has, of course, a special caveat: The design of the course or activity should focus on feminist rhetoric (i.e., students are learning about/using feminist rhetoric) or a course or activity in teaching feminist rhetoric (i.e., students are learning how to teach feminist rhetoric). Please read more about Pedagogies submissions here. We are excited to learn more about our feminist peers' teaching.

Getting Involved with *Peitho*

If you are a *Peitho* reader, you are a member of the *Peitho* citizenry, and we look forward to collaborating with you to enhance the journal's vision for civic participation. Whether or not your own scholarship currently fits the journal mission, or if you're not ready to submit, there are other ways to get involved with the journal. We welcome readers as peer reviewers. You can sign up to be a reviewer using our interest form at this link. We also welcome cover art. As you can see from past issues, many types of art are welcome: drawings, whether digital or by hand (rendered digitally); photography; or photos of other types of visual representations. We are looking for interesting, poignant, beautiful, provocative, and diverse subjects and depictions that speak to the aims and scope of *Peitho*. Please email your submissions to peithoeditorsteam@gmail.com.

In This Issue

We have been energized by the submissions we've seen over the past few months and the commitment of their authors to a citizenry with scholarly integrity. We see them, and the almost 40 years of prior Peitho scholars, as the foundation of the kind of citizenry we are enthusiastic about nurturing. Here, we are thrilled to introduce you to the pieces and authors included in this issue.

In the lead article for this issue, Carolyn Skinner contributes to the study of "reception" as a rhetorical phenomenon by exploring the collective, dispersed, and evolving processes by which rhetoric affects audiences and alters worldviews in a new coinage she calls "meta-reception." As she argues, "reception" refers to the effects that texts have on audiences and to what audiences do with the texts they read, watch, or hear, and "meta-reception" refers, instead, to the commentary on direct reception—to reception of the reception. Sharing a variety of examples to illustrate this new concept, the author ultimately argues that meta-reception, as a variation of reception, presents similar opportunities to feminist scholars of rhetoric. Thus, the piece offers future researchers a new and generative concept through which to conceive of their own work. Meta-reception is presented as an analytic tool specifically for feminist rhetorical work, yet it is also clear that the concept has utility for rhetorical studies in general.

Next, readers will find Kelly Franklin's beautifully written essay on African American Vernacular English (AAVE), linguistic justice, and first-year writing. Using the organizing principle of an experience tutoring a Black athlete at a PWI as he struggled through a first-year writing course, Franklin shows how scholarship related to sociolinguistics, educational malpractice, and linguistic justice helped her to help the student in his endeavor to present his professor with a research paper on those topics–a sort of metacommentary on his own experiences of cultural erasure in the context of damaging pedagogies. Using a strong narrative voice alongside scholarly commentary to present this case, Franklin ultimately shows how Black student athletes and Black feminists can challenge white supremacist logics in their day-to-day work.

We are also pleased to include "'The rapist is you!': Remixing the Repertoire of Performance-Protests," by Stephanie Leow in which she analyzes the rhetorical phenomenon of "Un violador en tu camino" - "A Rapist in Your Path." She traces the origins of the performance in Chile to the global stage, how it becomes a form of social media activism, and then the backlash to and parody of the movement. Leow's case studies demonstrate how performance theory extends the methodology of iconographic tracking; she offers tools to analyze rhetoric in motion and archiving. Her work teaches readers how feminist protests as performances help us understand historically situated and embodied transmissions of knowledge in digital and physical publics.

Finally, in "Marjory Stoneman Douglas's Everglades: River of Grass, the Rivers of America Book Series, and the Origins of an Environmental Rhetoric," Paige Banaji beautifully intertwines the publication history of River of Grass within the Rivers of America Series in the mid-century, arguing for Douglas' early contributions to activist environmental rhetorics. Particularly, Banaji traces Douglas' rhetorical savvy in participating as an amateur female science writer in early ecological thinking as the discipline of ecology evolved (and excluded); her savvy in using a nationalistic platform such as the Rivers of America Series to offer critical

histories of Florida that shine an honest light on colonization's cultural and environmental harms; and her early environmental activism in helping to save the Florida Everglades during Florida's development boom of the 1940s.

The Future of *Peitho* as Citizenship

Our tenure as co-editors will take the journal to 2029. Our hope is that those involved with the production of the journal, from writers to copy-editors, embrace the challenge of a *Peitho* citizenry, and that we all take on the pervasive challenges to democracy, human rights, and integrity that characterize the current sociohistoric moment. While it can often feel like the work we do does not make an impact beyond our own small circles, in contexts in which we run the risk of preaching to the already converted, we call on our community to use their scholarly projects, their everyday insights, and their day-to-day teaching as opportunities to reach and nurture wider publics in the riches of feminist rhetorical thought and action.

Biographies

Cathryn Molloy is a professor of writing studies in the University of Delaware's English Department. She is the author of *Rhetorical Ethos in Health and Medicine: Patient Credibility, Stigma, and Misdiagnosis*. Before joining the co-editing team at Peitho, she was on the editing team at Rhetoric of Health and Medicine for eight years. Currently, she is co-editing the *Routledge Handbook on the Rhetoric of Health and Medicine* with Lisa Melonçon and J. Blake Scott.

Bryna Siegel Finer is a professor of English at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, where she serves as Director of Undergraduate Writing Programs. Her published work has appeared in *Rhetoric of Health & Medicine*, *Rhetoric Review*, *Teaching Writing in the Two-Year College*, *Praxis*, and the *Journal of Teaching Writing*, among others. She has served as the associate editor of *Rhetoric of Health & Medicine* and book reviews editor for *Composition Studies.* She is also the co-editor of *Writing Program Architecture: Thirty Cases for Reference and Research* (2017).

Jamie White-Farnham is professor in the Writing Program at University of Wisconsin-Superior, where she serves as Director of Teaching, Learning and Technology and the Jim Dan Hill Library. Her work appears in *Peitho*, *College English*, *Community Literacy Journa*l, *Rhetoric Review*, *Computers & Composition*, among others. She was previously the associate editor at Prompt: A Journal of Academic Writing Assignments. She is also the co-editor of *Writing Program Architecture: Thirty Cases for Reference and Research* (2017).

Together, Cathryn, Bryna, and Jamie have co-edited *Women's Health Advocacy: Rhetorical Ingenuity for the 21st Century* (2019) and *Confronting Toxic Rhetoric: Writing Teachers' Experiences of Rupture, Resistance, and Resilience* (2024) and co-authored *Patients Making Meaning: Theorizing Sources of Information and Forms of Support in Women's Health* (2023).

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Sex in Education and the Rhetoric of Meta-Reception

Carolyn Skinner (she/her)

Abstract: This article proposes meta-reception as a rhetorical concept that can support feminist efforts to recognize the dispersed, collective nature of much rhetorical activity. Whereas reception refers to the effects that texts have on audiences and to what audiences do with texts, meta-reception is defined as commentary on that direct reception, or reception of the reception. The meta-reception of Clarke's *Sex in Education* (1873) serves as an example that demonstrates that references to earlier receptive texts are themselves rhetorical, deployed in the service of arguments or in contexts that can be quite different from those of the initial text. In the case of *Sex in Education*, meta-reception was first used to characterize advocates of advanced education for women as unwomanly aggressors in a warlike debate, and, later, to craft a progress narrative for the history of the women's rights movement. Because meta-reception acknowledges that the work of meaning-making involves not just supposedly independent rhetors making great speeches or publishing significant texts but also those who comment on and thereby reshape the public's understanding of texts, it has the potential to help scholars identify a wide range of rhetors and forms of discursive work that are not accounted for by canonical interpretations of rhetorical activity.

Keywords: reception, feminism, historiography, women's rights, nineteenth-century rhetoric

Doi: 10.37514/PEI-J.2025.28.1.02

In recent years, scholars have explored *reception* as a rhetorical phenomenon that acknowledges the dynamic and dispersed nature of rhetorical activity and rhetorical effects (Blair; Kjeldsen; Kjeldsen and Andersen; Skinner, *Rhetorical* and "Theorizing"; Willis). These endeavors seek to understand how rhetors, audiences, and social and material contexts interact to affect how we make meaning and understand our world. In doing so, they align with the efforts of feminist rhetoricians to decenter the autonomous rhetor and to recognize the collective nature of rhetorical activity (for examples of this work, see Buchanan; Ede and Lunsford; Fredlund, Hauman, and Ouellette; Foss and Griffin; Hallenbeck, "Toward a Posthuman" and "Resituating"; Royster and Kirsch 98–109). In this article, I contribute to these endeavors to explore the collective, dispersed, and evolving processes by which rhetoric affects audiences and alters worldviews by analyzing what I call *meta-reception*.

Whereas *reception* refers to the effects that texts have on audiences and to what audiences do with the texts they read, watch, or hear, I define *meta-reception* as commentary on direct reception, or reception of the reception. Although reception and meta-reception can occur exclusively within the mind of an audience member, they can also take the form of outwardly expressed responses, rebuttals, confirmations, or amplifications of the original text that serve the receivers' own rhetorical purposes, purposes that might align with or differ widely from those of the received text. As rhetors engage in reception and meta-reception, they alter or confirm the perceived meaning and value of the original text, reflecting the contexts, purposes, and perspectives of the receivers. In previous work, I argue that reception offers feminist rhetorical scholars a means of challenging the canonical model of rhetorical activity (the independent rhetor persuading an audience) and of expanding the people and processes recognized as contributing to public decision-making. I maintain that the analysis of reception supports these goals because it illuminates the ways that determining what a text means and how it is valued are distributed across rhetors and audiences (*Rhetorical*; "Theorizing"). Building on this, I contend that meta-reception, as a species of reception, presents similar opportunities to feminist scholars of rhetoric.

To illustrate how attending to meta-reception extends feminist rhetorical interests and rhetorical theory, I examine the commentary on the short-lived but contentious debate over physician Edward H. Clarke's *Sex in Education; or, A Fair Chance for the Girls* (1873). Relying on his expertise and authority as a physician, Clarke (1820-1877) presented women's reproductive physiology as extraordinarily complex and delicate, especially around adolescence (Clarke focused on the years between 14 and 20 [47]). Consequently, he proposed different educational models for men and women: male students should study intensely every day, while female students should study fewer hours per day than men on all days and observe a "remission" in study and exercise every fourth week (157). Women who did not follow this regimen risked not only their own health, but also their fertility and the health of their future offspring; consequently, women who studied too much imperiled "the future of the [white middle-class] race" (45).[1] Clarke presented seven case studies (only five of which were students; the others were an actress and a bookkeeper) selected from the records of his own practice to demonstrate the consequences, which might include "dysmenorrhoea, headache, neuralgia, and hysteria" (84) among other ailments, that could befall young women who did not reduce their efforts or refrain altogether from studying while menstruating.

Sex in Education immediately generated an intense and voluminous debate that intersected with several contested issues in the nineteenth-century U.S.: women's education, work, and political rights; evolution and social Darwinism; and the role of science in public rhetoric (Skinner, *Rhetorical*; see also Zschoche; Newman). Reviews, editorials, articles, and books all commented on, amplified, or opposed Clarke's ideas about how "science" might help resolve "the woman question." After about 18 months of intense debate, however, the firestorm initiated by *Sex in Education* largely dissipated. Although the book continued to be published through its 18th edition in 1889, people effectively stopped arguing about it, judging by the precipitous decline in the number of references to it in the periodical press. Of course, some opponents of women's rights continued, enthusiastically, to support Clarke's claims about the dangers of extended education for women. However, American women's college enrollment increased through the end of the nineteenth century. Drawing together data from several sources, Barbara Solomon reports that 11,000 women were enrolled in institutions of higher education in 1870 (making up 21% of all students enrolled), before the 1873 publication of *Sex in Education*; by 1900, 85,000 women were enrolled (36.8% of all enrollments) (63). In practical terms, it seems that many women and their families had not been persuaded by *Sex in Education*.

Even though the question of women's physical fitness for continuous effort seemed to be settled by the increasing numbers of women completing college and pursuing careers, Clarke's book continued to be cited occasionally in the public press through the 1880s, 1890s, and early 1900s. Sometimes writers sought to re-engage with the question of higher education for women, but often, writers meta-receptively invoked the *debate* around *Sex in Education*, not the content of the book itself. In other words, instead of arguing whether Clarke's thesis was right or wrong, these writers pointed to the rhetorical work that had been done by the

1 It is important to acknowledge the racism underlying *Sex in Education*, which is often identified by contemporary scholars as a key supporter of the nineteenth century's "separate spheres" gender ideology. Clarke's argument depended on the idea that "more evolved" races manifested greater differences between men and women, and his concern that white middle-class women were not having enough healthy babies was an expression of his fear that white Americans would not survive and progress evolutionarily as a "race." Clarke's construction of gender was embedded in his racist beliefs about evolution. For more on the racism, classism, and anti-immigrant sentiment undergirding *Sex in Education*, see Skinner (*Rhetorical*).

controversy surrounding *Sex in Education* to make various women's rights arguments.

In what follows, I first elaborate on my initial definition of meta-reception and briefly explain the methodology employed in the research presented here. Then, I demonstrate the intensity of the immediate (1873–1874) debate over *Sex in Education* by surveying the numerous meta-receptive characterizations of it as "war-like." Next, I analyze the rhetorical purposes that meta-reception served once the initial debate had passed (1882–1898). In the conclusion, I discuss the rhetorical nature of meta-reception and suggest its special relevance to feminist rhetorical scholarship.

Defining Meta-Reception

The principle that rhetorical activity and rhetorical effects are dispersed across rhetors and audiences that is evidenced in reception and meta-reception is shared by other rhetorical concepts that have been fruitful for feminist rhetorical scholars, such as circulation, rhetorical ecologies, and public memory. As one of Jacqueline Jones Royster and Gesa E. Kirsch's "terms of engagement" for feminist rhetorical scholarship, *social circulation* acknowledges the "*evolutionary* relationships" that reflect "connections among past, present, and future" (23; see also Briggette; Gries; Royster). Similarly, tracing the interconnections that emerge in studies of meta-reception responds to Sarah Hallenbeck's call not to limit our studies to "discrete, organized locations" of rhetorical activity so that we may "capture the broadest possible range of rhetorical practices… emerging both from individual women and men and from the larger systems of power in which they are enmeshed" ("Toward a Posthuman" 14). Meta-reception, with its layers of argument, response, amplification, criticism, and repurposing, allows us to see the effects of rhetorical acts by and about women well beyond their immediate context, as they reverberate across time and space.

In its recognition that rhetorical acts cross contexts, meta-reception complements *rhetorical ecologies* as articulated by Jenny Edbauer. As a framework for understanding rhetorical activity, rhetorical ecology allows us to "begin to recognize the way rhetorics are held together trans-situationally, as well as the effects of trans-situationality on rhetorical circulation…. In other words, we begin to see that public rhetorics do not only exist in the elements of their situations, but also in the radius of their neighboring events" (20). By its nature, meta-reception occurs across times, places, and exigencies, so it is one means by which rhetorical ecologies might manifest. Studies of *public memory*, which often attend to the ways that past and present affect one another, offer an additional approach to recognizing the dispersed and dynamic nature of rhetorical activity. For example, Carol Mattingly's examination of the fate of memorials dedicated to the Women's Christian Temperance Union illustrates how recent re-writings and erasures of history revise our sense of ourselves and our history. In discussions of public memory, we can see a commonality with meta-reception's tenet that rhetorical acts and rhetorical effects are very often subject to revision.

Even though analysis focused on meta-reception shares principles with other rhetorical concepts that have proven useful to feminist researchers, it also draws on methodological practices that differ from many common historiographic approaches. For example, rather than foregrounding the ways that *Sex in Education* reinforced the misogynist and racist context in which women wrote, spoke, and pursued political and edu-

cational rights as much nineteenth-century feminist historiography does (in rhetoric and other fields), this study of meta-reception asks what audiences-turned-rhetors *did* with not only *Sex in Education* but also with descriptions of the controversy it generated. Like Hallenbeck, I seek to shift attention "from the clean and constant demarcation between rhetor and surround, which instead [of being separate] transform one another through constant interaction" ("Resituating" 81). Additionally, meta-receptive analysis does not look "inside" the text to identify its appeals and epistemological world-making as conventional rhetorical analysis often does (Jasinski and Mercieca); instead, it seeks to identify the uses to which receptions of the text have been put. In other words, rather than asking how Clarke marshalled claims to authority (Douglass; Bateman), how he relied on and extended evolutionary theory (DeLuzio; Rosenberg), or how the formal features of *Sex in Education* mirror those of his pharmacology lectures (Fiss), I ask how characterizations of the reception of *Sex in Education* were used as evidence in support of arguments other than those that Clarke himself made (for more on methodological approaches relevant to studies of reception, see Skinner, *Rhetorical*).

Although reception and meta-reception can take various forms, including unrecorded thoughts, feelings, and conversations, historical studies of reception and meta-reception typically rely on instances in which a text was produced. To pursue the analysis below, I collected all the instances that I could find of references to the controversy surrounding *Sex in Education* (not simply references to or reviews of the book itself) in databases of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century periodicals. I then looked for patterns in how the initial reception of *Sex in Education* was described, why it was invoked, and what purposes characterizations of the book's reception served in the context of the rhetor's own argument and context.

The examples I selected for this analysis share two important features: first, the meta-reception is based on collective instances of reception; second, the meta-reception supports an argument addressed to an audience outside of the rhetor. In other words, because I am interested in meta-reception as a persuasive resource, my understanding of meta-reception differs from simply learning from past communicative experiences, which might occur within an individual mind. Someone evaluating a previous conversation might think, "The last time I told her something like this, she reacted badly, so I'm going to take a different approach this time." In this case, the reception (whatever the person's interlocutor said or did) and the argument ("I should take a different approach") based on the person's characterization of the reception (the meta-receptive interpretation "she reacted badly") are both individual, not social, events. Such a scenario might be characterized as a form of "self-rhetoric" (Harrison), but in this article, because my focus is on meta-reception as a strategy or resource for shaping public attitudes and beliefs, I'm interested in rhetoric that draws from and is addressed to audiences composed of many people.

Characterizing the Immediate Reception as a War

Starting almost immediately after *Sex in Education* was published, the debate it instigated was frequently described in militaristic terms. Although the choice of this metaphor to portray the reception of *Sex in Education* reflected the common characterization of argument as a form of war (Lakoff and Johnson 5), the frequency and vividness with which the reception of *Sex in Education* was described as a battle indicate that

the debate around Clarke's book was perceived to be particularly intense. Characterizing the reception of *Sex in Education* as a battle additionally served to portray the women refuting Clarke as unwomanly, because physical combat was incompatible with nineteenth-century American notions of femininity. The initial meta-reception, appearing soon after *Sex in Education*'s October 1873 publication, was not merely an objective description of the features of the book's reception; instead, it was itself an argument that shaped readers' perceptions of those participating in the debate, especially the women.

For example, a review (26 Mar. 1874) in *The Congregationalist*, a Boston-based periodical published for members of the Congregational church, was overt in its use of military metaphors. Referring to two of the books published in 1874 in opposition to *Sex in Education*, Julia Ward Howe's collection *Sex* and *Education* and Eliza Bisbee Duffey's *No Sex in Education*, this reviewer[2] wrote, "At the sight of [these two books] in manifest alliance, we find a military mood coming over us, and the metaphors of the battle-field offering themselves for service." The reviewer then described the women's rights debate as a David and Goliath story:

> To take up our parable, it will be remembered that some time since there stepped forth from the ranks of the reformers of this nineteenth century a champion named Woman's Rights, a very Goliath in bravery.… "Come on," cried this doubty warrior to the timid army of conservatives, "and set your battle in array!" In due time there appeared, in answer to this challenge, a youth of ruddy countenance, who, rejecting the heavier armor of other knights, essayed to meet the adversary with the simple sling of a logical process and the smooth stone of a physiological fact, therewith smiting the arrogant Philistine in so vital a part as to bring him—perhaps we should say *her*—fairly to the ground. ("Literary Review")

According to this reviewer, Howe and Duffey were part of the giant warrior Goliath, eager for battle, while Clarke, who was in his mid-fifties and acknowledged as a professional authority, was characterized as the young David wearing no armor. This description of the reception of *Sex in Education* (indeed, of the whole women's rights debate) painted the advocates of women's higher education as bullies who could be defeated by a "simple" slingshot composed of scientific fact and logical thinking.

Shifting battlefields but maintaining Clarke's position as the underdog in this war, the review concluded, "And we strongly suspect that after the smoke of this fusillade of musketry has cleared away, the little Doctor will be generally discerned still in possession of the field" ("Literary Review"). This meta-receptive characterization of the debate around *Sex in Education* as an unevenly matched battle encouraged readers to sympathize with Clarke as a David or as a "little doctor" victorious against women's rights, the better-armed giant that no one else wanted to fight. In contrast, the "Goliath" of women's rights (and the women it represented) was described as unfeminine in appearance (as a giant) and in behavior (as Goliath provoked "the conservatives" to violence). Taking a step beyond simply commenting on Howe's and Duffey's books (the primary purpose of the receptive act of a literary review), this reviewer crafted a meta-receptive characterization of *Sex in Education*'s reception to shape readers' perceptions of the debate around Clarke's book and of those who participated in it.

2 This text, like many of those cited in this essay, reflects the common practice among nineteenth-century periodicals of publishing unsigned reviews, editorials, or opinion pieces. I have provided names and biographical information when writers are identifiable.

In contrast to *The Congregationalist*'s characterization of Clarke as the underdog, three months later (25 June 1874), in an article titled "The Replies to Dr. Clarke," *The Nation* (a wide-ranging journal covering news, politics, economics, education, social issues, literature, and the arts published in New York) described Clarke as a strategic, overpowering fighter. This writer said that proponents of advanced education for women had been focused on achieving co-education at Harvard when they were surprised by Clarke's book:

> They were all busily engaged in operations against President Eliot at Harvard; had driven him, as they supposed, into his last stronghold; and were preparing with ferocious whoops for what they expected to be a final rush at him, when the Doctor suddenly, and without a note of warning, began to drop shells in their rear, at easy range and with a coolness which showed that he knew his ground. The disorder which followed was for a time very dreadful. The rank and file broke and got under cover.… Mrs. Howe and Colonel Higginson [two writers who refuted Clarke] reconnoitered the Doctor carefully.… While they were watching him, the book kept running through new editions, so it was plain that no time had to be lost. President Eliot had to be let alone for the present, and active measures taken to extinguish Doctor Clarke's fire. ("The Replies to Dr. Clarke" 408; see also "Literary Review" 484 in *Congregational Quarterly*)

This account of the reception of *Sex in Education* presented a particular characterization of Clarke, the reformers, and the debate following the publication of *Sex in Education*. Clarke was "cool" and efficient in his assault, through which he came to the aid of his colleague at Harvard, who was portrayed as being under attack by the reformers.[3] The reformers were disorganized and fled from hard battle; their "ferocious whoops" were likely read at the time as connotations of "uncivilized," "savage" behavior, which consequently cast Clarke as the protector of "civilization" in putting down a rebellion. The meta-receptive description of the advocates of women's education as at first "ferocious" aggressors and then as "disorder[ed]" in their initial reception of Clarke, gave readers the impression that the proponents of women's education were aggressive, disorganized fighters, neither appropriately feminine nor effective in battle.

In addition to describing the advocates of women's education collectively in negative terms, the writers who commented on the debate around *Sex in Education* often characterized individual opponents of Clarke in ways that undermined their femininity. For example, in November 1873, one commentator, writing in *The Daily Graphic*, a New York publication that claimed to be "the only illustrated daily newspaper in the world" ("The Graphic"), said that Caroline Dall[4] "knows how to use her weapons so as to draw blood every time." She was also said to have "explode[d] some of Dr. Clarke's manufactured 'facts'" ("Sex in Education"). Even though the writer was speaking metaphorically, the violence attributed to Dall was not consistent with nineteenth-century ideals of domestic femininity. In April 1874, the San Francisco *Daily Evening Bulletin* described another of Clarke's opponents, Eliza Bisbee Duffey,[5] in similar terms. The newspaper characterized

3 Some of Clarke's contemporaries suspected him of having written *Sex in Education* in support of Harvard's decision to exclude women; however, it seems that at least some of Clarke's colleagues at the medical school were dissatisfied with his methodology and conclusions (Wells 172-173; Bittell 126-127).

4 Caroline Wells Healy Dall (1822-1912) was an abolitionist, suffragist, and prolific writer. Her women's rights books include *Woman's Right to Labor* (1860), *Woman's Rights under the Law* (1861), and T*he College, the Market, and the Court* (1867). Dall helped found the American Social Science Association in 1865 and served in several leadership roles in that organization.

5 Eliza Bisbee Duffey (1838-1898) contributed *No Sex in Education* (1874) to the controversy around Clarke's book. Duffey wrote prolifically on women's health and rights, including the books *What Women Should Know: A Woman's Book about Women, Containing Practical Information for Wives and Mothers* (1873) and *The Relations of the Sexes* (1889).

Duffey's rebuttal of Clarke as delivering "what she evidently considers a *coup de grace*—the final finishing-up and annihilation of the unhappy doctor" ("No Sex in Education"). Although such an act of violence might be understood as an act of mercy to relieve suffering, it was not compatible with the ideas of women as delicate and sensitive.

Likewise, in its April 1874 review of Julia Ward Howe's[6] edited collection *Sex* and *Education* (1874), the *Liberal Christian*, "An Independent Journal of Religion, Literature, Science and Art" published in New York ("The Liberal Christian"), called her book "one long cry to battle." It then extended the martial language: "Mrs. Howe's introduction and her opening essay bristle with swordspoints, daggers and bayonets. She is nothing if not antagonistic. And her sentences are sharp and cutting two-edged swords" ("Reviews"). Though the characterization of women's rights advocates as unfeminine was common in this era, in the meta-reception of *Sex in Education*, the depictions of Clarke's opponents as violent and bloodthirsty suggested that they posed a real threat to society; they certainly weren't women with whom most Americans would want to associate. Even when the writers seemed (sometimes begrudgingly) to acknowledge the intellectual prowess of women's rights advocates, as in the reviews of Dall, Duffey, and Howe cited here, the war-like meta-receptive commentary undermined statements about the validity of the women's arguments.

As these examples illustrate, in just the first ten months after *Sex in Education* was published, the responses it evoked were vividly described in terms of war. Many of the commentators using this metaphor characterized women's rights supporters as violent, and even as the aggressors in the conflict. In one sense, this was in keeping with the notion that Clarke and his supporters were "defending" the status quo and that the advocates of higher education for women were the "aggressors" in demanding change. Such a characterization of the reception of *Sex in Education* promoted the idea that social reform required at least metaphorical violence, which meant that someone would be hurt in the process of expanding women's rights. If violence and injury were the costs of reform, then perhaps the price was too high, and the women should "retreat."

Moreover, the language of war highlighted the idea that women seeking greater rights were moving out of their appropriate spheres: a woman in battle was not in keeping with nineteenth-century U.S. notions of femininity or domesticity. In this sense, the meta-reception characterizing the women who responded to Clarke as engaged in war suggested the extreme gender role-reversals posited by those opposed to expanding rights and opportunities for women (Behling; Rouse). Even when the writers acknowledged the validity of women's objections to Clarke's argument and expressed support for women's education, placing women in the context of a metaphorical war reinforced the idea that women were "unsexing" themselves and endangering white middle-class society.

Characterizing Opposition to Women's Rights as Obsolete

Even though the early meta-reception characterizing the reception of *Sex in Education* as a war at least implicitly opposed women's education, later meta-reception (from 1882—nine years after *Sex in Education* was first published—through the end of the century) relied on the public's memory of that early "battle" to

6 Famous for writing "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," Julia Ward Howe (1819-1910) was a well-known pacifist and suffragist who co-founded the American Woman Suffrage Association and edited *The Woman's Journal*.

assert women's rights to education, work, and political participation. Often, *Sex in Education* was characterized as having produced an "alarm"—a momentary state of heightened awareness of possible danger—among the people. Importantly, the choice of the word "alarm" implied that, while there had been a brief time of concern, that time had passed. Some writers engaged in meta-reception to describe current rhetorical situations in the aftermath of that alarm, and some used it to characterize those who were still caught up in the "alarm" as old-fashioned or out of touch.

For instance, in June 1882, the Boston *Sunday Herald* published "Education of Girls." In it, the writer noted the effect that *Sex in Education*, now nine years old, continued to have on discussions of girls' and women's education:

> It is impossible to satisfy a public alarmed by the late Dr. E. H. Clarke's sentimental work on "Sex in Education," and always ready to pronounce woman "the weaker vessel" and shield her from mental exertion, that the girls are not overworked at school, and the fear that they may do too much is still a most serious drawback in our Boston homes, when parents are urged to use the advantages of the public schools in the education of their daughters. Unintelligent sentimentalism is still the greatest drawback to the proper education of young women in the Boston schools.

In the context of an article that critically assessed Boston's schools for young women but accepted women's right to a thorough education, the reference to *Sex in Education* served to identify the historical source of the "alarm" that continued to hinder parents' support of their daughters' education. This meta-receptive commentary characterized the after-effects of the reception of *Sex in Education* negatively: the book was still a "drawback" hindering widespread education, because it had fostered an "Unintelligent sentimentalism" among the people of Boston.

Just as characterizing the reception of *Sex in Education* as reflecting a state of "alarm" was used to explain the hesitancy of some parents, meta-reception was also used to dismiss physicians who tried to follow in Clarke's footsteps. In 1898, a brief editorial note in the *Boston Daily Advertiser* relied on Clarke's failure to stop women's educational progress to suggest that a similar argument by Dr. J. S. Flagg[7] would not succeed:

> Dr. J. S. Flagg has made the startling discovery that the tendency on the part of women to enter into the avocations [sic] heretofore monopolized by men will have an effect, if not checked, ultimately to modify the physiological and psychological distinctions between the sexes; in short, to abolish women. Oh wise and wonderful Dr. Flagg! But he is not exactly first in the field. About a quarter of a century ago Dr. Clarke produced no small alarm by his book, "Sex in Education," whose burden was to prove that if women were to receive a liberal education in colleges of equal grade with those provided for men, a multitude of terrible consequences would result, among them the consignment of the health of womankind to hop[e]less rack and ruin. ("Editorial Suggestions")

The rhetorical situation into which Flagg and this writer entered was shaped by the "alarm" that Clarke had evoked. As this writer told the story of *Sex in Education* and its reception, the initial receptive "alarm" meant that readers 25 years later were already aware of the physiological arguments against continuous effort at school or at work by women, so further arguments along these lines would likely not draw the kind of atten-

7 I have been unable to locate biographical information on Flagg, beyond evidence that he was a physician in Boston who lectured to medical students.

tion that *Sex in Education* had. Furthermore, because colleges continued to admit women and the result was not the "rack and ruin" of their health, readers had experiential evidence contradicting Clarke and his successors. This writer used meta-reception to foster a hostile rhetorical situation for Flagg's claims by referring to the initial reception's "alarm" and its subsequent rejection.

Commentary on the reception of *Sex in Education* that described people opposed to women's rights as old-fashioned and ill-informed supported one of the most common uses of the book's meta-reception: to craft a narrative of progress toward increasing women's rights and opportunities. In 1883, writing for the suffrage newspaper *The Woman's Journal*, which he co-edited, Thomas Wentworth Higginson (1823-1911) incorporated a characterization of the reception of *Sex in Education* into a long version of such a narrative:

> What always strengthens reformers is, that the arguments which meet their most advanced demands are the same that originally met their mildest demands; it shows that the whole affair is a matter of continuous development. The trouble usually is that after a certain point in the advance is carried, people forget that it ever was opposed…. Was there ever any objection to the higher education of women? It is of great value to have some worthy, but rather fossilized gentleman volunteer to place himself on record as still representing the old obstruction. ("Gauges of Progress")

Higginson noted that objections to women's owning property had been overcome and that "even the stoutest conservatives accepted the present property laws [acknowledging women's property rights] as a finality." Then he turned to the success of the Harvard Annex, the precursor to Radcliffe college, where women were taught by Harvard faculty: "So when…we see the Harvard 'Annex,' as its projectors say 'working so simply and easily that its success has hardly attracted attention,' it is difficult to realize that it is only ten years since the battle raged round Dr. E. H. Clarke's 'Sex in Education.'" With these past victories in women's property rights and education in mind, Higginson turned to a recent opponent of women's education, confident that Clarke's defeat when that "battle raged" foretold a future victory for women's education. Higginson concluded by suggesting what a "fossilized" opponent of women's rights might say: "If these worn-out arguments are so valueless in my hand against the higher education [of women], what are they when you use them against Woman Suffrage?" ("Gauges of Progress"). According to Higginson, not only was this opponent's argument doomed to fail against women's education, but it also foreshadowed his failure when opposing votes for women. In this article, reference to the "battle" over *Sex in Education* a decade ago set up a pattern that Higginson maintained would repeat: just as past opposition to women's rights was overcome, present and future opposition would be overcome as well.

Higginson confirmed the narrative he constructed, again referring to the *Sex in Education* controversy, three years later in an article for the *Critic*, a New York-based weekly focused on drama and literature. In "The American Girl-Graduate," Higginson cited the Association of Collegiate Alumnæ's statistical evidence demonstrating the health of women who had graduated from college. Consistent with the narrative of progress for women's rights that he posited earlier, Higginson concluded that the question of women's right to education had been resolved: "As a result of these investigations, or of the state of facts developed by them, the 'sex in education' controversy may be regarded as being in this country dismissed from the arena" (274). Importantly, Higginson's argument relied on "the 'sex in education' controversy" as a whole rhetorical phe-

nomenon. Higginson was no longer receiving Clarke by arguing with him as he had when the book was first published (see, for example, "II"; "Physician and Pedagogue"; and "Sex in Education"); instead, Higginson meta-receptively referred to the body of texts receiving *Sex in Education*—the controversy—as a landmark supporting his argument about how far the women's rights movement had advanced.

Similarly situating doubts about women's education in the past, Helen H. Backus (1852-1906), a faculty member at Vassar College and president of the Association of Collegiate Alumnæ, opened her 1899 discussion of the appropriate curriculum for women in the *Outlook*, a New York weekly, with a reference to *Sex in Education*:

> That intricate web of sophistry and sentimentality which prejudice wove throughout the ages, and to which Dr. Clarke's 'Sex in Education' added the finish, has been torn and discolored by the practical experiences of the past quarter-century. Now and then a conservative theologian or an old-fashioned nerve-specialist tries vainly to patch it up. But, for the most part, mothers and fathers, students and scientists, neglect it entirely. (461)

Backus described those who supported or attempted to revive Clarke's arguments as futilely trying to mend a web, only to have those most involved in women's education ignore their efforts. Echoing the language of other writers who maintained that the "alarm" in the initial reception of *Sex in Education* had long since been cast off, Backus went on to say that "The daughters of this generation are encouraged to work out their own mental salvation, little influenced by the fears of the past" (461). Backus used commentary on the reception of *Sex in Education* to craft a narrative in which worries about women's fitness for higher education were all in the past.

Although several writers in the 1880s and 1890s insisted that not just *Sex in Education* but also the alarm over women's health that it represented was obsolete, the "battle" over women's education had not yet been "won." As late as 1904, the medical journal the *Medical Record* cited *Sex in Education* and its reception in support of its claim that education was physically injurious to women: "Is a collegiate training harmful to women? The majority of medical men are of the opinion that such is generally the case—at all events, that co-education is harmful to women—and hold the view that women are not fitted physically for the strain put upon them by strenuous professional or business careers" (17). In the course of citing nearly a dozen physicians and scientists confirming this conclusion, the article referred not only to *Sex in Education* but also to its reception:

> The work [*Sex in Education*] appeared at the height of the movement to secure collegiate opportunities for girls, and was suspected of being unofficially inspired by the unwillingness of Harvard University [where Clarke taught in the medical school] to receive them. It reached a seventeenth edition in a short time, but the views expressed therein were warmly combated by a number of ladies distinguished in the movement for the higher education of women. (17)

Despite the doubts raised about Clarke's motivations and the "combat[ive]" objections made to his argument, this writer for the *Medical Record*—presumably an authority on matters of health—asserted that higher education was dangerous for women.

When the supporters of higher education for women used meta-reception to craft a narrative that suggested that the debate over women's education had been resolved, they weren't merely recounting facts. They were using a version of rhetorical history as an argument, contending that their audience should ignore anyone who still questioned the safety of higher education for women as "old-fashioned" (Backus) or "fossilized" (Higginson, "Gauges of Progress") and not to be taken seriously. The description of the initial reception of *Sex in Education* as an intense battle served later commentators well because they could treat it as a momentary commotion or "alarm" that had passed. Moreover, because women's enrollment in college continued to increase, the advocates of higher education for women could claim victory.

The Rhetorical Nature of Meta-Reception

In the case of *Sex in Education*, its initial reception, and the commentary on that reception, we can see that meta-reception—how the initial reception was received and interpreted—was used rhetorically. Meta-receptive comments were utilized to shape rhetorical situations and to serve rhetorical purposes at some remove from both Clarke's situation and purpose for publishing *Sex in Education* and his initial readers' situation and purpose for writing about, quoting, and referring to the book. Up to 25 years after its initial publication, advocates of women's education cited the reception of *Sex in Education* in a new context, not to refute Clarke directly, but to make different arguments in support of women's education and other rights. Where they first argued that women could safely pursue a college education, they later argued that because the issue of women's education had been resolved in their favor, the question of other rights and opportunities for women would soon be resolved in women's favor, too.

Other rhetorical contexts might rely on meta-reception for their arguments. As an everyday example, consider how a potential movie-goer might use reviewers' positive commentary on a film to persuade her friend to watch it with her. We might also think of meta-reception in an academic context: A scholar might publish a book that redefines a fundamental concept in her field, prompting her readers to re-think that concept. That process of collective re-thinking (occurring in the published reception—the reviews and the citations of the book) might later be characterized by someone meta-receptively as a breakthrough moment for the field, supporting an argument that the field has made a "turn." In this case, the writer arguing that the field has "turned" is selectively crafting a narrative: not everyone in the field will have read the book, and even among those who have, not everyone will have been persuaded by its redefinition. Finally, feminist historiographers who recover marginalized rhetors often engage in meta-reception, as they examine the immediate responses to speeches and texts in order to make claims about how and why a rhetor has been dismissed or erased. Meta-reception is rhetorical, used in contexts for purposes like making arguments and shaping worldviews. The process by which an initial message prompts reception, which opens an opportunity for a meta-receptive characterization of that reception, which is then deployed to support an argument, is outlined in Table 1, using these examples alongside of *Sex in Education*.

Original Message	Direct Reception	Meta-Reception	Arguments Supported by Meta-Receptive Characterization
Sex in Education	Refutations and support of Clarke's argument	Descriptions of the direct reception as a battle (early); descriptions of the direct reception as an "alarm" that is now obsolete (later)	Women are engaged in un-feminine rhetorical activity, and reform entails violence, therefore women's rights reforms are undesirable and dangerous (early); fears about the threats posed to women's health by education are in the past, and present-day acceptance of women's rights is assured (later)
Movie	Reviewers' positive and negative commentary on the film	Referring to positive reviews as evidence that the movie is worth watching	Because reviewers seem to agree that this is a good movie, you will enjoy it, so you should watch it with me
Book that redefines a central concept in an academic field	Collective re-thinking of that concept, based on the ideas presented in the book, appearing in reviews, presentations, books, and articles; adoption of or resistance to the new definition	Characterization of the uptake of the redefinition as a "breakthrough" for the field	The field has made a "turn" and so should develop new research questions and methods
Speech or text by a historically marginalized rhetor	Criticism, ridicule, and dismissal; alternatively, praise and acceptance	Depiction of negative initial feedback as reflecting prejudices and assumptions of the time; alternatively, description of positive initial feedback as evidence that the rhetor adapted effectively to the rhetorical situation	We should recover this rhetor because she was unfairly erased, either by her immediate contemporaries or by shifts in taste and values in the intervening years

Table 1. The Rhetorical Use of Meta-Reception

Importantly, the act of meta-reception is an interpretative act that serves rhetorical ends. As I have demonstrated, in the meta-reception of *Sex in Education*, references to the debate around Clarke's book were used to characterize the rhetorical situation as war-like, to cast women's rights advocates as unwomanly aggressors in that war, and, later, to craft a progress narrative for the history of the women's rights movement. These uses of meta-reception were selective representations of the direct reception of *Sex in Education* that served the writers' rhetorical purposes: describing the published reviews, articles, and books responding to Clarke's book as participants in a war may have excited readers and increased periodical sales; portraying the women who wrote those texts as vicious (or ineffective) combatants supported negative constructions of women's rights advocates; and declaring that the opposition to women's rights had been vanquished in the 1880s—simply because Clarke's thesis hadn't been widely accepted—was more wish than reality.

Meta-reception is a phenomenon that is related to circulation, public memory, rhetorical ecologies, and other concepts that foreground the dynamic and dispersed nature of much rhetorical activity. Meta-reception illuminates the ways that rhetorical effects can far exceed a specific context and purpose, and it demonstrates that analysis focused on a supposedly independent rhetor's choices is insufficient to account for the collective

efforts by which rhetoric often shapes or maintains worldviews that support or resist social change. As an analytical tool, meta-reception can also help us trace how arguments change over time as the material and social context evolves, how "old" arguments maintain their relevance in "new" contexts, how "old" arguments might be used as a shortcut for dismissing related arguments, or how supposedly resolved debates continue to influence how rhetors interpret and react to current controversies. Although this study of the meta-reception of *Sex in Education* is relatively limited in place and time, the scope for meta-reception could be quite large, engaging in what Deborah Hawhee and Christa J. Olson call "pan-historiography," which describes "studies that leap across geographic space, tracking important activities, terms, movements, or practices as they travel with trade, with global expansion, or with religious zealotry" (90). Meta-reception, therefore, presents an opportunity to think beyond the model of the supposedly autonomous rhetor persuading an audience to instead consider how variously positioned audiences-turned-rhetors interpret, revise, and redeploy rhetorical acts as they contribute to the dynamic, multifaceted, and evolving processes of shaping rhetorical effects.

Biography

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Relaxing in the Margins: Using Black Feminist Pedagogy with Black Student-Athletes to Challenge AI Compliance and Protect Black Voices in First-Year Writing

Kelly Franklin and Randy Reece

Abstract: In this article, the authors confront AI usage through multiple lenses: Black student athletes' use of Black English alongside a PWI's enforcement of agreed-upon standards established by a white, hegemonic first year writing program that excludes Black rhetorical traditions. Working together in a tutor/student relationship, neither party can truly relax; but the authors subvert power and collaborate as two scholars from the margins disrupting assumed white authority. Within this PWI's structure, Black Feminist Pedagogy serves as a lynchpin—not only for the students' writing, but also for teaching approaches that more effectively bridge the critical gaps left exposed in Black student-athletes' first-year writing instruction. The article concludes with an insistence that the margins will never hold the talent that awakens when Black student athletes' energy is effectively harnessed. Student athletes can be dawgs on the field and in the classroom when they work alongside Black feminist pedagogues.

Keywords: Black Feminist Pedagogy, First Year Writing, Black Student Athletes, Black language liberation, White Supremacy, AI/ChatGPT

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"I Gotta Be Me"—*Notes from a Black Feminist*

My 11-year-old son, Adam, recently started playing tackle football. By some standards, he could be considered a late bloomer, but I needed time to get used to the idea of him getting hit versus playing with flags. Adam is tall, lean, athletic, and well-built for sports.[1] He also has beautiful hair. No matter what I say, he's going to play football because, like many Black boys, he imagines a future in sports. I specifically asked Adam how he feels when he's on the field. He said, "Sometimes I feel nervous, but when I play more, I feel more relaxed." His words made me pause because in many cases, this also applies to life. Sometimes we're nervous, but as we play more, we feel more relaxed.

My role as a "literacy specialist" at a predominantly white institution (PWI) in the American South frequently made me nervous, unable to fully relax. I was hired to work with student athletes and close their "literacy gaps" since some had "low reading levels" determined by the PWI's testing measures that I often—and still do—question.[2] As their literacy specialist, I followed departmental guidelines to help students complete their tasks and assignments. I was highly skilled because I carried a master's degree and was a doctoral student in English rhetoric and composition at another PWI in the same city. Managing this labor was challenging, and the country miles between work, home, and the two PWIs were too many to count. However, I quickly realized my need to affirm the students' literacies because I was co-creating a Black feminist rhetoric with Black student athletes—one that dignified their speech and reimagined learning in ways that resisted the status quo.

1 Name has been changed for the sake of anonymity

2 "Baa, Baa, Black Sheep, Where my Dawgs at?" Implementing an Anti-Racist Pedagogy as a Literacy Specialist with Student Athletes" Under Review

Like Adam, I often felt nervous because the athletes' stakes were high, and they needed to remain academically eligible to sustain their positions on the team. I couldn't relax when I was heavily surveilled by white colleagues who questioned my competence. I couldn't relax when the coaches had made substantial financial investments in these players and needed a guaranteed return. The summer months were crucial because their grades needed to be high enough to make up for and/or replace any failed classes from previous semesters. I couldn't even relax into a summer dress code because the department suddenly enforced a policy prohibiting non-university-affiliated t-shirts. This meant my shirts touting names like bell hooks, Opal Lee, and James Baldwin were punishable offenses. Meanwhile, my doctoral program had its own demands and required my conference participation, publications, and examinations in exchange for its investment in me. But most importantly, Adam and his siblings needed a mother who was unbroken, emotionally present, and able to meet the needs of her children. Relaxing wasn't part of my pedagogy when pressure arrived from every direction. Black women are rarely afforded the luxury to relax, especially when we navigate multiple environments that require our relentless labor. Therefore, I use the phrase "relax" to highlight its subversive nature: relaxing is a privilege routinely denied to Black women, Black students, and even Black scholars, but remains an optional gesture for white teachers who firmly plant themselves in racialized power.

As a football player, my student, Randy, couldn't relax when he needed to stay active on the roster and prove his value to the team. Passing classes wasn't Randy's primary concern, even though he was a good student. Early morning lifts, practices, meetings, and facing the demands of his sport ordered his days. He was a paragon of intensity, incapable of relaxing due to his unwavering love for his beloved game. Securing his spot on the team met the minimum standard, but he still had to outperform other players in his same position and outshine his competition. Surviving this PWI pressure cooker for both of us brought heat and smoke from all directions. But I trusted my ethos as a Black feminist teacher and scholar who was anchored in unapologetic Black love. As we both stayed rooted in our shared identity, we found fleeting moments to relax.

I've previously theorized about my role as an anti-racist healer, radical thinker, and truth teller.[3] The young men I worked with were not my own sons, but as a Black feminist, they were my sisters' kids who needed to be treated with care. I saw them as simply older and bigger versions of Adam. But I grew tired of watching first-year writing teachers miss the mark with the students on my caseload and refused to relax my pedagogy when white systemic standards anchored course syllabi. Therefore, I write this article alongside Randy, who was also tired of white-language ideologies that refused his self-expression and creativity. Randy was a restless artist with an uncultivated art form who described his FYW teachers as "janky." I use this writing to show how my Black feminist pedagogy became a critical framework when Randy was tasked to write his final paper in his first-year writing class. Cynthia B. Dillard advocates for the necessity of this praxis when engaging the "ways, words, and understandings of younger Black people, especially those who have something profound and necessary to say to fields of education" (19). With Randy's profound and necessary understanding of education, our collaboration allows us to clap back against institutionalized white dominance and reclaim our final words.

3 "Baa, Baa, Black Sheep, Where my Dawgs at?" Implementing an Anti-Racist Pedagogy as a Literacy Specialist with Student Athletes" – Under Review

Randy and I worked closely together to meet his white instructor's bland, unremarkable pedagogy. Too many teachers uphold whitewashed curricula and rubrics, thinking these approaches are the most productive way to learn. Randy and I both disagreed and decided to pop off.[4] His pop off, titled, "I Can't Be Me," appears after I explain his summer course dynamics, his instructor, and our collective efforts with his final project. I hope our pop off proves not only the need for more voices like Randy's in first-year writing spaces, but also shows the beauty and brilliance that exists in Black student athletes when their energy is not just witnessed, but also harnessed. According to Dillard, these collaborations remain "absolutely essential to imagining a future that is worthy of Black engagement and brilliance" (19). Moreover, our writing can prove the need for FYW teachers to relax their rubrics and reimagine written English in more inclusive ways.

Randy comes from the "trenches," and wears the knowledge of the streets on his chest. But in FYW classes, he is silenced and treated like his Black language is a problem needing to be fixed, as is the case for many Black students and Black student athletes at PWIs. Randy and I were paired together because Randy had been out of school for one year prior to his spring semester arrival, and his academic counselor wanted to ensure that he had adequate support. Upon arrival, Randy came face to face with college football's racial, Ivy League, historical roots, and was now playing his sport in a space initially imagined for upper-class white men (Canada 17). Acknowledging the origins of college football is important in the present moment because Black football players do not neatly fit within its original framework of masculinity, honor, white nationalism, and racial exclusion, as described by Tracie Canada (17). The principals they fail to meet as "white gentlemen who were expected to understand their work in relation to their college and their nation" (17) are made especially clear when they speak in Black English.

Randy and his teammates contribute to a college football apparatus that generates billions of dollars, but in writing classes, they are silenced due to their speech patterns and punished even further by the academic support infrastructure. Just as my wardrobe choices were surveilled, so, too, were Randy and his teammates when they missed appointments with me. Their absences would result in fines, physical punishment from their coaches, or loss of playing time—all of which further complicated my position. Although Randy and I worked well together, many Black football players are treated like outsiders under constant scrutiny and oversight from the very departments where they should be able to relax. Victor E. Ray explains how universities have always been structured by racial inequality, insisting that "racial inequality is a bedrock principle of the American educational system. White educational opportunity has been premised on the exclusion of people of color" (92). In other words, universities have consistently omitted Black students from historic, educational narratives, while Randy and his teammates were only imagined in narrow ways.

Too often, colonized educators refuse to relax and instead uphold a white racial order that denies students of color their intellectual freedom. As Asao B. Inoue explains, "we live, learn, and teach not simply in the racist ruins of bygone eras but in schools and disciplines firmly built and ever maintained by white supremacy" (373). The fact that we are working in an educational system governed by white supremacy is undeniable. And yet, here come Randy and his teammates, ruffling the pale feathers of the FYW teachers who

4 "Poppin' Off at the Mouth: Reimagining First Year Writing Classes for Black Student Athletes and Black Graduate Students" – Under review

clutch their pearls, purses, and rubrics. Randy's writing undermines white hegemonic moves toward an era of conventions and standardization. In fact, Randy and his teammates uphold linguistic practices that violently shake, upset, and disrupt the legacy of white standardized language norms propagated throughout university systems writ large. When Randy and his peers' indifference to white comfort destabilizes the bedrock of a private institution that refused to imagine students of color in the first place, white women can no longer relax in their assumed authority, and the problem must be contained.

Randy's FYW instructor's solution was not unusual. Her standards followed those of the entire department: a rubric that enforced white codes. All his papers were expected to demonstrate "proper" use of grammar, mechanics, diction, syntax, vocabulary, spelling, and punctuation. These are categories that never fare well for Black students, and we frequently had to comb through their papers to anticipate and prevent severe grading penalties. This professor's rubric also forces students to consider their audience, one understood to be white by default. To that end, Carmen Kynard identifies how audience functions as "a terministic screen for whiteness and the excuse white folx give to never unravel their preferred Western conventions or not challenge their own need to be centered in a conversation" (carmenkynard.org). Randy could never relax as a writer when he was expected to center his teacher's "Western conventions." Use of Black language will never work for Randy's professor or any other FYW instructor at this PWI because Black discourse rests too far outside the archipelago of their standardized requirements.

To create even more estrangement, Randy's instructor's rubric adhered to the English department definition of "Standard Written English" as "the generally agreed-upon set of grammatical syntactic, punctuation, and spelling patterns found in published expository writing in English."[5] But these so-called "agreed-upon" standards, ones that Randy and his peers clearly disregard, must be called into question. Those who agreed upon the standards favored a set of rules and conventions established by a Eurocentric playbook that eliminates all other critical voices. Moreover, the phrase "published expository writing in English" discredits every Black writer who has published using Black discourse. Black cultural scholars such as Geneva Smitherman, H. Samy Alim, Gwendolyn Pough, April Baker-Bell, Elaine Richardson and countless others have collectively written against white racialized hierarchies that seek to devalue and delegitimize Black language. Scholarship by Jonathan Rosa and Nelson Flores detail ways racialized subjects' language practices are viewed as inherently deficient. Meanwhile, Richardson describes "blackademic literacy" as African American language and literacy traditions that move beyond surface level syntax, phonology, vocabulary, etc. into speech acts, nonverbal behavior, and cultural production (162-163). Broadening this framework, Kynard describes "vernacular insurrections" as moments when speech acts become counterhegemonic and wield their own power using language, identity, political methodology and social understandings formed in communities (10-11). Despite the critical mass of robust, intellectually rigorous, and culturally grounded scholarship that legitimizes Black language practices and proves its value within the academy (and beyond), the "agreed-upon" definition of "Standard Written English" propped up Randy's course and the department as a whole.

Sociolinguists have long ago denied the validity of a standard American English, while Alim and Smitherman emphasize challenging its hegemony. Students must be encouraged to ask more questions and imag-

5 Introduction to Academic Writing Assessment Rubric from this PWI's Common Curriculum

ine new linguistic possibilities that dismantle the power structures sustaining both standardized English and, by extension, whiteness. Rejecting the existence and value of these scholars not only deepens the divide between Randy and his instructor, but also further complicates the labyrinth of white logic he is expected to navigate. Furthermore, just as Randy was banished to the margins, left isolated in the classroom, and expected to demonstrate mastery of a language he cared little for, the scholars whose work would have offered a more inclusive and effective foundation for his teacher's pedagogy were never even mentioned. Relaxing was impossible for Randy when his writing instructor anchored her class in systemic injustice and Eurocentric standards, and Randy knew his Blackness was being judged.

After Randy wrote his first two papers on AI—the theme of his instructor's online summer class—we were both fatigued. His teacher wanted students to be forthcoming about their personal relationships with AI, with each essay centered around AI in general, ChatGPT, and its family members, but students also needed to discuss the drawbacks of AI resources. Her goal was for students to discuss ways they could establish a healthier and productive relationship with AI and its relatives. To appease his teacher, Randy admitted to using AI when he needed concepts simplified or when he was introduced to unfamiliar material he was expected to quickly master since he didn't bring the private school background many of his classmates carried. I often wondered "What could be healthier than using AI as a learning tool?" Once we started brainstorming Randy's final paper—a culminating project discussing the value and limitations of ChatGPT while also including AI in the essay—I suggested he write about how AI becomes a survival strategy for Black students in a PWI where they are required to write in standard written English.

Randy was also expected to include required readings such as *Mastermind: How to think like Sherlock Holmes* by Maria Konnikova, another repeat offender the student athletes had little interest in getting to know. He could also include his engagement with the film *Coded Bias* from a previous paper, but Randy's voice had to always remain consistent; otherwise, his instructor would question the authenticity of his writing if it sounded too "perfect." Any actual use of AI was restricted to a paragraph and had to be included in quotes. Randy had to once again acknowledge the drawbacks of AI and discuss existing problems with Large Language Models, (LLMs) to demonstrate his critical engagement with both sides of his argument. Finally, Randy had to adhere to his instructor's preferred Western conventions to meet her agreed-upon standards of written English, as well as include scholarship from academic sources to help support his claims.

Despite his instructor's strict guidelines, Randy was excited and ready to relax with a topic he could easily pop off about—but I was nervous. As a football player, Randy must remain academically eligible to remain on the team and sustain his scholarship. If this white woman felt Randy didn't adhere to the agreed-upon rubric, she could fail his paper, or worse: fail him in the course. As Kristiana L. Baez and Ersula Ore explain, troubling whiteness "always comes at a cost" (334), and jeopardizing Randy's academic standing was not in my job description. With this high of a price tag, relaxing was impossible. But I had agreed upon my own standards that differed from the FYW teachers I'd observed in the department. My Black Feminist pedagogy introduced him to another team—one filled with scholars who could support our vision and validate his voice. As I listened to his language refuse boundaries and reject systemic whiteness from within my office,

the sound of him shaking the margins made me nervous, but my vow to the culture was unwavering. Randy's intensity with these Black writers eased my nerves because he had something meaningful to say.

Recognizing our shared politics and encouraging Randy to pop off became my form of activism. I was mothering Randy's mind using Black Feminist pedagogy in the same tradition Patricia Hill Collins describes as a vital relationship that develops between "African American women teachers and their Black female and male students" (247). Once Randy's mind was awakened, he spoke truth to white hegemonic power. Black Feminist pedagogy is rooted in truth and freedom, both of which we were collectively seeking in that moment. Truth-telling is easy for Randy because he raps with his brother and drops verses at any given moment to prove his rhetorical skills. In fact, he is best described as a linguistic maven who could teach me a thing or two about language (2020 CCCC Conference).

But his FYW papers had only quelled his language sophistication and his instructor punished his techniques. She wrote comments like, "the biggest issue I had with this paper was the grammar, run ons, and amount of errors that don't really look like a final paper." She failed to acknowledge his ideas and content and refused any possibility for revision. We realized the need to attend to his grammar before submitting his work, but I was behind closed doors explaining how Black students are too often forced to code switch. My pedagogy deconstructed ways white supremacy would have us believe our grammar is incorrect, but we must refuse a status quo that upholds systemic whiteness. My resistance to Randy's FYW teacher is best described by Lisa A. Flores's scholarship. Flores explains how scholars of color are tired and "drained by the endless expectations that we perform whiteness and the persistent scolding when we inevitably fail at those performances" (350). I, too, was indicted in Randy's feedback due to the "amount of errors" Randy's final paper allegedly possessed, and we both endured his teacher's persistent scolding. Scholars of color can never relax when the expectations of a white performance remain nipping at our heels.

Teaching Randy to perform whiteness in his papers was an impossible task for this Black feminist, and I refused to relax into Eurocentric ideals that did us little favors. Teaching Randy grammar rules would leave me depleted, so my Black feminist activism became more important. I had watched Randy and his teammates whitewash countless papers, attempting to solve a problem that wasn't theirs to fix. Black students should not have to manufacture white-sounding papers at the expense of their cultural authenticity. His teacher outright refused to imagine the course outside her lens of whiteness, relying instead on a course description with generic language found in most first-year writing courses: "Students learn to analyze arguments by employing higher-order critical thinking skills: identifying sound versus faulty premises, detecting logical fallacies, evaluating conclusions, assessing sources, and becoming information literate." Randy's teacher chose willful ignorance by refusing Black literacies, dismissing Black scholars, and failing to recognize her own logical fallacies. When students engage in critical thinking within a space that affirms their linguistic identities, they are fully capable of meeting—and often exceeding—the goals of the course. Constantly punishing students for using their own linguistic variations rests on a faulty premise–one that assumes academic excellence can only be achieved through the university's agreed-upon definition of standard written English. While scholars such as Lisa Delpit and Christopher Emdin work to dispel myths that Black students are innately inferior and less capable, Randy's instructor relaxes in a white imaginary that lives in a false reality.

Linguistic freedom must exist in FYW courses, especially for student athletes arriving at PWIs with a cultural historiography that celebrates their Blackness. The football fields that nurtured them were the antithesis of first-year writing courses. Football is a space where they learn black modes of discourse through call-response, signification, and other categorizations theorized by Geneva Smitherman in *Talkin and Testifyin: The Language of Black America.* Football taught Randy codes he was expected to switch upon arrival to this PWI, but we both resisted. Randy and I knew language outside of white hegemonic dogma that refused our cultural expression. Meanwhile, Adam was also learning football rhetoric that forced him to relax white standardized English and answer a critical question every week on game day: "Who Got Yo' Back?!" Before charging the field to attack their opponents, Adam and his teammates would scream: "I Got Yo' Back!" Football as a cultural discourse community was one Randy had mastered alongside Black language, and his multilingualism was punished by his white instructor's rubric that held his freedom of expression hostage. Her comments made clear she did not have his back—and never would—with such a culturally punitive rubric.

As Randy emphasizes in his essay, he couldn't be himself as a writer. The solution for Randy and his teammates is AI resources that allow them to write in ways their professors require. In "For the Culture Pedagogy: I'm Starting with the Woman in the Mirror,"[6] I ask, "What if first-year writing classes offered [a] fugitive writing space where they could pull from their own archives instead of generating countless essays that only advance settler colonizing logics?" I refuse to relax my questions and remain critical of teachers who choose cultural incompetence because I know other possibilities exist for FYW classes, including Randy's. While Randy felt pressured to produce white sounding papers, his relationship with his FYW instructors remained tenuous because like many Black students, he valued his native language. This timeless dilemma is one that Gloria Ladson-Billings discusses in *Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: Asking a Different Question*. She insists that culturally relevant pedagogy must give students ways to "maintain their cultural integrity while succeeding academically" (27). When professors refuse these pedagogical approaches, students like Randy can slip into an AI world that will meet his professors' demands since Randy's linguistic abilities are disregarded. Randy knows the beauty of his authentic language as well as the options ChatGPT and its relatives present. If a convenient program can mask Randy's language that continues to face punishment, at least he can relax knowing there is an alternative LLM to ensure his papers fit the agreed-upon standards. ChatGPT can do the work Randy resists.

Fortunately, scholars like Adam Banks and his all-Black team refuse to relax their academic pursuits and are expanding the discourse around Black rhetorics and LLMs to dignify Black languages and literacies. Banks' scholarship would have been a valuable addition to Randy's AI course, but Randy's instructor was steadfast. She dismissed all possibilities of relaxing her rubric, denied Black scholars entry to her syllabus, and ignored inclusive innovations in BlackGPT that Randy would have appreciated. Nonetheless, Banks offers solutions to the AI dilemma Randy's department was battling, writing:[7]

6 "For the Culture Pedagogy: I'm Starting with the Woman in the Mirror" Forthcoming: Writer's Craft and Context, July 2025.

7 "Black GPT: Interview with Harriett Jernigan and Adam Banks."

> There are educational possibilities. As we discover more ways to incorporate LLMs into our classroom settings, we will see how something like BlackGPT can be used to complement creativity, scholarship, research, and communication. One of the things I think is most important is the centering of Black Englishes, Black rhetorics, Black rhetorical practices and culture. I think this is the kind of representation our students need, our society needs. This is the kind of work that can do things like instill a sense of pride among Black people who have been told most of their lives that their language is not on par with the dominant culture's standard dialects. ("BlackGPT")

Banks is advocating for BlackGPT to function alongside and on par with other LLMs so students like Randy don't feel the need to assimilate, code switch, and eventually glitch. Randy and his teammates take pride in their linguistic talents and should be affirmed; sadly, they are punished, devalued, silenced, and denied opportunities to use their home language. Centering Black English, Black rhetoric, and Black culture decenters whiteness and demands a reckoning with Eurocentric values that leave white women like Randy's teacher quivering in their Southern boots. But when Opal Lee—the Grandmother of Juneteenth—gets banned from my chest, Banks and his award-winning research have no chance of appearing on this woman's syllabus because institutionalized white dominance remains consistent. This is both a pedagogical problem and an ideological issue that Randy alone cannot resolve. ChatGPT functions as a blanket for Randy and his teammates to cover their writing so white women instructors can relax, but when he wants to pop off in his native tongue, Randy reclines with the quilts of Black feminist pedagogy. These pearls of wisdom got his back.

Although Randy's teacher and I agreed Randy's essay should be published because the voices of Black student-athletes are not often heard, she dropped the proverbial ball he had launched in her direction. AI has become an existential crisis for many schools and universities across the nation; his teacher could not deny the importance of this conversation, especially coming from a football player who spoke his truth. But her words were hollow, made empty by her resistance. She thought she possessed a cosmopolitan understanding of the topic, but omitting Black scholars who legitimize Black rhetorical traditions and depending on Sherlock Holmes to advance her pedagogy prove her inability to adequately address an issue so in vogue. Randy's instructor and her colleagues complain about students' use of AI, but when a Black male student speaks openly and honestly about the utility of online support for students like him, she moves the goalposts and blocks his opportunity to score.

Black feminist pedagogy becomes even more necessary when professors fail to articulate clear strategies for students to take their writing to the next level and refuse to affirm–or even acknowledge–students' linguistic differences. Randy's paper emphasizes: "Teachers and administrators may lack training in recognizing and respecting linguistic diversity, leading to a failure to accommodate and validate AAVE speakers." Again, this disconnection isn't Randy's to repair, nor can the burden of reconstruction rest on my back. His grade on his paper didn't reflect his effort, but I refused the weight of translating her whiteness. Besides, Randy's original descriptor of janky was close enough. If his essay was worth publishing, why didn't he earn an A? Or did publishing according to her agreed-upon standards first require a more gossamer cloth to erase his unmistakable disgust with a system that denies his linguistic freedom and identifies his instructor's deficiencies? Rationalizing her thoughts is an intellectual effort beyond my capacity to pursue, so I am instead choosing to share our collective truths as a Black male and a Black Feminist. I intercepted where Randy's white

instructor fumbled and suggested to Randy that him and I write together—not as his "literacy specialist," but as two scholars from two PWIs with intention to unsettle the margins. If Randy can rhyme with his brother, he could flow with me. Randy's essay, "I Can't Be Me," provides a glimpse into his experiences as a young, gifted, Black student navigating the legacy of a PWI that punishes Black males and their speech patterns. The featured section appears below in Randy's own words and illustrates his critical negotiations with language, identity, institutional standards, and AI usage.

"I Can't Be Me"

As a young black male that grew up in the trenches, I never would've thought coming to college would make me have to change who I am. Coming to *** taught me being me, aka being Black, ain't good enough. Where I'm from, people would die to be in my shoes until they see you gotta play the white man's game to be who you wanna be. In this project I intend to explore how ChatGPT succeeds at white washing essays by students of color like me. When using AI and/or ChatGPT, we might meet the rubric criteria, but our creative language and expression gets hijacked and our authentic voices are muted.

Before addressing how ChatGPT becomes the solution to writing in standardized English, we must first recognize what is Black language? Many think Black language is ghetto, uneducated, and lastly, improper grammar. These generalizations are often supported by feeble and inadequate reasoning (Moore & Parker, 207). However, according to *Linguistic Justice: Black Language, Literacy, Identity, and Pedagogy*, April Baker- Bell writes, "Black language is also the native language and rich linguistic resources that so many Black children bring into classrooms every day" (13). In other words, Baker-Bell is saying Black language is a way to bring character to the class because Black language is powerful. Black language is unique because it's something that can't be taught. Baker-Bell also points out how Black language "gets appropriated, exploited, and colonized" (13). She talks about how it's okay to use Black language in commercials, tv shows, or even advertising it on clothes and merchandise, but all hell breaks loose when a Black student tries to use his or her form of speech in a classroom. Therefore, ChatGpt becomes our best friend once we step into a PWI, because ChatGpt helps us speak in standardized English.

Once Black students arrive at PWIs, our black language gets muted when we write against these white-washed rubrics. As a Black student at a PWI, when I write, I am frequently penalized for the same things: grammar, syntax, punctuation, and mechanics. However, Black language is unique, so why change something so rare and precious just to fit a rubric? Arriving in college and learning a new language is difficult. I'm not saying it's an impossible task, but it will take time. When writing teachers force Black students that speak Black English to meet specific rubric criteria, they're asking students to not only stop being who we are, but to step into a world of white language we aren't used to. This takes away our personalities and creates a standard for our essays to sound the same. In "When Robots Come Home to Roost: The Differing Fates of Black Language, Hyper-Standardization, and White Robotic School Writing (Yes, ChatGPT and His AI Cousins)," Carmen Kynard writes, "students should not look and sound identical to one another and peers across the country" (carmenkynard.org). In other words, just because darker skinned students attend a PWI doesn't mean we have to sound like everyone that attends the school. If you ask me, ChatGPT is our best friend

because it's the only source that can help us meet a PWI's standards since they say Black language isn't good enough. If teachers don't allow Black language, students will start becoming dependent on AI.

When using AI and/or ChatGPT, we might meet the rubric criteria, but our creative language and expression gets hijacked. In "Classroom Writing Assessment as an Antiracist Practice: Confronting White Supremacy in the Judgments of Language" Asao B. Inoue writes "writing assessments are ecologies in which we can— and perhaps should always—explore the nature of judgment itself as an intersectional racialized discourse" (375). Inoue is saying rubrics create environments that are judgmental and reject students' multiple intersections. Teachers may not understand the different environments their students come from and for damn sure don't understand our language. Therefore, we have to resort to AI in order to meet a standard that's often impossible for us to reach due to the many factors working against us. Having students read about Sherlock Holmes when we don't even know who he is is a logical fallacy. What I mean by this is how am I supposed to connect with somebody I don't even know? And if students like me don't even know who he is, we won't understand the value of reading like Sherlock Holmes. I can't speak my home language, but I am supposed to think like some stranger? This is part of the ecological problem Inoue is challenging when he talks about writing assessments and the way we are judged.

If teachers keep having problems with Black language then we should be allowed to keep AI in the conversation to help us meet their standard. When I asked ChatGPT why isn't Black language recognized at PWIs, some of the reasons were: Linguistic Bias, Cultural Hegemony, Educational Policies, Social and Economic Implications, and lastly, Language Ideologies. But the main one that stuck out to me was Educational Policies. Chat GPT stated "Official policies within educational institutions may not acknowledge or support the use of AAVE. Teachers and administrators may lack training in recognizing and respecting linguistic diversity, leading to a failure to accommodate and validate AAVE speakers." I understand white teachers don't often hear or come across Black language, but once they do, they feel as if it's ghetto, uneducated, etc. Black students have to mute their creativity, and even Chat GPT itself can answer why Black language continues to be unrecognizable in PWIs when the teachers themselves cannot.

However, ChatGPT does still have its biases that we can at least acknowledge. In "ChatGPT Can Be Kind of Racist Based on how People Speak, Researchers Say" AI models are covertly racist when it comes to Black English. This article is pointing out important biases that AI is pairing people that speak Black English with jobs that don't require a university degree (Serrano). The article also says, "They found that the LLMs chose to sentence people who spoke African American English to death at a higher rate than people who spoke Standard American English" (Serrano). This is saying AI is still run by people with their own beliefs. This leads me to believe that teachers aren't the only ones that see Black language as inferior. In other words, AI has the potential to be just as racist as writing teachers who uphold rubric standards that Asao Inoue talks about. Black students are being judged in all directions.

I can't be the only one that feels rubrics attack Black language and force us to use ChatGPT to meet the status quo. Why can't we be accepted for who we are? We stay up late at night stressing over essays all due to teachers not letting us be free. Students of color arrive at PWIs expecting to sound and write white. The

film *Coded Bias* (2020) explores the implications of artificial intelligence (AI) and its embedded biases when white faces are paired against Black ones. In the film, Joy Buolamwini researched at MIT that AI technology is based on facial recognition software, but it did not work for darker skinned faces. Her research discoveries make me think about how students of color use AI technology to whitewash our assignments. In the film, another researcher, Cathy O'Neal, stated "what worries me the most about AI or whatever you want to call it- algorithms- is power, because it's really all about who owns the fucking code" (09:20-25).What she is speaking towards is no matter what we put into ChatGPT or AI there is still a human programmer who brings their bias. When using AI and/or ChatGPT, we might meet the rubric criteria, but our creative language and expression gets hijacked, and our authentic voices are muted because we don't own the code. It's like being caged birds that don't have freedom of speech. How can we really see if writing is our thing or if we actually like it?

Teachers use the same rubrics and want us to meet the same standard without ever thinking about our language. Now I ain't no expert or nothing, but paying ninety thousand dollars a year just to get told to follow one rubric's way of writing and not be able to put what I know or things I want to know on paper sounds like a scam to me. Then, when students like me come across a helpful tool like AI or ChatGPT that can whitewash our papers, we get punished. How I see it is that AI has taught me more than a teacher on a college campus has ever taught me. Instead of taking AI away, maybe teachers should try letting us be ourselves. Just like Buolamwini said black faces needed white masks to be recognizable by AI software, black students are putting white masks on our papers in order for them to be acceptable. How is that going to help me in the real world? The only thing putting a white mask on my papers teaches me to do is this: in order for me to be successful in this world as a young Black man, I can't be me.

"Not Like Us"—*Reclaiming our Last Words*

We tried to relax in the margins. When we listened to Nipsey Hustle while editing his papers, my office door remained closed. I introduced him to other Black feminist scholars like April Baker-Bell and Carmen Kynard because their pedagogies had become my compass in the academy. Baker-Bell described the racism associated with Black language in terms Randy valued, and Kynard's authenticity reminded us both to stay unapologetically Black in predominately white spaces. Randy was still in the trenches, only the setting had changed. Despite the manicured gardens, sculptures, fountains, and pristine buildings, he was scored at the bottom of a cultural rubric that denied his intellectual curiosity and most authentic voice. Randy's statement in his paper, "Black students are being judged in all directions" speaks to his awareness that he is surveilled and evaluated at every corner of the university. He could never fully relax under the white gaze, but Randy's commitment to the truth met my own. I operated from within my windowless office that locked in our collective vision of Black academic excellence. Adam Banks celebrates the griots in African American culture: storytellers, preachers, DJs, and rappers like Randy who effortlessly drop bars when they clap back in the streets. Banks insists that harnessing the griot talent offers a framework towards seeing writing "as serving local communities as well as the official purposes we assign writing in schools and workplaces" (161). Similarly, Elaine Richardson demands "concentrated effort to explore Black discourses and language styles" (22). When FYW teachers tap into new visions that offer Randy and his teammates opportunities to pop off rhetorically

and speak their collective truths, university stakeholders will no longer question the written performance of Black student athletes. Instead of punishing the artist for not following systemic white agreed-upon codes, we must recognize his rhetorical ability, honor his cultural practices, and advance the talents that rest in the DNA of all Black students because we wear a wealth of knowledge on our chests.

But I was not completely innocent. My ability to perform white writing secured my two positions in two PWIs so I could financially support my family. As Flores explains, "for all that we resist whiteness, we participate in it" (352). I, too, was tethered to an apparatus that upheld whiteness while I navigated Randy's need to pass his FYW class. Flores insists on inclusion, and Randy's voice is critical to the cultural milieu if we are going to expand the PWI landscape that refuses to relax its white academic standards. As a Black male, Randy brings currency to a bankrupt space, one so desperately in need of his perspective. But Randy's essay would not exist without my labor. Writing together as a Black feminist and womanist alongside a Black student athlete prove our combined capital. Randy taught me our value increases when we collaborate, combine forces, and align our efforts to collectively resist institutionalized white dominance. His white instructor thought she had the last word after she graded his final paper, but we reclaim our voices, redeem our worth, and redress our wrongs when our words slide through gatekeepers and refuse to remain silenced. In fact, I can finally relax knowing the lesson Randy is learning through our partnership that further legitimizes his true written talents. Randy remains a lyrical maven who can be a dawg[8] on the field and in the classroom.

The college sports industrial complex is a multi-billion-dollar industry and capitalist venture, operating on a "conveyor belt" as theorized by William Rhoden in *Forty Million Dollar Slaves*. Although Adam aspires to reach Randy's position one day, too many of these student athletes are recognized on the field but shipwrecked in their classrooms. In *Sula*, Toni Morrison's narrator describes Sula as dangerous because she is an "artist with no art form" (121). Morrison writes, "had she anything to engage her tremendous curiosity and her gift for metaphor, she might have exchanged the restlessness and preoccupation with whim for an activity that provided her with all she yearned for" (121). When Black student-athletes in FYW classes write tired essay after tired essay in standardized English, their curiosity remains untapped and they're never able to relax. They become restless artists with an uncultivated art form. Randy isn't the only lyrical maven who likes to write. Many of the student-athletes in FYW courses carry a "gift for metaphor," but their giftedness remains lost at sea. When the Black student-athletes arrive at this PWI, they are greeted by biased Eurocentric assessments, colonized rubrics, and white supremacist agreed-upon standards that quell their "tremendous curiosity" and engagement in the classroom. White supremacy insists on further drowning the lyrical talents they are dying to express, but this Black feminist resurrects possibilities for every "Randy" in the academy and refuses his white female instructor's final words.

Fortunately, Black student athletes and Black feminists who work alongside them are disrupting the margins and shaking the university's foundation. The more we write, the more we relax into truths we clutch, stand on, and protect. But we remain dissatisfied with white supremacist logics, rubrics, conventions, and pedagogies that deny our individuality, creative freedoms, and refuse our gifts. Our collective rhetoric and activism are always necessary so that others walking in these spaces can see alternate frameworks that respect

8 In football discourse, a "dawg" is a player who is aggressive, determined, unafraid, and ready to attack his opponent.

the artists and our streets. The margins are exploding with endless talent that students like us bring to the university. April Baker-Bell calls for an education system where "Black students, their language, their literacies, their culture, their creativity, their joy, their imagination, their brilliance, their freedom, their existence, their resistance MATTERS" (3). When Black students and all we embody become centered in classroom spaces, Randy can be himself without AI resources, and Black feminist pedagogues who exist alongside him in the margins can relax with a vision towards freedom.

Dedication

This project is for every teacher who ever said our language wouldn't amount to nuthin'. These lyrical birds are now free! Randy, working with you made my purpose clear. You and your teammates have my deepest gratitude.

Biography

Kelly Franklin is a Doctoral Candidate at Texas Christian University in English Rhetoric and Composition. After earning a degree in American Literature from UCLA, Kelly later earned a master's degree in English literature from Boise State University. Her work centers Black Feminist Pedagogy, Black Student Athletes and first year writing.

Randy Reece is a sophomore at East Texas A & M University, where he is majoring in film and playing as wide receiver on the football team. Randy is a native of Dallas, Texas and graduate of South Oak Cliff High School.

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"The rapist is you!": Remixing the Repertoire of Protest Performances

Stephanie A. Leow

Abstract: Originating in Valparaíso, Chile, "Un violador en tu camino" / "A Rapist in Your Path" is a protest performance against systemic gendered violence. It has been rendered over 446 times in 54 countries, and recordings of the protest have gained millions of views on social media platforms. "Performance"—as a theory, methodology, and metaphor—offers a lens to study this Latin American transnational feminist movement. This essay bridges rhetorical studies with Latin American performance studies to explore how "Un violador en tu camino" creates collective memory through embodiment in its various remixes. In this article, I describe and apply Diana Taylor's theory of performance to study "Un violador en tu camino" through three remixes: a popular rendition of the performance in Mexico City, an X (formerly Twitter) trend based on the performance's lyrics, and a viral parody of the performance. I further demonstrate how performance theory serves as a methodology to study the rhetorical circulation of protests. Studying feminist protests as performances helps us understand (1) historically situated and embodied transmissions of knowledges and (2) the entangled and remixed circulation between digital and physical publics, or in Taylor's terms, the "archive" and the "repertoire."

Keywords: transnational feminism, Latin American feminism, performance, protest, social movement, rhetorical circulation, iconographic tracking

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Introduction

On November 20, 2019, twenty women gathered in Plaza Aníbal Pinto in downtown Valparaíso, Chile. The group was led by LASTESIS, a feminist organization of Chilean artists. They began to disrupt the space, as they chanted in unison, marched in place, and swayed their shoulders. At the climax of their performance, they pointed forward and indicted: "The rapist is you!"

This performance would be the first rendition of "Un violador en tu camino" / "A Rapist in Your Path." On that date, the performance was not filmed or circulated, since a larger protest was planned five days later in Santiago for the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. Hundreds of protesters joined LASTESIS for the November 25, 2019 event, and, since then, over a million people have viewed the performance on YouTube. The lyrics and choreography denounce gender-based violence and the systemic oppression of women by patriarchal societies, as "Un violador en tu camino" quickly became what Charis McGowan from *The Guardian* calls "an anti-rape anthem" and "international feminist phenomenon." November 29, 2019, marks the day that the demonstration began to circulate at a rapid pace throughout Latin America, and, in the coming months, around the world.

The performances of "Un violador en tu camino" circulated through a complex transnational and rhetorical ecology, as they inaugurated a prominent social movement in Latin American feminism. It is a particularly rich case to develop our understanding of the material turn in rhetorical studies, as its circulation exemplifies the flow of information, bodies, senses, and systems through public and digital networks. Coined by Laurie Gries' methodology of iconographic tracking, the "remixes" of "Un violador en tu camino" can be traced through the material oppressions and embodied symbolisms of the original performance, changes to global renditions of the performance, and its circulation on social media. Between its in-person performanc-

es and its digital circulation, "the elements of the rhetorical situation simply bleed," interacting with each other through affective encounters—ultimately capturing the attention of transnational audiences (Edbauer 9).

To effectively analyze "Un violador en tu camino," new analytical lenses could be useful. Iconographic tracking, a prominent methodology in rhetorical circulation studies, traces the becomings of images across digital spheres to study their large patterns of circulation. Iconographic tracking examines these large patterns in conversation with the close analysis of exemplary remixes. It is a digital research strategy that "(a) follow[s] the multiple transformations that an image undergoes during circulation, and (b) identif[ies] the complex consequentiality that emerges from its divergent encounters" (Gries 337). With an emphasis on materiality, it makes the process of studying circulation transparent. In their introduction to a forum on rhetorical new materialism, Gries et al. describes the approach as "an emerging and unfixed constellation of scholarship that puts rhetorical theories into conversation with interdisciplinary theories, philosophies, and cultural epistemologies" (138). This essay extends the methodology of iconographic tracking through merging its methods with the tools of performance studies. Doing this accommodates the interplay between still and moving remixes to consider how performances' consequences derive from both its ephemeral nature and archiving into digital spheres.

"Performance"—as a theory, methodology, and metaphor—offers a lens to study this Latin American transnational feminist movement in the context of its socio-political histories. This essay bridges rhetorical studies with Latin American performance studies, namely, Diana Taylor's theory of performance, to explore how "Un violador en tu camino" creates collective memory through embodiment in its various remixes. To begin analyzing the rhetorical phenomenon of "Un violador en tu camino," I first describe the timeline of its circulation: (1) its original series of performances in Chile, (2) performances rendered globally, (3) social media activism based on the performance, and (4) the backlash to and parody of the movement. I then describe and apply Taylor's performance theory to trace the protest's rhetorical circulation through three main remixes: a popular rendition of the performance in Mexico City, an X (formerly Twitter) trend based on the performance's lyrics, and a viral parody of the performance. I further demonstrate how performance theory extends the methodology of iconographic tracking by offering tools to analyze rhetoric in motion and the archiving of these events. Studying feminist protests as performances helps us understand (1) historically situated and embodied transmissions of knowledges and (2) the entangled and remixed circulation between digital and physical publics, or in Taylor's terms, the "archive" and the "repertoire."

An Overview of the Circulation of "Un violador en tu camino"

At its peak, "Un violador en tu camino" circulated between the end of 2019 to the beginning of 2020, taking the form of protests, digital videos, and a variety of social media remixes and responses. Its original series of performances in Chile, however, emerged from the socio-political context of gendered violence and social unrest in 2019. From October 2019 to March 2020, the "estallido social" (social explosion) responded to social and economic inequalities, paired with the rising cost of living in Chile. The estallido social was met with mass injury, arrests, and human rights violations perpetuated by state military and police forces. 3,153 complaints were filed against armed forces and law enforcement, some of which included reports of sexual

assault, forced nakedness, and rape in detention facilities, according to the National Human Rights Instutite ("Archivo de reportes"). This police-sponsored violence was only the most recent case of the high rates of gendered violence in Chile. For example, in 2019, there were reports of 46 femicides, defined as "an intentional killing with a gender-related motivation" ("Five essential facts"), and 109 frustrated femicides, which is an attempted murder with gender-related motivation ("Complementary Report"). Although the ideation process for "Un violador en tu camino" had been underway since 2018, estallido social presented a kairotic moment for the national, and soon international, attention to the performance.

The original series of performances, created and executed by LASTESIS, occurred between November 20-29 of 2019 in ten different locations between Valparaíso and Santiago, Chile. For the November 25 performance in Valparaíso, around 50 women donned blindfolds, red lipstick, and black attire, while dancing in unison and chanting the lyrics:

Spanish [Original]	English [Translation]
[Verso 1] El patriarcado es un juez Que nos juzga por nacer Y nuestro castigo Es la violencia que no ves El patriarcado es un juez Que nos juzga por nacer Y nuestro castigo Es la violencia que ya ves	[Verse 1] Patriarchy is our judge That imprisons us at birth And our punishment Is the violence you DON'T see Patriarchy is our judge That imprisons us at birth And our punishment Is the violence you CAN see
[Pre-Coro] Es femicidio Impunidad para mi asesino Es la desaparición Es la violación	[Pre-Chorus] It's femicide. Impunity for my killer. It's our disappearances. It's rape!
[Coro] Y la culpa no era mía, ni donde estaba, ni cómo vestía Y la culpa no era mía, ni donde estaba, ni cómo vestía Y la culpa no era mía, ni donde estaba, ni cómo vestía Y la culpa no era mía, ni donde estaba, ni cómo vestía	[Chorus] And it's not my fault, not where I was, not how I dressed. And it's not my fault, not where I was, not how I dressed. And it's not my fault, not where I was, not how I dressed. And it's not my fault, not where I was, not how I dressed.
[Pos-Coro] El violador eras tú El violador eres tú	[Post-Chorus] And the rapist WAS you And the rapist IS you
[Pre-Coro] Son los pacos Los jueces El Estado El Presidente	[Pre-Chorus] It's the cops, It's the judges, It's the system, It's the President,
[Coro] El Estado opresor es un macho violador El Estado opresor es un macho violador	[Chorus] This oppressive state is a macho rapist. This oppressive state is a macho rapist.
[Pos-Coro] El violador eras tú (Paco culiao) El violador eres tú (Paco culiao)	[Post-Chorus] And the rapist was you And the rapist is you
[Verso 2] Duerme tranquila, niña inocente Sin preocuparte del bandolero Que por tu sueños dulce y sonriente Vela tu amante carabinero	[Verse 2] Sleep calmly, innocent girl Without worrying about the bandit, Over your dreams smiling and sweet, Watches your loving cop.
[Pos-Coro] El violador eres tú (Paco culiao) El violador eres tú (Paco culiao) El violador eres tú (Paco culiao) El violador eres tú (Paco culiao)	[Post-Chorus] And the rapist IS you And the rapist IS you And the rapist IS you And the rapist IS you.

On the same day, a similar performance took place in the Commune of Santiago for the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. This time, hundreds of people demonstrated. The recording of this performance, uploaded by the Colectivo Registro Callejero, an organization of artists, has 1.4 million views on YouTube, making it one of the first viral renditions. Afterwards, LASTESIS encouraged people to "re-appropriate" their performance for different contexts (LASTESIS et al.)—an invitation that would spread their feminist message transnationally.

Image 1: Open Street Map from Fabra (2019) depicting a series of pins on a world map that represent performances of "Un violador en tu camino." Pins are concentrated in regions such as Latin America and Southern Europe.

Since LASTESIS's call for re-appropriation, the performance has been rendered 446 times in 54 countries (Fabra) and has been adapted into at least 16 different languages (Fortin et al.). Still, Chile and Mexico lead the way with the highest number of performances, with 90 and 48 renditions, respectively. Even beyond Latin America, notable performances have made national headlines and garnered millions of views, from Turkey, to the U.S.A, to India, to Thailand. Different socio-political contexts have reimagined "Un violador en tu camino"; for example, the performers in Delhi, India on December 8, 2019 translated and altered the lyrics to reflect the relationship between sexual violence and the caste system: "In the name of the caste / In the name of religion / We disappear / We are exploited / We carry the worst part of rape / And violence on our bodies" (Noriega par. 2). This is only one of many cases where "Un violador en tu camino" has flowed between spaces and material realities. The protest's circulation exemplifies how meaning transforms between remixes—whether through physical performances in new locations, parodied performances, or X trends.

The digital circulation of "Un violador en tu camino" enabled its transnational re-appropriation, further complexifying its ecology. Increasingly, digital circulation has complexified our understanding of the way meaning is moved and remixed, leading to a "current hyper-circulatory condition of writing" (Dobrin 142). Digital recordings of the performance became plentiful and viral soon after the aforementioned renditions.

In a study of "videoactivismo," Valentina Carranza Weihmüller et al. found 1393 videos of Spanish and Portuguese performances between November 20, 2019, and December 24, 2019. An analysis of 77 of these videos revealed that the movement was characterized by its "pluridad articulada (articulated plurality/cultural pluralism)" (16). During this period of "videoactivismo," different remixes also emerged to extend the message of the protests. Several large-scale news publications, such as *BBC*, *The Washington Post*, and *Telemundo*, covered the protests, re-circulated the videos, and further spread the message across the world. But, of course, anything that gets circulated online is subject to an even wider audience—and even more scrutiny. "Un violador en tu camino" is no exception. It faced an immense amount of misogynistic backlash and ill-intentioned parodies on social media platforms. "Ciberviolencia machista (Machista cyber-violence)" characterized a corpus of TikToks posted within a year of the first protest (Mueses Flores and Nolivos Garzón) and a corpus of viral memes and parodies on YouTube, Instagram, X, and Facebook (Pilay). In viral YouTube meme compilations, creators edited clips of comedies or dancing animals to the chorus of the chant, with comments that ranged from reactions of humor to explicit gendered insults (Pilay). These remixes and responses not only showcase that "Un violador en tu camino" circulated to a variety of social media platforms, but also that its feminist message was frequently critiqued, rejected, and ridiculed.

The timeline of "Un violador en tu camino" reveals a complicated interplay between performance, circulation, and digital platforms. The transmission of its message—its "re-articulation," as encouraged by LASTESIS—took on forms that could not have been imagined by its creators in solely a Chilean context. While LASTESIS has described their original intentions for the lyrics and movements in interviews (such as Fortin et al.'s "Embodied Feminist Resistance in Chile"), the derivatives of their work interact with various contexts, humans, and technologies to alter its intended message. This brings to mind the distinction between distribution, which is intentional, and circulation, which is uncontrollable (Porter 11). For example, Mary Queen's essay "Transnational Feminist Rhetorics in a Digital World" tracks the rhetorical circulation of a letter critiquing the Feminist Majority regarding its championing of oppressed women in Afghanistan. Elizabeth Miller, the author of the letter, initially distributed it in an email to the editor of a magazine, but its subsequent circulation on various "cyberfields"—listservs, news outlets, and academic journals—caused a variety of unintended consequences. These consequences included its misattribution to RAWA (an Afghan feminist organization), recontextualization for conservative arguments, and spread to new (anti-)feminist audiences (Queen 483). But how may circulation be conceived when a case study gains momentum in both "cyberfields" and in-person events? In the case of "Un violador en tu camino," the performances were often planned and distributed intentionally, such as the first series of protests in Chile; however, their permanent archiving as digital videos and lyrics allow them to be viewed internationally, which spurs uncontrollable redistributions and remixes, both as new performances and online media. This is the nature of contemporary social movements that take on physical embodiments and digital remixes, where the expansiveness of these movements depend on this complex interplay.

Previous studies of "Un violador en tu camino," in disciplines such as Latin American cultural studies (Martin and Shaw, Serafini), linguistics (Pilay, Saejang), and feminist activism studies (Fortin et al., Figueroa, Merlyn Sacoto, Weihmüller et al.), have focused on either the protests themselves or its digital deriva-

tives—rather than the relationship between the two. Yet, this case has not been examined through the lens of rhetoric and performance. Rhetorical circulation studies, specifically rhetorical ecologies (Edbauer) and iconographic tracking (Gries), highlight the importance of networks in social movements to embrace images' ontological complexity. Rhetorical methodologies uncover the larger patterns and specific minutiae of case studies' becomings and consequences. In alignment with this goal, performance studies offer new methods to analyze ontological complexity. The language of performance fixates on the changes in materiality of moving and still icons, with an emphasis on how bodies and voices transmit knowledge. Both approaches are integral to a fuller understanding of cases such as "Un violador en tu camino."

There are three non-linear stages of "Un violador en tu camino": its series of performances across the world, remixes in support of the movement on social media and news websites, and digital parodies and backlash to the movement. These three case studies capture significant, though non-comprehensive, parts of this circulation. First, the performance in Mexico City on November 29, 2019 is one of the largest ones to date, with thousands of people filling the plaza in the Zócalo; due to its size and virality online, this performance is analyzed as an example of remixing performances in different public spaces. Second, an X trend emerged within this movement between November 25, 2019 to December 31, 2019, where X users would use the chorus of the chant to tell their personal stories of gendered violence. The third case study for analysis is a viral instance of parody covered by MILENIO with 496,000 views, posted on Dec 4, 2019, in which players in a South American soccer team facetiously dance to the chant. Compared to the Santiago protest, these three case studies—the Mexico City performance, the X trend, and the soccer team parody—can illuminate how performance theory reveals layers of complexity in the embodied activism of "Un violador en tu camino."

Performance and "Un violador en tu camino"

Performance as Methodology: The Archive and the Repertoire

Performance, especially the concepts of the archive and the repertoire, enhance our understanding of methodological approaches to rhetorical circulation studies. I draw on Gries's definition of rhetorical circulation here: "spatio-temporal flows, which unfolds and fluctuates as things enters into diverse associations and materializes in abstract and concrete forms" ("Iconographic Tracking" 335). According to Diana Taylor in *The Archive and the Repertoire*, performance as a theoretical concept identifies two forms of cultural transmission within these "diverse associations." Privileged by colonial powers, the archive encompasses permanent materials that can resist change and travel across distances, such as texts, documents, and buildings. For instance, video recordings, tweets, and hashtags fall under the archive. The repertoire, on the other hand, relates to corporal memory, through gestures, rituals, oral stories, songs, and dance. The repertoire has a finite duration, its manifestations disappear, and it requires physical presence for transmission (20). The live performances or parody renditions of "Un violador en tu camino" exemplify the repertoire. So, while Gries' work on iconographic tracking and remixes focuses on still images, such as the Obama Hope image, an approach that centers performance allows us to analyze texts with live motion (the repertoire), their subsequent digital archival (the archive), and the circulation between these networks.

Alternatively, performance could be thought of as events. Citing DeLuca and Wilferth's call for a Derridean framework that decenters print-based analysis of images, Gries advocates for understanding images as events to study their "dynamic network of distributed, unfolding, and unforeseeable becomings" (335). For Gries, eventfulness, with all of its complexities and unpredictability, is at the heart of circulation studies. Even a still image can be conceptualized as an event because of the underlying processes that enable it to exist. The metaphor of event also informs Phil Bratta's analysis of The One Million Bones Project, a public art installation that raised awareness for genocide in Congo, which he refers to as a rhetorical lived event. Rhetorical lived events "draw more attention to embodiment and proprioception" by exploring how bodies engage in public spaces through sensory components and create political acts through collective action (Bratta n.p.). The essential aspect of lived events is that they disappear, as do performances. Taylor posits a paradox: performance's power lies in its ephemeral nature—it disrupts, resonates, then disappears (5). But the knowledges it carries cannot be maintained in the same way beyond the start and end of the event. To complicate the binary between permanent and ephemeral, Queen characterizes electronic text as ephemeral as well, due to how circulation allows texts to encounter other forces, "forming and dissolving simultaneously" (475). These encounters include new audiences, links, and contexts that change their material processes. In any case, the metaphor of event rejects the notion that texts can be static or stable, so our methods for studying them must account for their ever-changing natures.

Although performance and events both highlight ephemerality and dynamism in artifacts, performance underscores power relationships in different types of knowledge transmission. Taylor constructs her theory of performance as a decolonial epistemology, one that counters the idea that Indigenous knowledges are primitive or non-contemporary because they are not in writing, but rather embodied. Historically, the Conquest of Indigenous Peoples, such as Aztecs, Mayas, and Incas in present-day Latin America, did not introduce writing systems or erase forms of embodied practices, but rather set up a hierarchy that privileges writing within the archive. Part of this privileging stems from the archive's ability to largely maintain its form through script and symbols when circulating, even when its ecology changes. Regarding this difference, Taylor poses the question: "Whose memories, traditions, and claims to history disappear if performance practices lack the staying power to transmit vital knowledge?" (5). While most electronic texts also form and dissolve as Queen suggests, and thus may not be statically permanent, they are texts in the archive that can be returned to, as their existence and messaging does not rely solely on embodied experiences. However, to name the archive and the repertoire is not meant to create a binary between them, but rather to increase the visibility of their networks in the circulation of social movements. As Taylor writes, "Other systems of transmission—like the digital—complicate any simple binary formulation," yet the repertoire provides "the antihegemonic challenge" (22).The importance of drawing a distinction—albeit a gray one—between the archive and the repertoire is acknowledging that the archive is regarded as the dominant form of knowledge transmission.

In the case of protests, performance further lends itself to align with the concept of *performativity*, more so than events. According to Judith Butler's theory of gender, "As performance which is performative, gender is an 'act,' broadly construed, which constructs the social fiction of its own psychological interiority" (279).

These social fictions are reinforced through regulatory practices that create gender norms, which have material consequences despite being a construction. Taylor references Butler's use of performativity as distinct from but related to her theory of cultural collective memory, since the process of socializing identities "is harder to identify because normalization has rendered it invisible" (5). Notably, Taylor attempts to separate a logocentric discussion of discourse—a space where she claims "performativity" inhabits—from "the non-discursive realm of performance" (6). However, the performativity of identity seems integral to analyzing feminist protest performances, where the embodiment of protesters lends to the resonance of the protest itself. A consideration of performativity works towards "foreground[ing] material matters alongside concerns with politics, race, class, and gender (Schell)," as well as resistance and citizenship in public spaces (Gries et al.). Thus, this essay considers performativity as a layer of performance. With this layered meaning, performance—as a site of study and methodology—allows us to recenter power in our analyses, highlighting how embodied practices are saturated with political meanings.

To study performance, we first consider its scenario or scene, including physical location, clothing, and sounds. This analysis examines how "the place allows us to think about the possibilities of the action" and how "action also defines place" with specific histories and socialization processes (Taylor 29). An example of this is the performance by Las Tesis Senior on December 4, 2019. This group, composed of women generations older than LASTESIS, performed in the Estadio Nacional de Chile. This is a site where victims were detained and tortured under Augusto Pinochet's regime, a place imbued with collective memory for those who lived through his dictatorship from 1973-1990 (Martin and Shaw). Attended by 10,000 people, the Las Tesis Senior performance consisted of a "scene" that held cultural memories of violence under the Pinochet regime, revealing how physical location can shape the meaning of the performance itself.

The other main component of performance analysis is "the embodiment of social actors" (Taylor 29). We can see how embodiment plays a role during the "Un violador en tu camino" performance in Santiago de Compostela, Spain. A recording of this performance, posted by T13 on December 11, 2019, has garnered 7.1 million views and sparked controversy. In this recording, a man interrupts the protest, shouting "Ahora a casa a hacer la cena (Now to the house to make dinner)" (00:16-00:18); the performers respond by chanting "cuidado machista, estás en nuestra lista (be careful, machista, you are on our list)" (00:30-00:53). The interruption derives meaning from the domestic stereotypes associated with feminized embodiments. The gendered binary of marianismo and machismo marks the opposition between performers and agitators, aspects particularly visible through the lens of the repertoire. Highlighting the relationship between the repertoire and the archive, *Metro Ecuador* covered the Santiago de Compostela incident, which, along with its recording being posted on YouTube, transmitted it to the archive and opened it up to further reaction from online publics. In a study of a Facebook comment thread under a post with the news article, Marie-France Merlyn found that 45.96% of the comments were negative responses to the initial poster, and 35.48% of the comments were negative towards women and/or feminism as a whole. Gendered embodiment played a large role in the renditions and responses to "Un violador en tu camino," as each remix connected to a central message about gendered oppression.

Transnational Remixes of "Un violador en tu camino"

If we study "Un violador en tu camino" in Santiago, Chile through Taylor's theory, we can see how its scenario and embodiment make the performance resonant. The lyrics of the song call out the institutional forces that perpetuate and provide impunity to gendered violence, a message that is further re-emphasized through the choreography of the performance. As the protesters call out the institutional violence by the state ("Es femicidio (It's femicide) / Impunidad para mi asesino (Impunity for my killer) / Es la desaparición (It's disappearance) / Es la violación (It's rape)" (LASTESIS 1, 9-12)), the performers put their hands behind their heads while squatting down, representing a position of shame and degradation that was forced upon women in police custody, a secluded space (Image 1 below). But performativity in the repertoire allows for a "generative critical distance between social actor and character," where the protesters transfer the degrading position to a public space and resignify its meaning to be resistant and subversive (Taylor 30). As characters with agency, they expose the police's inappropriate behavior by putting this position on display. At the same time, the protesters as social actors create "frictions between plot and character (on the level of narrative) and embodiment (social actors)," emphasizing how the state subjects feminized bodies to violence (Taylor 30). They simultaneously draw on their roles as performers—as demonstrators—and their embodied gender to denounce state-sponsored gendered violence.

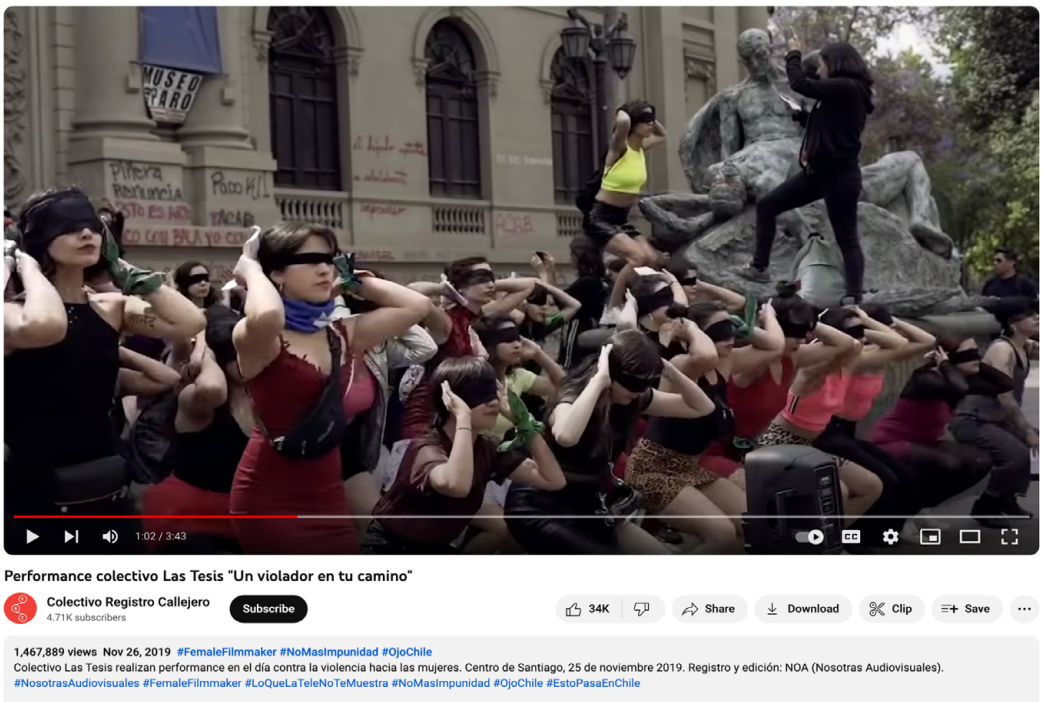

Image 2: A screenshot of a performance of "Un violador en tu camino" in Santiago, Chile, posted by Colectivo Registro Callejero. Most of the protesters wear dresses or skirts, black blindfolds, and green bandanas tied around their wrists, as they put their hands behind their heads and squat.

The performers' clothes, or costuming, also reinforce the message that clothes are not to blame for gendered violence, as many of them wear revealing "party" outfits. Again, gender performativity marks these rhetorical choices, in the context of gender being disciplined within the cultural script of "marianismo." Mar-

ianismo, put briefly, refers to a Latin American gender role that characterizes ideal femininity as virtuous, modest, and chaste in the image of the Virgin Mary. The protesters' costuming acts as an antithesis to marianismo. Even more, they use clothing to shape their embodiment into the patriarchal image of someone who "deserves" to be violated, in order to dispel this myth and reaffirm all women's rights to safety, no matter how they are dressed. In both choreography and costuming, "Un violador en tu camino" draws on the dual role of its protesters as feminized bodies, who are disciplined into a particular model of gender, and as performers, who subvert cultural scripts of patriarchy. In other words, they are performing the policing of their bodies. This, paired with the impassioned chant, creates two levels of meaning and resonance: We are showing you how you imagine and act on our bodies, and we are telling you that it is inhumane.

The embodied nature of the repertoire is the foundation of meaning-making for "Un violador en tu camino," even as it circulates online. Online, the interplay between the archive and the repertoire becomes more complex. The recording of "Un violador en tu camino" allowed for it to be archived on social media platforms, specifically YouTube, causing it only to disappear in the physical space of the Commune of Santiago, but still be preserved digitally. However, the repertoire is memorable because it is non-reproducible. It cannot be studied or felt in the same way twice, and a digital representation of the performance cannot be the performance itself. Yet, the virality of the recorded Santiago performance propelled "Un violador en tu camino" to be replicated in Mexico City. With each remix of the protest, different socio-political contexts and public spaces create new rhetorical situations, albeit under similar oppressive structures of gendered violence.

The transmission of "Un violador en tu camino" to Mexico City exemplifies how public spaces emphasize communities' specific relationships to gendered violence. Taylor calls Mexico City "a palimpsest of histories and temporalities" due to the mass destruction of Indigenous architecture and culture, which was forcibly replaced with buildings erected by Spaniard colonizers (Taylor 82). In this setting, "Un violador en tu camino" occurred in la Plaza del Zócalo on November 29, 2019. The history of gendered violence differs between Chile and Mexico; while Chile's feminist movement has a larger emphasis on police violence, Mexico has a more prevalent history of femicide, due to the high number of cases of femicide in Ciudad Juárez in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Drawing on this collective memory, the protesters in Mexico City hold up fliers with images of red and black crosses, a prominent icon in anti-femicide movements, which intertextually ties the performance with the social movement #NiUnaMenos (#NotOneMore). Expanding on Michael Warner's *Publics and Counterpublics*, Gries explains that the assemblage of strangers, in this case protesters, relies on circulation, "not just because of circulating texts around which strangers gather and through which intertextuality occurs but also because of the recognition that discourse circulates" (Gries 5). Through the linking of two feminist social movements, the "Un violador en tu camino" protesters and #NiUnaMenos advocates can consider themselves within the same public, joined by the exigency of violence against women within the political setting of Mexico City.

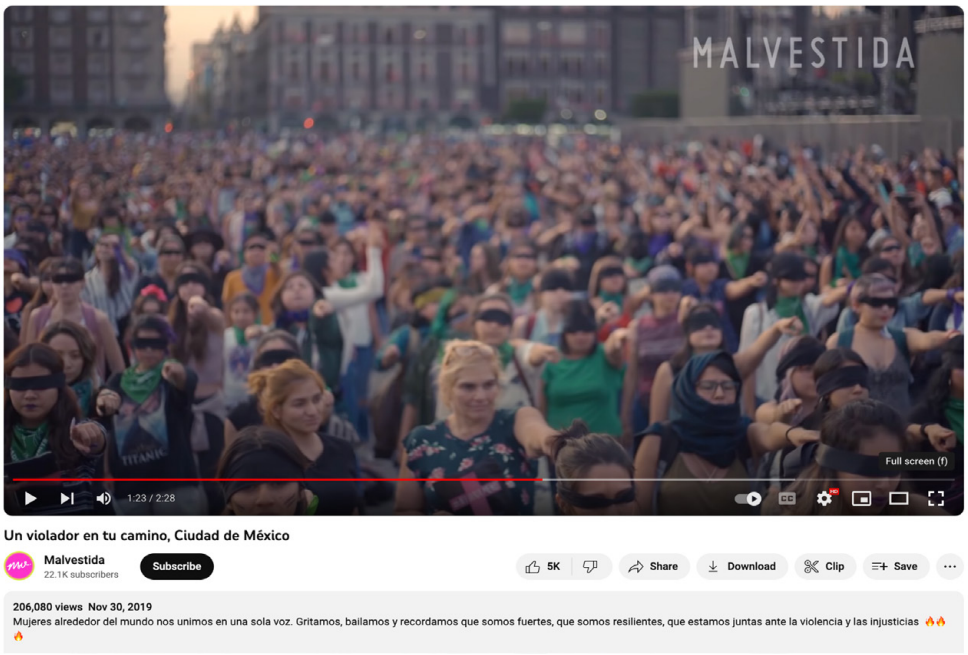

Image 3: A screenshot of a performance of "Un violador en tu camino" in Mexico City, posted by Malvestida. The protesters, who fill up the plaza, point forward during the chorus of the chant.

In the Mexico City protest, the embodied nature of performance provides a throughline for the movement, while the scenario changes to produce new meanings. Similarly to the Chilean performance, the protesters point forward when chanting "El violador eras tú (The rapist is you)." However, the public space of Mexico City and the orientation of the performers create a new layer of meaning in this gesture, since they are pointing at the National Palace, where the federal government resides (Image 3, "Un violador en tu camino, Mexico City," above). The occupation of this space "is not merely social; it is political" (Dobrin 43). The interactions between place and the lyrics highlight institutional critique—the message that gendered violence is not an interpersonal issue, but a political one. Even more, the Mexican protesters slightly change the lyrics based on their context. The Chilean protesters name the rapists as "Son los pacos (They're the cops) / Los jueces (The judges) / El Estado (The State) / El Presidente (The President)." In Mexico City, the protesters call out the institutions as "Los jueces (The judges) / Los curos (The priests) / El presidente (The president)," while they point at the federal judicial center (the judges) and the Mexico City Metropolitan Cathedral (the priests), before crossing their arms in an X above their heads, once again toward the National Palace (the president) (LASTESIS, 19-22). The indictment of the priests is the most notable change, since it underscores the Catholic Church's role in promoting a culture of victim blaming. Place also becomes political through its publicness, as the performers reach large audiences "who would watch, digitally record, share, and communicate using multiple channels about what they saw, extending the reach of the message" (Martin and Shaw 451). In real time, the performance would transfer between the repertoire and the archive to reach new transnational audiences and contexts.

Digital Activism in the Archive

One example of how the message transferred from the repertoire to the archive is the "Y la culpa no era mía" X trend. Emerging from the lyrics of the protest, the X trend demonstrates how participation in this movement extends beyond organized performances, with distinct affordances or limitations due to its form. The "Y la culpa no era mía" trend takes three lines from the lyrics, then provides details of the user's sexual assault in parentheses under each line. An example that is representative of the trend is below (Image 4):

Image 4: A screenshot of a tweet by @SoyLadyCorrales.

Translation: "And the blame was not mine/(I was 15 years old)/Nor where I was/(At the beach)/Nor how I dressed/(Shorts and white blouse)

It took me 22 years to write this tweet and I'm joining in. These are not isolated events, it is an epidemic of systematic violence."

Multiple replies use the same template to tell their own stories, and dozens of other users have posted this trend outside of the cited thread. Evidently, there are not visual or physical bodies in these acts of resistance, like in a performance, but the lyrics and details still draw on corporal rhetoric. Many of these tweets, the example included, represent the body as innocent and thus undeserving of violence—that of a child, in places that are supposed to be safe, in everyday modest clothing. This is a distinct approach from the typical immodest costuming of the performance. The similar imagery of childhood innocence, however, is part of the lyrical chant: "Duerme tranquila, niña inocente (Sleep calmly, innocent girl) / Sin preocuparte del bandolero (Without worrying about the bandit)." Although the body is still at the center of this movement, multiple elements of embodiment are lost—the presence of material bodies, the publics they occupy, and the layers of performativity.

When remixed into the archive, "Un violador en tu camino" has a different relationship to collective action. While every tweet tells an individual story, they share the argument that victims should not be blamed for gendered violence. The diversity of experience creates an overarching narrative in a digital space, creating a discoursal unity instead of the physical and visual unity of performers in a public space. This trend uses similar activist literacies as the 2011 Uprising of Women in the Arab World, a movement studied by Jennifer Nish, in which activists used selfies in particular genre patterns to connect themselves to the larger movement. In both cases, audiences would be able to "situate specific examples of rhetorical activity in relation to collective projects, social structures, and systems of power" (34). "Y la culpa no era mía" participants accomplish this with phrasing such as "I'm joining in" and "it is an epidemic of systematic violence," or even repurposing the hashtag #NiUnaMas (#NotOneMore). For the comparable movement #YesAllWomen, Dustin Edwards and Heather Lang argue that hashtags have a "cultural weightiness" that allow them to circulate, be remixed, and gain rhetorical velocity (132). Edwards and Lang highlight "the complexity and mess" of tracing hashtags and their material effects, such as its transmission to demonstrations and rallies (121). We can see a similar material movement within the circulation of "Un violador en tu camino" between demonstrations, digital representations, and remixes. However, the "Y la culpa no era mia" X trend never elicited its own hashtag, but rather amassed together through the same structural use of lyrics. Perhaps as a consequence, the virality of the trend was comparatively less than many of the recorded videos of the protest, or even similar social media movements on X, such as #MeToo or #NiUnaMenos.

Translating the repertoire to the archive offers an opportunity for activists. That is, social media provides digital access points for participation in the larger movement, but could arguably dilute the movement by being too individual. This was a common critique of the #MeToo movement that originated in the U.S; in a comparison of the two movements, Deborah Martin and Deborah Shaw go as far to say that "while MeToo builds a collection of individual stories which shines a light on the scale of sexual violence against women, Un violador and Ni una menos understand apriori that rape and femicide are rooted in misogynistic cultures, rather than in individual men" (720-1). These online movements also lack the embodiment of the repertoire, and, as Jason Del Gandio asserts, "Collective action relies upon the coordination and communication of bodies. Subtract those bodies and the collective action disappears" (151). Certainly, the "Y la culpa no era mia" X trend takes a more individual and less embodied approach compared to the performance, but because it still derives from the performance, it pulls from the rhetorical resonance of it. This trend could be considered what Chris Ingraham calls "gestures of concern," or "an expression into form of an affective relation" (1). With a "gesture of concern," participants in the trend reveal their solidarity with the larger movement, associating their unique narrative with the message of the performance's lyrics. These gestures, of course, are mediated by the material realities of the archive, in this case digital platforms, which allow the trend to present new avenues for people to interact in even more minute gestures, such as liking, retweeting, or commenting. Furthermore, as the trend pushes the movement into new public spheres of political discourse, it contributes to "decentring any authorship associated with the original performances," which extends the movement's message while paying homage to its origins (Martin and Shaw 714). The results of these social media campaigns are "sticky uptakes" (Nish 128), which can influence other types of action. They can spur new social media campaigns, such as the intertextual relationship between #NiUnaMenos and "Un violador

en tu camino," and new protest performances in transnational settings. Although the X trend may be critiqued by those who put social media activism in opposition to protest performances, it can indeed resonate with an audience and allow "citizens to come together around issues of mutual import…in order to act amid the contingencies of their civic and social circumstances" (Ingraham 16).

Parody Performances in the Repertoire

With widespread circulation comes remixes that diverge completely from a text's original message. As previously described, the circulation of "Un violador en tu camino" resulted in misogynistic backlash and parody remixes, a given for any social movement stored in the archive. A parody that garnered media attention was created by players of a South American U-17 team. One of the players posted the video on his Facebook page, which then went viral. News media reported on the situation after the Disciplinary Commission of the Mexican Association Football Federation announced an investigation into the team's misconduct, as the federation and news outlets likely anticipated public outrage. The team eventually issued an apology for mocking a movement against gendered violence. The most viral version of this parody is critically reported on by MILENIO and posted on YouTube, garnering 490,182 views as of December 4, 2019. Yet, the comments on the news report mostly condemn the reporter's negative attitude toward the parody or commending the humor of the parody. For example, the top comment, "La conductora encabronada por dentro jajajajj (The reporter is pissed off inside hahahaha)" reflects how even women who defended the movement received backlash, aligning with the findings of Marie-France Merlyn's study of Facebook comments. This new parody-performance created spaces for antagonistic audiences to engage with "Un violador en tu camino" through its circulation in the archive.

In the video, seven boys dance and react to an audio recording of "Un violador en tu camino" with an added instrumental beat in the background. The part of the song played in the video is the institutional critique of the police, judges, state, and president; three boys sway their hips and point around the room, then make an X with their arms, mimicking the choreography of the protest (Image 5). The parody takes place in a locker room, a space where these gestures lose their original meaning, in contrast to the public and political spaces that are rhetorically integral to "Un violador en tu camino" performances. To further elucidate the mocking nature of the reenactment, the camera pans to boys off screen laughing at the performance. This parody deviates far from the precise and forcible moves of the protest choreography.

Image 5: A screenshot of a video of South American U-17 team players parodying "Un violador en tu camino." In a locker room surrounded by teammates, the players cross their arms above their heads.

In this way, the body is still central to the meaning of "Un violador en tu camino," albeit subversively. Protesters' bodies—and the feminized gender associated with them—are vulnerable to gendered violence and unprotected by the state, so the collection and movement of bodies in solidarity makes their resistance resonate with populations around the world. By examining a parody, we can further understand how "bodies participating in the transmission of knowledge and memory are themselves a product of certain taxonomic, disciplinary, and mnemonic systems" (Taylor 86). Through the lens of performance, the masculine body takes on new political meanings. Their carefree movements reflect how their bodies are not disciplined or threatened due to being gendered as women under a patriarchal state. They reinforce their masculinity by representing their embodiment as antithetical to the protesters, within the scene of a locker room that signifies a male-only space. By parodying the original message, they actually reinforce a key point of "Un violador en tu camino": there is a thriving culture that blames—or even makes fun of—victims and thus contributes to a culture of gendered violence. They are counter-rhetorics of the repertoire, which "expand the lived experience of the original rhetorics by adding to them—even while changing and expanding their shape" (Edbauer 19). The fluid extension of the archive and repertoire into each other reinforces cultural memories. The exigence of "Un violador en tu camino" relies on both the publics and bodies integral to the repertoire, but also the transnational circulation of the archive, even in its subversion.

Performance and Entangled Circulations

By analyzing "Un violador en tu camino" as a performance, we can understand how the setting of the rhetorical event contributes to its meaning, as well as how the performance's ephemeral nature disrupts its settings. Additionally, the protesters as performers transgress against patriarchal culture; they use their per-

formativity of gender to manipulate the societal expectations of victims of gendered violence. The transmission between the repertoire and the archive entangle the body to create a message against gendered violence. Based on the analysis of the three remixes done above, I now further discuss how performance theory extends rhetorical circulation by explaining (1) embodied and situated transmissions of knowledges and (2) the entangled and remixed circulation between digital and physical publics.

Despite its potential widespread application, Taylor's performance theory is specifically fit for Latin American contexts, as it draws from rhetorical traditions embedded in the histories of this region. The performance's rhetorical strategies draw on histories of activism in Chile, ones that LASTESIS was invested in. The originators of "Un violador en tu camino" intended for the 2-minute, 30-second performance to disperse before police violence could erupt: "this [performance] ends and we go, we don't want any confrontation, we don't want to expose ourselves" (LASTESIS). This strategy reflects a lineage of activism through theatrical performance, particularly during the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet between 1973 to 1990, when dissenters of the government would be silenced, exiled, or killed. Because of this, theater groups would imbue political significance in their performances under the guise of the mise en scene (Grass et al.), showing their audiences "culturally specific imaginaries—sets of possibilities, ways of conceiving conflict, crisis, or resolution" without alerting authorities to their dissent (Taylor 13). In protest to the Pinochet regime, and similarly to "Un violador en tu camino," theater groups would perform in short bursts in public spaces to present a clear message of resistance to the passerby audience, then disperse (Fortin et al.). In relation to Taylor's theory, the ephemerality of "Un violador en tu camino" is both a political strategy and a preservation of historical activism, situated in Chile's history with institutionalized violence. Even the blindfolds—or the costuming—worn by the Valparaíso and Santiago protesters reference the blindfolded victims of torture under the Pinochet regime, which lose or change meaning in different contexts. Performance itself draws on the histories of communities and activists in Latin America, which many other methodologies or metaphors could not capture.

When the protest circulated transnationally, many activists opted to change the costuming, symbolisms, lyrics, and physical spaces of the performance, as explored in the previous sections. However, the protest circulated beyond Latin America, meaning that in these settings, new culturally specific meanings emerge. For example, on November 14, 2020, almost a full year after the original Valparaíso protest, the group Thai Feminist Liberation performed a version renamed Sita Lui Fai (Sita Walks through Fire). This title refers to Thailand's national epic *Ramakien*, where Sita, the wife of the protagonist, "is subjected to ordeal by fire to prove her purity and fidelity to her husband, Rama," which symbolizes men's ownership of women (Saejang 168). Jooyin Saejang's critical discourse analysis of the Thai rendition reveals that changes to the lyrics and choreography, such as an addition of a "cutthroat gesture signifying Sita's experience with deadly pain," emphasizes an affect of anger for the victims of gendered violence (171). Thai Feminist Liberation draws on an entirely different folklore and tradition to resonate with its national audience. To effectively protest, activists must consider how "civic obedience, resistance, citizenship, gender, ethnicity, and sexual identity…are rehearsed and performed daily in the public sphere," then find ways to draw on or subvert these imaginaries in their protest performance (Taylor 3). These strategies rely on historical nuances, rhetorical traditions, and

sociopolitical ideologies about embodied identities.

Performance's emphasis on embodied transmissions of knowledge also strengthens the analysis of transnational feminist movements. In the context of "Ni Una Menos" in Mexico—a feminist movement that has been referenced by "Un violador en tu camino"—Nina Maria Lozano brings attention to how structures and processes of violence create women's sociomaterial realities, often tied to the relationship between women's bodies and neoliberal economic structures. Performance similarly draws attention to the body. We can see performativity of gender in both the protest performances and the parody performances, which draw on societal expectation of gendered bodies to subvert the audience's expectations. The protesters use costuming to present as feminized bodies that are subjected to violence, using the societal image of a promiscuous woman paired with the impassioned lyrics to subvert the narrative that women deserve violence; the boys parodying the performance also draw on their masculinized bodies to exaggerate the choreography, with the purpose of denying an inter-gender solidarity that rendering this performance would typically signify. Understanding protests and its counters as performances offers a lens to study embodied identities—in their resistance and relationship to power.

Finally, Taylor's specification of the "archive" and the "repertoire" point us to how in-person protests, digital activism, and counter-rhetorics interplay, entangle, and cross-over. A spotlight on the affordances of the repertoire is not meant to set it in opposition to the archive, but rather to recognize the historical dominant Western privileging of the archive over the repertoire. Rita Segato's feminist theories, which informed LASTESIS's activism, critique lettered feminism that is primarily conceived and preserved through academia (Fortin et al.); the live Chilean performances of "Un violador en tu camino," on the other hand, were intended to make theory accessible for wide audiences (Martin and Shaw 715). The digital circulation of the performances then creates a network that continuously weaves between the archive and the repertoire. Promoting a comparative materialist approach, Zhaozhe Wang calls this type of hybridity "cyber-public activism," which is "the hybrid rhetorical practice of creating and circulating activist materials and discourse online and assembling people offline to occupy public spaces" (240). Although the "archive" and the "repertoire" do not exactly parallel a "cyber-public" dichotomy, both Wang and my discussions delve into exploring the entanglement between these seemingly binary realms, an entanglement that has become almost ubiquitous within modern day social movements. As seen from the three case studies, the archive and the repertoire forefront important questions about the accessibility of information, the opportunities for collective participation in (digital) activism, and the role of counter-rhetorics in driving circulation.

The Potential of Performance for Transnational Feminist Movements

"Un violador en tu camino"—and its rippling resonance—is a contemporary Latin American model for "how rhetoric moves and how rhetoric moves us" (*RSA 15* 6). It reveals a relationship between the archive and the repertoire that is becoming prevalent through the circulation of protests on social media; although physical and spatial disruptions are ephemeral, recordings of them spread through digital spaces, and thus the protests can be manifested in new places. This circulation, of course, also facilitates manifestations that attempt to subvert the knowledges being created, as the movement takes on a life of its own online.

Performance theory offers rhetorical studies new ways to interpret layers of complexity and focus on embodiment. Its methodological and metaphorical applications facilitate the analysis of moving, embodied texts in relation to their digitized forms. Performance theory moreover centers epistemologies that have historically been sidelined in rhetorical studies, such as Indigenous forms of cultural memory transmission, while providing language for connected realms of circulation, such as the archive and the repertoire. The theory's position in the contexts of Latin American feminism further reveal connections between contemporary and historical strategies for activism. Future studies should explore performance as activism in different movements, preferably as a live audience member who can experience the sensory elements of the repertoire. In embracing the dynamism of performances like "Un violador en tu camino," future research might illuminate the evolving intersection of digital activism and embodied practices, a crucial step for advancing global feminist movements.

Biography

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Marjory Stoneman Douglas's *Everglades: River of Grass*, the *Rivers of America* Book Series, and the Origins of an Environmental Rhetoric

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Abstract: Published in 1947, Marjory Stoneman Douglas's *Everglades: River of Grass* revised public perceptions of the Everglades, transforming it in the eyes of readers from a swampy wasteland into a unique ecological gem. Today, Douglas is a well-known and lauded figure in Florida environmental history. However, when she first took up the Everglades book project, she was not an environmental activist. She was a writer responding to an invitation to write for the *Rivers of America* book series. Founded by Constance Lindsay Skinner, the *Rivers of America* series sought to kindle national pride through histories focused on major American rivers. Douglas participated in this project, but she departed from the series' nationalistic impulses by offering a critical history of Florida and making environmental appeals. Positioning *River of Grass* within the *Rivers of America* series and environmental rhetoric scholarship, this article analyzes Douglas's navigation of discourses of history, science, literature, and gender to produce a successful piece of environmental rhetoric decades before the advent of contemporary American environmentalism.

Keywords: environmental rhetoric, science writing, nature writing, conservation writing, environmental history, Florida Everglades, women in science

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> There are no other Everglades in the world.
>
> They are, they have always been, one of the unique regions of the earth, remote, never wholly known. Nothing anywhere else is like them: their vast glittering openness, wider than the enormous visible round of the horizon, the racing free saltness and sweetness of their massive winds, under the dazzling blue heights of space. They are unique also in the simplicity, the diversity, the related harmony of the forms of life they enclose. The miracle of light pours over the green and brown expanse of saw grass and of water, shining and slow-moving below, the grass and water that is the meaning and the central fact of the Everglades of Florida. It is a river of grass. (Douglas, 5-6)

With the words above, Marjory Stoneman Douglas (1890-1998) opened her now famous *The Everglades: River of Grass,* a book that revised public perceptions of the Everglades and inspired readers to advocate for the preservation of Florida's natural environment. Using a lyrical style to translate the ecological science of the Everglades into poetic understanding, Douglas transformed Florida's wilderness in the eyes of readers from a swampy wasteland into a unique ecological gem. *River of Grass*[1] was an incredible success during its own time and remains a legacy in environmental rhetoric today. Released on November 6, 1947—a date timed to coincide with the dedication of Everglades National Park—the book's first printing of 7500 copies sold out before the end of December (Davis, *An Everglades* 395). The book has remained in print, with two reissues since its initial publication.[2] Today, it is considered the "green bible of Everglades environmentalism" (Davis, "Conservation" 54).

1 Throughout this article, I refer to *Everglades: River of Grass* by its subtitle.

2 After Rinehart and Company's seventh and final printing of *River of Grass* in 1965, Douglas cleverly bought the plates and reissued the book under Hurricane House Publishing, an imprint she founded and ran for about a decade (Davis, *An Everglades* 434). The reissue allowed Douglas to keep the book in print at a time when the environmental movement was just getting off the ground, which has no doubt contributed to the book's longevity. Today, *River of Grass* is in its fourth edition with the Florida publisher Pineapple Press.

Douglas is a venerated figure in twentieth-century Florida history, most well-known for writing *River of Grass* and for her environmental activism. Born in Minneapolis, she grew up in Massachusetts, where she was raised by her mother and her mother's relatives. Later, she attended Wellesley College, majoring in English. In 1915, Douglas moved to Miami. The move was an escape from a failed marriage and became an opportunity to launch a writing career. Her father, Frank Stoneman, from whom she had been estranged for most of her childhood, was owner and founder of the *Miami Herald,* and he offered Douglas a job at his newspaper. Her writing eventually led her to environmentalism. She founded the Friends of the Everglades organization in 1969, and for the next three decades, she advocated for Everglades preservation and restoration. She received numerous awards and accolades for her work during her lifetime and posthumously, most notably the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1993. By the time she stepped down as president of Friends of the Everglades at 100 years of age, she had acquired an almost mythical status as the "grande dame" of the Everglades (Davis, *An Everglades* 530-1).

Given Douglas's now established place in Florida's environmental history, it seems natural that she penned the book that brought Everglades preservation into the national conversation. However, her publication of *River of Grass* preceded her environmental activism by several decades. It was her first book, published when she was 57 years old, after a long and successful writing career, first as a journalist and assistant editor for the *Miami Herald,* and then as a freelance writer of short stories, authoring over 100 pieces for publications like the *Saturday Evening Post.* She may not have written *River of Grass* had it not been for an invitation to write a book for the *Rivers of America* book series. In 1943, Douglas had been working on a novel for about six months, when the series editor, Hervey Allen, asked her to write a book on the Miami River. Douglas thought that the five-mile Miami River was not worthy of a book project, but she considered the offer. In her autobiography, she recalled, "When a publisher visits your house and asks you to write something, you don't let him go casually" (Douglas and Rothchild 190).[3] She believed that the Miami River might be connected to the Everglades. As Douglas later narrated, "Anyway, I asked Hervey if I could somehow use the Everglades to back up the Miami River and maybe I could get a book out of that. 'All right,' Hervey said, 'write about the Everglades.' There, on a writer's whim and an editor's decision, I was hooked with the idea that would consume me for the rest of my life" (Douglas and Rothchild 190).

In this article, I explore how Douglas's practical response to a prospective book contract led her to an inspired environmental rhetoric. Specifically, I examine Douglas's *River of Grass* in relation to the *Rivers of America* book series. The *Rivers of America* series is a unique historiographic site, part of a broader project to popularize the study of history at a time when academic historians were trying to professionalize their field. *River of Grass* engaged in this vision to reach popular readers. However, Douglas's book departed from the series' ostensibly nationalistic ideology through its focus on environmental advocacy and critical history. Douglas successfully negotiated the expectations of the book series with the exigence of an Everglades in peril. In doing so, she composed a successful piece of environmental rhetoric decades before the rise of contemporary American environmentalism. Exemplifying rhetorical moves that both echo a long tradition

3 Douglas experienced blindness in her later years and composed her autobiography with the assistance of John Rothchild.

of nature writing and characterize contemporary environmental rhetoric today, Douglas first weaves together scientific, literary, and historical discourses to evoke a sense of wonder for the natural world. She then offers a damning critique of the colonialism and capitalistic development that spurred environmental devastation, and she finally ends with an urgent call to action. Together, these moves prompt readers to appreciate the Everglades and advocate for their preservation.

In the discussion that follows, I contextualize *River of Grass,* first as a *Rivers of America* book and second, as a piece of environmental rhetoric. Then, I analyze *River of Grass* focusing on two ways Douglas departed from the *Rivers of America* series: her choice of the Everglades as a subject and her critical history of Florida. As I argue, these departures both distinguish *River of Grass* from the series and help establish it as a significant piece of early environmental rhetoric.

The *Rivers of America* Series and the Discipline of History

Douglas's subtitle, *River of Grass*, would eventually become a central and influential argument; it famously changed the way people thought about the Everglades. However, it was also a way for Douglas to tailor her book to the *Rivers of America* series. *River of Grass* was the 33rd book in the series, which produced 65 books between 1937 and 1974, each focused on the history of a specific U.S. river.[4] The series was founded and first edited by the writer and historian Constance Lindsay Skinner, whose goal was to produce history accessible to popular audiences that would instill national pride in its American readers. Skinner's experiences as a writer, historian, and woman shaped the *Rivers of America* series. A poet and fiction writer, Skinner first took up history writing in 1918 when she was invited to write for the *Chronicles of America* series, which sought to tell the stories of American history "in living form, through a continuity of short narratives . . . so to make the traditions of the nation more real and vivid to those of our citizens who are not in the habit of reading history" (qtd. in Barman 105). Skinner's two books for the series, *Pioneers of the Old Southwest: A Chronicle of the Dark and Bloody Ground* and *Adventures in Oregon: A Chronicle of the Fur Trade Period*, were both popular successes, and they pleased her editors (Mink 755).

However, the series ran counter to academic historians' efforts to professionalize their field. Early twentieth-century academia was experiencing a "burgeoning culture of professionalization"; academics sought to distinguish themselves from amateurs and elevate their disciplinary discourses (Applegarth, *Rhetoric* 2). As Jean Barman writes, "Academics [in the early twentieth century] had been doing their best to gain control over the writing of history," favoring a "scientific history" that emphasized "aspects of the past which could be measured and quantified. . . . They eschewed the messiness that came from including the human factor, preferring to write about impersonal forces and the growth of institutions" (107). The *Chronicles of America* series clearly defied these efforts, and the series' editors and authors were aware of this tension. In a letter to Skinner, Allen Johnson, the editor of the *Chronicles* series, writes, "You must know that my professional brethren feel that I have fallen from grace in attempting to 'popularize' history" (qtd. in Barman 107). Johnson, a Yale University historian, believed in the project, but he also knew he was at odds with his colleagues. Not surprisingly, Skinner's two books for the *Chronicles of America* series received harsh reviews from profes-

4 Carol Fitzgerald identifies at least 350 printings of *Rivers of America* books.

sional historians, who complimented Skinner's literary skill but also expressed concerns about her "historical perspective" (qtd. in Mink 756).

The professionalization of academic disciplines was an exclusionary enterprise, a conscious effort to define the boundaries of disciplinary membership, which consequently "marginaliz[ed] . . . specific groups and interests" (Levine 6). Training and academic credentials distinguished the professional from the amateur; those excluded from the academy because of gender, class, or race were also excluded from the discipline. Even when granted access to academic training, women and minorities were marginalized within the discipline. In the late nineteenth century, doctoral programs in history began to open to women, but they were denied employment opportunities commensurate with their credentials, excluded from professional and departmental meetings, and discouraged in a variety of ways from conducting research and publishing (J. Goggin 770-8). Skinner, a white woman from a non-elite background who did not have formal academic training, worked from the margins of the discipline. As Nicolaas Mink notes, the harsh reviews Skinner's work received from professional historians were "almost preordained": "Skinner simply lacked the qualifications (education, gender, and social class) to garner intellectual legitimacy in the profession" (756-7).

However, Skinner's dramatic and literary history writing was part of a broader impulse by "Progressive-era intellectuals who sought to mobilize American memory as a resource for a more democratic future" (Blake 423). Historians such as Van Wyck Brooks, Lewis Mumford, and Waldo Frank criticized the emergent "scientific" historical academic discourse as dry and inaccessible to most lay readers (Mink 756). As Van Wyck Brooks would write in his 1918 essay, "On Creating a Usable Past," historians should approach their subject, "from the point of view not of the successful fact but of the creative impulse" (qtd. in Blake 423). Skinner shared these views. In an essay entitled "History as Literature: And the Individual Definition," she critiqued contemporary history writing as "dead stuff" produced by "writers [who] have not perceived that the drama of human feelings, motives, and inspirations is essential to true historical narrative" (qtd. in Mink 758). Skinner sought to breathe life into historical events and inspire readers about their shared past. For her next project, the *Rivers of America* series, Skinner reaffirmed this commitment, establishing a series written in a literary style to tell the stories of America. "This is to be a literary and not an historical series," she writes (Skinner 840). Her project further eschewed the exclusivity of academia through her author assignments. Of the 26 titles Skinner originally planned for the series, nearly half were assigned to women authors; none were assigned to professional historians (Mink 761).

Rivers of Grass as Environmental Rhetoric

As a *Rivers of America* book, Douglas's *River of Grass* participated in Skinner's project to bring histories told in literary fashion to popular audiences. However, Douglas's book is not known today for its participation in the *Rivers of America* series, nor is it necessarily remembered as a history of Florida. As the back cover of the 2021 edition advertises, *River of Grass* "brought the world's attention to the need to preserve the Everglades as the unique and magnificent place that it is." The book's legacy is thus its enduring role as a piece of environmental rhetoric.

Over the past several decades, rhetoric and communication scholars have amassed a large body of scholarship focused on environmental rhetoric, from early works by Christine Oravec, M. Jimmie Killingsworth and Jacqueline S. Palmer, and Carl G. Herndl and Stuart C. Brown to more recent contributions, such as edited collections by Craig Waddell, Peter N. Goggin, Derek G. Ross, and Richard D. Bessel and Bernard K. Duffy. Through the examination of case studies of environmental rhetoric—from the debate over Hetch Hetchy and the writings of Aldo Leopold to *An Inconvenient Truth* and *Our Common Future*—this research has extended understandings of the ways in which various writers and rhetors have sought to address environmental exigencies.[5] Acknowledging a range of genres and texts, these scholars have defined the term *environmental rhetoric* broadly. Herndl and Brown define environmental rhetoric as language that shapes understandings about nature. They find examples in "scientific disciplines such as biology and ecology, in government agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency and its regulations, and in nonfiction essays and books such as Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* or Paul Ehrlich's *The Population Bomb*" (1). Likewise, Ross's definition is straightforward yet capacious: "environment-related communication intended to motivate action and shape attitudes" (3). Nathaniel A. Rivers emphasizes that traditional environmental rhetoric focuses on the ways in which human activity has contributed to environmental crises and conversely persuades audiences that humans have the power to resolve such crises (426).[6] Building on these understandings, I employ *environmental rhetoric* to refer to the broad range of genres that respond to an environmental exigence. If, according to Lloyd Bitzer's famous conceptualization, rhetoric is "a mode of altering reality . . . by the creation of discourse which changes reality through the mediation of thought and action," then environmental rhetoric, is the creation of discourse that seeks to address the specific reality of an environmental exigence by shaping audience's perceptions of the environment and urging action to address that exigence (4).

Among the genres often included in environmental rhetoric are nature writing, conservation writing, and environmental history—all of which are terms that could possibly be applied to *River of Grass.* Don Scheese identifies nature writing as "a first-person, nonfiction account of an exploration, both physical (outward) and mental (inward), of a predominantly nonhuman environment, as the protagonist follows the spatial movement of pastoralism from civilization to nature" (6). According to Scheese, nature writing draws from the scientific tradition of natural history as well as the personal narrative forms of spiritual autobiography and travel writing. Within this field, Risa Applegarth identifies the "literary nature essay" as a specific "high-status" genre that "demonstrate[s] literary, philosophical, or other aesthetic qualities that elevate natural history observations to the status of art, while retaining strict adherence to observational accuracy" ("Genre" 52). This tradition, according to Applegarth, is exemplified in the work of John Burroughs and Mary Austin. Building on conceptions of nature writing, Richard Johnson-Sheehan and Lawrence Morgan identify conservation writing as "an umbrella term for a range of writing about ecology, biology, the outdoors, and environmental policies and ethics" that "places the natural world at the center of readers' attention, often viewing sustainability as a core value" (10). Like nature writing, conservation writing draws from science writing and

5 In addition to this research focused on rhetorical case studies, there is much recent research devoted to theory-building at the intersection of new materialism and environmental rhetorics. For example, see Clary-Lemon, Gries, Rivers, and Stormer and McGreavy.

6 Rivers goes on to argue that such conceptions of environmental rhetoric put too much emphasis on human agency; instead, he advances an environmental rhetoric informed by new materialism and object-oriented ontology.

empirical observations of the natural world; however, unlike nature writing, conservation writing "does not foreground the author's personal reflections" but instead focuses pragmatically on conservation advocacy (10). Johnson-Sheehan and Morgan identify the "nature-centered works" of William Bartram, John James Audubon, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Henry David Thoreau as precursors to conservation writing. While Bartram and Audubon present scientific observations, they do not make direct arguments for conservation, and Emerson and Thoreau "lack the scientific grounding" of contemporary conservation writing (Johnson-Sheehan and Morgan 11-12). Instead, Johnson-Sheehan and Morgan point to George Perkins Marsh and John Muir for authoring some of the first examples of conservation writing; in both, the writing has significant scientific grounding as well as clear arguments for conservation (12-13).

Douglas's *River of Grass* certainly draws from the traditions of nature writing and conservation writing. The first chapter, in particular, is a literary account of scientific observation that, like a literary nature essay, "elevate[s] natural history observations to the status of art," while maintaining scientific accuracy (Applegarth, "Genre" 52). Like conservation writing, Douglas does not use the first person point of view or engage in personal reflection but rather focuses on advocacy. However, unlike typical examples of nature writing or conservation writing, *River of Grass* foregrounds history and storytelling, key aspects of the *Rivers of America* series. For this reason, *River of Grass* might fit under the description of *environmental history,* which J.R. McNeill describes as "the history of mutual relations between humankind and the rest of nature" (6). As ecocriticism scholar Michael Branch argues, the historical anthropology Douglas presents in *River of Grass,* "anticipates the work of current environmental historians in its recognition that stories about landscapes are ultimately inextricable from stories about human dwellers in the land" (130). Indeed, as Mink argues, the *Rivers of America* series could be considered a "prototypical form of environmental history" for the ways in which the series "prob[es] the dynamics of culturally diverse people who transformed and were transformed by the landscapes of different regions" (753). However, Skinner herself betrayed no interest in conservation when proposing and advertising her series. As I discuss in more detail later, Skinner's goals were to offer relatable folk histories that might inspire patriotic feeling, and in choosing to respond instead to an environmental exigence, Douglas departed from Skinner's original vision.

Douglas's *River of Grass,* because it draws from many genres, is difficult to categorize. As Branch describes:

> While it is written in nonfiction prose, the book's narrative dramatization of historical and natural historical information gives it the feel of a novel . . . While it is replete with precise scientific data, *River of Grass* filters those details through a poetic sensibility, rendering the landscape with a lyrical intensity characteristic of . . . classics of American nature writing. . . . Just as the book defies the constraints of a particular genre, so too does it resist any single disciplinary discourse, instead invoking insights from history, geology, hydrology, anthropology, zoology, botany, politics, economics, journalism, and literature to offer a rich, multidimensional view of South Florida's cultural and natural history. (127)

This multidimensionality is what helps make *River of Grass* a notable example of environmental rhetoric, which often employs different discourses and disciplines. The term *environmental rhetoric* is broad enough to encompass the book's various influences; moreover, the term emphasizes the book's rhetorical nature.

Regardless of any generic categorization, *River of Grass* responds to an environmental exigence by reshaping readers' perceptions and motivating them to save the Everglades.

Environmental Rhetoric and the Popularization of Science

Within the practice of environmental rhetoric, there is a tension between the need to communicate science while also moving audiences to action. Environmental activists and writers often must engage in a form of public intellectualism, in which they inform popular readers about scientific details of nature and ecology while appealing to readers' emotions through literary techniques. This balance of scientific detail with literary aesthetics is a central feature of environmental rhetorics like nature writing and conservation writing. On the one hand is traditional science "with its fabled detachment from all natural objects" (Killingsworth and Palmer 12), which "locate[s] the human researcher as outside and epistemologically above nature" (Herndl and Brown 11). On the other hand is a poetic rendering of nature that emphasizes its beauty and emotional power. This balance between scientific and aesthetic representations of nature characterizes much environmental rhetoric. As a form of science writing for public audiences, environmental rhetoric must engage and relate to readers (Molek-Kozakowska), appealing to readers' sense of wonder, or demonstrating the applications of the science described (Fahnestock 334). At the same time, for readers to accept their arguments, writers must demonstrate scientific credibility (Applegarth, "Genre" 53).

This tension in environmental rhetoric is similar to the tension between the professionalization and popularization of history that affected Skinner's *Rivers of America* series. Scientists, like historians, were similarly motivated toward professionalization at the turn of the twentieth century. As science journalism scholar Sharon Dunwoody argues, "[late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century] scientists embraced professionalization with great energy, creating scientific societies, specialized educational requirements, and internal systems of rewards and punishments" (102). These efforts to professionalize uprooted a rich tradition of amateur scientific research and established a firm boundary between expert and layperson (Applegarth, *Rhetoric* 3; Broks 27-32; Myers 268; Paul 34-7; Bensaude-Vincent). As Greg Myers explains, "One by one, disciplines were institutionalized and amateurs excluded" (268). By the mid-twentieth century, this division was so great that "scientific culture not only failed to provide rewards for interacting with publics but also actively punished scientists for doing so" (Dunwoody 102). Indeed, as scientist and environmentalist Paul Ehrlich describes, the twentieth-century scientist was trained to believe that "if what he [sic] does is comprehensible to the general public, it means he's not a good scientist" (qtd. in Goodell 6). To do good science was to do it outside of the public eye.[7]

However, in responding to environmental crises, there is an urgency in bringing science to the public. Early scientists in the environmental movement risked their standing in the scientific community to do so (Goodell 6). The most notable example of this is Rachel Carson, whose *Silent Spring* prompted backlash amongst some in the scientific community who attacked the book as lacking scientific credibility (Lear

7 Dunwoody argues that the environmental movement has helped to loosen the boundaries between expert and layperson; today's scientific community is more accepting, and even encouraging, of scientists that bring their research to the public (103). However, tensions do remain. One of the major concerns today is the real or perceived political or financial interests of public-facing scientists; this has been especially pertinent in the highly politicized debates over climate change (Cloud).

396-456; Graham 48-81). Carson was dismissed as "amateur" or "scientific journalism"; critics argue that her writing was "emotional" (Smith 737). An object of particular concern was Carson's opening "Fable for Tomorrow," which was "held up as evidence that Carson was a storyteller and nothing more" (Smith 746). However, like so many environmental writers before and after her, Carson's goals were to bring scientific environmental research to the public in a way that would motivate action, and in that regard, her book was a great success.

Carson has not been the only environmental scientist to experience backlash from the scientific community; as a woman scientist, though, she was an easier target. Historically, women's positions within the sciences have been marginalized, and their acceptance as science writers has been tenuous (Baym). Women's access to science writing has often been contingent upon the audience and context of their writing. While women have written a range of science genres, they have had the most acceptance and success in genres tailored to popular audiences. Since the eighteenth century, women have written advice books, textbooks, and bulletins that have helped to disseminate scientific knowledge to the public (Jack 10; Gates and Shteir 4; Bonta). Likewise, in genres of nature writing, nineteenth-century American women naturalists first wrote in popular genres such as field guides before gaining acceptance as authors in the literary nature essay tradition (Applegarth, "Genre" 54). In short, women, who often worked on the margins of the scientific community, had the greatest success when writing science for a public audience, a practice that was for a long time eschewed by the scientific community.

Douglas was researching the Everglades when the scientific study of ecology was in its infancy, and she made no claims to being a scientist. Indeed, while critics tried to discredit Carson as merely a storyteller and not a scientist, Douglas strongly identified as a storyteller. Still, Douglas's *River of Grass* serves as a successful example of a woman writer bringing scientific knowledge about nature and ecology to popular readers. Douglas was able to navigate this difficult terrain in part because her book was in the *Rivers of America* series. This series, which was founded by a woman who elevated other women writers, and which was ostensibly focused on folk histories of U.S. river settlements, served as a point of access for Douglas. Under the guise of popular history, the *Rivers of America* series gave Douglas an opportunity to teach readers about the ecology of the Everglades. To do so, Douglas combines the expectations of the series with a blend of literature and science characteristic of environmental rhetoric to engage her readers and to advocate for the Everglades' survival.

The Everglades as a River

Douglas was a rhetorically savvy writer who understood conventions and editorial and audience expectations. For example, when she began her freelance career, she conscientiously studied the form and content of the magazines for which she wished to write stories. In her autobiography, she relates, "I sat down and deliberately studied the kind of story I thought Mr. Lorimer [George Horace Lorimer, the editor of the *Saturday Evening Post*] liked.'" (Douglas and Rothchild 169). While Douglas does not describe her preparation writing for the *Rivers of America* series, it is fair to assume that she familiarized herself with the series and its previous publications. She would have understood the typical patterns and expectations of *Rivers of America*

books, and as an experienced writer, she would have worked to make sure that her book "fit" the series. At the same time, Douglas had her own interests and motives. As composition and genre studies scholars have observed, writers work in negotiation with the external structures of a genre and its rhetorical situation on the one hand and the internal structure of their own ideas on the other (Brooks and Jacobs qtd. in Bawarshi 79). Anis Bawarshi argues that this negotiation includes "the relationship between a writer's material, local conditions, and the genre's material, local conditions, and the genre's ideological and discursive demands" (79). Likewise, in *River of Grass,* one can trace the ways in which Douglas adopted the style and some of the typical features of the *Rivers of America* series—a dramatic and literary rendering of historical stories, for example. At the same time, Douglas adapted the form for her own purposes, given her own local conditions and ideological position. More specifically, she adapted and departed from the typical *Rivers of America* book so that she could respond rhetorically to the environmental crisis facing the Everglades.

The most obvious way *River of Grass* departs from the *Rivers of America* series is in its subject: The Everglades is not a river. The water of the Everglades does flow slowly from north to south, but defining it as a river stretches the geographic definition. Scientists today describe it as a connected freshwater system "of marl prairies, sawgrass marshes, tropical hammocks, cypress swamps, pinelands, sloughs, and lakes" (Davis, *An Everglades* 27). Further, the Everglades has not served the same social function as a river; it has not mediated trade, transportation, and settlement in the same ways major rivers such as the Mississippi or Hudson have. The history of human relationships to the Everglades is starkly different from the history of human relationships to rivers.[8] Therefore, in choosing the Everglades as her subject, Douglas naturally had to depart from the series' advertised goal to examine the history of rivers as "the original places of settlement and communication and later the means of movement" in the U.S. (McCague back cover).

The metaphor, "river of grass" was a clever way to suit the *Rivers of America* series, and it became Douglas's most lasting and influential argument in defense of the Everglades. Ironically, even though the river of grass metaphor helped align her book with the series, to make this argument, Douglas had to depart from the series formula by paying extended attention to the nature and ecology of the Everglades. As environmental historian Jack E. Davis explains,

> Volumes in the [*Rivers of America*] series typically open with the most elemental geographic description of the river in question before expeditiously shifting to the books' principal subject, people. . . . In a slight departure, Carl Carmer devoted the first chapter of *The Hudson* solely to natural history. This chapter is a mere five pages, however, whereas the opener of Douglas's volume runs *fifty-one pages*, all of them about nature, wild and freewheeling and lacking in a single human footprint. (*An Everglades* 360, emphasis added)

These 51 pages focused on nature make Douglas's book quite different from the *Rivers of America* books before it, yet this first chapter is necessary to establish the argument that the Everglades is a unique kind of river—an argument that aligns Douglas's book with the series and revises readers' negative perceptions of the Everglades as merely a swamp.

8 For a history of how Native Americans used the waterways of the Everglades from the pre-colonial era through the early twentieth century, see Tebeau. For a history of pioneer-era trading between Native Americans and white settlers in South Florida, see Kersey.

Arguably, this first chapter, entitled "The Nature of the Everglades," is the most influential, and compared to the other chapters, it draws the most from the conservation and nature writing traditions described above. Douglas's first chapter applies literary style to scientific observations of nature; it "places the natural world at the center of readers' attention" (Johnson-Sheehan and Morgan 10). With the opening lines quoted at the beginning of this article, Douglas establishes the uniqueness and beauty of the Florida Everglades. Using a lyrical style, she poses her principal argument, that the Everglades is not a swamp, a wasteland, or a deluge of muck and water, but a river of grass, a balance of nature unlike anywhere else on earth. In the discussion that follows, Douglas offers a detailed description of each of the elements contributing to the Everglades' unique ecology: the sawgrass, the water, and the rock. Then, in a section headed "The River of Time," Douglas traces the prehistory of Florida from the Pliocene to the Miocene, when the peninsula of Florida was first formed, before moving into a section describing the flora and fauna or "Life on the Rock" (33, 39).

Absent from Douglas's first chapter is human life. She presents nature on its own and in doing so, brings the environment from background to foreground, giving rhetorical presence to the Everglades (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 115-20). By electing to focus on the natural elements of the Everglades and omitting any reference to humanity in her first chapter, Douglas imbues nature with "importance and pertinency" (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 116). Moreover, she suggests the posthumanist importance of the Everglades. As Branch argues, Douglas "compels readers to engage in the salutary exercise of envisioning a natural world devoid of human species . . . . Her approach asks us to consider the importance and beauty of a river of grass that exists outside the flow of human history, a place so essentially inhuman in its purpose that we can begin to comprehend it only if we meet it on its own terms" (128). Douglas writes that the Everglades "were complete before man came to them, and for centuries afterward, when he [sic] was one of those forms which shared, in a finely balanced harmony, the forces and the ancient nature of the place" (9). Here Douglas subtly hints at a less "finely balanced harmony" between humans and nature to come, foreshadowing her critique of human's destruction of the Everglades later in the book.

Characteristic of environmental rhetoric, the descriptions of nature in *River of Grass* are firmly rooted in extant scientific knowledge. Through these descriptions, Douglas posits a new understanding of nature for her readers to consider. Douglas's river of grass argument, which emphasizes the "the simplicity, the diversity, the related harmony of the forms of life [the Everglades] enclose," drew from the emerging science of ecology (5). The study of ecology became a distinct discipline in the U.S. around the turn of the twentieth century but did not gain prominence until the 1960s with the beginning of the contemporary environmental movement.[9] Granted, some ecologically-minded ideas had been in circulation for a while. Prompted by concerns over depleted resources, Progressive Era conservationists like Gifford Pinchot advocated for the "wise use or planned development of resources," while preservationists like John Muir sought to protect unaltered nature, especially through the creation of national parks (Nash 129). However, both preservationists and conservationists were anthropocentric, prioritizing the human use of nature, either as a resource or as commodified scenery (Taylor 329-30). In Florida, efforts to drain the Everglades fit counterintuitively within the

9 See Martin and Jones for accounts of how the discipline of ecology was forged within the context of nuclear experimentation during the Cold War.

progressive conservation paradigm. Governor Napoleon Broward "freely spoke of [wetlands] reclamation as conservation" (Davis, *An Everglades* 151). On the other hand, South Florida naturalists like John Gifford, John Kunkel Small, and Charles Torrey Simpson extolled the virtues of the Everglades and voiced concerns about their demise. Sometimes, however, these naturalists advocated for preservation at the same time they accepted efforts to drain and alter the Everglades (Davis, *An Everglades* 220-2). These contradictions revealed a failure to understand the Everglades as an interconnected system. Douglas's secondary research into the ecology and hydrology of the Everglades worked to correct such misunderstandings.

When Douglas began her research and writing for *River of Grass,* "scientists had only begun to decipher the ecological complexities of the Everglades" (Davis, *An Everglades* 354). In the late 1930s and early 1940s, scientists began performing some of the first hydrological studies of the Everglades, and Douglas's book helped bring this new scientific knowledge to the public (Wilhelm 33). Douglas was not a scientist, but she had access to some of the most cutting-edge research on Florida natural history at the time. As a former journalist and daughter of the former *Miami Herald* editor, Douglas was well connected to South Florida's naturalists and conservationists, including C. Kay Davis and John Stevens of the U.S. Soil Conservation Service, R.V. Allison of the University of Florida Everglades Experiment Station, John H. Davis of the Florida Geological Survey, and the botanist David Fairchild. In her acknowledgements, Douglas credits Garald Parker, the state hydrologist and an expert on the Everglades system, with helping her conceive of the idea of the Everglades as a river of grass (Douglas and Rothchild 191; Davis, *An Everglades* 355-8; 386-7).

Equipped with the scientific knowledge she had gained from her research and her contacts, Douglas crafted an effective environmental rhetoric. She distilled what she learned through her research into language that was both beautiful and based on empirical facts balancing the aesthetic with the scientific in the tradition of nature writing. Like the conservation writing described above, Douglas used the third person point of view, "privileg[ing] scientific evidence over personal experience" (Johnson-Sheehan and Morgan 10). Using third person also allowed Douglas to maintain "an objective stance" and sidestep any questions regarding gender and credibility (Applegarth, "Genre" 56).. For example, when Douglas explains the Everglades water cycle, she uses language that is descriptive yet objective:

> On summer mornings over the Glades the sky is only faintly hazed. The moisture is being drawn up from the sheen among the saw grass. By noon, the first ranks of the clouds will lie at the same height across the world, cottony and growing. The moisture lifts the whipped and glistening heights. The bases darken, grow purple, grow brown. The sun is almost gone. The highest clouds loose their moisture, which is condensed into cloud again before it can reach the earth. Then they grow more heavy. The winds slash before them and the rains roar down, making all the saw grass somber. (17)

Here, Douglas navigates her own gendered position, as well as the tricky balance of science and literary nature writing.

However, her diction is anything but the stilted language of science, with her evocative descriptions of "faintly hazed" skies and "cottony and growing" clouds (17). Douglas's language belies a sense of wonder that has held a tenuous position in scientific discourse since the Enlightenment period. On the one hand, a

sense of wonder can lead toward inquiry into the natural world; however, it is a sentiment often regarded as something to be "occluded or overcome '' through the disinterested process of the scientific method (Beudel 267). Despite this, an appeal to wonder can motivate environmental activism. Saskia Beudel argues that "once wonder is triggered and enlivened through attentive hands-on and sensory engagement with the world about us, it has the potential to foreclose or nullify the urge for destruction" (271). Accordingly, in the first chapter of *River of Grass,* Douglas evokes a sense of wonder for the Everglades. With this evocation of wonder and with her metaphor of a river of grass, Douglas offers readers a revised perception of the Everglades in particular and of nature in general. She posits a new human-nature relationship, one in which nature is valuable for its own sake, instead of with respect to the ways in which humans may use it. This perspective becomes a key piece in her environmental rhetoric. By promoting an appreciation for the unusual beauty and unique ecology of the Everglades in her first chapter, Douglas establishes an ideal human-nature relationship that would be in stark contrast to the history of Everglades destruction she goes on to narrate in later chapters.

River of Grass as Critical Florida History

Following the first chapter on "The Nature of Florida," Douglas proceeds to material more in line with the *Rivers of America* series: people. In the next chapters, she tells the long history of the societies that have lived in and around the Everglades, beginning with the very first people believed to have crossed a land bridge from Siberia to North America and migrated south eventually to the Florida peninsula. Her history ends with the present-day 1940s. Although Douglas's first chapter most resembles the traditions of nature writing and conservation writing associated with environmental rhetoric, her later chapters scrutinizing Florida's complicated history are also important to her argument in defense of the Everglades. In her history, Douglas again veers from the *Rivers of America* project through her focus on indigenous societies, her critique of white colonialist attitudes, and her condemnation of the more recent attempts to drain the Everglades. Far from inspiring patriotic feeling, Douglas's history reveals how the desire for profit and progress led to environmental destruction.

Skinner's goals in creating the *Rivers of America* series were nationalistic. Conceiving her project during the Great Depression, Skinner was determined to tell stories that would rekindle national pride at a time when feelings were especially low.[10] In "Rivers and American Folk," an essay describing and promoting the series, Skinner explains that "[w]hen American folk have troubles which do not end swiftly, they begin presently to examine their own sources as a nation and their own story as a people" (839). She believed that rivers were central to this story, writing, "It is as the story of American rivers that the folk sagas will be told" (839). Skinner saw rivers as vital sites of pre-industrial American history, where "foreigners… began their transition from Europeans to Americans as River Folk" (840). The series thus focused on tales of early pioneers and settlers along the river valleys of the United States.

10 Although Skinner passed away in 1939 and only witnessed the publication of the first four books in the series, her nationalistic vision continued and was especially evident during the World War II era publications that immediately preceded Douglas's book. As Fitzgerald observes, World War II era *Rivers* books often featured "patriotic exhortations from their authors, encouraging conservation and promoting the purchase of War Bonds" (xxi).

Skinner considered herself a pupil of Frederick Jackson Turner, and her *Rivers of America* project reflects the spirit of Turnerian frontierism.[11] Skinner's project lauded Eurocentric technological progress and westward expansion. This ideology is evident in Skinner's explanation that her books would present the river settlements of the early U.S. as "a new thing on the earth, evolving a new faith and theory of government out of practical and physical struggle with the earth and under the menace of Indians and other wars" (qtd. in Colon 16). Skinner sought to tell stories of American ingenuity and progress, stories that focused on the "marvelous inventions that have speeded our labor and increased our riches built upon this foundation. Inventions of free-minded men in a free society" (qtd. in Colon 16). Sigma Colon describes the *Rivers of America* project as producing "a narrative form of settler colonialist ideology and race-based nationalism" (15). In such narratives, not only do white settlers conquer the lands; indigenous peoples are also quietly erased. As Davis explains, *Rivers of America* series books typically "dealt with" Native American histories first and "expeditiously . . . before too much space is taken from a rousing narrative on the development of American civilization" (*An Everglades* 360). Mink describes the treatment of Native Americans in *Rivers of America* books as following an "archetypal frontier progression" with "Indians and their cultures represented as a simple, primitive, and natural antipode to the depressed modern condition" (764). In most of the books, these societies "disappear from the landscape," removed by "time." White settlers' active participation in this disappearance is quietly omitted (Mink 764). However, as Colon demonstrates, not all *Rivers of America* authors ascribed to these ideologies.[12]

Douglas's history of the Everglades does not skirt over Native American history or laud the advancement of American civilization; in fact, seven of the fifteen chapters in *River of Grass* are devoted to Florida's Native American history. Citing recent archeological discoveries, Douglas offers an account of Florida's first peoples—the Timucuan, Calusa, the Tequesta, and the Mayaimi, followed by a sharp critique of colonialism and settlers' attempts to conquer Florida, an unvarnished history of the Seminole Wars, and a critical account of the follied attempts to advance civilization through the destruction of the Everglades. There is a clear thesis running through Douglas's historical narrative as she recounts the genocide of native peoples through settler colonialism, wars over land and slavery, and the draining of the Everglades—her history of Florida reveals a damning pattern of greed and destruction.

Douglas had no patience for stories of European colonialists as heroes, brave adventurers, or discoverers of new lands. She saw through the mythos and described them as greedy and genocidal. "[A]fter Columbus had opened up the New World," she writes, "island after island of Indian people, by slavery, torture, hard work, homesickness and diseases, thousands after thousands of men, women, chiefs, children, priests,

11 Skinner and Turner had a long-standing epistolary relationship. In a memorial to Turner in the *New York Herald Tribune*, Skinner writes, "I never met Turner but I can consider myself, in a sense, a pupil of his because of our correspondence" (qtd. in Mink 758).

12 According to Colon, Walter Havighurst, author of *The Upper Mississippi: A Wilderness Saga* (1937), was "among the most blatant proponents of Euroamerican solidarity"; in his narrative, diverse European groups—Swedes, Norwegians, Scots, Germans, and New Englanders—were brought together by their shared racial ties against an "Indian menace" (qtd. in Colon 15). Other authors, such as Maxwell Struthers Burt, author of *Powder River: Let'er Buck*, lauded Native American nations as stewards of the land and described their displacement by Euro-American settlers as "one of the greatest tragedies in history" (qtd. in Colon 17). Likewise, in *Kennebec: Cradle of Americans*, Robert Tristram Coffin critiqued the lumber industry for prioritizing profits over the conservation of natural resources; he also advocated for environmental protections (Colon 16).

fishermen, warriors, had been blotted out" (92). Douglas clearly identifies white colonialists as the agents to remove and destroy. "[N]ever before in history," she writes, "was a whole people so destroyed, and by so few" (92). The motivation behind this destruction is obvious to Douglas: greed. For example, she pointedly debunks the tale of Ponce de Leon and his quest for a fountain of youth: "The story of the Fountain of Youth was written only many years later" (97). On the contrary, she explains, "What he wanted was slaves and gold" (99). Douglas ascribes the same motives to the First Seminole War and the border skirmishes between Spain and America that preceded that war. She describes how Spanish-controlled Florida became a place of refuge for those attempting to escape slavery, a refuge routinely invaded by slave catchers. Again, Douglas is unequivocal about the American motivations behind these disputes. She writes, "The white men wanted land and they wanted slaves with which to work it. The Indians who gave safety and freedom, or a nominal slavehood, to escaping Negroes and loyally refused to give them up to the slave catchers, had both. That was the whole story" (194).

In Douglas's history of Florida, greed led to the conquest of people, and she goes on to show how this same type of greed motivated the conquest of nature.[13] Ever since the declaration of Florida's official statehood, and even before, white men had been eyeing the Everglades with a design to profit from them. It was a settler colonialist ideology that would characterize the white American attitude to the Everglades until the latter half of the twentieth century. Just as white Americans considered the expansion of the United States and the conquest of its lands from native inhabitants part of a "manifest destiny," so did they understand that nature itself should be conquered and possessed, utilized for the perceived progress of American civilization. Douglas reveals how this greedy pursuit of so-called progress led to an environmental crisis.

Douglas recounts efforts to drain and dredge the Everglades in the decades leading up to her book, beginning with Henry Disston's ultimately unsuccessful contract to drain 12 million acres of the Everglades in 1881 (283). Douglas blames Governor Napoleon Bonaparte Broward for the earliest success in Everglades drainage. In his 1904 campaign for Florida governor, he made Everglades drainage a cornerstone of his platform. Douglas describes his persuasive campaigning:

> He unfurled big maps of the Glades area, showing how the canals should run and how they would serve not only drainage, but for transportation by boats, to build up the country . . . It was enough to get anybody excited about, the way Napoleon B. Broward would rear up that great frame of his, and in a voice that spoke intimately to every man roll out the long sentences so that the spines of all the little boys listening on the edge of the crowd would fairly prickle. (312)

Broward's ambitions were to drain all the Everglades, and fortunately, these ambitions were larger than the technology of the time allowed, but he did dig four canals and more distressingly helped popularize the idea that the Everglades can and should be drained. (Grunwald, *The Swamp* 130-50; Davis, *An Everglades* 115-26). In the years following Broward's governorship, parts of the Everglades were drained and dredged, canals were dug, and land was cleared and sold. The interwar years in Florida were a period of real estate booms and busts, as new properties were developed and sold within Everglades land.

13 Douglas's arguments anticipate ecofeminism. See Sierra for a discussion of Douglas's proto-ecofeminism in her early fiction.

In relating this history, Douglas questions the logic and motivation behind Everglades drainage. She notes the connection between the greed of land speculators seeking to drain and profit from the Everglades and that of European colonialists centuries before, writing "What had been the Florida boom, the hot released passion for easy money from land, which had gripped the country recurrently since the Civil War, was certainly the same kind of hysteria which had helped discover and populate the New World" (341). Douglas also rebukes the logic of progress that saw Everglades drainage as a great human technological innovation:

> . . . in all those years of talk and excitement about drainage, the only argument was a school-boy's logic. The drainage of the Everglades would be a Great Thing. Americans did Great Things. Therefore, Americans would drain the Everglades. Beyond that—to the intricate and subtle relation of soil, of fresh water and evaporation, and of runoff and salt intrusion, and all the consequences of disturbing the fine balance nature had set up in the past four thousand years—no one knew enough to look. They saw the Everglades no longer as a vast expanse of saw grass and water, but as a dream, a mirage of riches that many men would follow to their ruin. (286)

In her history of Disston, Broward, and the others who sought to drain the Everglades, Douglas exposed a developmentalist attitude, in which the value of nature rested upon its potential to be cultivated, manipulated, and profited from (Killingsworth and Palmer 9-14). It was a manifestation of the Turnerian attitude of "winning the wilderness" (Turner). This, to Douglas, was part of a "school boy's logic"; rather than progress, such logic had only led to destruction. Douglas's long history of Florida demonstrates the false premises and devastating consequences of the developmentalist attitude. In contrast, Douglas proposes a more ecologically-minded attitude toward nature, one that recognizes "intricate and subtle relations," the "fine balance" of nature, and the "consequences" of the ill-conceived projects of "school boys" craving profit and progress. Ultimately, through her environmental rhetoric, Douglas shows that the current crisis facing the Everglades was engineered by humans, and in a call to her readers, she argues that humans must step in to address the problem they created. This history helps set up the conclusion of Douglas's book, where she makes an overt case for saving the Everglades.

Conclusion: The Eleventh Hour

In examining the entirety of Douglas's *The Everglades: River of Grass*, it is useful to divide the book into three main parts, each of which contributes an important appeal to a larger overarching environmental rhetoric. In the first chapter of the book, Douglas presents the Everglades on its own and appeals to the reader's imagination and sense of wonder. The second part, the middle chapters, is a history of the Everglades as a sad tale of greed and destruction. Together, these first two parts articulate an argument for a reorientation of humans to their environment and a rebuke of the developmentalist attitude: Nature is intrinsically valuable; visions of conquering nature are part of a greedy, damaging legacy.

The third part of Douglas's book is her last chapter, "The Eleventh Hour," where she warns that the Everglades is in peril and makes a direct call to save it. Reading *River of Grass* today, almost 80 years after its initial publication, it is difficult to grasp the foresight of Douglas's call. For one, given the amount of environmental degradation we have witnessed in the past seven decades and the existential threat of climate change, we are all too familiar with environmental crises. It is also easily forgotten that Douglas's incredible envi-

ronmental rhetoric was born from a project with entirely different aims. Despite this, Douglas's book proves to offer a compelling and useful model of environmental rhetoric: balancing science, history, and literature; evoking wonder for the natural world; unabashedly critiquing dominant narratives and arguments; and making a direct appeal to action.

River of Grass ends with these hopeful words: "Perhaps even in this last hour, in a new relation of usefulness and beauty, the vast, magnificent, subtle, and unique region of the Everglades may not be utterly lost" (385). What Douglas did not realize at the time was that the fight to save the Everglades was just beginning. She would take up this fight again later in her life and continue fighting until her death at the age of 108. *River of Grass* proved to be an important start to a conversation about the Everglades and an awakening to a "new relation" with nature.

Biography

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Review of *Transnational Assemblages: Social Justice and Crisis Communication during Disaster.*

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Baniya, Sweta. *Transnational Assemblages: Social Justice and Crisis Communication during Disaster.* National Council of Teachers of English; The WAC Clearinghouse, 2024.

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At first glance, it might not seem as if *Peitho* readers would find deep interest in a book focused on rhetorical approaches to disaster relief. But upon our reading of Sweta Baniya's 2024 monograph *Transnational Assemblages: Social Justice and Communication during Disaster*, we believe there is much for feminist readers to learn and find value in. Throughout her book, Baniya foregrounds feminist rhetorical values and stances as she pays special attention to intersectional experience; local, national, and international acts of coalition building; and her own positionality while taking up her book's purpose: to explore how people around the globe formed transnational assemblages to provide disaster relief in response to the 2015 Nepal earthquake and 2017's Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico.

Drawing on the work of scholars such as Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, and Manuel DeLanda, Baniya defines transnational assemblages as "collectives of people, organizations, or entities who are connected transnationally via online and offline mediums and who gather to respond to a certain situation of natural or political crisis by challenging the dominant narratives and practices" (13). Using a mixed-methods approach of narrative inquiry and social network analysis, Baniya gathers both micro-level, qualitative and macro-level, quantitative data to uncover the localized stories, formation, and mobilization of transnational assemblages created during the two disasters. Baniya prioritizes social justice concerns throughout her analysis, focusing on marginalized communities' crisis response efforts and inequity in disaster relief. Feminist scholars, of course, will be drawn to this focus, especially given the exigency of our current global moment, as we face a new reality marked by diminished U.S. federal support for institutions like the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

In her introduction, Baniya defines "disasters" as "events that have extreme, large-scale impacts that affect a great number of lives" (4). Disasters, Baniya clarifies, "can have a multidimensional effect that requires the involvement of national, local and international entities to address the aftermath" (4). Baniya goes on to assert the rationale for using assemblage theory to understand disaster relief, citing the variety of local and global collectives involved in responding to disasters. She contends that the transnational assemblages she studies reveal how such assemblages "can take countless multimodal forms, and members of the assemblage can perform such communication both formally and informally," within and without digital contexts as well (15). Baniya continues, "transnational assemblages help in identifying the gaps in communication that may

be created by the official disaster response system, and they may also encourage actors to stand up for the community" (15). Baniya also uses this introductory chapter to underscore the necessity for technical communication specialists to engage these discussions about disaster relief, highlighting especially those scholars in technical communication who have developed social justice-oriented frameworks to approach technical communication. Drawing on the work of scholars such as Natasha Jones, Michelle Eble, and Angela Haas, Baniya claims that studies like hers offer insight into how to "incorporate social justice-oriented communication and disaster response that will help us in understanding how current disaster relief models strengthen systemic oppressions, creating newer forms of injustice in post-disaster situations" (9).

In both of her two case-study chapters, Baniya is highly reflective of her own positionality, explaining how she offers an insider and outsider account of the two research sites. In chapter one, she explores her positionality as a local Nepali journalist, communications practitioner, and active social media user who experienced the 2015 Nepal earthquake firsthand. Baniya's focus is to turn attention from large-scale federally funded relief efforts to explore instead how local Nepali communities worked within transnational assemblages to respond to the disaster. Using the Nepali term *swa-byabasthapan*, which Baniya translates as self-management," Baniya explores the alternative, grassroots-level disaster response performed by individuals within transnational assemblages who did not wait for the government or any official organizations" (54). These self-management efforts indicate the communities' investments in sovereignty and control as they assess the "collaborative actions necessary to address the injustices these individual communities . . . face [and . . .] understand the community and its needs" (54).

As an outsider investigating the devastating effects of Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico, Baniya works in chapter two to acknowledge her limited perspective while still uncovering how transnational assemblages informed relief efforts in response to this disaster. Similar to her work in chapter one, Baniya investigates how Puerto Rican communities addressed governmental shortcomings through their own efforts. Drawing on the expertise of feminist scholars like Karrieann Soto Vega, Baniya highlights how local assemblages enacted *autogestion*, which, like chapter one's *swa-byabasthapan,* is also "loosely translated as 'self-management'" (91). Here, Baniya considers how actors leveraged digital media platforms to "prioritize[e] the voices and needs of the people and creat[e] flexible protocols that continued to evolve as the crisis unfolded" (92). Focusing on examples like the disaster relief app Connect Relief, Baniya explores how this "application helped collect data, identify community needs, and match donors and volunteers with needy communities" (94) in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico.

Through the two chapters on the two case studies, Baniya engages two research sites of different geopolitical contexts and delineates non-Western, decolonial modes of disaster relief . In her concluding chapter of the book, Baniya considers what readers might learn from these case studies, which seems critically important to current local and transnational exigencies and circumstances. In both chapters' studies, Baniya's research data indicates that transnational assemblages not only facilitate crisis communication and action as disaster response, but they also have the potential to challenge and highlight inequalities: social injustices created by unequal distribution of aid or information through the official narrative of authorities. Building on these findings, Baniya thus redefines decolonial and social justice approaches to crisis communication as

"alternative crisis communication performed by individuals unrelated to any official or international organizations to curate, share, and validate information for the larger public by using varied publicly accessible digital technologies and platforms" (119). Baniya also turns her attention to the pedagogical in this final chapter, explicating how faculty in technical communication might engage the possibility and promise of transnational assemblages as they explore new social justice-oriented response and communication strategies.

It's essential to dwell on the positionality and the stance Baniya cultivates and calls for in her monograph. As readers and reviewers of *Transnational Assemblages*, we especially appreciated Baniya's focus on positionality as a way to meditate and make sense of disaster-related experiential realities (or not) and as a lens through which to analyze disaster relief efforts. While Jess appreciated the outsider perspective Baniya cultivates in chapter two, Carina found that reading this book brought back memories of the Sichuan earthquake in China, a collective grief shared by every Chinese citizen who lived through May 12, 2008.

At a time when access to globally available social media was not available, and living far away from Sichuan, Carina's only memories of the disaster came through official TV channels. Baniya's book prompted questions about the stories silenced or untold with the absence of social media, and the enormous relief people would receive had it been present. Carina knew, however, that countless efforts of "*autogestion*" and "*swa-byabasthapan*" were made locally and transnationally, despite the very limited digital network resources back then. Even though Baniya's transnational assemblages are a proximate product of digital tools, Carina firmly believes that their spirit of self-management existed before digital spaces. People have been able to conjure up local, individual efforts of disaster relief long before the access of digital tools. Transnational assemblages, therefore, remain as a non-Western, temporal, and spatial reality whenever disaster strikes in less privileged areas.

As Baniya's book prompts this kind of reflection, it also pronounces the power of crisis communication made possible through transnational assemblages to reach the marginalized, the ignored, and the unseen in disasters in a timely manner timely manners. As decolonial and social-justice research is currently at the forefront of technical and professional communication, Baniya's book serves as a fine example of a mixed-methods, multi-sited, and multimodal study that is mediated by the "self-reflexivity" of the researcher (39). Feminist scholars should pay close attention to how this book contributes to crisis communication and disaster studies by introducing non-Western methods of disaster relief sensitive to local communities and marginalized populations, which are made possible through transnational assemblages. *Transnational Assemblages* ultimately offers a redefinition of crisis communication with social-justice orientations that future researchers, educators, and practitioners can adopt in the study , teaching, and management of disaster relief.

Biographies

Carina Jiaxing Shi is an English PhD candidate studying rhetoric and composition at the University of Maryland, College Park. Her research centers on translingual artisanship and translingual/transmodal fluency within academic and professional writing literacies. She also invests her time in the politics of U.S.-trans-

national identities, comparative rhetoric, and transnational literacy autobiography. She endeavors to find scholarly values in lived experiences. She teaches upper-level professional writing courses and first-year academic writing courses at UMD, where she also served as writing program administrator. Carina believes that art and music are ladders to the soul, and the making of art is no different from prayer.

Jessica Enoch is professor of English and director of the academic writing program at the University of Maryland. Her recent book publications include *Domestic Occupations: Spatial Rhetorics and Women's Work*; *Mestiza Rhetorics: An Anthology of Mexicana Activism in the Spanish-Language Press, 1887-1922* (co-edited with Cristina Ramírez), and *Women at Work: Rhetorics of Gender and Labor* (co-edited with David Gold). Enoch currently serves as the immediate past president of the Coalition of Feminist Scholars in the History of Rhetoric and Composition.