

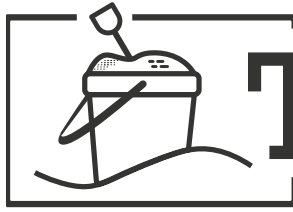


The Sandbox

VOLUME II • ISSUE I

Published by the Community Literacies Collaboratory, the signature program of the Brown Chair in English Literacy at the University of Arkansas





The Sandbox

Short Papers, Big Ideas on Literacies & Learning

VOLUME II • ISSUE I

Published by the Community Literacies Collaboratory, the signature program
of the Brown Chair in English Literacy at the University of Arkansas

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LETTER FROM OUR EDITOR

Welcome to the Sandbox

Eric Darnell Pritchard

FIRST PUBLISHED IN
THE SANDBOX

YEAR PUBLISHED
2025

READ OR
LISTEN ONLINE



Dear Readers,

During my childhood summers, my family and I would go to Jones Beach on the southern coast of Long Island, New York and enjoy all the sun, water, and breezes the Atlantic Ocean had to offer. A favorite pastime of mine, my siblings, and cousins was to dig into the rich, moist sand and use it to make model castles, houses, cars, animals, and flowers right there on the beach. Often our parents and grandparents would join us in our play. With each object we made we were making a world that reflected our individual dreams but contributing to a collective vision too. Eventually, as the sun began to say farewell for the day, we would leave the world we made by sand to be washed into the earth from which we created it, until the next time.

When summer went away, our play with the sand did not always end. Some of the city's public parks had sandboxes: large squares in playgrounds filled with sandboxes

where the young (and the young at heart!) engage in a joyful practice of communal imagination and manifestation.

We named the CLC's publication *The Sandbox* because we see the work of community literacies research, advocacy, and pedagogy as practices of community, wonder, and possibility that can be found in every sandbox. *The Sandbox* invites community literacies workers to write thought provoking, accessible, but brief essays, policy memos, or reports on a timely issue within literacy learning and practice. The publication's purpose—that's the "short papers, big ideas" part—is for the works featured to provide nuanced insight into a salient issue for general audiences, creating a resource for people to use in efforts to shape literacy learning, development, and practice for the better and across a wide range of contexts.

In our issues of *The Sandbox*, born digital and then printed in a collected volume annually, we strive to make the work accessible in all senses of the word, including those called for by numerous activists and scholars of disability justice. The wide range of work we publish includes scholarly essays (800-1500 words); policy memos/

Interested in Submitting to the Sandbox?



reports (1-5 pages); book reviews (750-1500 words); review essays of 2 or more books] (1500-3000 words); literacy and learning narratives/literacy autobiographies (1000-1500 words), and interviews. Coauthored and collaborative work is more than welcome. All contributions undergo an editorial process of anonymous peer-review, and once accepted, authors engage in a collaborative process of revising the work toward publication and are engaged at each stage including copyediting, proofreading, and visual image selection.

Unlike most scholarly publications, we can provide an honorarium for all writers whose work is selected for publication in *The Sandbox* at a rate that is competitive with freelance writing for mainstream publications such as The New York Times and Washington Post. In future issues, we hope to feature reports from some of the various community partners with whom the Brown Chair

and CLC have had the pleasure of collaborating, from multiple literacy councils across Arkansas to literacy educators, advocates, and researchers with projects all over the country, including Conway, Arkansas; Ames, Iowa; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Tallahassee, Florida; Fort Worth, Texas, and Houston, Texas. We hope that you will answer our open call to be contributors to future issues and consider pitching an essay, policy memo, or report for publication consideration.

The Sandbox is a critical part of the purpose and work of the CLC which, in the months leading to and after our launch on May 6, 2022, facilitates and supports a variety of literacy partnerships in Arkansas and nationally, ranging from scholarly research and educational and policy initiatives to community programming centered on various aspects of empowerment and advocacy.

The three parts of CLC's name speaks to a vital part of the full essence of the CLC and its work. By '**community**' we seek to grow and nurture literacy within communities in Arkansas and beyond, while honoring that literacy and community are vital to and constitutive of one another. With '**literacies**', we refer to the practices of meaning-making that include but are not limited to traditional modes of literacy: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Literacies are inherent to every measure of self and communal expression, from what we read and write to the clothes we wear, the histories we archive, and the diversity of languages we honor and embrace across communities. Lastly, '**collaboratory**' characterizes the incubator in which we invite, sponsor, and sustain collaborative community literacies work among various literacies stakeholders who, though not always collocated, are no less mutually invested in the transformative power of literacies.

Through the principled ethics of justice, imagination, community accountability, and love, the CLC creates and support partnerships and programs in four key areas: research, education, advocacy, and empowerment. As with The ww, the CLC invites all literacy stakeholders—advocates, educators, librarians, researchers, policymakers, and creatives—to dream projects that will help all people practice literacies more fluently, richly, productively, and joyfully. Such partnerships include supporting scholarly research with clear statewide, national, and international literacy and education policy outcomes that can positively impact literacy learning and practice in schools or adult literacy programs, through to smaller programs that focus on literacy development within small gatherings of readers and writers, to literacy learning and practice in applied trades and crafts such as farming, sewing, painting, theater, and photography.

We anticipate that the articles published here will inspire all who read them to pursue their own deep thinking, tenacious visioning, and collaboration on topics related to the contents of the articles we feature and however they speak to the work of literacy learning and practice in your life and work wherever that work takes place, such as your home, classrooms, community organizations, libraries, religious and spiritual spaces, work, or virtually, and through writing, reading, speaking, listening, or any number of applied and artistic trades and crafts.

Before sending us off to read and engage the works in this publication, I wish to thank all authors whose work grace the pages of this journal for seeing *The Sandbox* as a home for your wonderful work and for your patience as we bring each issue to life. I want also to thank the Brown Chair and CLC's staff: Jami Padgett, associate editor of the journal and assistant to the Brown Chair; graduate assistants Jackie Chicaese and Molly Mingo; and Braxton Kocher of Bandt Agency, a wizard of web design and marketing, who supports Team CLC to more sharply articulate the work we do and to make sure *The Sandbox* reflects that in every way possible. Most notably, Braxton helped us to meet the goals to make the journal as accessible as we possibly could, as this is something we will keep expanding on because it is at the heart of our work. My thanks also to the Advisory Board of the CLC which consists of faculty in higher education, librarians, and authors, who have committed to the vision of the CLC and work diligently to help us manifest it every day. You can learn more about each of them on our website.

In addition, I wish to thank the University of Arkansas College of Arts and Sciences, with special thanks to Kim Gillow and Kristen Young in the Office of Major Gifts and Grants, for their generosity and many efforts to make the CLC and the work of the Office of the Brown Chair in English Literacy a success. My gratitude also to all of the students and my colleagues in the Program in Rhetoric and Composition in the Department of English at the University of Arkansas. Last, but certainly not least, thank you to the Brown Chair in English Literacy—an endowment created jointly with a very generous donation from the Brown Foundation and the Walton Family Gift which funds the CLC. As a community-accountable Black queer feminist scholar-teacher-educator, and a lifelong literacies advocate, it is a deep honor to be able to leverage the resources of this position for work I hope will do its part in creating the world in which we all deserve to live; one where we all have peace and happiness. My great hope is that you feel those commitments in every aspect of this publication and all the CLC's work now and forever.

Now, I get to finally say: welcome to *The Sandbox*! We are so glad you have chosen to read our journal that we have been so intentionally, enthusiastically, and imaginatively created for you. We hope it will be of great use to you in your literacy work and everyday life. We also hope that you too will someday join us as a contributor to *The Sandbox*, sharing with us all your big ideas and short papers on literacy and learning.

With the love of literacy and learning,

Eric Darnell Pritchard, PhD

Founding Director, Community Literacies Collaboratory

Brown Chair in English Literacy

Associate Professor of English

University of Arkansas



Eric Darnell Pritchard

Director, Community Literacies Collaboratory
Brown Chair in English Literacy and Associate
Professor of English at the University of Arkansas

Eric Darnell Pritchard (they/them) is an award-winning writer, cultural critic, and Brown Chair in English Literacy and Associate Professor of English at the University of Arkansas. They are also on the faculty of the Bread Loaf School of English at Middlebury College. They earned their BA in English-Liberal Arts (magna cum laude) from Lincoln University, the nation's oldest historically Black college and university (HBCU). They also earned an MA in Afro-American Studies and a PhD in English (with distinction) from the University of Wisconsin – Madison.

Reading Everyday Life: A Rhetoric and Composition Scholar's Reflections on Experiencing Art that Commemorates Black Life and Legacies

Sharieka Botex Ph.D



FIRST PUBLISHED IN
THE SANDBOX

YEAR PUBLISHED
2025

GENRE
SCHOLARLY ESSAY

READ OR LISTEN ONLINE



In April 2024, my wife and I traveled to Houston, Texas for the first time. While at the airport rental car check-out counter I advised the rental car agent that I wanted my name documented on the rental car paperwork, despite his perspective that it was unnecessary to document me as a driver of the vehicle. While I wished documentation was unnecessary, I persisted on my name being on the rental car paperwork so there was a record that I was an authorized driver, in case such a record became necessary. Like the agent, my wife believed it was unnecessary to document me as a driver on the paperwork, especially after the agent advised that doing so would result in an additional charge. I did not care about the additional charge.

I cared about the anxiety that emerged for me when considering what would happen if I was pulled over while driving the car and I was not listed as a driver. As a Black lesbian, my belief that I should not forgo receiving written

Photo Credit: Stacy Botex, 2024. Photo of Kehinde Wiley's "Archeology of a Silence"

authorization, even for a routine activity like driving a rental car that my wife reserved, superseded the polite rental car agent's well-intended recommendation for me to forgo receiving documented authorization. For me, the paperwork authorized me to drive the vehicle, even if we were pulled over by someone who believed they had the authority to invalidate our word and marriage. Even though I received documented authorization to drive the rental car, I accepted my wife's invitation to drive to her best friend's home.

As my wife drove the Dodge Charger on a Texas highway, I comfortably rode with my window down, and excitedly took in the signs and scenery. We were excited for our trip to Houston and to attend the baptism of the child of one of my wife's best friends. As we headed towards our friends' home, my wife and I had a different opinion about our driving conditions. She wanted the air conditioner on. I wanted to be a hopeless romantic and keep my window down and serenade her as I sang Beyoncé and Miley Cyrus's "II MOST WANTED" on *Cowboy Carter*. There was something special about being the shotgun rider in the car with the love of my life and singing Cyrus and Beyoncé's lyrics "I'll be your shotgun rider/ 'Til the day I die," (Chorus, Lines 1-2). Next to my wife and singing Beyoncé's songs, I felt protected, in ways that are akin to the kinds of protection that Elaine Richardson (680) reflects on African American women using their literacy practices to provide for their "loved ones."

Art's Role in Our Lives, Teaching and Institutions

At a time when Black, LGBTQ, immigrant, women, and historically disenfranchised communities' access to opportunities and rights are being attacked and, in some instances, eliminated, we must respond "yes" to Beyoncé's question "Can we stand for something?," which she asks in "AMERICAN REQUIEM" (Beyoncé, 2024). In responding to Beyoncé's question, we must ensure that our responses are intertwined with an investment in taking stances to create and maintain rights, protections and opportunities for all people. As a rhetoric and composition scholar and teacher, I find comfort in turning to Beyoncé's question and the possibility of hearing how people I work with, teach, and am in community with respond to the question. In this multi-modal literacy autobiography, I share what I gleaned from doing what Eric Darnell Pritchard (2016) in their definition of literacy refers to as "reading everyday life" while listening to Beyoncé's *Cowboy Carter* (2024) and viewing Kehinde Wiley's *An Archeology of Silence* (2024) exhibit at the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston (MFAH) and Kris Graves's *American Monuments* (2024) exhibit in the Duke University Rubenstein Library Photography Gallery.

Pritchard writes that, “Freire, like Truth and myself describes literacy as a practice of meaning-making that does include print, but also as a way of reading everyday life as significant to literacy practice” (20). Within this piece, I reveal what reading everyday life while observing art, texts and monuments in public spaces resulted in for me. In “Postmodern Blackness,” bell hooks’ (1990) critiques postmodern theory and calls for more engagement with Black people and culture and advocates for what she refers (6) to as “Radical postmodernism.” hooks also calls people to engage in transformative and inclusive work that connects people regardless of their identities and circumstances. Within writing studies, there are examples of scholars doing work that hooks recommends when stating “...academics have to give the same critical attention to nurturing and cultivating our ties to black communities that we give to writing, articles, teaching, and lecturing” (hooks, 9-10, pdf).

An example of such work is “Black Linguistic Justice from Theory to Practice,” by Hannah Franz et. al. Franz and her co-authors (2024) shed light on how they support and affirm Black students, including in their design and use of the SRTOW website, which provides resources and approaches for teachers to assess African American Vernacular English and Black students’ writing. Franz et. al (2024) shed light on how “[e]ducator bias tilts” negatively impact Black students and provide insights to address the issue. They write “As a result, sociolinguistic research has addressed the need to mitigate such barriers for African American students, while demonstrating that African American student success can be supported and enhanced by having students learn about African American language and culture (see. e.g., Alim and Baugh; Ball; Fogel and Ehri; Labov)” (Franz et. al, 2024, 650).

I have teaching experiences that align with Franz and her coauthors’ (2024, 650) recommendation for students to engage in educational experiences where they, “... learn about African American language and culture.” In the Spring 2024 semester, my Literacies for Our Lives: Lessons from African American Rhetoric class visited the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University. During our tour of María Magdalena Campos Pons *Behold* Exhibit, our class discussed Campos Pons’ focus on Black women and the essential role they play as leaders and life-givers, who make invaluable contributions to humanity. Our class discussed those themes in Campos Pons’ work, her use of her literacy practices and texts we read about Black peoples’ literacy practices. My experiences with my students, like my forthcoming discussions of my personal experiences with art, evidence hooks’ points that:

“

One can talk about what we are seeing, thinking, or listening to; a space is there for critical exchange. It's exciting to think, write, talk about, and create art that reflects passionate engagement with popular culture, because this may very well be “the” central future location of the resistance struggle, a meeting place where new and radical happenings can occur.” (hooks, 10)

”

hooks' (10) perspective about the role art and literacy practices play in developing “...a meeting place where new and radical happenings can occur” should motivate us because such work may result in creating spaces, resources and opportunities for people. Similar to hooks' recognition of the powerful role art plays in our lives, Nina Simone calls artists to raise awareness about the human experience. Simone states¹, “An artist's duty, as far as I am concerned is to reflect the times.”

In sharing my experiences with these artists' work, I reveal how Beyoncé (2024), Kehinde Wiley (2024), and Kris Graves (2024) shed light on Black people's circumstances and culture in a way that fulfills what Simone refers to as their duty. I believe the artists' work is best described as work Jacqueline Jones Royster and Jean C. Williams (1999) says “allows us to re-see and re-think” (583) our lives, legacies and society. For educators, this piece should illustrate the value of adhering to Gwendolyn Pough's (2011) advice for compositionists to “...push it further and give (students) critical thinking skills, to teach the(m) how-to-read society, or in the words of Sojourner Truth, “read men and nations” (308).

In classifying the experiences I reflect on as experiences where I am seeing, thinking and listening as hooks (10) calls people to do, and reading as Pough and Pritchard calls us to do, I hope to inspire people to, as Royster and Williams (583) say, “re-see and re-think” how scholars within academic spaces and artists within their work educate, affirm, and protect cultures and identities. As I continue in this literacy autobiography, I will discuss Black art and Black scholarship that stands for something. Through

¹ The date of Nina Simone's quote is not listed with the YouTube Video footage, which was published on February 21, 2021.

sharing my experiences with Black art and scholarship that respond “Yes” to Beyoncé’s question, “Can we stand for something,” I show that Black art and scholarship are essential sources of knowledge and affirmation that can help thwart efforts to exclude people and eliminate their access to institutions, resources, and opportunities.

Reading Everyday Life Everywhere We Are

During our trip to Houston, Texas, on a 7.03-mile run, I ran from our friend’s home through different areas in Houston. While it was my first time running in Houston, it was not my first time running as an African American lesbian, so I am well-aware of the realities that some runners with my identities experience while running. That awareness does not trump my love for running or my lived realities of running being liberating. I wore a Duke University t-shirt, which served as a source of privileged protection, even though I knew the t-shirt did not protect me any more than Beyoncé’s wealth and status protect her. Still, as I ran, I wore the t-shirt and bumped Beyoncé in my headphones. I hoped that people would see me as a runner instead of a threat who needed to be chased.

I ran through Mandell Park, where there was a local garden. I ran in residential communities with local neighborhood roads and sidewalks. I made my way to a part of the city that still had homes and sidewalks, but without the enclosed neighborhood feel, due to the homes being located off of what seemed to be a major roadway. Eventually, I made my way to Hermann Park. At some point, taking in beautiful scenery and freely running as Beyoncé harmonized, as she and Black women country singers and vocalist (Adell, Tanner, Beyoncé, McCartney et. al) do when they sing, “Blackbird singing in the dead of night/ Take these broken wings and learn to fly” (“BLACKBIIRD”, 2024, Verse 1, Line 1-2) turned into processing what I, with a closer look, learned was a statue of Sam Houston². While our friend had shared some information about Houston and the city, I possessed limited knowledge of the historical figure, who I researched for this piece. Even with limited knowledge of Houston, the statue of Houston on a horse reminded me of other celebrated American historical figures who enslaved Black people. The resemblance resulted in feelings that are similar to Wiley’s (2023) perspective on Confederate monuments, which I will later share and feelings that I view as akin to Louis Maraj’s (2020) sentiments that, “...Black beings ‘fit the description of the nonbeing, the being out of place, and the noncitizen always available to and for death’” (Sharpe, 2016, 86, qtd. by Maraj, 114).

²See Footnote on next page

Instead of giving into the “out of place” feeling that Maraj (2020, 115) draws on Sharpe to reflect on, I kept enjoying my run and reflected on what I loved about Houston. When I got back to our friends’ home, I told my wife about my phenomenal run. I told her about seeing Houston’s statue and my perspective that Beyoncé’s *Cowboy Carter* cover subverted symbols like Houston’s statue. I found comfort in discussing the *Cowboy Carter* cover where Beyoncé, a successful Black woman, is sitting on a white horse and displaying her patriotism by representing America. In seeing Beyoncé posing with the American flag, I read her to be communicating a “This land is your land, this is my land” sentiment. Communicating such a sentiment presents an American legacy and history that includes Black people thriving. What I view as a showing of patriotism on the album cover coexists with my reading of some of Beyoncé’s lyrics in “AMEN,” where she sings “This house was built with blood and bone/ And it crumbled, yes, it crumbled/ The statues they made were beautiful/ But

² I researched so that my reflections about Sam Houston’s statue would not result in inaccurate claims about Houston. According to Sam Houston’s History.com page (2023), “In the Senate from 1846 to 1859, he made a name for himself as a staunch Unionist in an era of increasing sectional tensions over the issue of slavery. Houston was a slaveholder himself and defended slavery in the South, but he repeatedly voted against its expansion into the territories” (History.Com Editors 2023/2009- “President, Senator and Governor of Texas”, para. 2). In James McPherson (1993) book review “The Lone Star,” a review of Marshall De Bruhl’s “Sword of San Jacinto: A Life of Sam Houston” and John Hoyt Williams’s A Biography of the Father of Texas, like Houston’s History.com page, McPherson also discussed Houston’s ownership of enslaved people. McPherson stated, “Houston was no abolitionist – he owned a dozen slaves and deplored Northern agitation of the question. But he did not wish to risk the nation’s survival to expand slavery” (McPherson, para. 12). McPherson said that Houston “...held more military and public offices than anyone else in American history,” including his positions as, “congressman and governor of Tennessee” and “...member of the Congress and twice president of the Republic of Texas; United States senator from the state of Texas; and finally, governor of the state when it seceded from the United States in 1861...” (McPherson, para. 1). Along with the initial research, I conducted to learn about the legacy of Houston, I contacted Duke University Librarian Heather Martin and shared some information about what I found on Houston in my research and inquired about library resources and processes that could help me verify and confirm that the Sam Houston discussed in the sources I found and represented in the statue I saw were the same person. Martin provided two resources, including John Makeig’s (1996) “Hermann Park’s Sam Houston dismounts for its first scrubbing in 71 years” which I read and Barrie Scardino Bradley’s book, Houston’s Hermann Park: A Century of Community, which I used the control find feature to search for references of Sam Houston in. In Makeig’s (1996) article where he discussed the anticipated outcome of the restoration work on Houston’s statue, he shared points about Houston’s legacy that are in alignment with McPherson’s points about the political offices he served in. Makeig (1996) wrote, that, “When they are done, the statue gets boosted back into position to be seen by millions of passerby on Main and Fannin, a starkly impressive reminder of Sam Houston- former Tennessee governor, former Tennessee congressman, former commander of the Texas army that defeated Mexican President Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna in 1835, former president of the Republic of Texas and former Texas governor” (Makeig). In chapter four “Hare & Hare: 1924-1951” of Bradley’s book, Bradley (2013) states, “Gen. Sam Houston (1793-1863), first president of the Republic of Texas and subsequently a US senator and state governor, embodied the myth of Texas. Three of his children were still alive in 1925, as were elderly Texans who remembered him. The forty-foot-high statue was placed in the monument circle at the entrance to Hermann Park, where Kessler in 1916 envisioned a monumental statue.” (59). The birth year for Sam Houston that was provided by Bradley (2013), who discussed the Sam Houston statue in Hermann Park is also the same birth year McPherson (1993) provided. Like Bradley (2013) and McPherson (1993), the Sam Houston History.com (2023) webpage also reports that Houston’s birth year was 1793.

they were lies of stone...” (Verse 1, Lines 1-4). I read Beyoncé’s lyrics as her shedding light on inhumane and unpatriotic parts of American history.

In considering my reading of Beyoncé’s lyrics, it is productive to engage with Dr. Adrienne D. Lentz-Smith’s insights about celebrated histories, which she shared while reading her paper as a co-panelist at the From Slavery to Freedom Symposium at Duke University in October 2023. Associate Professor of History³ , Lentz-Smith⁴ said:

““

Classroom building is a silly name for a building that is filled with faculty offices...But it is so named because actually until 2018 it was called the Carr Building. It was denamed in 2018 because it was named for North Carolina Industrialist and Democratic Party scholar Julian Carr. ... Carr and his cohort of Democratic up and comers inspired on and capitalized on the paramilitary racial terrorism of the 1898 election season ... All of this is to say that we would do well to recall, that alongside the Duke Buildings and Institutes celebrating Dr. John Hope Franklin, Duke’s built environment, until recently was littered with reminders of and monuments to the very people who crafted and defended the systems of political and economic exploitation that stalled and rolled back the kind of work that Dr. Franklin chronicled. In this, Duke is no different from its rival, UNC or its aspirant peer, Princeton nor corners of Yale or Vanderbilt, nor really most predominately White, or should we say historically white colleges and universities. (1:30:37 -1:32:33)

””

³ Smith-Lentz, Adrienne, D. Duke Scholars@Duke, <https://scholars.duke.edu/person/adriane.lentz-smith>. Accessed 13 February 2025.

When thinking about Lentz-Smith's points and Beyoncé's lyrics in "AMEN," I wonder how America's honoring and inclusion of people who built and are building buildings, and making essential contributions for everyone to thrive, are compromised by commemorating legacies that devalue those people? In this wondering, it is helpful to consider Lentz-Smith's insights about the past, which she said she drew on William Faulkner's quote for. Lentz-Smith said,

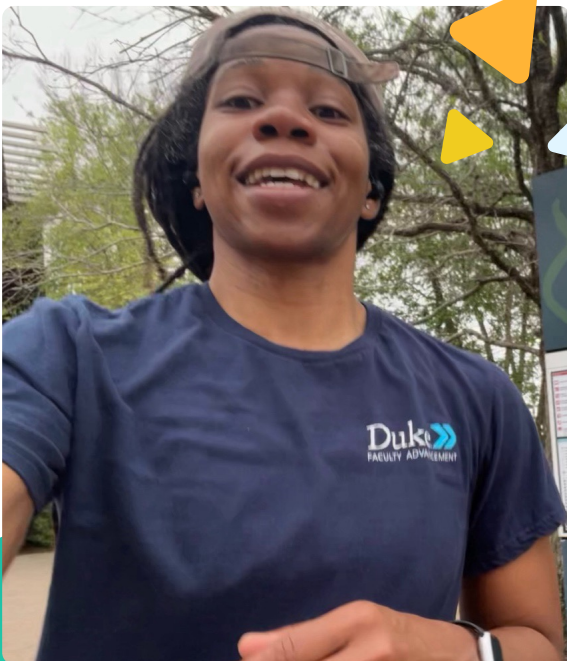
“

...The past is never dead. It's not even past, although in this age of insurrection and voter suppression and violent policing, Lord knows that I think of that quote often...Rather, it's to note that we live and walk and work among contesting understandings of our past; that those contests are never abstract. They have walls and have heft, and they affect how we map and maneuver through the present. (1:32:56-1:33:26)

”

We should heed Lentz-Smith's insights about the past while being cognizant of creating a now in a way that acknowledges that the present will one day be a past that others will live with.

The Reading Will Be Televised



Throughout my time in Houston, I had enriching and invigorating experiences. Our friend invited us to the MFAH which, like Duke University, celebrated their centennial in 2024. While at the MFAH, we attended the Spring Festival New Beginnings. According to the MFAH website, the event was a "... community celebration of spring and new beginnings. In the spirit of resilience and renewal, the MFAH also honors its 100th anniversary of opening in 1924, and ushers in the next 100 years" (2024 Spring Festival: New Beginnings). My attendance at the

Spring Festival marked another occasion where I celebrated the centennial of an institution, which I also did by attending Duke University’s centennial celebration. In the 1924 version of the institutions, it is unlikely that I would have been permitted to exist in the ways that are illustrated in the video of my wife and I dancing to “TEXAS HOLD ‘EM” at MFAH.

During our time in the MFAH, we saw thought-provoking and powerful art exhibits. We went to Wiley’s (2024) Archeology of Silence exhibit, which was among Black art that affirmed and inspired me. Wiley’s art, and the work of other Black artists in the museum communicated the truth that Beyoncé speaks in “Ya Ya” where she states, “History can’t be erased.” In Wiley’s (2024) exhibit, I saw the burgundy-colored wall with Wiley’s (2024) quote,

“ That is the archeology I am unearthing: The specter of police violence and state control over the bodies of young Black and Brown people all over the world. ”



VIEW THE VIDEO OF DR AND MRS
BOTEX DANCING TO BEYONCE’S
“TEXAS HOLD ‘EM” AT THE MUSEUM
OF FINE ARTS IN HOUSTON



I saw Wiley's (2024) paintings of vibrantly colored fields of flowers with Black people portrayed in different positions and statuesque sculptures, which appeared lifelessly stuck in the positions they were in. I read Wiley's placement of name brand clothing on Black people in various poses as commentary on how Black people invest in industries that do not invest in them. When I reached the "An Archeology of Silence" (2024) statue, I wondered why the Black man was positioned the way he was positioned. Still, I appreciated that he appeared to be safely across the back of a horse that was carrying him instead of in a position with someone riding the horse to terrorize him. Of the sculpture, Wiley (2023) said:

“ For the equestrian monument the show is named after...I was walking down the Monument Row in Richmond, Virginia, and I noticed all of the Confederate officers mounted on horseback. Number one, I was deeply offended. Number two, I was deeply affected. And number three, I was deeply inspired. I felt as though there was a type of drag going on that I wanted to try on. And it was weaponized and mobilized against me, and I could either be blown away by that momentum or I could in a jiu-jitsu move, bend into it blast field and try to create some response that was more of a “Yes, and...” And so this is my “Yes, and...” As opposed to seeing the insistent figure of the dominant white male figure who's defending chattel slavery, what we have here is the fallen body of a young Black man who could be in Senegal, in L.A., in Europe. (49)

”

I encourage people to consider Wiley's reflections in tandem with my discussions about seeing Sam Houston's statue and Lentz-Smith's commentary on the Classroom Building and the historical figure the building was formerly named after. Along with my reflections on experiencing Black art during my trip to Houston suggesting that we are in the times that hooks (1990) envisioned as times when art would be “the central future location of the resistance struggle,” I have experienced other Black art, that suggests that we are in the moment hooks (1990) was speaking of.

I encourage people to consider Wiley’s reflections in tandem with my discussion. In May 2024, during a break from a work session with colleagues, I caught a glimpse of Kris Graves’s *American Monuments*, which despite initially being unsure of what was being commemorated, I decided to tour after my work session. When I went to the exhibit, reading an excerpt from Diana McClure’s (n.d.) commentary on the exhibit provided clarity about the focus of Graves’s powerful photography. On my trip back to Graves’s exhibit in August 2024, I read McClure’s piece on Graves’s work where she wrote about Graves photographing confederate statues that artists used as platforms to commemorate Black people. McClure (n.d.) stated:

“ The demise of this storyline is ritualized most vividly in a suite of photographs taken by Graves at Lee Circle in Richmond, Virginia in July 2020. The images caught at night capture a series of projections superimposed onto a 60-foot-tall statue of Confederate General Robert E. Lee port of Richmond’s iconic Monument Avenue. Run by an artist Videomedtry, the projections feature the faces of recent Black victims of fatal white violence... (McClure)

”

When considering McClure’s points about the “...the demise of this storyline,” it is important to consider how what she refers to as the “demise of this storyline,” helps to make possible the commemoration of the legacies commemorated in Videomedtry and Graves’s work. In May, I commemorated my experience at Graves’s (2024) exhibit with a selfie with the blue wall where the words Kris Graves, *American Monuments*, and an excerpt from McClure’s exhibit commentary appeared in black font. I photographed Graves’s (2024) photo of Trayvon Martin’s face projected on a confederate monument that read “BLM,” which is a message that the historical figure originally celebrated in the confederate monument would never communicate on his own. I believe Graves’s “*American Monuments*,” Wiley’s “*Archeology of a Silence*,” and Beyoncé’s *Cowboy Carter* chastise oppressive legacies, commemorate Black people, and enhance society. I hope that Graves, Wiley and Beyoncé’s art and the cultures, histories, and identities represented by their art live on to be celebrated 100 years from now. I hope this piece and the art and scholarship spotlighted in this piece inspires people to continue to navigate the current moment while envisioning the futures we want and need.

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The "I" in Me

Angela Glass



FIRST PUBLISHED IN
THE SANDBOX

YEAR PUBLISHED
2025

GENRE
**LITERACY AUTO-
BIOGRAPHY •
LITERACY NARRATIVE**

READ OR LISTEN ONLINE



Curiosity, yes, curious I was. That was me. I knew early on that my voice was dormant (having normal physical functions suspended or slowed down for a period; in or as if in a deep sleep,) yet I was around situations that caused my laughter to celebrate like joy and my smile to pierce through any sword of defeat. I was also holding moments of fear. I saw silence take my breath and force me to navigate adult words I never knew. Adult words like anxiety, hopelessness, scared, distorted, dark. What these words wanted as they hovered over me, I didn't know, but I was sure that my world was not normal. I always knew something better was inside of me and I was curious to find that out while living in a world that began to shape my every thought and idea.

That single concept of “there’s better on the inside of me,” I believe, saved me. Somehow that thought wrapped around me inconspicuously. I like to think that children just by nature want to have joy and to see that in their small worlds. Growing up, I saw no clear guidelines that my life had great value. I loved my grandmother and, for the most part, my life as I lived it. I think I accepted things like poverty, abuse, and neglect because they accepted me. I didn’t fight about who was right or wrong but I know now that an internal guide was at work, wanting me to believe better. That definitely helped me at times throughout those moments of life, as I began to learn and recognize that not everything would always go well for me. As a child I could look back and feel the force of acting like a child but also realizing I was far from having connections with anything nurturing, caring or a sense of belonging. I wanted to feel those emotions and receive a child’s reward. I would wonder why I never saw my mom like I felt I should have. I would babysit her absence with the love that I wanted to see. When she would not come home like she said she would, I apologized for her and groomed myself to tolerate absence. And what word...what word was hovering over me that labeled me, when it came to not knowing my father or having a true relationship with him. I realized by not having a blueprint of “right,” it allowed me to form so many hidden places that shaped me and really took the driver’s seat of my heart, as that pain masked my hurt and a longing for love. I stayed confused, alone with my thoughts, and silent. On one hand I was taught to join in on the social norms of my world, but I was also being told by my surroundings that some things are impossible to mask. My curiosity, again, was begging for answers that my mind couldn’t quite give.

I remember growing up and having conversations with people who had very vivid memories of their childhood that amazed me with how they could recollect certain things at a very young age. My memories were hit and miss, but I realized as an adult how my environment spoke to me without using a single word. Do you think it’s hard for a child to comprehend the knowledge that they are living inside someone else’s world and vision? Do you think a child knows what they are comprehending at times when it’s some of the hardest situations imaginable? What happens when we as children sit in the chair of life—feet barely touching the ground, hands clinging to the cold metal of the resting arms as we are told to accept everything we see? My world was forming with or without my permission.

Getting older, I managed to trek my way through many family dysfunctions and patterns, patterns that I would have to reconcile with as a now grown-up little girl. I found myself with a joy for life and a love for writing, drawing, and creating anything I could touch. I was always wanting to see more from little. I would sit in spaces that allowed me to serve, help, assist, and nurture things that needed to grow. I knew I had a keen eye to look past the mess of a situation and see miracles, to encourage others to pull peace from pain, and motivate the obvious jewel to shine even when it was encompassed by the debris of life.

I became a mother early and unplanned I had to quickly scoot down in my “chair of life,” to somehow put my feet on the ground and start facing real realities that I was not ready for. I was that girl: marriage, family, home, let’s make it a great life! I had made up in my mind that even though challenges happened to me, I was going to use that to help me obtain what I really wanted. My intentions were great, but I also realized very quickly that being a parent in real time versus my vision in my mind... well, they often bumped heads. The word “mother” means a lot to me. It can be rewarding and intriguing at the same time. Here I was giving myself a responsibility to watch another human being unfold their life under my care. I wanted us to be okay while simultaneously knowing that I had a lot of junk to clean up along the way. She needed me and I was waiting on my past to help guide my decisions. I knew what I wanted to see in our lives and I started to slowly invite those thoughts in. I found that being curious was benefiting me. I believe becoming a parent challenged me to have options that I didn’t know I could have, as far as raising her. I wanted to choose to grow into the person that kept nudging me from within. I wanted to choose to be more curious about believing for better, even when that wasn’t always my reality. I ended up waiting twelve more years before I had my last child. Funny thing is, I actually wanted to wait longer. I know, I know. Both of my girls definitely had plenty of questions for me and as I put everything on the table for them to know, I am glad it turned out the way it did.



One epic moment that shifted my life was an impromptu blessing. I got to travel abroad to Malawi, Africa. The trip came in true fashion, unexpected! My youngest daughter was nine at the time and we felt so thankful to travel with a team from our church. By this time, I had finished my first book *Words Matter* and was in the process of trying to get it published. I was on cloud nine that I actually wrote my first book. Eekkk!

Of course, I was also dealing with family/personal drama, a few medical issues, and job decisions. Within a span of three years, I had a hysterectomy due to fibroids and previous menstrual issues, a bone marrow biopsy; I became allergic to dairy, anemia; my job wanted me to relocate back to our corporate office. I had coined early on in my life that my middle name was “transition and change,” because I always felt like my whole life was a constant pattern of ebb and flow (used to describe something that changes in a regular and repeated way.)

I was taught to walk by faith. I was taught to trust God. I was taught to tug harder for what I wanted...with a smile. I loved the strong desires in me to believe in better even when I saw the opposite. Faith seemed to keep my boat rowing, and glimpses of mental success felt rewarding. I mentioned having an

epic moment but, if I am honest, epic moments seemed to be waiting on me around every corner. With so many things that were happening all at once I started to see a pattern of me staying in survival mode while outwardly trying my best to walk by faith and trust that everything was going to work out. I just knew others were going to be as excited as I was about my book, right? I mean, this is a great accomplishment. After connecting to a women’s organization that I was faithful in for several years, I asked them to help support me financially in my endeavors. Though they were excited for me, they were not able to assist. I was devastated but I was okay as I found peace and confidence in closing out my savings account to pay for the publishing help. I was a firm believer in trusting the process. Speed up to almost two years later, I was still waiting for my book that I was sure to have been completed by now, only to have my

publisher that I trusted unexpectedly drop me. Complete silence!

Okay, does your facial reaction look like mine did?

I reminded myself to keep going through the challenge and stay true to what I saw that was sitting on those blank pages when I first began the process. I had written a book. My first book! Writing my book was such an accomplishment for me, and I was having a great time being joyful and excited even if I didn't have all the answers on how it was going to come together. My faith was definitely guarding every opposition that came to bring doubt. You see, this book brought up so much of my past that was still relevant in my life. Even though I was older at this point, so much of my existence was still sitting in that "chair of life," and many times I didn't know what exactly to look at. This book was literally pieces of my journey comprised on humble pages, but I also was coming into knowledge about the hard realities of what I wish I had verses what I was given. I battled with how someone like me, who is so passionate and encouraging about life, have all these negative pieces. My faith told me that all these things were working out for me and I just needed to have a positive perspective on the pain. But what I also began to understand was that faith was asking me to do something. I just didn't want to give this over to God and trust, I wanted to participate in the process. I wanted to roll up my sleeves while also sit still for answers. I wanted to use the very things that I appreciate about me to help guard my visions and dreams that I saw for myself. I loved that I didn't have all the answers, but I could trust that was enough to get me started and keep me motivated. Faith at work. So I got to work, fumbling, laughing, crying, healing bit by bit. So many things didn't make sense to me but I knew it was necessary. I was still struggling because my outside world spoke a different language than my inner world. I was taught to smile through it all and just trust, my inner world was saying this wound from your youth formed this idea that has become truth to you and it can't stay. I was slowly seeing how I had built up so many truths based off of false narratives. I had to start asking myself questions about my childhood, my marriages, dysfunctional patterns, and all things in between. It was scary and freeing at the same time. Nothing happened overnight but I truly learned in those moments that it's the small things that truly make a difference.

Back to my trip—we went to Malawi, Africa and my life was changed. Something happened to me over there.

Oh, my daughter got sick for 5 days, lost nearly 5 pounds, we didn't have any travel money to take with us, (she had \$20 and so did I,) and our luggage didn't meet us upon our arrival back home. Whew! Yeah, just your normal everyday things that happen, right?

But I have to say something deeper was taking place. My world started to become hungry for something that my eyes couldn't satisfy. I came back home and had to pick back up with life, with my family, my book, and my new world that still looked the same. I was seeing everything much differently and feeling it. Things started to take on a whole new meaning, and something inside of me was sounding off. I could hear it—like a faraway rumble of thunder building its way to the doorstep of my heart.

My definition of purpose is this: it's everyday living; it's walking out your journey in simple, powerful, steps that open up powerful pieces of your life as you partner with this knowing **YOUR LIFE MATTERS**. When you start there... you will get answers!

I began to slow down when I came back from Africa. I slowed down mentally and physically. Now let me tell you, we were a family on the go, and I didn't realize how much it affected us in such a major way up until this point. I mean, it was good and the things we were connected to were amazing: volunteering, serving,

community engagement, collaborating with like minds to organize relevant causes for change, and lots of family things—oh, and sports. We did it all and loved it! But I realized a greater piece of me was pulling on something that I had left behind...my healing. That little girl was still sitting in that chair, feet barely touching the ground, and was begging for attention. One of the hardest things about walking out your life and this journey is that you find out, in a lot of cases, you will have to do the work alone. Here I was as a young child with family, community, people, environments, society, and passed down teachings that molded me, to now having to wake in my grown self and answer for my own life, still with many questions and too few answers. How do I do that with life still happening every day and the understanding that I have to continue to be a part of it, yet knowing the only way for me to find answers meant fading out of that race. Everywhere I looked people seemed to be doing what I was doing. How could I find out what was calling me from within? The little girl in me needed attention and so did my pain as I finally started to see a very different vision than what I was given growing up. The best answer for me was just taking my time and being patient with me. I didn't realize so much pain was there while simultaneously having joy with each "vacation" I took from looking to the world for advice.

I began to put in time to focus on me and desired to learn how to love myself...all of me. It felt good and challenging at the same time. It was so funny, everything started to want to come to my aid once I made this decision to slow down. The trees, nature, my home, motherhood, my passions, all started to talk to me in a way I had never heard before. It was a total wonder! How could I have missed this? I look back and can see bits and pieces of this soft voice wanting to be recognized. I remember one day I was sitting quiet, and I began to cry. You know, that pretty ugly cry? It was pretty ugly! Then out of nowhere, I started to laugh...I laughed so hard. As I sat there letting the tears hit my carpet in crisscross-applesauce, I began to ask myself, "Is this what happiness feels like?" Everything was so brand new, and I loved it! Slowing down began empowering me to run with a better understanding of my life.

I started cleaning out this mindset and partnered with loving myself one step at a time. Soon, the writing came more easily, and the confidence started to shine even when it rained. And it still rains! It has been some hard work on my end, and I have had days where I was just barely making it. Still, I allowed the process to keep building a bridge for me that no one could tear down. I soaked up everything I could when it came to bettering myself. Even at a young age I kept a journal. I can smile now as I look back and see all the things that I thought were weird and unusual as it was actually a piece of my process to build my self-confidence. My journals allowed me to express myself, my creativity opened up my mind to believe, and my faith was building bridges for everything to eventually come together so I could learn to walk in confidence into what I see for myself today. I kept reminding myself to stay teachable and to write, even when it was hard to express my thoughts on paper. I found myself years later with some of my journals, looking through them, amazed at my courage. Yep, ugly tears!

That courage was something that I struggled with when it came to trying to be myself—my true self that I knew was waiting to be introduced. I can see some of my old mindsets that I no longer carry and ways that do not serve me anymore as a thing of the past. My life has become more enriched, and my awareness of my internal strength has anchored me as a mother, a writer, a server, an advocate, and a cheerleader.

Being empowered to go back to my younger self and heal helped me to understand more about the greater voice I had inside of me. I likened it to someone gifting you a

new car and you know nothing about it or how it runs versus you picking out the car you want and being able to drive it, look under the hood, get some advice on all its bells and whistles. I saw the power of creating my own story and changing the pages of my life regardless of how someone wrote it: very priceless for me. That sentiment has given me freedom because I now know that it is purpose in the process. I know that every vision I have has to have a process. Being the author of several books didn't happen overnight. The vision I saw of holding a book in my hand started off as thought, and I gladly report it took a lot of pieces to make everything come together and bring my vision into fruition. The joy I have of celebrating my books with others, signing copies, getting encouraging feedback and testimonies of change go hand in hand with the process of the journey to get there. I don't ever want to be afraid of talking about the hard places that make us or the small pieces that make great change. I found that celebrating myself did more than give me courage to carry on, it helped revive places within me that knew I was fit for the journey, When I cheered for me in my hardest moments it made way for me to accept so many things that I was pushing away. I was giving permission a chance to assist me in this process. I was learning that I needed to understand that my process was not just a word but a journey that has to happen and over time I get the gift of seeing what desires to manifest from that. I encourage cultivation and nurturing. They go hand in hand with this journey and so much of why I still love what I do is a result from those two amazing words. We are a growing being and that will always be a part of our purpose. As we desire to improve our mindset and set our heart to develop that constant roadmap for change, you will by default nurture the good and the challenging parts of who you are. I am learning to be okay with that. I have chosen to embrace the process. One step at a time.



Angela Glass

Angela Glass is a poet, award-winning writer, and author of women's book *Words Matter*. A motivational speaker and advocate for youth literacy, Angela has written books that focus on embracing your purpose along with sparking critical thinking in youth to celebrate creativity while having confidence as they explore the many styles of writing. When Angela is not nestled in her corner desk at home, she enjoys letting nature give her new writing ideas while she soaks up the southern sun in Arkansas.

Building Literacy and Engagement Through Hip-Hop Pedagogy

Rori Fararo-Brooks



FIRST PUBLISHED IN
THE SANDBOX

YEAR PUBLISHED
2025

GENRE
OP-ED

READ OR LISTEN ONLINE



As a social worker in a public elementary school, I see how deeply hip-hop is embedded in my students' interactions and culture. I see it when they're dancing or reciting lyrics to a hip-hop song, when they give each other a fist bump, when they use slang, and when they think of something on the fly or outside the box. Even in moments when students roast each other, it demonstrates their cleverness and knowledge of each other. Since hip-hop is infused in the way my students communicate, I saw an opportunity to build literacy and social-emotional growth through a hip-hop program. In my experience as a student and social worker, hip-hop has been used to transcend racial and ethnic boundaries and can bridge students' lived realities with their classroom learning. Literacies are embedded in our culture and the way students choose to express themselves is a way of asserting and representing their identities. It's important that we honor and celebrate the diverse ways students communicate. When we bring hip-hop culture into students' learning, they don't have to change their style or where they come from.

Students can use their language, invent their own words, and be who they want to be. Hip-hop pedagogy can keep students enthused and engaged in their learning and is an accessible way for them to feel deeply and begin to play with language.

In our common schooling philosophy we start from what we are told to think rather than what we feel from our experience. Hip-hop pedagogy shifts the approach from simply reciting the correct answer to fundamentally connecting students to their life experience and what they know and can talk about. In this way, hip-hop pedagogy extends students' experience-based knowledge to life skills, academic skills, and the development of symbolic language. Music connects both sides of the brain, bringing together our intuitive and nonverbal abilities with our logic and language-based skills. When students experience positive emotions such as joy and confidence, it enhances memory, cognition, and learning.¹ Music makes emotion tangible and can foster emotional awareness in students who may struggle to identify or express what they're feeling. As students simultaneously listen to and read the words of a song, they understand the meaning and themselves in new ways. Music gives us common ground and common language. It helps motivate us, helps us celebrate our wins, and comforts us in difficult times. It helps us define who we are and tell our life stories. It provides perspective when life gets hard.

In our traditional education system, we wait until middle and high school for electives, student choice, and feedback. Instead of protecting and fostering children's innate creativity, passion, and opinions, we suppress their brilliance and enthusiasm, and then expect students later in their education to imagine other possibilities, argue their viewpoints, and direct the course of their education. Students become empowered to make responsible decisions when they're challenged to navigate problems through experimentation and practice. Hip-hop in early education is one way to prioritize creative, dynamic, culturally responsive teaching and cultivate students' natural curiosity through collaboration, movement, and play.

There is growing use of hip-hop based programs in secondary education like that by We Do It 4 the Culture; however, there is a notable absence of these methods in early childhood education. Research indicates that establishing a strong literacy foundation

¹ Immordino-Yang, Mary Helen, and Antonio Damasio. "We Feel, Therefore We Learn: The Relevance of Affective and Social Neuroscience to Education." *Mind, brain, and education* 1, no. 1 (2007): 3-10.

² Love, Bettina L. "What is Hip-Hop-Based Education Doing in Nice Fields such as Early Childhood and Elementary Education?." *Urban Education* 50, no. 1 (2015): 106-131.

prior to 4th grade is crucial for life-long success, making culturally relevant material at the start of students' literacy development essential. Failure to read proficiently by the end of 3rd grade is linked to long-term adverse health outcomes, higher rates of school dropout, underemployment, lower earning potential, incarceration, and continued cycles of poverty^{3,4}. Hip-hop pedagogy can play a pivotal role in fostering the early literacy and social-emotional skills students need for success.

For students of color living in poverty especially, there is a mismatch between the cultural environment of school and what they experience at home and in the wider world. In many ways, students are expected to leave part of their identities at the door, including the way they speak, dress, express themselves, relate to one another, generate ideas, and learn. Students learn best when they feel respected and understood and can be themselves. Young students in particular need trusting and safe relationships to thrive and learn. When elementary school students have space to share their voice and know it's valued in the classroom, they feel more connected to the teacher and content^{5,6,7}. Hip-hop pedagogy recognizes the educator and students as learning from each other and connecting across their cultural experiences. Hip-hop pedagogy allows teachers to consider and respond to students' perspectives and give students agency to shape their learning. This in turn develops trust and confidence for students to take risks, not be afraid to make mistakes, and share their unique knowledge.

Hip-hop pedagogy recognizes that all learning occurs relationally, and invites deep, impactful relationships by centering students as collaborating in their education. In this model, students aren't just imparted with knowledge, but teachers are also changed and gain knowledge from their students. Educators may find at times that

³ Hernandez, Donald J. "Double Jeopardy: How Third-Grade Reading Skills and Poverty Influence High School Graduation." Annie E. Casey Foundation (2011).

⁴ Fiester, Leila. "Early Warning! Why Reading by the End of Third Grade Matters. KIDS COUNT Special Report." Annie E. Casey Foundation (2010).

⁵ Hains, Bryan J., Janela Salazar, Kristina D. Hains, and John C. Hill. "If You Don't Know, Now You Know: Utilizing Hip-Hop Pedagogy as a Tool for Promoting Change in Students and Community." *Journal of Education* 201, no. 2 (2021): 116-125.

⁶ Immordino-Yang, Mary Helen, and Antonio Damasio. "We Feel, Therefore We Learn: The Relevance of Affective and Social Neuroscience to Education." *Mind, brain, and education* 1, no. 1 (2007): 3-10.

⁷ Tyng, Chai M., Hafeez U. Amin, Mohamad NM Saad, and Aamir S. Malik. "The Influences of Emotion on Learning and Memory." *Frontiers in Psychology*, 8, (2017): 1454-1454.

they know less than their students and have to be open to students' perspectives and what's happening in their cultural environments. In this way, learning occurs from student to teacher as well as teacher to student and between students. Hip-hop pedagogy requires teachers to be open to grow, adapt, and change based on students' learning styles, needs, and knowledge. It recognizes that students are experts in their own culture and are participants in cultural change as they bring new language, styles, and ways of communicating into being. This process of reinvention and experimentation is representative of hip-hop creation at its core.

Hip-hop is often critiqued because of inappropriate language and topics, and while some artists promote violence and harmful speech, many more use lyrics to name and resist the systemic and interpersonal harm they experience. These topics are not unknown to our students: they see them every day in their own lives and communities. Bringing powerful songs into the classroom offers students the opportunity to wrestle with these same issues and become empowered to make change and speak out against injustice. Hip-hop can develop self and community awareness through the three guiding principles of *checkin' yo self*, *flipping the script*, and *testifyin'*.⁸ Through *checkin' yo self*, students become more mindful, think before speaking and acting, and see themselves as connected to a larger community; through *flipping the script*, students look beyond dominant narratives and discover new insights; and in *testifyin'*, students develop the ability to respond to and address forms of oppression through their experiences and perspectives⁹.

Using hip-hop lyrics in the classroom can also model and inform students' writing.^{10,11} Through analyzing lyrics, students can develop an understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in meaning. The literary elements of hip-hop are unique because the genre is dynamic, fast, and more packed with lyrics than

⁸ Okello, Wilson. "Who's Got Bars?": Remixing Intergroup Dialogue Pedagogy through Hip-Hop Feminism." *Journal Committed to Social Change on Race and Ethnicity (JCSCORE)* 6, no. 2 (2020): 61–93.

⁹ Okello, Wilson. "Who's Got Bars?": Remixing Intergroup Dialogue Pedagogy through Hip-Hop Feminism." p. 85–89.

¹⁰ Hall, H. Bernard. "Deeper than Rap: Expanding Conceptions of Hip-Hop Culture and Pedagogy in the English Language Arts Classroom." *Research in the Teaching of English* 51, no. 3 (2017): 341–350.

¹¹ McLaurin, Trent, and Kimberly E. Lewinski. "Departments: Perspectives on Practice: Bringing Hip Hop Culture into the Classroom: Hip Hop Lyrics as Mentor Text." *Language Arts*, 101(1), (2023): 53–57.

any other musical genre. In a single song, the artist may take the same theme and apply it to different contexts, adding layers of meaning and interpretation. In well-written songs, there's a mix between double entendres, simple lines, and repetition.



In one lesson from my program, students explore how imagination shapes our communities by creating a lyric-based Mad Lib that draws on their experiences and ideas. The activity uses lyrics from the song “[Imagine](#)” by Common, but students replace key sections with their own words.

In the process, they express themselves and build knowledge of parts of speech and rhetorical devices like similes and allusions.

*Imagine layers in the game where we all players
No more _____ or police car chasing
(verb ending in -ing)*

*Imagine life that bring us _____ type of singers
(a singer you like)*

*Life is greener on this side, the beauty that we see
Be coming from inside, imagine if*

*You a _____ and she a _____
(dream job) (dream job)*

*We no longer _____ or _____
(forms of oppression or racism)*

Clean water coming out of Flint's faucets, it's awesome

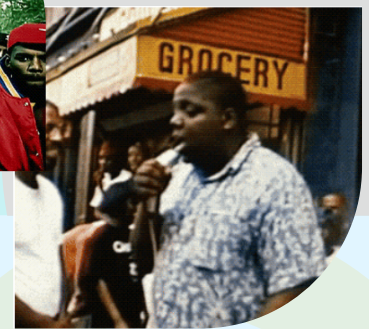
*Not being _____ but got _____
(negative adj.) (same adj. with a positive spin)*

Original line: Not being petty but got petty cash

Hip-hop is a form that is constantly evolving with the culture, reinventing language, and finding new ways for stories to be crafted, felt, and understood. Hip-hop can help students push beyond the limits of their comprehension because they understand words and meanings within the context of rhythm and beat. Hip-hop can be complex, filled with metaphor and stories, while single lines may be more logical and straightforward, combining higher level thinking with familiar concepts. Hip-hop is a rich source of learning that can support students' insight, encourage their excitement, and welcome the genuineness that they bring to their values, preferences, and interests.

Hip-hop also has a long legacy of celebrating students' cultural heritage. Hip-hop pays homage to earlier musicians, makes use of cultural references, and comments on historical and current events. Students can explore these aspects when they create their own beats through sampling.

For example, Rapsody's "[Laila's Wisdom](#)" samples Aretha Franklin's "[Young, Gifted and Black](#)," while Joey Bada\$\$'s "[Brooklyn's Own](#)" is an ode to Christopher "The Notorious B.I.G." Wallace. This track evokes "[One More Chance](#)," with a hook that re-imagines Mary Jane's "[Girls All Night Long](#)," one of the most sampled songs in '90s hip-hop. Students can analyze the lyrics in "Laila's Wisdom" and "Brooklyn's Own" while also learning that sampling is one way artists honor earlier musicians. Students can also dive deeply into sound production by manipulating rhythm and melody through Nas's "[Made You Look \(Instrumental\)](#)," a song which draws from history by sampling both the Incredible Bongo Band's "[Apache](#)" and Fat Joe and Big Pun's "[John Blaze](#)." Students can see how genres like R&B also use elements and samples from hip-hop. For instance, The Honey Drippers' "[Impeach The President](#)" uses the beat from MC Shan's classic hip-hop track "[The Bridge](#)."



The transformative power of hip-hop lies in its potential to create original and vibrant forms of knowledge. Hip-hop pedagogy honors students' unique identities and perspectives and can foster learning and engagement in the classroom. Hip-hop helps students communicate across experiences and speak out against injustice. Hip-hop has the ability to build literacy, help students gain a deeper understanding of themselves and others, and facilitate self and community expression. Hip-hop can serve as a foundational tool in early education because it connects students' learning to what they're feeling and experiencing. Hip-hop says I'm speaking my truth and generating knowledge from my experience. Hip-hop recognizes us in our full humanity by seeing us as imperfect and flawed, passionate and radiant, and allowing us to tell our stories.

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A Pedagogy of Kindness, Inclusivity, and Joy in the Writing Classroom: A Personal Reflection Through Practice

Shuvro Das



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GENRE
OP-ED

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Late on a December day in Pullman, Washington, I was completing my syllabus for the “College Composition” class that I was scheduled to teach in the upcoming spring semester. As a new international graduate teaching assistant, I was reasonably nervous about embarking on unfamiliar terrain. The first thought that came to my mind was to give my students a safe space and the opportunity to find and use their voices—especially for purposes they cared about. I wasn’t trying to “give” them a voice; they already had their own. My goal was to ensure that their voices could be heard, centered, and sharpened with intention and agency. I asked myself: what could I incorporate into my pedagogy that I had not necessarily experienced myself as an undergraduate student back home in Bangladesh?

I often say that my teaching has always entailed care and hope. As an international GTA and a graduate student navigating a new educational culture, I came to pedagogy through lived tensions and dreams, often shaped by the lack of such affirming practices in my own prior classrooms.

Flash forward four years, and I have witnessed firsthand the transformative power of a classroom environment rooted in kindness, inclusivity, and joy. I have come to believe that writing is not merely an academic exercise but a deeply personal journey—a means for students to discover, express, and refine their unique voices. When students feel safe, valued, and genuinely supported, they are more inclined to take risks, explore creative ideas, and ultimately grow as both writers and individuals.

As I reflect on my teaching practice, I am more convinced than ever that kindness, inclusivity, and joy are not just aspirational values—they are necessary foundations for equitable, liberatory writing instruction. When we center kindness, we make space for vulnerability; when we embrace inclusivity, we commit to justice; and when we cultivate joy, we disrupt narratives of deficit that have long defined who get to write, speak, and be heard.

Embracing Kindness in the Writing Process

Kindness, to me, is not about lowering academic standards or becoming overly permissive. Rather, kindness is about cultivating empathy and understanding in every interaction. Early in my teaching career, I encountered a student who had long suffered from writing anxiety due to harsh feedback in previous classes. They had grown reluctant to share their work, fearful of being judged. By approaching this student with genuine kindness—providing constructive, encouraging feedback and offering multiple opportunities for revision—I watched a transformation unfold. Their writing became bolder, more experimental. That student's voice emerged with clarity and conviction. Witnessing that transformation was profoundly affirming—not just as a teacher, but as someone who believes deeply in the ethical responsibility of pedagogy. It reminded me that kindness is not ancillary to rigorous instruction; it is what makes that rigor accessible. The personal reward was immense, but more importantly, it revealed a larger truth: when we lead with care, students feel

empowered to claim their voices. For writing educators broadly, this experience speaks to the necessity of compassionate pedagogy as a pathway to both personal and academic growth.

Writing apprehension can significantly hinder effective engagement. When students feel they are supported, they tend to do much better. I often imagine kindness as my pedagogical superpower. It is not just something I believe in—it is how I move through the world.

I see my students as my counterparts in a shared process of discovery. In walking alongside them as they find their voices, I am continually challenged to reflect on my own—how I listen, how I respond, how I grow. This reciprocity keeps my teaching dynamic and deeply human. Kindness is the lifeblood of my pedagogy. It is my stance, my strategy, and my everyday practices.

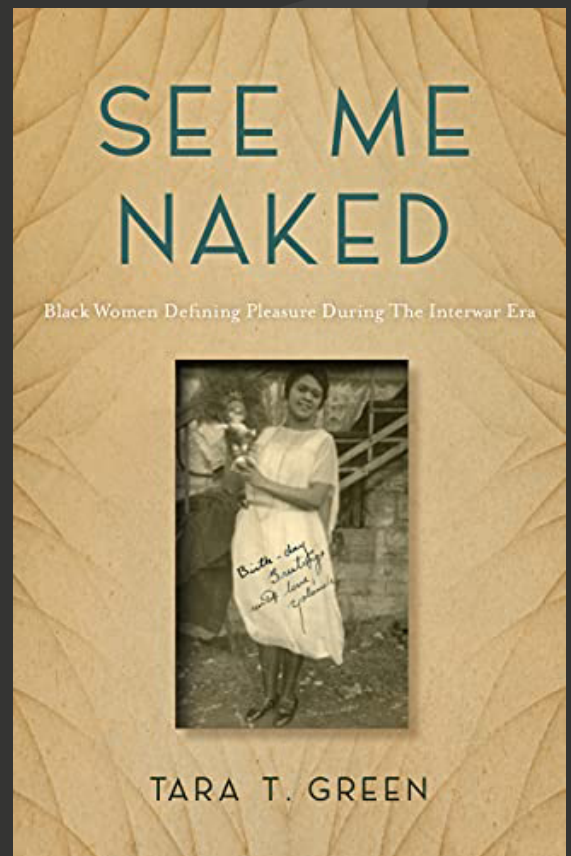


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See Me Naked: Black Women Defining Pleasure in the Interwar Era. By Tara T. Green. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press. 2022. 206 pp. Paper, \$32.95; e-book, 32.95.

Zainab Khadijah Karim



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GENRE
BOOK REVIEW

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“Hidden away from public scrutiny is where a Black woman who cherished respectability joyfully reminisces about her indulgence of feelings that she wishes not to forget.”¹ So begins Tara T. Green’s exploration of Black women’s challenges and achievements in seeking pleasure, aptly titled *See Me Naked: Black Women Defining Pleasure in the Interwar Era*. The above quote comes from the book’s foreword, which briefly focuses on Alice Dunbar-Nelson, whose brilliant self-referential work on pleasure as a quest to care for oneself is the source of the book’s title.

¹Tara T. Green, *See Me Naked: Black Women Defining Pleasure in the Interwar Era* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2022), 1.

See Me Naked continues a conscientious discussion on how Black women historically answered the call of pleasure in their lives. Weaved between the ancestry of these pleasure tales, Green also poses a question to the reader: how does one clearly define Black womanhood? This question is important in understanding a Black woman's body narrative. Much of Green's scholarship here highlights the role of cultural practices in shaping Black women's experiences of pleasure during the interwar era: music, dance, writing, and public performing, for example. Each area often serves as the only spaces where Black women could freely express and experience pleasure without harm, maybe.

On the face of it, *See Me Naked* may come across as a direct, opposite response to Darlene Clark Hine's "culture of dissemblance."² In her landmark work, Hine addresses gaps in the historical narratives of the Black women's experiences with sexual violence that caused many Black women to conceal their inner lives from the public; but it is not. *See Me Naked* is a companion text to Hine's scholarship. It shows how Black women, even during the time of sealing off their inner lives, used pleasure as a means of survival both privately and publicly. Green's offering is of the few women who dared to show their allegiance to pleasure publicly.



YOLANDE DU BOIS

Yolande Du Bois, daughter of W.E.B Du Bois, is the first subject whose pleasure journey is chronicled. Immediately we are met with Yolande's looming need for acceptance from her father. "Du Bois's restrictive prescriptions on Black people and women in particular meant that Yolande was born into an ideal of Black womanhood that Du Bois expressed in his work but did not necessarily practice."³ Her love and passion for writing, teaching, and art were ever present but often overshadowed by the men who pulled at her sensibilities more than the pleasures that made her whole. Much of what was detailed about Yolande had to do with an overwhelming

longing—longing for freedom to express. Even in her letters to Countee Cullen, whom she married and divorced in less than a year, she expressed deep desires to be close to

² Darlene Clark Hine coined the term "culture of dissemblance" to describe how black women concealed their inner lives to protect themselves from sexual exploitation and rape during the Reconstruction Era. In *See Me Naked*, Green builds on Hine's theory by presenting nuanced ways Black women navigated societal limitations and expectations while still centering their desires and pleasure-seeking during the interwar era.

³ Green, *See Me Naked*, 29.

him that he seemed to reciprocate. Through writing, we see Yolande as the woman she wants to be: free, pleasure-filled, honest. In her short stories, Yolande produced the voices of Black women and girls that mattered the most to her. The overwhelming theme was “mothers [who] are influential in how their children think about the world outside of their own.”⁴ These stories were a callback to Yolande’s freedom to express, but in her daily life Du Bois’ voice was louder than hers, “her voice was his voice,”⁵ which led to Yolande’s voice being ultimately silenced by the weight of the men who were supposed to love her.

In Lena Horne’s story, she found her voice through performance. Being raised by an incapable mother, Horne learned early on that she had to rely on herself for survival. “Little Lena could not find her voice, perhaps driving her to express herself through performance.”⁶ Mostly raised by her activist grandmother, Horne believed that “Silence [was] an act of respectability.”⁷ Lena struggled greatly in the liminal space between the respectable shadow of her grandmother’s activism and the pleasure that called her to perform and indulge her body in sexual desires. Through an analysis, and often too long explanation, of Horne’s film career, we find that many of her roles centered on the pleasure that was absent early in her life. These roles represent Horne’s talent, but also her diligent circumvention of what others defined as Black womanhood and pleasure-seeking; and what these pleasure practices meant to her. Horne’s pleasure points were: “pleasures in looking, pleasures in being looked at, pleasures in performing racial fictions, pleasure in upending racial fictions of the industry’s moguls”⁸ as noted by feminist scholar Jennifer C. Nash.

Through humor and creating a public persona, Moms Mabley used her voice for the women who adopted a culture of dissemblance. She educated her audience on “racial and gender stereotypes that limit progressive thinking, mistreatment of women and girls by older men, and sexual repression designed to privilege patriarchal heteronormativity.”⁹ Moms Mabley was the most compelling pleasure tale in this

⁴Green, 36.

⁵ Green, 47.

⁶ Green, 56.

⁷ Green, 56.

⁸ Jennifer C. Nash, *The Black Body in Ecstasy: Reading Race, Reading Pornography* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 23.

⁹ Green, 84.



MOMS MABLEY

series. She was a large-bodied, dark-skinned woman, who “leveraged her pioneering presence on the comedy stage to critique a repressive society that was specifically limiting to Black women and even more so to Black queer women.”¹⁰ However, this chapter presents several outside voices who are necessary, in a sense, but given far too much stage time overshadowing Moms Mabley. First, there is Butterbeans

and Susie, a married singer/dancer duo who temporarily become the center of attention showing their major influence on Moms’ career. “Mabley would learn from Butterbeans and Susie that comics had a great deal of control over their art and that there would always be people willing to pay for the pleasure of laughter.”¹¹ There is also a sidebar on Hurston’s dejection of comedy then acceptance of it reflected in uses of comedy in the novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. These tangents give us a glimpse into comedy’s prolific power of disrupting spaces, but it also leaves less room for Moms Mabley’s voice to be heard. Mabley created a persona mirrored after her grandmother, who taught her how to tell the truth: the most powerful use of one’s voice. Nevertheless, we understand that Moms Mabley’s life is influential in breaking down barriers and creating a legacy, particularly for The Apollo Theater, where she found regular work. For Mabley, the Apollo Theater was “a place of possibility that reflected and mediated the tensions between aspiration and possibility.”¹² Moms Mabley’s jokes, while funny and often shocking, are an education in self-efficacy, pleasure, and survival.

See Me Naked entrusts the audience with the inner lives of Black women who, despite using their voices loudly to seek and center pleasure, also did so during a time when self-effacing was the norm. These women used their voices and bodies as cartography

¹⁰ Green, 84.

¹¹ Green, 91.

¹² Green, 99.

for Black women of future generations. Memphis Minnie’s discography of sexual exploration, resilience, and “feminine power as a way of accessing pleasure”¹³ has created a path for albums such as Janet Jackson’s *The Velvet Rope*, Janelle Monae’s *The Age of Pleasure*, and Beyonce’s *Renaissance*. Minnie’s chapter provides the vacillation between seeking pleasures that “test the power of gendered subjects”¹⁴ and envisioning a life where she continues to “create a self that tells how she used her body as a form of action and pursuit.”¹⁵

While the title purports that Green will give examples of how these Black women define pleasure, we are, instead, met with the overtone of what it means to have and use their voices. In a multitude of ways, the voices of each of these women were used against them and nearly stripped away in their pursuit of agency *and* pleasure. Pleasure-seeking then becomes a form of resistance to keep the voice intact and to produce an external self that represents the radical imagination of Black womanhood.

While readers of *See Me Naked* will undoubtedly remain hungry for deeper explorations of the pleasure practice of Black women during the interwar era, it is a critical text added to the archives as evidence of the integrity of Black women’s sexuality and pleasurable experiences. It is evident, however, that increased historiography will be required to fully capture the stories of those underwritten by the tall tales of white, patriarchal notions of pleasure and respectability.

¹³ Green, 129.

¹⁴ Green, 122.

¹⁵ Green, 120.

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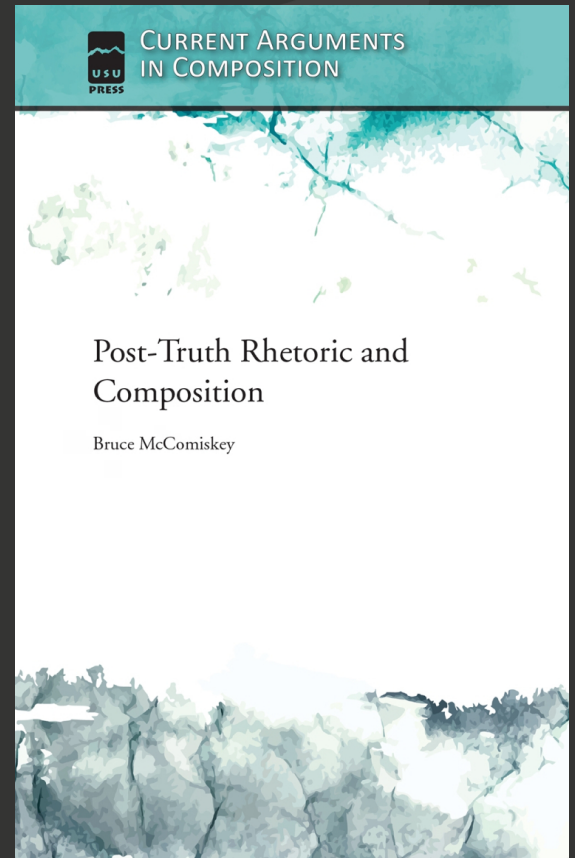


Zainab Karim

Zainab Khadijah Karim is an Assistant Professor of English and a published writer. She's written for *Ebony*/*Jet* Magazine, *MadameNoire*, *Revelist*, and other online writing platforms. During the summer of 2021, she created and edited a series called *Shape of Pleasure*, which featured personal essays and poetry that explored how Black women centered pleasure in their lives. This anthology was influenced by *Pleasure Activism: The Politics of Feeling Good* by adrienne maree brown. She is community taught by other Black women writers and feminist. Though most of her work is non-fiction, she has a deep reverence for fiction.

**McComiskey, Bruce.
Post-Truth Rhetoric
and Composition.
University Press
of Colorado, 2017.
58 pages. \$6.96
paperback.**

Mohi Uddin



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GENRE
BOOK REVIEW

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In the age where the authenticity of information, the credibility of sources, and the reasoning behind media productions are often rhetorical, the concept of truth in rhetorical studies has drawn significant attention. As rhetorical traditions deal with ethics of communication, rhetoric scholars regard lies, doublespeak, and fallacies as unethical rhetorical strategies (McComiskey 2017, 8). The Aristotelian rhetorical triad suggests that rhetorical traditions require ethos, logos, and pathos; namely, establishing credibility, appealing to reasoning, and appealing to emotion. Therefore, ethos, logos, and pathos make any communication persuasive, which is a major objective of rhetoric for verbal, written, or any other form

of communication. The absence of any of these elements—namely, ethos, logos, or pathos—raises questions about truth. The recent rise of digital technologies has made the notion of truth more of a relative matter, where the audience barely knows the authenticity of information and reasoning behind media productions and circulations. The lack of credibility and reasoning thus deepens the question about political biases behind digital media productions and circulations. In many cases, digital media heavily uses emotional manipulation—appealing to regional, religious, ethnic, and nationalist spirits—instead of backing up emotion with reasoning.

Bruce McComiskey, Professor of Rhetoric and Writing at Virginia Tech’s English Department, addresses these aforementioned concerns in his book *Post-Truth Rhetoric and Composition*, published by the University Press of Colorado in 2017. Citing Oxford Dictionaries, McComiskey defines “post-truth” as a circumstance where facts are less powerful than emotional appeals, and so emotional appeals shape public opinion (2017, 5). This definition would imply that post-truth rhetors use unethical persuasive strategies to maneuver public opinion in their favor. McComiskey highlights the 2016 United States of America Presidential Election resulting in the election of Donald J. Trump as President of the United States as an example—when digital media, including Facebook and Twitter (now, X), were found to be instrumental in manipulating public opinion through fabricated credibility. The 58-page book, in this way, provides some quintessential insights about post-truth media content and its profound effects on people. McComiskey argues that post-truth rhetoric promotes lies, fallacies, and doublespeak, which rhetoric scholars consider unethical rhetorical persuasion that inspires attacks on ethnic minorities, racial tensions, bullying, and microaggressions, to name only a few attacks.

The constant circulation of emotionally biased content on digital media affects the psyche of “netizens,” users of the internet, especially digital media, which ultimately influences social stability, universal suffrage, power structure, democracy, and human rights. The biased and fake content on digital media, more specifically, hinders the possibility of learning the realities, truths, and facts, as they tend to produce content devoid of substantial connections to facts and realities. McComiskey terms this circumstance as post-truth rhetoric, as he says that it “signifies a state in which language lacks any reference to facts, truth and realities. When language has no reference to truths, facts, or realities, it becomes purely a strategic medium” (McComiskey 2017, 6). This “strategic medium,” McComiskey adds, serves unethical rhetoricians by manufacturing consent and marginalizing the historically

underrepresented communities, particularly Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). He expresses deep concern about the effects of the strategic medium, noting how disinformation and misinformation play an instrumental role in reinforcing dominant ideologies and perpetuating systemic oppression through exclusionary mechanisms. Marking the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election campaign, McComiskey illustrates how politically motivated verbal attacks on BIPOC communities heightened racial tensions across the United States, affecting not only the adults but also leaving the younger generations vulnerable. Divided into three sections, McComiskey's book *Post-Truth Rhetoric and Composition* not only identifies the issues in digital media but also proposes that writing instructors teach students critical literacy against digital lies, fallacies, and doublespeak.

In the section "Post-Truth Rhetoric," McComiskey unfolds what he means by post-truth rhetoric, examining the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election, which he argues was influenced by unethical rhetorical strategies. While a solid transition from the age of "truth" to "post-truth" would be difficult to draw, a broad historical perspective would have enriched the audience of the book. However, in this section, McComiskey made some details on "Bullshit," "Fake News," "Ethos (at the Expense of

Logos)," and "Pathos (at the Expense of Logos)." All the subsections under this section quintessentially discuss that digital media technologies indulge in propagating disinformation to sow the seed of suspicion among the citizens and serve the purpose of vested interests, pushing people into tensions and violating human rights.

The next section, titled "Post-Truth Composition," advocates for critical writing instruction to fight against the politically motivated digital media content that dominates public courses. McComiskey believes that writing instructors can play pivotal roles in checking the negative consequences of post-truth rhetoric both in classrooms and public discourse. He suggests that writing instructors foster openness, creativity, engagement, and awareness among the students, adding that "bullshit" flourishes in the absence of these rhetorical skills, therefore teaching these skills is essential to challenge the success of unethical rhetorical expansion (McComiskey 2017, 41).

In the final section titled "Consequences of Neglecting to Act," McComiskey predicts the potential risks if post-truth rhetoric remains unchecked. I believe this section serves as a warning so that the audience can practice rhetorical skills in personal and public life. The section is concise, but I believe the weight of this

section is significant, so it deserves some detailed discussion.

In contemporary society, people rely on news media and social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter/X, TikTok, and Instagram as primary and easily accessible sources of information. However, users of these platforms barely get an opportunity to cross-check the facts. In this post-truth context, false and fabricated media content dominates the emotions of people at the cost of logic. In this connection, it is worth referring to Safiya Noble's *Algorithms of Oppression* (2018) as she argues that digital media also has systemic racism and classism, and so their algorithms are coded accordingly. Digital media thus feeds people with biased content to manufacture consent for certain communities while denigrating historically underrepresented populations. While much of the conversation in *Post-Truth Rhetoric and Composition* is about systemic racism in digital technologies, it is important to recognize that McComiskey essentially focuses on some useful disruptive methods, too. He argues that fake news succeeds when the audience is not curious about the facts, adding that rhetorical knowledge empowers individuals to understand, analyze, and interrogate the politically motivated feeds. McComiskey anticipates that if the post-truth rhetoric persists, then the racial tensions and systemic classism will continue to prevail, as he says, "Xenophobia will replace social justice, isolationism will invalidate cultural freedom, shouting will trump listening, disruption will drown out response, insults will replace respect, exclusion will diminish diversity.." (2017, 43).

In conclusion, I must recognize that McComiskey's *Post-Truth Rhetoric and Composition* is a kairotic contribution to understanding complex gestures of digital media technologies and their widespread influence on life, livelihood, law and order, democracy, and human rights. Although the book was written in 2017, its relevance has increased manifold in 2025. McComiskey illustrates how powerful rhetoricians rely on unethical rhetorical strategies—often devoid of logic—to advance personal and communal agenda, thereby marginalizing the interests of historically underrepresented communities. The global rise of autocratic tendencies, the waning status of democracy, and escalating ethnic and racial tensions compounded through digital media technologies make McComiskey's conversation more urgent than ever. Moreover, the recent electoral campaigns around the world offer some good examples of how digital media technologies facilitate powerful rhetoricians by manufacturing public opinion in their favor and denigrating historically underrepresented communities. *Post-Truth Rhetoric and Composition* is academic by genre; however, I

believe the lucid language, real-life examples, and contemporary perspectives make it illuminating to general readers as well.



Mohi Uddin

Mohi Uddin is a Ph.D. student in the Writing and Rhetoric Studies Department at the University of Utah. He also teaches first-year writing at the same university. His research interests include digital rhetoric and writing pedagogy.



Interested in Submitting?

The Sandbox invites community literacies workers to write thought provoking, accessible, brief policy memos, reports, or essays on a timely issue within literacy learning and practice. The purpose of these papers is to provide nuanced insight into a salient issue for general audiences, creating a resource for people to use in efforts to shape literacy learning, development, and practice for the better across a wide range of contexts. We currently maintain an open call for submissions.

We are currently accepting:

Critical / Scholarly Essays (3000-3500 words)

Opinion-Editorial / Commentary (800-1500 words)

Policy Memos / Reports (5-7 pages)

Book Reviews (1500-2000 words)

Review Essays of 2 or More Books (3000-3500 words)

Literacy and Learning Narratives / Literacy Autobiographies (2000-3500 words)

If accepted and commissioned for publication, author(s) will receive an honorarium for their paper/contribution.

Proposals must be a brief email indicating what you wish to write about, why you feel it is a timely issue and what impact your insights may have on critical issues in literacy learning and practice today.

Please email us at brownchairinenglishliteracy@gmail.com to submit or if you have any questions.





BROWN CHAIR IN ENGLISH LITERACY

The Brown Chair in English Literacy at the University of Arkansas is an initiative aimed at improving literacy throughout the state of Arkansas and beyond. By cultivating partnerships with a variety of literacy professionals—including university faculty and staff, K-12 teachers and administrators, school and community librarians, practitioners in community agencies and not-for-profit organizations, and governmental officials—the Brown Chair supports literacy research, teaching, and outreach in the following areas:

LITERACY AND CULTURE

Helping individuals throughout Arkansas and nationwide develop and deploy literacy through cultural and creative practices, such as sewing, filmmaking, gardening, painting, etc.

LITERACY AND POLICY

Helping literacy scholars, educators, and non-profit and community organizations develop and pursue literacy research that can and/or will be translated into policies in Arkansas and beyond.

GENERAL YOUTH AND ADULT LITERACY

Helping individuals throughout Arkansas and beyond read and write more richly, productively, and critically in many aspects of their lives, including, but not limited to personal, familial, professional, political, emotional, and spiritual.

LITERACY AND WORK

Helping adults throughout Arkansas and beyond prepare for and participate more fully in high-quality jobs that call for careful and critical reading, writing, listening, speaking, discussing, and problem-solving.

ACADEMIC LITERACY, K – 16

Helping students throughout Arkansas and beyond develop reading and writing abilities so that they can succeed in school and achieve the highest level of education they desire.

The Brown Chair in English Literacy is supported by the Brown Foundation and the Walton Family Gift.



The CLC is the signature center and program of the Brown Chair in English Literacies. It facilitates partnerships, community programming, and educational and policy initiatives centered on empowerment and agency. Driven by a Black feminist love ethics of justice, imagination, community accountability, and love, the CLC supports individuals in Arkansas and beyond in practicing literacies more fluently, richly, productively, and joyfully.

As part of the CLC's commitment to accessibility, the CLC provides Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) captioning, American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation, program materials, including books and additional supplies, and additional access accommodations free of charge to all participants at all events. All programming is completely free and open to the public across the nation and globe.

AS A CENTER, THE CLC OFFERS FIVE CORE PROGRAMS:

GRANTS

The CLC, with the financial support of the Brown Chair in English Literacy, offer grants up to \$15,000 to support literacy organizations and community literacies educators and researchers.

Seed & Growth Grants support new or continuing literacy programs and initiatives that promote or enhance literacy learning.

Some of our past Seed & Growth recipients include: The River Valley Learning Alliance, the Storytelling Thru Inquiry and Literacy Expression Project, Tree House Books, and The Virginia Community Writing Mapping Project.

News coverage of grant recipients from previous cycles can be found at communityliteraciescollaboratory.com/news

THE SANDBOX

The Sandbox: Short Papers, Big Ideas on Literacy and Learning is the CLC's official scholarly and pedagogical publication. As a peer-reviewed publication, The Sandbox, features thought-provoking,

accessible, but brief essays, policy memos, learning narratives, literacy autobiographies, reports, and interviews on a timely issue within literacy learning and practice.

The CLC maintains an open call for submissions. Writers whose work is accepted receive an honorarium at a rate that is competitive with freelance writing for mainstream publications such as The New York Times and Washington Post.

To read the Sandbox or submit your own work, visit <https://communityliteraciescollaboratory.com/sandbox>

POSSIBILITIES HUB

The **Possibilities Hub** presents seminars, talks, and reading groups that explore topics in or through literacy. All Possibilities Hubs are free and open to the public.

Previous Possibilities Hubs include:

- the Fall 2024 “*Possibilities Hub Reads: Holler, Child by Latoya Watkins*,” facilitated by Stephanie Keene.
- the Spring 2023 “*Coalitional Literacies: Strategies for Building Social Justice Initiatives Across Institutions*,” co-facilitated by Dr. Natasha N. Jones of Michigan State University and Dr. Laura Gonzales (a member of the CLC Advisory Board) and Dr. Victor Del Hierro of the University of Florida.
- the Spring 2022 “*Abolitionist Study Group*,” co-facilitated by Dustin P. Gibson and Stephanie Keene.

To learn more or submit your own Hub idea, visit <https://communityliteraciescollaboratory.com/programs/possibilities-hub>

SYMPOSIUM

The CLC hosts symposiums on topics around literacies, community accountability, rhetorics, and pedagogies.

In Fall 2025, the CLC hosted its second symposium, “Crafting the Irresistible: Creative – Critical Literacies and Communities,” which explored how the interplay between the creative and critical bolsters literacies scholarship, pedagogical practice, political and activist expression, and community formation and transformation. It also honored the 21st birthday of Gwendolyn Pough’s groundbreaking book: *Check It While I Wreck It*. You can learn more at CraftingTheIrresistible.com

In Fall 2022, along with the Lillian Radford Chair in Rhetoric and Composition at Texas Christian University, the Brown Chair in English Literacy and CLC co-sponsored “*Tracing the Stream: The Geographies of Black Feminist Literacies, Rhetorics, and Pedagogies*,” a symposium paying homage to the life and scholarship of Black feminist Jacqueline Jones Royster. This three-day virtual symposium, honoring the 22nd anniversary publication of Royster’s important book *Traces of a Stream: Literacy and Social Change Among African American Women*, brought scholars from Black feminist and Critical Race literacies, rhetorics, and pedagogies together in tracing the geographies and cartographies of Black feminist thought and traditions.

The “*Tracing the Stream*” symposium lives at <https://www.tracingthestream.com/>, along with a correlating syllabus co-created and taught by Dr. Carmen Kynard (TCU) and Dr. Eric Darnell Pritchard (UArk).

LITERACY EXCHANGE

The **Literacy Exchange** offers workshops focused on providing the tools and frameworks needed to advance literacy work in our communities.

Previous literacy exchanges include:

- “*Grants Writing Workshop for Literacy Programs and Initiatives*,” co-facilitated by Dr. Sherita Roundtree and Dr. Anne Charity Hudley
- “*Composing Kinship: Poetic Lineage Workshop*” facilitated by George Abraham
- “*Dreaming Black Unicorns: A Workshop*” facilitated by Dr. Alexis Pauline Gumbs
- “*Planning Writing Projects*” and “*Contemplative Writing*” workshops facilitated by Dr. Beth Godbe

To learn more about the CLC and any of its programs, visit our website at:

<https://communityliteraciescollaboratory.com/>



MEET

 **OUR**

TEAM



Eric Darnell Pritchard, Ph.D

EDITOR

FOUNDING DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY LITERACIES COLLABORATORY

BROWN CHAIR IN ENGLISH LITERACY

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS

Eric Darnell Pritchard (they/them) is an award-winning writer, cultural critic, and Brown Chair in English Literacy and Associate Professor of English at the University of Arkansas. They are also on the faculty of the Bread Loaf School of English at Middlebury College. They earned their BA in English-Liberal Arts (magna cum laude) from Lincoln University, the nation's oldest historically Black college and university (HBCU). They also earned an MA in Afro-American Studies and a PhD in English (with distinction) from the University of Wisconsin – Madison.

Eric's research and teaching focuses on the intersections of race, queerness, sexuality, gender and class with historical and contemporary literacy, literary, and rhetorical practices, as well as fashion, beauty, and popular culture.

Their first book, *Fashioning Lives: Black Queers and the Politics of Literacy* (Southern Illinois University Press, November 2016), won three

book awards: the inaugural 2017 Outstanding Book Award from the Conference on Community Writing, and the 2018 Advancement of Knowledge Award and the 2018 Lavender Rhetorics Book Award for Excellence in Queer Scholarship, both from the Conference on College Composition and Communication. *Fashioning Lives* was also recognized as honorable mention for the 2018 Winifred Bryan Horner Outstanding Book Award from the

Coalition of Feminist Scholars in the History of Rhetoric.

They are also Editor of the journal *The Sandbox: Short Papers, Big Ideas on Literacy and Learning*, the official publication of the Brown Chair in English Literacy at The University of Arkansas. They are also guest editor of “*Sartorial Politics, Intersectionality, and Queer Worldmaking*,” a special issue of *QED: A Journal in GLBTQ Worldmaking* (Vol. 4, Issue 3, Michigan State University Press, 2017).

In addition to their book and edited volume, their writings have appeared in numerous scholarly and popular publications including *The New York Times*’s “Modern Love” series, *Harvard Educational Review*, *The International Journal of Fashion Studies*, *Literacy in Composition Studies*, *Visual Anthropology*, *Public Books*, *ART FORUM International*, *Ebony.com*, *The Funambulist* (Clothing Politics Vol. 1 and Vol. 2), and *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education*.

Their research has been supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, the James Weldon

Johnson Institute for the Study of Race and Difference at Emory University, and the Unit for Criticism and Interpretive Theory at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, among other institutions.

An engaging and energetic public speaker, they have delivered keynote lectures and served as a discussant on plenary sessions at numerous institutions and festivals including the National Museum of African American History and Culture at the Smithsonian, the Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum, Museum at the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT), the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising (FIDM) Museum,

the Bard Graduate Center Gallery, the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, and as the 2018 Walker Gibson Lecturer at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. Eric has also been a featured guest on radio programs and podcasts including *Dressed: The History of Fashion*, *This Rhetorical Life*, *In The Telling: A Black Family Podcast*, *The Deep End and Friends*, *The Marc Steiner Show*, *Collections by Michelle Brown*, and the *Top Rank Magazine Podcast*.

Eric’s next book *Abundant Black Joy: The Life of Patrick Kelly*, a biography of the 1980s fashion superstar, is forthcoming from Amistad/

HarperCollins. Eric’s debut picture book biography for kids (and kids at heart of all ages!), *Clothes to Make You Smile: Patrick Kelly Designs His Dreams*, is forthcoming from Abrams.

As a self-described “community-accountable intellectual,” to borrow a phrase from Black feminist alchemist Alexis Pauline Gumbs, Eric’s work and service within the communities they love and are sustained by has also been honored. Most recently, they received the 2018 Esteem Award for National Service to the LGBTQ Community at the 11th Annual Esteem Awards in Chicago, Illinois. They were also previously honored with the A. Philip Randolph “Man of Vision” Award from the Wisconsin Black Student Union.

You can learn more about Professor Pritchard and their work at their website, ericdarnellpritchard.com.

Julia Jensen

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF THE COMMUNITY
LITERACIES COLLABORATORY

ASSISTANT TO THE BROWN CHAIR IN
ENGLISH LITERACY



Originally from Northern California, but now residing in Farmington, Julia has earned a Bachelors degree in Cultural Anthropology at UC-Santa Cruz (go Banana Slugs!!!) and an MA in North American History (Public History) at Arizona State University.

A “theater kid,” Julia has also been an instructor in youth dance programs. Julia has been a very active participant in many of Northwest Arkansas’s local literacy programs, including book clubs hosted by local libraries and independent booksellers.



Jackie Chicaless

ASSISTANT TO THE BROWN CHAIR AND
SYMPOSIUM COORDINATOR

Jackie Chicaless is a PhD student in Composition and Rhetoric at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, where she studies writing pedagogies. Her scholarly work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Writers: Craft and Context* and *Peitho* and her poetry has appeared in the *New England Review*, *Gulf Coast*, *Salt Hill Journal*, the *Florida Review*, and elsewhere

Molly Mingo is a Graduate from the University of Arkansas with a Master's in Rhetoric and Composition. She is currently studying in South Korea and working as an ESL teacher. As a teacher and scholar, her interests are in creating a pedagogy that encompasses students from all cultures and the ways in which language shapes perception.

Outside of academia, she has always been a huge reader of everything fantasy and dystopian. Her other interests reside in fashion, decorating, traveling, and trying out as many coffee shops as possible.



Molly Mingo

GRADUATE ASSISTANT TO THE
BROWN CHAIR AND CLC

ARRIVALS & DEPARTURES



WELCOME ABOARD,
Julia!

NAME

Julia Jensen

POSITION

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF THE COMMUNITY LITERACIES COLLABORATORY AND ASSISTANT TO THE BROWN CHAIR IN ENGLISH LITERACY

ARRIVAL DATE

Aug 2025

Julia joins the team at both the CLC and the Brown Chair in English Literacy to advance both organizations' missions to grow literacy in Arkansas and beyond.

Join us in giving Julia a warm welcome.

ARRIVAL 



THANK YOU,
Jami!

NAME

Jami Padgett

POSITION

ASSISTANT TO THE BROWN CHAIR AND ASSISTANT TO THE DIRECTOR OF THE CLC

ARRIVAL DATE

2022

DEPARTURE DATE

Jul 2025

After three years with the CLC, Jami has decided to move on and pursue new, exciting opportunities.

While we'll miss her dearly, we wish her nothing but the best on her next adventure!

DEPARTURE 

EDITORIAL BOARD



Beth Bruch

HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARIAN,
DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA

Beth Bruch (they/them) is a middle-aged antiracist, antizionist, queer, white, southern Jewish librarian and cat lover. Beth Bruch fights for justice and generally needs a nap.

Working with young people towards their discovery of their own unique brilliance has been the highlight of Beth's career to date. Beth prizes their ability to form genuine relationships with students, especially those who feel disconnected from others. Beth has been the librarian at a public high school in rural North Carolina for the past seven years.

In their personal life, Beth engages in Palestinian solidarity work through Jewish Voice for Peace and the Durham2Palestine Coalition. They lead shacharit services for

their small havurah and enjoy thinking about lots of things. Sometimes they write religious and secular material. They also write poetry and draw.

Beth received their Masters in Library Sciences degree from North Carolina Central University, their Masters in Social Work degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and their Bachelor of Arts degree from Swarthmore College.

They love to read and to proselytize about a lot of books and authors, but Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe and King and the Dragon Flies are two favorites, along with whatever book they are currently reading.



Cedric Burrows, PhD

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH,
ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

Cedric D. Burrows (he/him) is an Associate Professor of English at Marquette University. A native of Memphis, Tennessee, he earned his B.A. at Alcorn State University, M.A. at Miami University (Ohio), and Ph.D. at the University of Kansas.

Cedric's research focuses on how elements of African American rhetoric are reinvented when presented in mainstream spaces. His book *Rhetorical Crossover: The Black Presence in White Culture* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012) won the 2021 David H. Russell Award for Distinguished Research in the Teaching of English from the National Council of Teachers in English.

His work has also appeared in *Journal of Africana Religions*, *WPA: Writing Program Administration*, *Praxis*, *Pedagogy*, and the edited collection *Rhetorics of Whiteness: Postracial Hauntings in Popular Culture, Social Media, and Education* (Southern Illinois University Press, 2016), which

received the 2018 Outstanding Book Award in the Edited Collection Category from the Conference on College Composition and Communication.

Cedric's teaching is an extension of his research through his courses on the Black Freedom Movement, which includes classes such as *The Rhetoric of Black Protest*, *The Rhetoric of Martin Luther King and Malcolm X*, and *Black Travel and Leisure*.

For his work in helping revise the first-year writing course to reflect equity, diversity, and inclusion, Cedric received Marquette's Presidential Difference Makers Award. He was also awarded Marquette's Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion Faculty Award for his contributions to social justice at Marquette.



Alexandra Cavallaro, PhD

**DIRECTOR OF THE CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF
CORRECTIONAL EDUCATION AND ASSOCIATE
PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH, CALIFORNIA STATE
UNIVERSITY-SAN BERNARDINO**

Dr. Alexandra J. Cavallaro (she/her/they/them) is an associate professor in the English Department and director of the Center for the Study of Correctional Education at California State University, San Bernardino.

Her research focuses on three interconnected areas of interest: literacy studies, critical prison studies, and queer studies. At the heart of this work is her interest in the silences and gaps in the official record, the edges of the canonical tradition, and the populations at the margins of institutions. Her teaching, for which she was awarded the 2021 Excellence in Instructional Activities Award, is rooted

in critical and feminist philosophies of education. This entails a commitment to making connections between knowledge and power, and particularly between personal experience and larger political and historical contexts. She believes that truly meaningful pedagogy happens when we practice the belief that people deserve more dignity, humanity, and freedom than institutions currently give them.

In her role as Director of the CSCE, she facilitates prison educator trainings and coordinates the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program at CSUSB.



Laura Gonzalez, PhD

ASSISTANT TO THE BROWN CHAIR AND
SYMPOSIUM COORDINATOR

Dr. Laura Gonzales (she/her) is an Assistant Professor of Digital Writing and Cultural Rhetorics in the Department of English at the University of Florida. Her research focuses on the intersections of language diversity, community engagement, and technology design.

Dr. Gonzales is the author of *Sites of Translation: What Multilinguals Can Teach Us About Digital Writing and Rhetoric* (University of Michigan Press, 2018), which won the 2020 CCCC Advancement of Knowledge Award and the 2016 Digital Rhetoric Collaborative Book Prize. Her second monograph, *Designing Multilingual Experiences in Technical Communication*, is forthcoming by Utah State University Press. Dr. Gonzales is the Vice President of the Association of Teachers of Technical Writing (ATTW), Chair of the Diversity Committee for the Council of Programs

Heather Robideaux has been working in public libraries since 1992, receiving her MLIS from the University of Texas-Austin in 2001.

She has been with the Fayetteville Public Library for over 20 years and currently serves as the Manager of Adult and Reference Services. Robideaux has been active in adult programming development at FPL, working annually on the FPL Fulbright Distinguished Author series, the True Lit Fayetteville Literary Festival, and summer reading activities for adults.

She is a member of the Arkansas Library Association (ArLA), Public Library Association (PLA), American Library Association (ALA) and Reference & User Services Association (RUSA), and served on the Notable Book Council selection committee for the 2010 and 2011 terms.



Heather Robideaux

MANAGER OF ADULT SERVICES,
FAYETTEVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY



Carmen Kynard, PhD

LILLIAN RADFORD CHAIR OF RHETORIC AND
COMPOSITION AND PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH,
TEXAS CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

Carmen Kynard (she/her) is the Lillian Radford Chair in Rhetoric and Composition and Professor of English at Texas Christian University. Before TCU, she worked in English and Gender Studies at John Jay College of Criminal Justice as well as English, Urban Education, and Critical Psychology at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York.

She interrogates race, Black feminisms, AfroDigital/ Black cultures and languages, and the politics of schooling with an emphasis on composition and literacies studies. She has taught high school with the New York City public schools/Coalition of Essential Schools, served as a writing program administrator, and worked as a teacher educator. She has led numerous professional development projects on language, literacy, and learning and has

published in *Harvard Educational Review*, *Changing English*, *College Composition and Communication*, *College English*, *Computers and Composition*, *Reading Research Quarterly*, *Literacy and Composition Studies* and more.

Her award-winning book, *Vernacular Insurrections: Race, Black Protest, and the New Century in Composition-Literacy Studies*, makes Black Freedom a 21st century literacy movement. Her current projects focus on young Black women in college and Black Feminist/Fugitive imaginations in anti-racist pedagogies.

Carmen traces her research and teaching at her website, *Education, Liberation, and Black Radical Traditions*, which has garnered over 1.9 million hits since its 2012 inception.



Beverly Moss, PhD

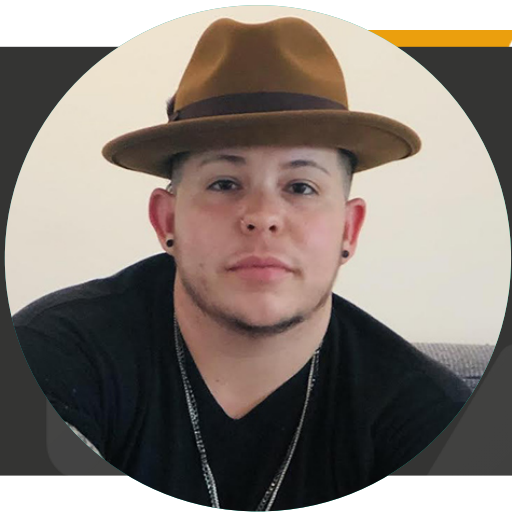
PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH,
THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

Beverly J. Moss (she/her) is an associate professor of English at The Ohio State University where she specializes in composition and literacy studies. Professor Moss earned her B.A. in English from Spelman College, her M.A. in English with a specialization in rhetoric and composition from Carnegie-Mellon, and her Ph.D. in English with a specialization in rhetoric, composition, and literacy from the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Her scholarly and pedagogical interests include examining literacy in African American community spaces, composition theory and pedagogy, and writing center theory and practice. She is the author of *A Community Text Arises: A Literate Text and A Literacy Tradition in African American Churches*, co-author of *Everyone's an Author* (composition textbook), editor of *Literacy Across Communities*, and co-editor of *Writing Groups Inside and Outside the Classroom* and *The Best of the Independent Journals in Rhetoric and Composition 2012*. Professor

Moss has served on the editorial boards of *College Composition and Communication* and the *Studies in Writing and Rhetoric* series and currently is on the editorial board of the *Community Literacy Journal*.

She also serves on the advisory board of the Coalition for Community Writing and as director of Second-Year Writing at The Ohio State University. Beverly is currently writing a book on the literacy practices of Phenomenal Women Incorporated, an African American women's service and social club. A long-time faculty member of the Middlebury Bread Loaf School of English, Professor Moss is now the director of the Middlebury Bread Loaf Teacher Network (BLTN), a professional development network of current and former Bread Loaf teachers who teach primarily in public schools in rural and urban settings. Professor Moss was awarded the 2021 College Composition and Communication Exemplar Award and the 2021 Coalition for Community Writing Engaged Distinguished Scholar Award.



Nic López Rodríguez

MFA, PHD STUDENT, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

Nic López Rodríguez (they/them) is a nonbinary, Florida raised, Philly based Boricua. They are a writer, educator, DJ and brujx. Over the last decade they have served the community as a social justice organizer and researcher.

A former Leeway Foundation Arts & Change grant recipient, their writing has been featured in *The Gordian Review*, *Philadelphia*

Inquirer and *N.A.S.W. Journal*. Nic holds an MFA in Creative Writing from Rutgers University and is currently working as a writing arts professor at Thomas Jefferson University.

As a true Scorpio sun/Aries moon, Nic has a million passion projects, but their main love is rooted in deep, watery poems.

2025 Reading Recommendations from CLC

JAN					
FEB					
MAR					
APR					
MAY					
JUN					
JUL					
AUG					
SEPT					
OCT					
NOV					
DEC					

2025 Reading Recommendations from CLC

JANUARY

Braxton: *The Only Good Indians* by Stepehn Graham Jones
Eric: *The Body is Not an Apology* by Sonya Renee Taylor
Jackie: *James* by Percival Everett
Jami: *Gut* by J. Bailey Hutchinson
Molly: *The Vegetarian* by Han Kang

FEBRUARY

Braxton: *Horror Movie* by Paul Tremblay
Eric: *The Reformatory* by Tananarive Due
Jackie: *Black Pastoral* by Ariana Bensen
Jami: *An American Marriage* by Tayari Jones
Molly: *Scarlet* by Marissa Meyer

MARCH

Braxton: *Peek-A-Who?* by Nina Laden
Eric: *The Davenport* by Krystal Marquis
Jackie: *Bliss Montage* by Ling Ma
Jami: *Unnatural Creatures* by Kris Waldherr
Molly: *The Raven Boys* by Maggie Steifvater

APRIL

Braxton: *About Time* by Neil Hilborn
Eric: *Huda F Are You* by Huda Fahmy
Jackie: *I Can't Talk About the Trees Without The Blood* by Tiana Clark
Jami: *Pilgrim Bell* by Keveh Akbar
Molly: *The Serpent King* by Jeff Zentner

MAY

Braxton: *Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type* by Doreen Cronin
Eric: *When Stars are Scattered* by Victoria Jamieson and Omar Mohamed
Jackie: *A Wizard of Earthsea* by Ursula K. Le Guin
Jami: *Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak
Molly: *The Kissing Hand* by Audrey Penn

JUNE

Braxton: *How to Retire and Not Die* by Gary Sirak
Eric: *Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy* by Rey Terciero and Bre Indigo
Jackie: *Heading North* by Holly M. Wendt
Jami: *Water I Won't Touch* by Kayleb Rae Candrilli
Molly: *The Disreputable History of Frankie Landau-Banks* by E. Lockhart

JULY

Braxton: *The God of the Woods* by Liz Moore
Eric: *City Summer, Country Summer* by Kiese Laymon & Alexis Franklin
Jackie: *The Novices of Lerna* by Ángel Bonomini, trans. Jordan Landsman
Jami: *Brute* by Emily Skaja
Molly: *Sunrise on the Reaping* by Suzanne Collins

AUGUST

Braxton: *Scott Pilgrim's Precious Little Life* by Bryan Lee O'Malley
Eric: *Care Work* by Leah Lakshmi Oiepzna-Samarasinha
Jackie: *Bestiary* by Donika Kelly
Julia: *Shark Heart: A Love Story* by Emily Habeck
Molly: *The Darkest Minds* by Alexandra Bracken

SEPTEMBER

Braxton: *How to Win Friends & Influence People* by Dale Carnegie
Eric: *Weirdo* by Tony Weaver Jr, Jes & Cin Wibowo
Jackie: *Cenzontle* by Marcello Hernandez Castillo
Julia: *Chain-Gang All-Stars* by Nana Kwame Adjei-Brenyah
Molly: *Where Things Come Back* by John Corey Whaley

OCTOBER

Braxton: *His Black Tongue* by Mitchell Luthi
Eric: *Sana, Sana: Latinx Pain and Radical Visions for Healing and Justice* Edited by David Luis Glisch-Sánchez and Nic Rodriguez-Villafañe
Jackie: *Coexistence* by Billy-Ray Belcourt
Julia: *Vampires of El Norte* by Isabel Cañas
Molly: *Esperanza Rising* by Pam Muñoz Ryan

NOVEMBER

Braxton: *My Heart is A Chainsaw* by Stephen Graham Jones
Eric: *Sundust* by Zekae Peña
Jackie: *The White Book* by Han Kang
Julia: *One Dark Window* by Rachel Gillig
Molly: *Scarlet* by Marissa Meyer

DECEMBER

Braxton: *Japanese Fairy Tales* by Yei Theodora Ozaki
Eric: *Champagne Supernovas: Kate Moss, Marc Jacobs, Alexander McQueen and the 90s Renegades Who Remade Fashion* by Maureen Callahan
Jackie: *Mothman Apologia* by Robert Wood Lynn
Julia: *Legends and Lattes* by Travis Baldree
Molly: *My Best Friend's Exorcism* by Grady Hendrix