

CHAPTER 1.

INTRODUCTION—ANTIRACISM AS AN ETHICAL FRAMEWORK FOR RESEARCHING RACE AND RACISM

On June 17, 2015, 21-year-old white supremacist Dylann Storm Roof walked into an African Methodist Episcopal (AME) church and gunned down Cynthia Hurd, Susie Jackson, Ethel Lance, Rev. DePayne Middleton-Doctor, Hon. Rev. Clementa Pinckney, Tywanza Sanders, Rev. Daniel Simmons Sr., Rev. Sharonda Singleton, and Myra Thompson (Scales).¹

This tragic event resurrected Southern horror, recalling through its specific location what was once a national policy of devaluing Black life.² The city of Charleston carries forward the stubborn geopolitics of the American South, which has long been associated with anti-miscegenation, lynching, and other terroristic acts that were intended to maintain stark divisions between Whites, Blacks, and “others.”³ Charleston, in effect, functions as a sign of race relations in America, reminding us that racial (anti-Black) violence is a characteristic of this country. Racism, then, is not a matter of time, but of place.

Both Charleston and Dylan Roof symbolize the drama of racism in America. South Carolina appears to endorse Roof’s belief in white supremacy, which is vividly illustrated by the state’s refusal to take down the Confederate flag waving over the state Capitol building until after Roof’s attack on the AME church.⁴

1 See Scales’s article at <https://fox59.com/news/national-world/charleston-shooting-victims-names-released/>

2 South Carolina has been a location affiliated with several policies leading to southern resistance to equal rights for African Americans. After the Civil War, South Carolina immediately began to implement Black Codes and failed to grant African Americans the right to vote. The Constitution of 1865, passed only a few months after the Civil War, demonstrated a commitment to African American sub-humanity. South Carolina also retained racial qualifications for the legislature, which ensured that African Americans had no power to combat unfair laws. Such laws disenfranchised most African Americans’ right to vote through a combination of poll taxes, literacy and comprehension tests, and residency and record-keeping requirements.

3 See Michelle Alexander’s *The New Jim Crow* for references to racial hate crimes as acts of terrorism (79).

4 After years of refusal, South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley finally authorized the removal of the confederate flag from the statehouse (Scott, see <http://www.cnn.com/2015/07/10/politics/nikki-haley-confederate-flag-removal/>), admitting that it “never should have been there” in the first place.

However, the shooting itself did not directly persuade then-governor Nikki Haley to sign that bill. It was, in fact, Brittney “Bree” Newsome,⁵ who directly contributed to this intervention when the flag continued to fly in the wake of the eight murdered and three injured Black Christians. Through her thirty-foot climb up the pole, the Black Woman activist boldly articulated national shock and outrage when she removed the flag (Workneh).

At this point, our readers may notice that we capitalize the “B” in the word “Black” and “Brown” throughout this book. We also decided to capitalize “White,” but our decision occurs with some ambivalence, which will be explained throughout the next few paragraphs. This citation issue offers a vivid example of how race, racism, and antiracism are currently affecting long-standing debates about how to develop inclusive editorial standards across media knowledge entities. We recognize this social conversation as dynamic, complex, and contextually dependent on how professional organizations’ engage their racial politics of editorial standards. AP, for example, recently decided to accept the capitalization of Black, Brown, and Indigenous, but rejected the capitalization of white for several reasons.⁶

First, “White” can be used to signify White supremacy. Next, White people do not share the same history and continuous present of discrimination based solely on their skin color. Third, the term “White,” as presented by a global news organization in an international context, could lead to considerable disagreement since discourses on race vary widely based on cultural history and geography. We recognize these reasons as valid and hope that antiracist writers will continue to subvert traditional editorial standards to expose histories of exclusion and a rejection of White supremacy through the lower-case white. However, for now, our position is that we will capitalize “B” to refer to “Black” and “Brown” people and capital “W” to refer to “White” people.

As previously mentioned, this position was difficult to establish. It deserves some further explanation because future debates on this grammar issue will likely persist. In particular, these capitalizations intend to draw attention to the fact of race as a social construct mediated by language, technologies, and communication. We do not use the capital to suggest that race is biologically determined, fixed, or some essence of being that we “naturally” share. Instead, we use this grammatical marker to appropriately recognize a deliberate expression of identity that is claimed by persons whose experiences with skin color stratification are inextricably connected to architectures of white supremacy, capitalism, and patriarchy, which are residual designs of colonialism, feudalism, and autocracy.

5 See <https://breeneewsome.com>

6 See bit.ly/APStyleBlackWhite

Skin color, among numerous other characteristics, serves as an indicator of our likely relationship to a historically disenfranchised or privileged racial/ethnic group. Therefore, when we capitalize White, we are encouraging all readers to critically reflect on their personal relationship with race and racism—regardless of their identity. Is the capitalization noticeable when applied to all racial groups? Does capitalization encourage White readers to decentralize their whiteness as the default? Does it make all of our readers think about the best ways we should grammatically mark equality?

Meanwhile, we have chosen to resist using a lowercase “b” and will use a capital “B” when spelling Black for the same reason that one (anonymous) author explained in 1878:

White men being printers long before the black men dared read their works, had power to establish any rule they saw fit. As a mark of disrespect, as a stigma, as a badge of inferiority, they tacitly agreed to spell his name without a capital. The French, German, Irish, Dutch, Japanese, and other nationalities are honored with a capital letter but the poor sons of Ham must bear the burden of a small n. To our journalist brothers we present this as a matter of self-interest. Spell it with a capital. To our Democratic journals we present it as a matter of good grammar [sic]. Spell it with a capital. To Republicans we present it as a matter of right. Spell it with a capital. To all persons who would take from our wearied shoulders a hair’s weight of the burden of prejudice and ill will, we present this as a matter of human charity, and beg you to spell it with a capital. (See the following source in our works cited: “Spell it with a Capital”; see also Clark; Gourley; Lanham and Liu; Price; Tharps).

We will also capitalize “B” when referring to “Brown” people and a “W” when referring to “Black Women” for the same purposes of claiming respect and dignity described in these articles, but with two additional critiques.

First, “Brown” identities have emerged as a categorical identity used to refer to indigenous, Asian, and Latinx people as vulnerable populations that are in need of protection against the institutionalization of anti-terrorist and anti-immigrant rhetoric. “Brown” makes a claim about how one’s community has responded to being subjected to (White) people’s racist attitudes towards them as outsiders, or “others.”

Secondly, Black Women occupy an anomalous identity category because both masculine or male is the default association with Black, Brown, and White

whereas the feminine or female is typically associated with whiteness, quite literally through veneration. The “ideal” beauty is often assumed to have “fair skin,” the literal, symbolic manifestation of whiteness and its assertion of itself as normal, natural, pure, good, and chaste. Black Women, thus, are theoretically erased by the automatic gendering of races as male or masculine, or the racialization of gender as white and female (by default).

The Confederate flag, like the capitalization of racialized cultural identities, is a sign and symbol of the endurance of White supremacist ideologies in contemporary political discourses. Several years after Roof reigned terror upon Mother Emanuel, Haley expressed some regret over her decision to take down the flag. Haley still refuses to acknowledge the flag as a racial or racist symbol. In a December 2019 interview with conservative pundit Glenn Beck, she argued that, “People saw it as service, and sacrifice and heritage—but once he did that, there was no way to overcome it” (Cole). Haley’s comments reinforce a strong resistance to associating acts of violence with white supremacy and its iconography. They also reflect a general public uneasiness with talking about race, racism, and their inevitable consequences.

Roof’s highly publicized murders were dubbed the *Charleston Massacre*.⁷ Since mass shootings tend to be named after locations or shooters only—e.g., Orlando, VA Tech, Columbine, Sandy Hook, the D.C. Sniper—the word “massacre” certainly indicated that something was distinctive about the Charleston event. As a category of murder, the meaning of “massacre” extends beyond the realm of “mass shooting.” The term edges into the domain of “terrorism,” but mainstream news outlets refrained from referring to Dylan Roof’s actions as terrorism or terroristic, despite the many think-pieces that encourage us to rethink those terms (Bump; Gladstone; Friedersdorf). The word “massacre” signifies indiscriminate slaughter, calculated erasure, a method of genocide, and a particularly cruel murder. These characteristics vividly illustrate the practices of terrorism and the inevitable consequences of racism—seen and experienced, but not heard and said. The geographical naming of racist acts constitutes a linguistic cleansing of any racial motivation for the crimes referenced. Therefore, calling the catastrophe a massacre conveniently conceals the motivation for the murder and diminishes the nature of Roof’s act as racism or terrorism.

How we name crime affects how race and racism are learned, which in turn affects how Charleston is learned. The relationship between the racially motivated shooting and the presence of a confederate flag flying above a government

7 Various news sources referred to Roof’s terrorism this way. These outlets include, but are not limited to: BBC (<http://bbc.in/2OdYI7s>), NBCNews (<http://nbcnews.to/3oWYQcM>), MSNBC (<http://on.msnbc.com/3jxAqAP>), New York Times (<http://nyti.ms/36M82FW>), Huffington Post (<http://bit.ly/3cPILQ0>), The Economist (<http://econ.st/3oWzjf2>)

building in the 21st century clearly demonstrates a continuity between South Carolina's history and present, racism and nationalism, gender and social movements. However, Charleston is hardly the only place where white nationalist mass shooters stake their hunting grounds.

Although racism is often misconstrued as a distinctly Southern phenomenon, Roof's killing spree in Charleston highlighted the fact that white supremacist ideology saturates the architecture of the entire U.S. geography and culture. The Charleston scene unfolded within the context of the proliferation of numerous national and international online and offline antiracist protests against police brutality. In addition to Roof's racially motivated murder, the conditions of his arrest reinforced the grievances of the #BlackLivesMatter movement. Roof stayed alive long enough to be arrested *and* was treated to a meal at Burger King after he was taken into custody, dramatizing nationwide racial inequality. The fact that an armed White mass shooter could be arrested without violence generated outcry, given that the U.S. police have killed hundreds of unarmed Native American, Black, and Latinx men and women in the past several years.⁸

Even as our readers are appalled by the racially motivated mass shooting in Charleston, we recognize that some of our readers might imagine racism as far "worse" before and during the Civil Rights era. Or, perhaps the reader is observing the connections between President Donald J. Trump's racist comments about immigrants, the increase of detention centers, mass deportations and family separations, and mass shootings by young White men whose manifestos resemble Trump's rhetoric. Regardless, we argue that racism exists as a constant, ever-present force that is as destructive now as it has always been. Violent manifestations of racism continue to reverberate from a perverse past, drowning the nation in tidal waves of hate. To clarify this point, Roof's frightening actions illustrate the global spread of white supremacist ideology, which was also enacted in a mosque in Christchurch, New Zealand, another mosque in Québec City, Canada, and a Wal-Mart in El Paso, Texas among several other places.

8 1,092 people were killed by the police in 2016; 86 were Native American and 136 were Black, despite the fact that each of these racial groups consists of 1 percent and 13 percent of the population, respectively: Campaign Zero (www.joincampaignzero.org/problem/), The Guardian Counted Project (bit.ly/TheCountedGuardian), and Mapping Police Violence (mappingpoliceviolence.org/).

We would love to be able to evaluate and cite government reports about this issue. However, the U.S. government does not typically track this information through any of its executive agencies, nor are they required to do so at the state or federal level. In 2014, only "224 of 18,000 law enforcement agencies reported fatal shootings" (Swaine and Laughland). Reports of violence are calculated through citizen-journalists and netizens painstakingly tabulating deaths from news reports and public legal records. As previously cited, these include, but are not limited to: Campaign Zero, PINAC (photographyisnotacrime.com/), Mapping Police Violence (mappingpoliceviolence.org/), and the Guardian (bit.ly/GarnerRiceMissingFBIRecord).

Given that contemporary media makes America's racial history so painfully visible, one might think, as a nation, we would take immediate action. Racialized discrepancies in police response ought to be a stimulus to mass agitation rather than the accepted norm. The 2016 U.S. presidential election, however, authorized white supremacist political appeals and further entrenched such norms. The victory of Donald J. Trump in the 2016 U.S. presidential election should be interpreted as an ominous sign for race relations nationwide. According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, over 700 instances of "hateful harassment" against vulnerable populations were reported within a week of the election. Their documentation also revealed an increase of hate crimes against Muslim, Jewish, Black, and Latinx people, which were disclosed in the U.S. Department of Justice's 2015 hate crimes report. Former Attorney General Loretta Lynch called the report "sobering" and urged people to report hate crimes (U.S. Department of Justice 2016).

Meanwhile, Trump's administration included David Duke-approved executive appointments⁹ such as Steve Bannon, an anti-Semitic¹⁰ founder of the extreme right Breitbart "news," and one-time Chief Strategist. In addition, Jeff Sessions, an Alabama senator, held the position of Attorney General despite the fact that he was denied a federal judge position in 1986 for using the n-word and claiming to be "OK" with the KKK.¹¹ With such white supremacist-approved administrators, we are seeing an increased reporting of hate crimes, as well as a reduction and/or elimination of crucial protections such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964.¹² These examples demonstrate that racism is being publicly endorsed in the White House, which intensifies the visibility of racism in our everyday lives

9 David Duke is a former grand wizard of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan who unsuccessfully ran for the Louisiana Senate in 2016 and Louisiana governor in 1991 (see <http://to.pbs.org/3rxPKjG>). Trump claims to disavow Duke, despite receiving praise from Duke on several occasions. Trump also claimed to never know Duke, but video evidence suggested otherwise (see <http://wapo.st/3p3pMTm>).

10 Steve Bannon's radical right activity has received significant coverage via the SPLC's Hate-watch (see <http://bit.ly/3p3qbVS>).

11 Joe Biden urged his withdrawal in 1986 (Shenon, <http://nyti.ms/3q3woTi>). Trump's consideration of Sessions has been praised by White nationalists like Andrew Anglin, who claimed that his nomination (and several others) are "like Christmas" (<https://bit.ly/2OIV3EH>). However, his potential appointment has been sharply criticized by the NAACP, as follows: "Senator Sessions was denied appointment as a federal judge in 1986 for a slew of racist comments, including calling the work of the NAACP and ACLU 'Un-American.' He has also repeatedly spoken out against the federal Voting Rights Act" (NAACP Statement).

12 According to the SPLC (<http://bit.ly/3rAdX9c>), over 1,000 hate crimes were reported one month after Trump's election. The most recent (2015) hate crimes statistics can be found at <https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2015> and the Bureau of Justice Statistics published a report about hate crime statistics from the early 2000s to 2015 (see <http://bit.ly/36Wa13V>).

(Sanchez). It is within this setting that we, as teachers and researchers, are formulating and expressing our ideas about race and racism. We are very concerned with how researchers assert their commitment to antiracism when studying and making knowledge about race and racism. This ethical problem led us to invent parameters for antiracism *as a methodology*, especially in sociopolitical contexts where the risk of retaliation remains extremely high.

In fact, Roof's attack invites us to consider how academic disciplines and researchers are affected by such intense tragedies. In our field, we must look to "alternative" histories to learn more about the implications of racially violent events. For instance, Felipe Ortega y Gasca, who was among the first Chicano/Latino Compositionists, challenges dominant histories of writing and rhetoric. In Ortega y Gasca's story, the death of Martin Luther King, Jr. directly corresponded to the National Council of Teachers of English's development of anti-racist policy statements. He states:

In 1968 on the death of Martin Luther King, Jr., the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) at its national convention in Chicago approved a resolution by the membership to establish a Task Force on Racism and Bias in the Teaching of English as a memorial to the slain civil rights leader. . . Our charge was to survey high school and college anthologies and readers (collections) of American literature for their content—to ascertain how inclusive they were vis-a-vis the minorities represented by the participating caucuses. Needless to say that inclusiveness was non-existent. The scathing Report of the Task Force published in 1972 entitled *Searching for America* gave all the anthologies F's for inclusiveness. That was 1972. (Ortego y Gasca)

As we evaluate the extent to which humanities scholars practice antiracism in the 21st century, we consider the implications of Ortego y Gasca's memory of the field, which many scholars saw (and still see) as contributing to linguistic imperialism and thus civil unrest. His statement about the NCTE's response to major national crises describes the ways in which its own teachers, scholars, and administrators comply with racist educational and scholarly practices.

How much has changed about the field's inclusivity since 1972? With its many caucuses, committees, and affiliates, many are probably not aware of the numerous task forces and committees for inclusion that have emerged in the NCTE/CCCC over the past 40 years. According to a document composed by a Task Force on Including People of Color on the Council composed in 1996, the following inclusion efforts have arisen:

1. Minority Affairs Advisory Committee wrote reports in 1975-76 to address diversity issues.
2. The Board of Directors approved a Policy on Minority Involvement in 1980 that evolved from these reports.
3. An implementation plan for the Policy on Minority Involvement was developed in 1981.
4. A letter of protest was forwarded to the NCTE President concerning the failure to implement the 1980 policy in 1984.
5. The next year, the Task Force on Minority Involvement submitted a plan to increase the numbers of people of color as participants in all areas of the Council.
6. In 1986, the Task Force on Minority Involvement submitted another report recommending practices and policies for involving people of color.
7. In 1987, the Task Force on Racism and Bias and the Minority Affairs Advisory Committee became actively involved in annual convention planning, developing the Rainbow Strand. During the same year, the Minority Affairs Advisory Committee submitted a report on the involvement of people of color in NCTE committees, and the Minority Affairs Advisory Committee and the Committee on Racism and Bias met with affiliates to discuss involvement of people of color.¹³

How has the field addressed the issue of race, racism, and research in its histories of itself, its pedagogies, and its current methods and methodologies? According to the most current NCTE executive leadership literature on race and racism, the field continues to lack consistent engagement with these issues. One report, composed by the Task Force on Involving People of Color in the Council, argues that despite the inclusivity efforts of various groups who have offered suggestions for procedural changes via policy statements, protest letters, etc., “. . . It is apparent from a review of the history that this making and providing recommendations has become cyclical, resulting in occasional and limited change” (NCTE). In fact, the most updated webpage that summarizes NCTE/CCCC’s attempts to diversify its council reinforces these arguments made well over 20 years ago. Although the Task Force’s recommendations were audited in 2001, all of the reports and recommendations that are linked on the page are from 1996.¹⁴

13 Archival researchers may be interested in learning more about the Task Force on Racism and Bias’ work from 1968-1980, which is located at the University of Illinois’ Archives Research Center (see <https://bit.ly/NCTERacismBiasTaskForceFile1968-80>).

14 “2001 Audit of Implementation of Recommendations from the 1996 Report on Involving People of Color in the Council” (see <https://bit.ly/3eSwB71>) and NCTE Position Statements (see <http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/nctediversity>).

On the other hand, a significant body of antiracist scholarship has emerged in our discipline that opens up the possibility for researchers to resist academic discourses and education policies that normalize whiteness by excluding knowledge created by diasporic and/or indigenous communities. For decades, teacher-scholars such as Geneva Smitherman, Keith Gilyard, and Victor Villanueva have drawn our attention to racism in the field by mixing personal narrative with sociolinguistic analysis, situating their movement between rhetorical registers within late-twentieth century struggles over language rights in school and out. Damián Baca, Arnetha Ball, Malea Powell, Jacqueline Jones Royster, and Shirley Wilson Logan have grounded similar work in the counter-narratives of marginalized populations—all of whose writing, rhetoric, and media draw our attention to histories of racism in writing instruction and the influence of imperialist ideology on education in general. Adam Banks, Lisa Nakamura, Judy Wajcman, and Barbara Monroe, among several others, pursue similar inquiry while simultaneously tracking the impact of media innovation on cultures of communication, showing how white supremacy, capitalism, gender normativity, and language regulation mutually reinforce each other while coiling their way across national borders.

We build on these scholars' work by examining the ways in which scholars talk about race and anti/racism. Colonial ideology flows through language and language research, placing us in all kinds of ethical conflicts regarding uses of violent literacy, or weaponized speech and communication. Performing and studying the processes of speaking, writing, rhetoric, and computing with little to no historical awareness of empire-in-action will likely reinforce what it ignores. In response, this book showcases how scholarly and public lexicons mediate the ability to perceive, identify, name, evaluate, and analyze racism and its discourses. Each chapter explores various contexts in which we have opportunities to reflect on our personal experiences with race and racism and their dramatic influence on how we produce knowledge—how we learn(ed) about the concepts, how they affect our desire to know, how we connect with other people, how we learn, how we teach, and how we research.

Our approach is partly a Burkean one then, though our politics owe more to work by Royster and Linda Tuhiwai Smith. Their thinking helps us define the exigency of methods that are rooted in antiracist and decolonial thought. In this moment of composing *Race, Rhetoric, and Research Methods*, we are responding to living during a historical present when federal and state governments seem eager to erase concerns about race relations from collective consciousness. Likewise, too many rhetoric, composition, and writing studies (RCWS) teacher-scholars-administrators select and execute forms of investigation that inadvertently, or perhaps all too knowingly, sidestep race in favor of less troubled territory.

RACE, METHODS, AND METHODOLOGY IN RCWS

Within the morbid scene of Roof's racially-driven violence, which occurred as part of a backdrop of historically ongoing racialized instances of police brutality and other white supremacist-inspired mass shootings, RCWS professionals are confronting several race-based dramas via their online professional spaces. During the composition of this book, three recent events—involving a law, an award, and a listserv—have highlighted the critical importance of how we study and talk about race in the field of rhetoric, composition, and writing studies.

THE RACIAL “PROFESSIONAL” SCENE OF RCWS

Four hundred scholars signed an open letter decrying the National Council for Teachers of English's (NCTE) affiliated organization the Conference on College Communication and Composition's (CCCC) decision to host its 2018 conference in Kansas City, Missouri because of the state's passage of SB-43.¹⁵ This controversial law received national attention after the Missouri NAACP issued a travel advisory that explicitly warned Black and Brown visitors to be cautious about coming to its state on account of disproportionate traffic stops and arrests, potential for police brutality, and a lack of recourse—since SB-43 weakens the ability to prove racial “discrimination” if the accused never “intended to cause harm.” The problem of SB-43 was made highly visible by our co-author Iris Ruiz, former co-chair of the CCCC Latinx Caucus. She led the composition of the open letter for NCTE/CCCC members, with some assistance from co-author Alexandria Lockett and several other scholars interested in supporting the collective action to refuse to attend the conference and/or pursue other equity demands of NCTE/CCCC.

For Ruiz and her letter's signatories, the decision as to whether to attend the conference was an ethical issue that could serve as a measure of the profession's public commitment to antiracism. However, we should be cautious not to assume that a signature automatically signified solidarity. People's motivations and the extent of their dedication to this particular antiracist effort could be interpreted variously. Certainly, all 400 signers did not refuse to attend. Signing the letter may have enabled a person to offer a simple gesture of their empathy regarding the situation. Others may be opportunistic—seeing the letter as a quick way to represent themselves as progressive. Meanwhile, some people might have decided

15 Open Letter refers to the “Joint Caucus Statement on the NAACP Missouri Travel Advisory” (see <http://bit.ly/3tz8GQS>). SB-43 refers to “Senate Bill 43” (see http://www.senate.mo.gov/17info/BTS_Web/Bill.aspx?SessionType=R&BillID=57095378, Missouri State Legislature, September 2017).

to go to the conference because they wanted to visit family and friends nearby. Many more may have signed the letter but still attended CCCC in Kansas City because they didn't want to risk their tenure and promotion by not going to a major research conference in the field. Some signatories may have been locked into travel plans that could not be canceled because they had already received institutional or organizational financial assistance and/or awards to attend.

Regardless of the outcomes of the open letter and its participants' actions, the drama over SB-43 raised fundamental questions about the way conferences are organized:

- Which criteria should organizations use in order to decide whether to support a particular conference host?
- Do conference organizers recognize that/how certain geographical locations might be more dangerous for its members identifying with marginalized racial/ethnic backgrounds than others?
- How equitable is the governance of our professional organization(s)?
- Who serves on these committees and, ultimately, makes decisions about conferences, membership dues, and benefits for all members?

The same year (2018), a number of scholars belonging to the National Communication Association (NCA) issued a statement criticizing the organization's lack of diversity and inclusion. One of its arguments was that only one of its 70 living distinguished scholars has ever been a (male) person of color since the inception of the award in 1991, despite countless invaluable scholarly contributions from ethnically/racially diverse scholars.¹⁶ Their collective action led to two hashtag campaigns on Twitter: #CommunicationSoWhite and #RhetoricSoWhite. These hashtags were referenced in a petition delivered to the NCA, signed by over a hundred scholars, about the lack of diversity in the field's publication boards (Jackson et. al).

The hashtags gained even more traction in 2019 when Martin J. Medhurst, editor of *Rhetoric and Public Affairs*, defended the organization's distinguished scholar selection's diversity and inclusion.¹⁷ Hundreds of NCA members and

16 Since 1992, there have been 104 Distinguished Scholars. 81 (78 percent) are males, 23 (22 percent) are females, and 1 (.96 percent) is a male of color. See this report composed by the NCA president Stan Muir on May 18, 2019 (<http://bit.ly/OpenLetterNACDiversity>).

17 On June 10, 2019, Medhurst sent an email via the CRTNET listserv (<http://bit.ly/3aP-J2yQ>), to contest changes to the NCA Distinguished Scholars' selection process, which are outlined in Stan Muir's response (see <https://bit.ly/3kT91cB>), to the culmination of decades of debate and concern regarding NCA's lack of racial and gender diversity. Notably, Medhurst acknowledges the lack of diversity in the field as a "fact," but repeatedly makes arguments that present diverse representation and merit as oppositional matters. For example, "There is a difference in running an issue of a journal that features two female scholars, a black scholar, and a

affiliates signed an open letter in the summer 2019 to resist Medhurst's comments and their implication that diversity and inclusion are somehow opposed to "merit," as well as the lack of transparency regarding the awards selection and the overall problem with whiteness and exclusionary racial practices that are normalized in the discipline.

This quasi-public discussion about race and communication studies echoes similar debates going on in RCWS. In particular, both fields (and especially communication studies) are inherently conservative because their teaching and learning advances Standard White English and civility norms that harm minorities. As the NCA petition's authors note,¹⁸ casual rationales like s/he's "too junior" or "too mean" need to be met with critical questions such as:

What does "junior" mean? How is that determined particularly when we know faculty of color are often not afforded positions of power or always hired and welcomed at Research I universities that afford them high visibility? What does it mean when a white male who is an Associate Professor is not "junior" but a scholar of color at the same level is? How do narratives about "meanness" simply reify assumptions about white middle class civility and discipline faculty of color who speak out against white supremacy, homophobia, classism, ableism, and patriarchy? Does the Publications Council consider issues of power and historical discrepancies in their deliberations and recruitment? (Jackson et al.)

Medhurst's editorial evades this line of reasoning entirely. He instead focuses on color blindness and equality as more "appropriate" values for researchers to uphold in their professional correspondence and exercise in their work. He refuses to consider what it would mean to take the job of increasing diversity seriously as a senior career White male scholar in the field, who repeatedly claims to care about such issues. Even in his apology, which was issued almost a week after he sent the editorial, he will seek advisors to help him "assure full consideration of diversity" and change the mission of the journal to "reflect greater commit-

graduate student, all of whose work has been accepted through the process of blind review versus saying to oneself, 'I need to publish some female scholars and black scholars and graduate students so everyone will know that I believe in diversity.' Along that pathway lies disaster, for once we substitute identity for scholarly merit as the first consideration, we have lost our reason for being academics." Medhurst's position on diversity is that of equality rather than equity because he fails to present a solution for the problem of representation that doesn't continue to advantage White scholars.

18 See https://www.natcom.org/sites/default/files/NCADistinguishedScholars-Lack_of_Diversity_Petition8.18.pdf.

ment to diverse voices.”¹⁹ Medhurst does not offer to resign, nor does he offer to be replaced by a reputable scholar representing a historically marginalized background. Instead, he maintains his position of power by relegating “diversity work” to others whose consultations he can freely reject.

Although Medhurst’s email was vehemently decried by hundreds of NCA members, some people agreed with his concerns about identity politics. Namely, they don’t want to be silenced or change their values regarding “blind review” processes run by predominantly White editorial boards. Medhurst clearly recognizes that increasing the visibility of researcher’s cultural backgrounds within the organizational structures would re-mediate publication practices, how the quality of research is evaluated, and the extent of its circulation. Such transformations would present a threat to research traditions that neutralize theoretical investigations about race and methodology. The legitimacy of historical and canonical research in the field is at risk if audiences expect researchers to disclose their own racial identity. In sum, #RhetoricSoWhite and #CommunicationSoWhite contribute a critical perspective of the field’s research traditions, which makes it possible to create space for more research that will facilitate inquiry about how race and racism affects the kind of knowledge we make about culture, communication, rhetoric, literacy, and language.

Meanwhile, numerous scholars have been unsubscribing from a major RCWS professional listserv—the Writing Program Administration List (WPA-L)—because of certain users’ desire to start a “secret” alternative online community where people could more openly criticize social justice discourse and identity politics in the name of “freedom of speech.” The conversation involved heated debate, including what some considered to be racist and sexist remarks. Therefore, when an “anonymous” email from the username GrandScholarWizard@gmail.com showed up on the scene, dozens of users expressed concern about the safety of the online community and questioned the field’s commitment to inclusion in general. Ruiz was a major leader in this conversation as well. She co-organized the development of moderation rules that would protect the listserv’s members from hateful interactions.

19 Almost a week after Medhurst sent his email to the CRTNET listserv, on June 17, 2019, he sent an apology (<https://bit.ly/3rO4V8r>), to current and former members of the *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* editorial board, diverse constituencies in NCA, his Baylor colleagues, and the field at large. In an effort to clarify that his remarks did not represent the editorial board and that his comments did not accurately represent his “intention,” Medhurst states, “I’m sorry this episode has developed in the way it has. My views were inartfully expressed. They have been interpreted exactly opposite of my intention. So that there is no doubt, let me say unequivocally that I do not believe that intellectual merit and diversity are a binary. I will welcome advice and guidance on that point as we together work towards solutions that will make the communication discipline a model for others to follow.”

These three events culminated in several resignations from academic journals like *Rhetoric and Public Affairs*, syllabi like #communicationsowhitesyllabus, and press coverage in *The Chronicle* and *Inside Higher Ed*. Each of these cases continue to be passionately discussed on social media, at conferences, and in classrooms. Such deliberation vividly illustrates the problem of how professional organizations and their members strategically and publicly respond to structural oppression. In particular, they sparked dialogues about the cost and location of conferences, the color and gender of the faces of leadership in the field, “appropriate” methods of teaching and learning RCWS, as well as “proper” ways of engaging online communities that represent the discipline. This conversation signifies a pressing need to understand how our scholars, teachers, and students think about race and antiracism, coloniality and decolonialism, as well as how these concepts play out in research practices and representations of scholarly identity.

Our book takes seriously, then, that researchers have an ethical obligation to confront the epistemological, social, and political ramifications of living in a capitalist white supremacist patriarchal society. This obligation means both recognizing and naming racism as an existent, pervasive, deadly problem, as well as analyzing its effect on the work we do, especially in terms of how we choose that work and go about doing it. These critical actions ultimately enact the principles that define an antiracist methodology. After all, we are living in a historical moment when students are searching for the purpose of education in an uncertain and dangerous world. We face problems like hackable elections as U.S. President Donald J. Trump remains in office after being impeached for threatening to cut off aid to the Ukraine unless its president gave him damaging information about his political rival Joe Biden. Through his powerful position, he continues to direct family separations and the unchecked, unsanitary, unsafe detainment of both asylum seekers and citizens. This frightening policy is happening alongside a Congress that has failed to remove Trump or pass legislation that effectively mitigates other major issues like mass shootings, homelessness, hate crimes, climate change, and major disparities of quality of life among the rich and the poor. This intense context is changing how professions operate.

For example, graduate students and their teachers and mentors are no longer communicating in a shadow world of rank and file. Graduate students are assuming positions of leadership and creating their own independent scholarly spaces. For example, vibrant, relatively new organizations like the Council of Writing Program Administration’s (CWPA) Writing Program Administration Graduate Organization (WPA-GO), the NextGen listserv, and Digital Black Lit (Literatures & Literacies) and Composition (DBLAC) illustrate powerful shifts in leadership. These groups have emerged alongside active social media conversations in communities like #TeamRhetoric, #AcademicTwitter, and #CiteB-

lackWomen, which are all extensions of the broader activist context of #OWS, #BLM, #SayHerName, #YesAllWomen, #TimesUp, and #MeToo. Therefore, it is not uncommon to observe graduate students and early-career teacher-scholars talking publicly about their everyday experiences with racism, sexism, ableism, transphobia, and economic scarcity. Long gone are the days when senior faculty could exert unchecked power in their offices, classrooms, academic journals, and conferences. The possibility of being called out and disgraced has been magnified by grad student organizations and various online communities via major platforms like Twitter and Facebook.

These cases did not directly inspire this book, but they reinforce its purpose. Racism is a fact of our history and present. It affects how we design research, what we claim is the truth about what observe, how we learn, our decision-making, and ultimately who we will communicate with and who we will try to become. In fact, considering the role of racial discourse in our own profession of RCWS led us to develop this co-authored text.²⁰ RCWS has a somewhat troubled relationship with race and racism. On one hand, the field has produced many texts about how U.S. racial conflict affects our scholarship and pedagogy (Gilyard; Logan; Royster; Villanueva). On the other hand, much of that work responds directly to the ways in which mainstream scholarship in the field marginalizes the issue of race. We will demonstrate how these omissions occur in two ways: 1) how scholars choose to historicize the field of rhetoric and composition studies, and 2) how our research methods and methodologies neglect race and racism. In both cases, knowledge-making reifies colonial perspectives that privilege white hegemony.

TALKING AND WRITING ABOUT RACE IN RCWS SCHOLARSHIP

This subsection examines how our field, RCWS, tends to lack critical engagement with race, racism, and coloniality. It also describes how our research methods and methodologies respond to this absence. Our analysis of some of the field's dominant historical narratives demonstrates their failure to acknowledge the significance of race and coloniality. In their reflections on the teaching of composition and rhetoric during Reconstruction and the Industrial Revolution,

20 Throughout this book we refer to the broad, interdisciplinary field of “rhetoric and composition” as RCWS (rhetoric and composition/writing studies). However, we recognize that literacy studies is also a key area of the discipline. We drew on Derek Mueller’s justification in his book *Network Sense*. He explains that RCWS “. . . matches with the Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) designation 23.13, as established by the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES). This phrasing also underscores ongoing developments in the field with regard to a richer disciplinary history associated with ‘rhetoric and composition’ and a contemporary relabeling that has taken hold unevenly under the designation ‘writing studies.’”

Berlin, Connors, Brereton, and Kitzhaber, among several others, ignore the specific ways that segregation—as a social and legal policy—in American society affected the accessibility of education and rhetorical practices of disenfranchised groups (Ruiz).²¹ In addition, histories of rhetorical studies assume a similar tone and character as those histories of composition studies.

For instance, Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg’s widely circulated anthology, *The Rhetorical Tradition: From Classical Times to Present*, normalizes a Western colonial male historiography both in the overwhelming space it affords such voices and in its slender (albeit well-meaning) acknowledgments of difference. Bizzell and Herzberg’s large book presents a sequence of scholars and teachers of rhetoric that reinforces a print-centric perspective of Western civilization’s intellectual heritage. Aristotle, Isocrates, Cicero, and Quintilian head the pack as readers move through Greece, Rome, Scotland, England, and America—with only a few brief nods to abolitionists like the Grimké sisters and Frederick Douglass. It hasn’t been updated in almost 20 years, but its selections and characterizations prevail in similar, more recent anthologies like James A. Herrick’s *History and Theory of Rhetoric*.

Published in 2012, Herrick’s textbook also treks through Plato and Aristotle’s Greece, Quintilian and Cicero’s Rome, and Christian Europe before turning its gaze towards philosophical shifts including the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. It sharply moves Rhetoric into a “Contemporary” period, foregrounding twentieth-century theory through critics like Burke, Bakhtin, Booth, and Perelman. Male-centric, Western homogeneity is disrupted in the final chapter of *The Rhetorical Tradition*, which is entitled “Texts, Power, and Alternatives,” though Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida precede the selections representing White feminism. Granted, the counter-cultural contributions of both of these theorists certainly warrants this placement. Foucault was an early exponent of queer theory, and Derrida was an Algerian-Jewish critic of Western logocentrism. Nevertheless, both theorists still signified White male privilege as their translated work flourished enough to become canonized within the same *Anglocentric* discourses they critiqued. Their sections in Bizzell and Herzberg’s anthology give way to an inadequate survey of “comparative rhetoric,” which is a *mélange* of African American and Chinese text fragments lumped in the same section. Neither the White feminist nor “ethnic rhetorics” sections feature individual authors, as the previous chapters do.

These survey texts are commonly assigned or encountered during RCWS graduate study. Unfortunately, they omit non-White, non-male authors and suf-

²¹ According to Google Scholar’s “most cited” work feature, over 1,000 works cite Berlin, and works that cite him seem to also be most widely circulated.

ficient attention to structural racism. Consequently, students and faculty lack models for designing research about this very problem. Normalizing representations of disciplinary history that inhibit criticism about the influence of racism and coloniality on canon formation and research traditions makes it difficult to study these issues. Royster and Williams illustrate this point in their article “History in the Spaces Left.” They critique the homogeneity of “official” histories of the field, discussing how their universal perspective “sets in motion a struggle between these ‘prime’ narratives and other narrative views (that for whatever reasons the official narratives exclude) for agency and authenticity and, most of all, the rights of interpretive authority” (580). Furthermore, they argue that, “. . . as existing histories of composition acquire an ‘official’ status, they participate in the making of metaphors and the symbolic systems of reality by which we draw the lines of the discipline and authenticate what is ‘real’ and not, significant enough to notice and not, or valuable and not” (580–581). Royster and Williams conclude their article by calling for methodologies that disrupt White and colonial primacy. They claim that this perspective benefits the field because researchers would feel more motivated to develop ways of seeing, and filling, the field’s racial knowledge gaps (583). Guided by antiracism, we assume this charge by critically investigating how RCWS researchers write about conducting research.

Before we proceed with our antiracist critique, we must identify “official” definitions of the terms *method* and *methodology*. Lee Nickoson and Mary P. Sheridan, in *Writing Studies Research and Practice*, offer technical definitions for these terms. They associate *method* with researchers’ efforts to “identify research topics, design strategies for collecting, managing, and interpreting the collected data, and determine how to represent their findings.” Such activities embody “*what* the researchers do and *how* they do it” (2). By contrast, they acknowledge that *methodology* concentrates on the “*whys* of research” as well as “the epistemological and theoretical interests that drive researchers’ understanding of their study and of themselves (their roles and responsibilities) within [that] study.” Nickoson and Sheridan’s definitions guide the major conceptual pathways that we will explicitly discuss throughout our book.

However, even as we drew on Nickoson and Sheridan’s working definitions of methods and methodologies, we discovered that their own agenda for knowledge production seemed contained within a discourse that privileged “prime” narratives over the “others.” For example, the vast majority of their collection does not engage how race and racism impact research practices. Out of 20 essays that describe the interplay of what, how, and why in RCWS, only one chapter focuses explicitly on race and racism. In this chapter (and in his own single-authored book *Antiracist Writing Assessment Ecologies*), Asao Inoue performs a powerful critique of writing assessment’s inattention to race in its investigative proto-

cols. He also specifies its failure to understand race as a rhetorical phenomenon that infuses historical ways of educating and communicating (128-29). In this book, we extend Inoue's critique beyond the parameters of writing assessment to the larger interdisciplinary domains in which it unfolds.

Inoue encourages researchers not to layer considerations of race into existing research protocols, but to attend to race and racism in the very formulation of our queries. We take Inoue's cue by moving from critique to praxis, offering numerous, interlocking ways to think about race and its relationship to the processes and performances of communication, writing, rhetoric, media, and literacy. For example, we don't merely acknowledge the need for antiracism to neatly conclude chapters, articles, and books that ignore race in their theorizing of teaching and learning research, writing, rhetoric, and communication. In this book, antiracism fundamentally shapes the whys of our research. Consequently, critical race theory (CRT) frames our book's structure and its featured research methods, which are designed to serve the purpose of destabilizing the kind of dominant research writing traditions that derive their authority from exempting White researchers from disclosing the politics of their identity and its potential impact on their research's subject matter, design, and analytical approaches.

Since we believe that RCWS research subjects and practices are variously affected by race and racism, we have selected a research methodology—antiracism—to guide our research design and methods. This critical framework enables us to focus on two interrelated processes: 1) how we make knowledge about these phenomena and 2) how we ought to pay careful attention, and resist, the ways in which knowledge production structurally involves violence against marginalized people. CRT informs our methodology because it informs our ability to question the centrality of race in interdisciplinary methods and applications that claim "neutrality" while hiding their Eurocentric philosophical foundations and ordering mechanisms of society such as the law, education, and literacy (Bell; Crenshaw; Delgado and Stefancic; Dixson and Rousseau; Freeman; Ladson-Billings; Montoya; Omi and Winant; Prendergast; Romm; P. Williams; Yamamoto). Stifled racial progress, an exigence of CRT, drives our work and the purpose of a CRT methodology "[which] focus[es] on 'race' and racism and its intersections and a commitment to challenge racialised power relations" (Hylton 27). We are especially interested in how these relations work through language. Since a CRT methodology holds researchers responsible for contributing to the eradication of racism, we argue that antiracism operationalizes research as an ethical action capable of showing what Hylton describes as a "commitment to challenge [racism]." Our praxis of antiracism, then, means "forms of thought and/or practice that seek to confront, eradicate and/or ameliorate racism" (Bonnet 3).

To further illustrate antiracism as methodology, we examine how this framework is informed by other critical theoretical positions that constitute CRT. For example, we have attempted to demonstrate the relationship between antiracism and decolonialism. Ruiz's chapter, "Critiquing the Critical: The Politics of Race and Coloniality in Rhetoric, Composition, and Writing Studies (RCWS) Research Traditions," critiques the field's citation practices, as well as its methods of producing histories. By reclaiming the work of colonized populations, Ruiz shows how they are embedded in unequal race relations that marginalize their knowledge and cultures. This decolonial approach to historiography illustrates the use of CRT as an antiracist methodological framework for epistemic justice.²²

Indeed, racism is a complex rhetorical object. It is categorically a fact, a fiction, a consequence, and a physical and metaphysical influence on human interactions. Furthermore, white supremacy is systematically ordered and maintained by multiple discourses of exclusion that are embedded in racialized technological, linguistic, and legal codes. We take these issues into consideration when observing human experience, reflecting on it, and giving words to what we see and how we remember it. This intensive process demands a futile attempt to "tell the truth" about what happened. The problem of truth looms large in research. Many conflicts about whether some knowledge production is credible are structured as a drama over "objectivity," "neutrality," and "bias." These debates still go on in the social sciences and education. Indeed, at the core of the ethical conflict that characterizes the drama of research lies the decision to disclose or conceal what one knows about race and racism.

Although this is not a textbook, we recognize that the relationship between race and research methods and methodologies needs to be explicitly taught as a part of the core under/graduate curriculum. There are few published examples of how this is being formally learned. CRT theorist Thandeka K. Chapman offers one notable exception of antiracism being taught as a methodology in her graduate course that introduces students to qualitative research. In her chapter in *Researching Race in Education*, Chapman reflectively analyzes her use of race-based approaches, considering how "Language is a key element for demonstrating bias and reframing research" (237).

22 In her book, *Decolonizing Rhetoric and Composition: New Latinx Keywords for Theory and Pedagogy*, Ruiz features a chapter on "Race." This chapter discusses "the use of CRT as a decolonial methodology, which Mignolo describes as questioning an allegedly objective body of knowledge" (13). Similar to Royster and Williams, Ruiz attempts to disrupt the field's tendency to present its own histories as universal prime narratives. She argues that canonized knowledge in RCWS unethically ignores the intensely violent consequences of colonialism and racism—the continuous erasure of diasporic and displaced populations.

One of the biggest challenges for Chapman is building learning environments that enable students to actually talk about race (242-43). To resolve this issue, she argues that “Race-based research makes visible explanations of distress and misinterpretation that people of color fear from white researchers and academics of color” (237). According to Chapman, her most impactful teaching moments occurred when her students discussed how they noticed race and racism operating in their everyday lives, via family, friends, etc. Chapman observes that such interactions helped them learn to “. . . embrace and challenge their epistemological understandings of difference as a means to cultivate ethical research practices” (243). We, too, are committed to opening up space for our field’s professionals to contemplate their relationship to communicating about race.

Unfortunately, the structural power of racism is carefully controlled through stylistic conventions of research writing and communication. Race is political. It affects what people, places, and things mean, yet it is not “polite” to talk about race in public—a cultural norm that affects “professional” spaces. Research, then, is political because the researchers’ writing performance will reinforce certain attitudes towards language and, thus, ideologies of race. Narrative and textual inquiry does not attempt to evade this particular problem of “bias,” but rather to investigate it by exploring what kinds of stories we make. Indeed, a researcher’s racial awareness affects their epistemology and how they construct identity narratives. Sanchez’s chapter, “Towards Reconciliation: Composing Racial Literacy with Autoethnography,” offers a useful model for instructors and students seeking ways to start difficult conversations about race and racism. In particular, Sanchez showcases how autoethnography can be used as a method for composing a racial literacy narrative. Throughout his reflection about what led to his desire to be antiracist, he grapples with the possibilities for reconciliation and the extent to which this process meaningfully contributes to the goal and/or philosophy of antiracism.

We hope that this book will be useful to researchers like Chapman, who are tasked with teaching research methods courses to aspiring professionals in humanistic fields. We also crafted the book with graduate students in mind. By focusing each chapter explicitly on how race and racism affect ways of thinking and the processes of claim making, we demonstrate and actualize antiracism *as a methodology* in four single-author chapters of this book that utilize the following research methods (respectively): critical historiography, autoethnography, visual rhetorical analysis, and critical technocultural discourse analysis.

Each of us authors explicitly discusses how considering race and racism affects our analysis and communication of research findings, as well as the implications of our research to publics inside and outside the field. Through this

kind of reflection, we seek to increase the epistemological and rhetorical value of recalling and articulating personal experience, which helps us ground our theory in real-life substance (Malagon, Huber, and Velez). Thus, narrative is embedded in our methods because storytelling, as a form of argumentation, subverts the idea of a “neutral,” aracial point of view. By grounding our theoretical observations in lived experience, we take a metacognitive approach to the mechanisms of race and racism operating in our everyday lives and the cultures, scenes, texts, and media of society.

We also converse with each other’s work in between chapters. These inter-chapters showcase each co-author further discussing concepts in their work, current events, among several issues. Each one clarifies, through reflective dialogue, what understandings our distinct subject positions afford and what they might obscure. In that way, we follow cues offered by Meredith J. Green and Christopher C. Sonn in “Problematising the Discourses of the Dominant: Whiteness and Reconciliation,” wherein they address how unacknowledged power relations within diverse political groups can derail activist programs and dilute antiracist methods. Overall, the interchapter dialogues are intended to give our audiences additional access to our work, as well as an opportunity to experience our voices in an alternative format. Through the interchapter dialogues, we aim to create a more integrated, nuanced conversation about race and research.

In addition, our book’s postscript also discusses collaboration as antiracist action. It specifically describes how the authors collaborated, as well as the challenges they faced and the critical and creative insights they discovered throughout the process. In the postscript, we discuss major contemporary issues that unfolded during the final stages of the book’s production. We draw on these events to further elaborate on our book’s significance and applications.

ANTIRACIST PRACTICE: THE ROLE OF DISCLOSURE IN RACE-BASED RESEARCH

Why did a Black woman, White man, Latinx woman, and Chicax man—all scholars under age 50—choose to write this book? How did our cross-cultural contact enable us to leverage our interracial contact and varying professional ranks and backgrounds to develop this book?

We felt compelled to make a substantive contribution to the field, in regards to defining and operationalizing antiracism. We resist living in a culture in which violent scenes like the massacre at Mother Emanuel and numerous recorded incidents of police brutality are historically consistent with anti-Black racism. We know that these aren’t sporadic events, and we recognize that they reverberate in our personal lives. In Christopher Carter’s chapter, “Taser Trouble:

Race, Visuality, and the Mediation of Police Brutality in Public Discourse,” he demonstrates how the ongoing saga of police violence against unarmed (mostly Black, Indigenous and people of color, or BIPOC) persons exposes the necessity of citizen surveillance because “official” police accounts frequently differ dramatically from mobile phone video footage of these events. Any of us could bear witness to wrongdoing and be put in a position to have to decide to record.

More troubling still, the footage we capture may end up inadmissible and disregarded while we are subject to retaliation, intimidation, and even imprisonment. Without accountability, police testimony is more persuasive than what appears on a citizen’s film, which diminishes the public’s hope that telling the truth offers pathways to justice. This crushes our faith in democracy and the justice system. Facing the possibility of a fatal police encounter, or being regularly confronted with visual evidence of unnecessary murders, harms everyone—albeit disproportionately. We, the authors, feel these (and other) consequences of racism deep in our hearts, at the forefront of our minds, and in the marrow of our bones. They directly affect the fear we feel when we leave our homes, our loved ones’ concern for our lives, the empathy we have for our students, and the anxiety we have about the purpose, cost, and responsibilities of post-millennium education.

Too often, predominantly White rhetoric and composition researchers carefully acknowledge the importance of taking race and racism into account when teaching and researching while concealing their specific relationship to racial identification. From a decolonial antiracist perspective, their self-image illustrates normative whiteness. They are almost always strategically naive, appearing before their audiences as benevolent, well-meaning colonizers who generously utilize their social status and privilege to study subaltern populations such as our composition students, or other downtrodden “barely literate” or “aspiring-to-become-literate” populations—including their historically marginalized colleagues (Heath; Sternglass). However, such posturing raises questions about how racial dynamics affect exchanges of power between researcher and the researched.

For example, what motivates a White researcher to study “people of color” without disclosing what’s at stake for them to be writing about difference, race, equity, diversity, etc.? What kinds of risks are White researchers willing to take in their work that match the intensity of the life/death urgency of eradicating racial, gender, and economic inequality?

Furthermore, how is it possible for a White feminist to theorize about Mexican female rhetors of the late 19th century when she is not a historian, is not Mexican, is not Latinx, does not speak Spanish, and does not show interest in that same community which inhabits her profession? Such researchers produce “knowledge” about ethnic/racial communities without having any real contact with the people that identify with them (Yancey). Despite ongoing controversy

about White researchers increasingly occupying disciplinary spaces such as Africana/Black studies, Native/Chicana studies, and Mexican and Latinx studies, the “authenticity” questions seem to have been laid to rest.

When researchers seek to make “exotic” cultures and language practices familiar, they may unknowingly (or deliberately) assimilate, consume, and appropriate the epistemological traditions of the “other.” Their subject selection reveals that whiteness increases scholarly authority, or the ability to make claims about cultural groups, regardless of one’s degree of participation or history of contact with said groups. Yet, as we will show throughout the book, this is a problem when researchers representing historically marginalized identities—whose selves and communities are affected by their work—remain invisible in their efforts to identify structures of oppression that prevent them from being seen. Iris Ruiz addresses these issues in her chapter, “Critiquing the Critical: The Politics of Race and Coloniality in Rhetoric, Composition, and Writing Studies (RCWS) Research Traditions,” which analyzes the racial and colonial politics of citation in RCWS scholarship. Specifically, Ruiz argues that scholarly publications in RCWS privilege White scholars advancing racial discourses that reinforce racially neutral histories of the field and a relatively racially homogenous canon. In addition, the demographics of published RCWS researchers fail to accurately reflect the culturally diverse participation that constitutes the profession (although racial/ethnic diversity among professionals in the field remains very limited).

When researching race and racism, one’s relationship to these concepts should be explicitly identified. This act, for us, is one of the primary characteristics of antiracism. Taking whiteness for granted as the assumed—or default—subject position of a researcher, or the audience, contributes to the idea that only White people can be considered intelligent and/or (culturally) literate. Thus, these racially biased misconceptions persistently reproduce racism in the processes of knowledge production. Hence, we argue that supposedly aracial or non-racial feminist methodologies that call out bias, such as many White RCWS feminist scholars who conduct studies about social injustices, fail to be critical of their own privileged position because they are often given the space and opportunity to perform research and publish findings on individuals who occupy linguistic minority spaces—despite the lack of authorship representation from the very groups they make knowledge about. They maintain their dominance by failing to expose their colonial gaze, which justifies their research about historically disadvantaged racial and ethnic groups to “increase awareness,” as if they are doing that group a favor.

We recognize that researching this subject is deeply emotional work. Therefore, we carefully established parameters for antiracism as a methodology while pondering the broader significance of being a researcher in this historical mo-

ment. Of course, we believe that excellent research about any subject can be produced by anyone who engages the subject with care, comprehension, and commitment. This standard of attempting to practice antiracism would be upheld by any researcher who claims to challenge White hetero-normative epistemologies if they acknowledge their identity and privilege. Next, they should be able to articulate the continuity between historical practices of exclusion and their contemporary relationship to structures of power and oppression. Furthermore, RCWS researchers should concede the limitations of their cultural knowledge as an outsider, recognizing that their vantage point will not be as rich as those intimately tied to the traditions of literacy and rhetorical prowess under discussion.

Alexandria Lockett's chapter, "What is Black Twitter? A Rhetorical Criticism of Race, Dis/information, and Social Media," explores various ways these issues could play out when researchers examine a complex racial, technological, textual, and rhetorical object like Black Twitter. Her research analyzes the cultural impact of "Black Twitter" and the performativity of online Blackness. With careful attention to the issue of embodiment, Lockett argues that Black Twitter enacts dramas about the ownership of Black creativity and culture, given the challenges of attributing authority to a global distributed information network comprised of a mixture of human and non-human (bot) agents. Indeed, Black Twitter affects what we know about the preservation of Black culture and opens space to think about the economics of digital labor and cultural production. For instance, how should we study and talk about networked communication? What kind of language should we use to describe linguistic acts of collective intelligence? How should individual authors be recognized for their eloquence amid the crowd and the hive? In other words, researchers must not separate issues of race and technology when deciding to study "public" writing and communication. Any source has authors, even if the author must be referred to by a username and their social media profiles. When obtaining knowledge about "others," researchers should always credit the source—even if it is digital, public, and hard to trace back to its authors—and articulate meanings they do not make as if they are invented from one's own thoughts. Finally, one should explicitly state how their experiences relate to their work, as well as how their research benefits the subject(s) and communities that they study.

Since we exist in an uncivil political terrain, our awareness of the current hostile racial climate directly affects how we research and teach. Disclosing cultural identity changes the narrative about the possibility for researchers to be unbiased and "objective" when studying race and racism. In this context, such disclosure enables the audience to determine what's at stake for the researcher when doing this kind of work. Any absence of this utterance in scholarship about human performance says to the interlocutor that the subject is beyond

race, and thus, beyond the influence of networked information systems operating across geographies and technologies.

Furthermore, the refusal to participate in “racialized” communication further contributes to misinformation and an inability to recognize the aesthetic nature of information access and production. In our professional experience, “academic writing” tends to be defined by an author’s ability to present arguments without overtly discussing how their personal experience plays a role in the research and writing process. Some fields like anthropology, psychology, and education regularly confront this issue because their researchers struggle to gain trust from the communities they study. When researchers make their conclusions about the value of human beings and their social activity transparent, it opens up the possibility to more deeply engage the limitations and potentials of what we think we know.

Therefore, we work in different, but related, ways to reveal our positionalities throughout this book. A researcher’s gaze, as we have previously argued, constitutes an important consideration in qualitative studies in RCWS (see *Ethics and Representation in Qualitative Studies of Literacy*, edited by Peter Mortensen and Gesa Kirsch). It also applies to our work’s theoretical exploration of language, epistemology, and race. Race and racism as lived, symbolic phenomena inspired us to conceive of this project as a co-authored book. Since this work is the product of four researchers representing different backgrounds, identities, and locations, designing this book demanded the use of synchronous and asynchronous communication technologies for collaborative composition.

We paid very close attention to how we negotiated our various areas of expertise to discover and invent—not simply document—how race and racism affect our identities as researchers, teachers, and citizens. We deliberated intensively about what our research was *doing* and whether the ability to observe its generative potential would lie in the mutually supportive character of our stories, as well as the instructive places where they diverge. As we previously discussed, RCWS professionals must function within a “hostile racial climate” that requires them to engage in uneasy contemporary public discourse about discrimination and inequality. We highlight some of the ethical stakes involved in researching and talking about race through a critical discussion about key intersections between the racial violence in Charleston and our digital disciplinary scene, in which heated debates about how race affects our disciplinary identity are leading to resignations, public letters, generational factions, and transformations in social justice branding.

This is not another book that assumes White scholars are the only audience, that people need to be better “rhetorical listeners,” nor does it attempt to persuade our audiences that “diversity and inclusion” matter. Instead, this book is a medi-

tation on how race and racism operate in multiple sites of knowledge production about language and communication. As authors coming from different cultural backgrounds, we wanted to experiment with composing a collective, integrated text that could draw on our diverse subject positions in society and explicitly consider how our identities affect the kind of research we are able to do about race.

More specifically, our book foregrounds three ethical challenges of studying race and racism in RCWS. These include, but are not limited to

1. Disclosing our cultural identities and their direct relationship to our research about race and racism;
2. Identifying how the discipline of RCWS has failed to comprehensively theorize and discuss race and racism in ways that amplify their intellectual and social complexity; and
3. Acknowledging antiracism as a necessary but experimental concept that needs to be explicitly developed responding to how living in a racist society affects our ability to truthfully and accurately observe reality as it exists vs. how people desire to imagine and invent it.

Towards this end, the book showcases three distinctive features that we will elaborate near the end of this introduction:

1. Single-author chapters that illustrate how we each individually constructed research with the issue of race at the center of our investigations
2. Interchapter dialogues that offer more in-depth coverage of the authors' ideas and motivations regarding how we learned to invent, analyze, and claim knowledge about race, racism, and antiracism
3. An afterword that explicitly discusses the rationale for our book's title, as well as some of the challenges and insights offered by antiracism as a research methodology, and collaborative writing across race and gender

Our primary purpose, then, is to identify and utilize research methods that enable researchers to focus on how race and racism affect epistemologies of place, self, and society. We also examine how the collaborative authorship process itself might support researchers interested in creating and participating in structured communication contexts that facilitate inquiry about meaningful ways to communicate about race in scholarship.

OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS: OUR METHODS AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES

Overall, we do not believe that any researcher stands outside of race and racism because we reject the notion that a researcher—especially of language, com-

munication, society, technology, information, and/or writing—is capable of researching these concepts as phenomena external to the making of knowledge. Antiracism is the goal of our research. This purpose informs our methods and methodologies because we believe that racial stratification is constructed and reproduced in all kinds of professional communications contexts. We attempt to demonstrate that our work is “antiracist” by interrogating how race affects the ways in which we see, talk, write, and attempt to produce institutionally recognized scholarship about human beings, their arrangements, how they learn, and how they communicate. Moreover, we do not underestimate the ways in which research may inaccurately and negatively represent historically disenfranchised individuals, cultures of resistance, and sites of knowledge production that are located outside of “formal” educational institutions.

The first single-author chapter of the book (Chapter 2) builds on the narratives of this introduction and examines rhetoric, composition, and writing studies’ imperialist politics of citation, which have been practiced within the field since at least 1949. Iris Ruiz focuses on how certain disciplinary textual and citation practices, rituals, values and beliefs construct the field’s limited cultural literacy, as well as how that literacy enables certain historiographies to assert and maintain White scholastic hegemony and disciplinary power. Inventing a decolonial gaze from a curandera methodology, Ruiz critiques three critical RCWS methodologies by calling attention to how they engage in imperial scholarship practices, cultural and historical erasure, and “white-washing.” Such methods, Ruiz claims, affect how race appears and disappears in “critical” research practices, especially in terms of who is permitted to write, research, and circulate stories about race and racism.

This methodology allows for historical recovery, or historical curanderisma, as well as personal and disciplinary healing. This kind of historical recovery, which builds upon her earlier scholarship featured in *Reclaiming Composition for Chicanas and other Ethnic Minorities: A Critical History and Pedagogy*, seeks to make silenced voices and histories of rhetorical education and engagement more audible. Ultimately, Ruiz—like her co-authors Sanchez, Carter, and Lockett—argues for the necessity of research methods that are capable of mapping race to specific geographies, communities, and forms of textual production.

In the next chapter (Chapter 3), James Chase Sanchez enacts autoethnography, or self-critically researching one’s own cultural identity, as a research method that contributes towards the process of racial reconciliation. Specifically, Sanchez investigates his own upbringing as a Chicax individual in a rural Texas town known for a history of racism, while claiming that autoethnography provides a lens for better understanding how race is epistemic and can help reconcile injustices against one’s body. For Sanchez, it began with feeling outside

of two communities: the minority Brown kids who spoke Spanish (which he didn't) and the White-majority kids who were, well, White. These differences and the feeling of not having a community emphasized whiteness as normalized in his hometown. Therefore, class, language differences, space, interactions between peers and elders, and Sanchez's own response to these issues all were variables in producing Sanchez's racial awareness, or his racial literacy. Throughout his chapter, Sanchez analyzes the purpose of autoethnography as a scholarly and pedagogical exercise, suggesting that the study of race via autoethnography can elicit transformation of attitudes and memories that inhibit reconciliation. In other words, the desire to resolve the problem of racism depends on a person's willingness to learn about the limitations of prejudice and bias, admit their own participation in systems of exclusion, believe that one's survival depends on the well-being of other people, as well as care about the livelihood and subjectivity of all human beings.

In Chapter 4, Christopher Carter expands current methods of investigating civic dialogue by concentrating on the visual mediation of violent arrests of unarmed Black men in South Carolina and Oklahoma, placing particular emphasis on rhetorics of citizen videography and police camera footage. As a White man from Kentucky, he is familiar with narratives of White victimhood and brotherhood that give power to the arguments that police use to defend their use of violence. Carter finds that although arresting officers generally provide oral defenses of their actions in shooting cases, video reveals details that differ from or are not acknowledged by the official narrative, as follows: 1) suspects under investigation do not pose an immediate threat to their pursuers; 2) police begin to construct a rationale for the gunfire almost immediately after it occurs; and 3) attending officers continue to mistreat the subjects as they are dying or after they are dead.

Similar to Sanchez and Lockett, Carter investigates the dynamic relationships between geography, race, and citizenship. Like Ruiz, he critically examines how authority mediates truth-telling in regards to whose testimonies of knowledge (about injustice) are likely to be believed. However, Carter's focus on visibility and networked publics introduces key methodological challenges such as how to assess "evidence" within a technological context where anyone with access to a mobile phone and the internet can record and share footage. These processes include tracking the virality and accessibility of both "official accounts" and those that come from activist counter-surveillance. Visual rhetorical analysis provides a method of critiquing the role of race and its relationship to the persuasiveness of images in public debate.

In Chapter 5, the final single-author chapter, Alexandria Lockett examines the complexity of studying the discourses of racial online publics. Through her

critical technological discourse analysis of several instances of the rhetorical activity of “Black Twitter,” Lockett identifies some of the ways in which Black Twitter reveals opportunities for developing more nuanced methodologies for studying the intersections between race, digital technology, and culture. Although Black Twitter has powerfully responded to the police brutality discussed by Carter, it evades traditional definitions of “community” and “culture” that are named and located in the physical spaces interrogated by Sanchez. In this chapter, Lockett reflects on her relationship to Black Twitter—as a (Black) Twitter user—to consider how racial identities are mediated on social media. She asks, “What is Black Twitter?” Noting that Black Twitter is virtually absent from academic studies in RCWS even though it is widely acknowledged by many mainstream media outlets, Lockett reviews some key intersections between academia, journalism, and Black Twitter.

According to Lockett, Black Twitter is subject to misinterpretation and even data warfare. The “blackness” of Black Twitter is recognized through racially coded language practices that can be improperly performed by outsiders such as Russian hackers seeking to disrupt the U.S. political process. Some researchers will acknowledge the power of Black Twitter while simultaneously overlooking its relationship to Black English. Lockett analyzes the rhetorical and political significance of Black English, especially the persuasive value of public expressions of Black English (BE) and/or African-American Vernacular English (AAVE). Twitter’s complex technical mechanisms (e.g., algorithms, archiving, and “trending” functions) also intensify the challenge of studying cultural expression through ethnographic and linguistic methods.

As we previously discussed, this book’s primary purpose is to establish research methods that enable researchers to focus on how race and racism affect epistemologies of place, self, and society. We also examine how the collaborative authorship process itself might support researchers interested in creating and participating in structured communication contexts that facilitate inquiry about meaningful ways to communicate about race in scholarship. In some ways, our book is similar to *Critical Rhetorics of Race*. We appreciate that its editors, Lacy and Ono, offer one of the few more recent books in the field that is exclusively dedicated to critically analyzing race and racism from a transdisciplinary orientation. However, their edited collection “aims for broad knowledge about how race and racism emerge and function in their various guises and conditions” (3), whereas we are far more interested in how race and racism affect scholars during the process of composing research for our field. While locating and describing race and racism constitute necessary steps towards awareness of their manifestations in everyday life, we do not believe that understanding racism enables one to “navigate such a world [and] ultimately change it” (3-4).

Indeed, we take for granted that the audience of this book does not need for us to exhaustively document and describe racism in its everyday forms. We also take for granted that the audience rejects the idea of a “post-racial” U.S. society. However, we are writing for researchers in the field who want to learn additional strategies for cultivating creative, reflective responses to matters of race and racism. In our case, we are writing for researchers interested in figuring out what antiracism looks and feels like as part of our research traditions and as a methodology that is capable of influencing our methods.

Thus, we decided to write this book collaboratively, not as an edited collection, but as a representation of four individuals contemplating their experiences as citizens, researchers, teachers, scholars, artists, friends, daughters, sons, mothers, fathers, brothers, and sisters. We chose this method of composition to make visible some of the ways in which we are self-consciously and artistically describing and modeling antiracist research. We understand our research approach as a deliberate, political act that illustrates how we feel, not just what we think, about experiencing race and racism in the work we are doing and the kind of society we want to work in.

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