

*Race, Rhetoric and Research Methods*, Alexandria Lockett, Iris Ruiz, James Sanchez, and Christopher Carter. (The WAC Cleringhouse, Fort Collins, Colorado. 2021)

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Judging from the title, *Race, Rhetoric and Research Methods*, I assumed the book was mainly focused on racism in the field of Rhetoric and Composition. The book however, focuses each chapter explicitly on how race and racism affect ways of thinking and the processes of claim making. The four-single author chapters demonstrate and actualize antiracism as a methodology to share their various experiences as people of color by utilizing the following research methods: Critical Historiography, Autoethnography, Visual Rhetorical Analysis and Critical Technocultural Discourse Analysis.

In an attempt to proof its antiracism, the book addresses issues like; racial literacies, black feminism, linguistic diversity, African-American Vernacular English (AAVE), racial bias in the field of Rhetoric and Composition, with the aim to push the everydayness of racism into the forefront of research.

The authors point out to the readers in the introduction the use of capital ‘B’ in the words ‘Black’ and ‘Brown’ throughout the book as well as their decision to capitalize ‘W’ in ‘White’ to prove White supremacy pointing out that anti-racist writers use lower-case ‘w’ for white for the rejection of White supremacy. But particularly, its purpose is to “draw attention to the fact of race as a social construct mediated by language, technology and communication and to appropriately recognize a deliberate expression of identity that is claimed by persons whose experiences with skin color stratification are inextricable connected to architectures of white supremacy, capitalism and patriarchy, which are residual designs of colonialism, feudalism, and autocracy” (3-4).

As a black student of Rhetoric and Composition, I particularly took interest in the second chapter by Iris Ruiz “*Critiquing the critical: The politics of race and coloniality in Rhetoric, Composition, and Writing Studies research traditions*”. Incorporating research methodologies analogous to Ono et al.’s “*Critical Rhetoric of Race*”, this chapter gives a sense of how rhetoric,

composition, literacy, and communication studies has simultaneously claimed that it is committed to antiracism and social justice, but when we look at how it's talked about in the field, it is a different story presented. Inventing a decolonial gaze from a curandera methodology, Ruiz critiques RCWS critical methodologies by calling attention to how they engage in imperial scholarship practices, cultural/historical erasure and 'white washing'. With the aim of calling out white supremacist origins of RCWS through antiracist methodologies, she argues that although certain Rhetoric, Composition, and Writing Studies (RCWS) methods claim to be 'critical', when filtered through an epistemic act of decoloniality, and epistemic disobedience, it becomes clear that the current critical methods are embedded in traditions of whiteness.

Ruiz points out that BIPOC (Black and Indigenous People of Color) perform their academic identities through standard conventions, disciplinary legitimacy, and other actions that ensure professional access, she doesn't exactly expatiate on this point but reveals that the BIPOC had to acknowledge Greco-Roman historical and epistemological traditions to receive a nod towards scholarly 'credibility' and gain a badge of 'academic rigor' from their peers (40).

In this chapter, she advocates for the marginalized authors tagging the field as hegemonic for being rather invested in maintaining its 'scholastic White hegemony'. RCWS relies upon Eurocentric histories to legitimize its disciplinary status, which is colonial and marginalizes certain people and the knowledge that is produced by marginalized groups through their publications is minoritized and can be clearly seen when one takes a close look at how race has functioned throughout the disciplinary (46-47). Ruiz reveals that the field neglects research topics and articles from people of color; she specifically makes reference to various instances when academic manuscripts of brown and black skin people, including hers were rejected without having been read by the CCC editors. This marginalizes important works by scholars of color who may be working to disrupt a white hegemonic epistemological tradition or may be trying to articulate something very notable about how to bring alternative and diverse pedagogies into our institutions that are continuously becoming more and more diverse. The present challenge for compositionists is to develop theorizations of race that do not reinscribe people of color as either foreign or invisible; only through such works can composition begin to counteract the denial of racism that is part of the classroom, the courts, and a shared colonial inheritance.

Ruiz talks about the embodiment theory and its allowance of the body's contribution to knowledge making as well as colonial influence on the marginalized authors. Colonial pursuit destroyed and delegitimized indigenous knowledge, philosophy, and people native to this land relying on rhetorical constructs such as religious salvation that eventually became discredited with reign of science, which had the effect of separating the mind, the spirit, and the body of marginalized people.

Referencing Kimberle Crenshaw's essay "*Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex; A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist theory and Antiracist Politics*" she advocates embracing the intersection of sources of marginalization, and feminism should express the aspirations of non-white women. Elaborately, she addresses the plight of colored women's invisibility and how current feminist movements overlook important historical realities for women of color. In the field, those claiming to be feminist overlook possibilities for antiracist dimensions of the initial definition of intersectional feminism as specifically referring to Black Women.

She however agrees that it is beyond her scope for this chapter to give a complete survey of the range of feminist scholarship that is practiced within RCWS, with hopes that it will suffice to say that most feminist scholarship in the field is complicit in contributing to this problem of universal applicability to RCWS scholars who identify as women of color.

When one examines the field's most popular scholarly venues, one cannot miss glaring absences of a genuine intersectional approach that considers not only the female but the minoritized female. In the pursuit of antiracist research methods, this is an abomination to the many historically marginalized women who are RCWS scholars. It is a neglect of colonized women by the field and the effect of this exclusivity is a type of continued colonization and imposed silence (67).

Ruiz suggests historical curanderism and decolonial epistemic disobedience as a decolonial option as it functions as a decolonial response to colonial methods in RCWS, and as such, performs both healing and reclamation practices of colonized people's way of making knowledge and way of being in the world. She claims they are possible methods because it contributes to growing body of sustainable decolonial methodologies and they contribute to more

equitable and inclusive research and citation practices for BIPOC .These methods also increase ethos in RCWS, a discipline that has always claimed to be inclusive, antiracist and accommodating. (73).

In the interchapter dialogue, Alex Lockett addresses the issue of Black students being vilified and characterized as intellectually deficient and in need of White Cultural assimilation and the right for indigenous student's to their use their own language to be honored. She claims it will develop a lot of respect for home language, Black English, home discourse, or however you want to refer to a student's own language.

The entire modern history of composition studies relied on 'basic writing' and the emergence of those kinds of racist program and emergence of STROL –Students Right to Their Own Language. This chapter addresses antiracism as a methodology and highlights that antiracism as a process requires constant reflection and continuous reflexive assessment. The authors believe this chapter will be very useful to graduate student education, I couldn't agree more.

However, antiracist researchers and lecturers who are tasked with teaching research methods courses to aspiring professionals in humanistic fields will find chapters 3, 4 and 5 helpful as the authors elaborately address the issues of racism, its effect on a researcher and the black community.

Methodologies like autoethnography are being referenced as a powerful methodological lens, one that makes the personal cultural, interpretative, and subject to critique. (113). In terms of antiracism, autoethnography provides a space for the researcher to combat accepted norms and pinpoint realities of racism that might not always be apparent to most audiences. This methodology illustrates the various realities of racism in our personal lives and provides ways to critique normative, institutional structures.

Sanchez, in chapter three also suggests reconciliation as a method of antiracism that helps the researcher move past pain and trauma that lingers from their past and the power of autoethnography lies within the ways the research can speak to an audience and also in how the individual researcher, the one who is speaking their truth, can change due to their own scholarship.

Carter utilizes the visual rhetorical analysis in a chapter he titles “*Taser Trouble: Race, Visibility, and the mediation of police brutality in public discourse*” to explicate how White officers engage in both acts of excessive violence and outright dehumanization of unarmed black suspects which are clearly mediated by race and racism. (155)

He makes reference to several instances where blacks were murdered by officers with proof of videos and images but when the visual isn’t immediately constant with the interests of whiteness, the White juries and the hegemony of whiteness will rule in favour of the whites. He reveals that several Black Lives Matter activists have been mysteriously killed or found dead and that America has normalized racism to the point where there’s a perception that only the blacks exhibit violence and the whites are completely immune from ever being violent. Police brutality is so out of control that as more people utilize mobile technologies to document what they see, the less radical police reform and abolition efforts will seem to the general public.

With the Critical Technocultural Discourse Analysis, Lockett expatiates on black twitter, then offers value to a growing body of scholarship about how social media affects racial identity, political affiliation, and civic engagement (167) .

According to Lockett, Black Twitter helps the digital representation of Black English (BE) or African American Vernacular English (AAVE). It is a public performance for black cultural intervention. It doesn’t only represent black journalism but also functions as a culture and community capable of organizing, promoting, and or archiving social movements.

The book does not analyze race and racism from a transdisciplinary orientation but focuses more on how race and racism affect indigenous scholars in the field of Rhetoric and Composition. It takes “*Antiracist Writing Assessment Ecologies*” as an exemplary work by taking Asao Inoue’s cue of moving from critique to praxis, offering processes and performances of communication, writing, rhetoric, media, and literacy.