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# EN VAUT DEUX LIMINALITY IN GRADUATE SCHOOL

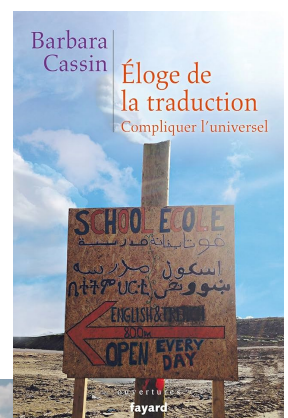
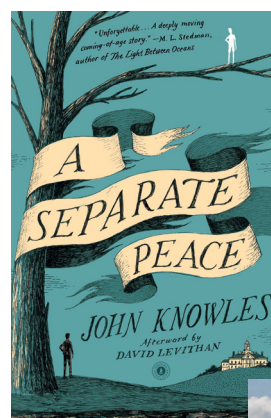


## ABSTRACT

According to Barbara Cassin [1], nostalgia is the pain of an impossible return to another time and place; so, the nostalgic person experiences liminality when they are caught between different spaces and times. In this essay, I measure my own nostalgia by tracing my education from grade to graduate school. Even though I find that change is constant, the “transitional liminality” [2] one experiences in graduate school is distinct and new. I offer ways that rhetoric and composition’s disciplinary customs are especially liminal. For example, substudies of the discipline are queer, affective, decolonial, and writing center rhetorics; their scholars wrangle complex and often contradictory ideas into consistent epistemological theories. In reflecting on the ways that I experience nostalgia as a master’s student of rhetoric and composition, I propose the concept of “preemptive nostalgia,” which occurs when one anticipates the nostalgia they will feel in the future but have not felt yet.

## KEY OUTCOMES

- » The graduate student CV makes space for the scholar we are soon to be but are not quite yet.
- » Graduate employment as a Teaching Assistant and Peer Tutor counterpose peer and authority identities.
- » Composition courses necessitate revising more than just writing and writing processes; they necessitate revising our writerly identities.
- » The research journal dethrones diaries and creative writing pages; ideas once kept separate and distinct in each medium now intermingle.
- » The significance of relics from my past (*A Separate Peace*, by John Knowles; *Éloge de la Traduction*, by Barbara Cassin; and the French proverb, *l’homme qui sait deux langues en vaut deux*) is revitalized.



[1] Cassin, Barbara. *Nostalgia: When Are We Ever at Home?* Translated by Pascale-Anne Brault, Fordham University Press, 2016.

[2] Scholz, Frederike, and Joanna Maria Szulc. “Connected Early Career Experiences of Equality in Academia during the Pandemic and beyond: Our Liminal Journey.” *Gender, Work & Organization*, vol. 30, no. 3, May 2023, pp. 1042–58.