teaching. Decolonizing Literacy reminds us most of all to treat our students, especially those from impoverished or postcolonial backgrounds, not as blank slates who walk into our classrooms but as ongoing historical stories that can be supported through writing.

Madison, WI


Reviewed by Matthew Ortoleva, Johnson & Wales University

Engaging Audience: Writing in an Age of New Literacies, a new collection of sixteen essays edited by M. Elizabeth Weiser, Brian M. Fehler, and Angela M. González, considers the rhetorical concept of audience in the twenty-first century. The foundation of this collection is Lisa Ede and Andrea Lunsford’s seminal work on audience as first encapsulated in their 1984 CCC article, “Audience Addressed/Audience Invoked: The Role of Audience in Composition Theory and Pedagogy,” which is reprinted in this collection. The concept of AA/AI, as it is often referred to in this collection, flows through these essays “in the manner of a leaf following a current, swirling into side currents, turning in eddies, then flowing on,” to borrow a metaphor from the editors (xii). Each essay in this collection expands on the questions that Ede and Lunsford ask to begin “Audience Addressed/Audience Invoked”: “How can we best define the audience of a written discourse? What does it mean to address an audience? To what degree should teachers stress audience in their assignments and discussions? What is the best way to help students recognize the significance of this critical element in any rhetorical situation?” (3). The contributors of this collection—including Ede and Lunsford, who contribute a new article on the subject—ask these questions at a time when the need to understand the new literacies emerging from twenty-first-century digital environments is drastically expanding.

This collection is organized into three sections, the first of which is “The Audience Stream: Following the Current of Audience Theory.” This first section is devoted solely to Ede and Lunsford with their original article of AA/AI starting the collection followed by the reprinting of their 1996 re-engagement with the concept of AA/AI in “Representing Audience: ‘Successful’ Discourse and Disciplinary Critique,” which also first appeared in CCC. The third essay of the “Audience Stream” section, and perhaps the most notable of the collection, is Ede and Lunsford’s newest engagement with AA/AI, an article written for this collection entitled “Among the Audience:
On Audience in an Age of New Literacies.” In “Among the Audience” Ede and Lunsford consider how twenty-first-century literacies and participatory media challenge older notions of authorship and audience, and call into question the usefulness of AA/AI in new communication environments where the roles of writers and audiences destabilize and frequently shift. Ede and Lunsford convincingly argue that the dialogic relationship of AA/AI still make it a productive construct to understand the new literacies and participatory communicative practices found in the new digital environments. Ultimately, Ede and Lunsford do recognize that although AA/AI is useful in helping understand the complexity of all forms of communication, “understanding the complexity of the writing process, audience awareness, and participation calls for more specific grounded, and nuanced analysis than the binary of addressed and invoked audiences can provide” (56). As such, to more fully understand the complexities of audience, they call for deeper analysis of concrete situations that ethnographic and other qualitative studies might provide. Moreover, Ede and Lunsford recognize that understanding these new literacies calls for a convergence of two previous separate strands of scholarship: audience and collaboration. Ede and Lunsford conclude their essay by stressing the importance of teaching the concept of audience and how it relates to the ethical implications of being engaged in acts of participatory communication. Ede and Lunsford suggest that although students may be digital natives, they still need to become aware of the types of audiences they might encounter when they write, how they might negotiate these audiences effectively and responsibly, and how they might “build bridges between the seemingly private voices they inhabit on-line and the public ones they can establish” (63).

The second section of this collection, entitled “Theory Streams: Ebbs and Flows of Audience through Composition and Communication,” contains two essays. Traci Zimmerman’s “Authors, Audiences, and The Gaps Between” examines audience through theories of authorship, including those of Foucault and Barthes, and calls on us to teach in the gaps between author and audience, and between writers and readers. David Beard’s “Communicating with Audience,” embraces the interdisciplinary character of this collection and reaches into two fields often neglected by Rhetoric and Composition—the fields of interpersonal and mass communication, where the concept of audience is often studied empirically—to understand audience activity and how audiences consume texts. Both essays in this section make fine contributions to the collection and are both equally engaging. Still, of the three sections of the collection, “Theory Streams” feels somewhat anemic. Zimmerman’s and Beard’s articles form a strong basis for engaging AA/AI; however, missed is an opportunity to put Ede and Lunsford’s work into deeper conversation with other theories of audience, such as James Porter’s concept of the discourse community or Kenneth Burke’s theory of identifica-
tion, both mentioned in other sections of the collection but fall short of a
deep theoretical engagement with AA/AI.

The third section, “Praxis Streams: Audience Wending through Class-
rooms and Communities,” makes up the bulk of this collection with eleven
essays. This section is rich with concrete examples of how teachers from
a variety of sub-disciplines within Rhetoric and Composition, and some
disciplines outside of Rhetoric and Composition, teach the concept of audi-
ence. David Dayton’s article “New Media Personas and Scenarios” describes
his use of personas and scenarios, which are “visual-verbal representations
of key audience groups” (115) and “bring imagination and intuition more
forcefully into our analysis and invention of audiences” (127). Dayton’s
article is particularly useful and includes a sample persona created by one
of his students, as well as a brief history of the way personas and scenarios
have been used by design teams in workplace writing environments. Inad-
vertently perhaps, Dayton’s article also hints at intersections with creative
writing pedagogy, as students, through the creation of these personas and
scenarios, become storytellers. Bob Batchelor’s “Tactician and Strategist”
turns to the field of public relations, where audience considerations are at
the center of all writing tasks. In “I Can Take a Stance,” Tom Pace embraces
Peter Elbow’s idea of first ignoring audience to focus on topics and ideas, so
later when a writer chooses to no longer ignore audience and rather to let
audience considerations shape the text, he or she may find a new purpose
for revision. Marie Paretti, in “When the Teacher Is the Audience,” considers
the intersection of activity theory and genre theory as a way to understand
how texts mediate the relationship between writer and audience while also
examining the problems created by bifurcated activity systems produced
by the always present teacher-as-audience conundrum. Paretti offers an
example of how she addresses this problem through a memo assignment
which explicitly makes her the audience and offers a site for a real exchange
of information, information that Paretti uses as a program administrator.
In “The Self-Addressed Stamped Envelope,” Alexandria Peary also calls on
activity theory as a way of engaging students in the concept of audience.
For Peary, activity theory serves to demonstrate how students might grasp a
practical understanding of audience by interacting with editors in a writing-
for-publication course.

Phyllis Mentzell Ryder’s chapter turns to public writing and pedagogies
of service learning to explain the work of “public-making,” while Sharon
McKenzie Stevens turns to translation studies to demonstrate the complexity
and the ethical complications that surface in collaborative acts of writing
as she argues for the need for pedagogies that help students address differ-
ent, more-powerful audiences without necessarily “assimilating to audience
expectations” (232). Traci Freeman’s chapter “Can I get a Witness? Faith-
Based Reasoning and The Academic Audience” examines the challenges

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of teaching audience to students who turn to faith-based reasoning and religious rhetoric and how such a turn may disrupt notions of academic audiences. Those who teach in communities where expressions of faith are not so overt may find this article unexpectedly engaging. Freeman argues for the need to move beyond merely suggesting to students that faith-based arguments are ineffective in the academic discourse community and rather to reconsider the often provincial view of academic audience. Freeman offers an example of how she uses stasis and a personal essay assignment to allow students of faith to interrogate the commonplace notion that faith-based arguments are not welcome by academic audiences. In “Theorizing Audience in Web-Based Self-Presentation” Erin Karper calls on Kenneth Burke’s theory of identification as a means of understanding the interactive nature of audience in digital environments, and in “Reading Audiences” Dan Keller turns to reading pedagogies to examine how students’ understanding of audiences are shaped by their reading practices. Finally, in “Writing Assessment as New Literacy,” Lee Nickoson-Massey considers how classroom writing assessment practices and peer-response activities are rich areas of inquiry into the concept of audience.

This timely collection clearly demonstrates that the concept of audience and the struggles on how to help students understand this important rhetorical concept is alive and well in our field. This collection also serves to remind us that the theories and concepts that define our field of study are shifting, evolving, and often lead us in exciting new directions.

Providence, RI


Reviewed by Rebecca Richards, University of Arizona

Trying to translate the principles of critical pedagogy into the U.S. composition classroom has not been without challenges. U.S. composition instructors drawn to Freire’s work, in particular, have had to attend to the differences and privileges of their specific geopolitical location from that in which Freire wrote and worked. In addition, U.S. composition instructors must also confront the tension presented in the U.S. media, which quickly and superficially proclaims that U.S citizens live in an already-free and egalitarian society, all while lived experiences and observations tell us