Language, Culture, Identity and Citizenship in College Classrooms and Communities, by Juan C. Guerra. Urbana: NCTE, 2016. 179 pp.

Reviewed by Lisha Daniels Storey, University of Massachusetts Amherst

*L*anguage, Culture, Identity and Citizenship in College Classrooms and Com-*munities* offers a theoretical framework for building and enacting a writing-across-differences approach at both the classroom and the programmatic level. Juan C. Guerra effectively extends the important theoretical insights generated in translingual research and scholarship to consider the dimensions of culture, identity, and citizenship in students' lives. With this broadening of vision, Guerra contributes a rich conceptual and pedagogical resource useful for those readers who research and teach writing and rhetoric in ways that value linguistic and cultural difference, for those interested in issues of transfer, and for those committed to building campus programs oriented around students' experiences moving across communities as well as academic and public contexts.

The book's first chapter sets up Guerra's theoretical framework, a response to the ideological and social forces that work to standardize and stratify students' lives. The rest of the book is divided into two parts. In the first, "Building Theory through Lived Experience," Guerra devotes a chapter to each dimension of this framework: language, culture, identity, and citizenship. In part two, "Putting Theory into Play," he analyzes how this theory plays out in two sites, a classroom and a campus-wide writing initiative. In addition to building upon translingual approaches in composition and literacy studies, Guerra draws from foreign language studies, English studies, and education to develop conceptual tools for helping students access and develop "the full repertoire of linguistic, cultural, and semiotic resources they need to respond effectively to the reading, writing, and rhetorical challenges they are likely to encounter in the academy and beyond" (16).

In the introduction, Guerra lays the groundwork for this theory by mapping translingualism's social and ideological orientations to language difference onto other significant components of students' identities and experiences. This translingual/transcultural approach helps teachers work with and toward fluidity—difference-as-norm—in order to equip students with the range of tools necessary to navigate the standardizing forces that disempower, especially those from marginalized groups. Moving forward, Guerra considers ideologies of language and difference in the second chapter. To clarify the terms of the code-switching/code-meshing debate, he introduces "code segregation" to refer to the use of separate language varieties at home and in school, which Rusty Barrett recommends designating "situational code-switching" (qtd. in Guerra

44n2). Code segregation references the devaluation of students' language varieties according to monolingual ideologies that attempt to "fix" difference, as well as the "almost exclusive devotion to academic discourse among proponents of Writing Across the Curriculum at the expense of the linguistic and cultural repertoires that students bring with them to the classroom" (37). Guerra's understanding of code-switching draws from K-12 contexts "that value and use the languages and dialects students bring with them to the classroom from their communities of belonging" while "acknowledg[ing] the important role that appropriateness plays in language use" (35). In this formulation, code-switching/code-meshing does not correspond to an either/or binary but rather to a range of possible responses, in contrast to code segregation. Including Critical Language Awareness (CLA) when teaching these options supports student agency, helping writers cultivate a set of dispositions to identify and assess rhetorical situations—including the power relations constructed therein—and determine the linguistic and discursive strategies users want to employ for their purposes (43). The aim must be to equip students to continually and critically assess what is appropriate for the situation and navigate the tension of conformity and rebellion, convention and innovation (42). CLA tempers the normalizing overtones of "appropriateness," which alone does not fully capture the opportunities for agency and resistance available to students.

Chapter three features conceptual tools for helping students navigate cultural difference and access cultural memory. Guerra argues that the relationship of language and culture is as important for college writing contexts as it has been for K-16 education (50). Given this concern, he introduces and develops Critical Cultural Awareness (CCA), "an ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries" (Byram 53), as counterpart to CLA. While this critical awareness of culture is a necessary part of language and literacy learning, concepts like Claire Kramsch's "Third Culture," which focuses on language and culture as relational and fluid, as well as the related notion of Third Space, are also necessary to avoid dual or binary constructions of language and culture, self and other (51). Building from these "third" models, as well as Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's notion of the rhizome, Guerra introduces the concept of "Life in the Neither/Nor" to account for the "neverending fluidity, instability, and unpredictability" that students must navigate (54). As he mentions throughout the book, students from disenfranchised communities are already familiar with cultures in flux, thus these conceptual resources not only account for and value this reality—recognizing it as resource—but also provide students from dominant groups, as well as teachers, ways of thinking about culture beyond binary constructions of Otherness. Guerra also introduces "cultural

modalities of memory" (55) as a tool for students to access and make use of their lived experience within the transitional space of the writing classroom.

Given this interplay of language and culture, the production of identity and the practices of self-representation are dynamic and complex, demanding not just alternative responses to difference, but dispositions that orient us responsively with others from the start. In chapter four, Guerra uses Stephanie Kerschbaum's *Toward a New Rhetoric of Difference* as a starting point to consider how difference is constructed, marked, and performed relationally. He then contributes an informal case study to show how practices of self-representation demand radically open dispositions from interlocutors. Drawing from interviews with his siblings, Guerra shows the variation of linguistic practices and self-representations even among members of his family. By sharing how his siblings—those assumed to share a history—disrupt his own assumptions, Guerra suggests important implications for the ways teachers approach their students based on markers of difference. Throughout all these theoretical chapters, Guerra weaves autobiographical examples that both build and illustrate his theoretical concepts. Guerra uses Spanish and English linguistic practices in the tradition of Gloria Anzaldúa and Victor Villanueva to allow readers to experience some of the tensions taken up in the book.

Guerra extends his study of difference in chapter five to inform an approach to cultural citizenship. Here, he works with Amy Wan's reconceptualization of citizenship in *Producing Good Citizens* as a set of practices both large and small, rather than an achieved—fixed—status or right. Specifically, Guerra proposes a translingual and transcultural notion of citizenship, what he refers to as "citizens in the making" (101), to acknowledge "citizenship as an on-going process of development" (101) that includes discursive practices in the public sphere, classrooms, and students' multiple communities of belonging. In these particularly anxious times, as rights of language, movement, and safety for the most vulnerable and disenfranchised are endangered by increasingly fortified borders, both physical and rhetorical, the call to cultivate habits of transcultural citizenship in our everyday lives is particularly salient.

With the two case studies that close the book, Guerra illustrates productive starting points for enacting this theory and pedagogy at the classroom and programmatic levels respectively. In chapter six, Guerra analyzes writing and interviews with his students to highlight the competing ideologies around language and culture, and the pressures they exert on students with varied linguistic and cultural experiences. In the context of a course on language variation and policy, Guerra shows the range of students' engagement with these competing ideologies (142); this complexity supports his argument in chapter two against adopting a singular approach to linguistic and cultural diversity in favor of offering critical language awareness and rhetorical, semiotic, and

discursive resources for navigating different situations. With the second case study, in chapter seven, Guerra examines the Writing Across Communities initiative at the University of New Mexico to show how this multidimensional theoretical framework animates a grassroots ecological approach to literacy and civic engagement encompassing the classroom, campus-wide events like civil rights symposia and the celebration of student writing, and additional sites like a community writing center. Guerra designates this movement "WAC²" to highlight its radical centering of students' literacy and language practices across their varied communities of belonging, in contrast with the academic and disciplinary focus of traditional Writing Across the Curriculum programs. Using interviews with Michelle Kells and graduate students involved in WAC², as well as his own participant observation, Guerra narrates WAC²'s beginnings in 2005 and its insurgent growth, organized around the literacy practices and lived experiences of UNM's diverse student population (151) and committed to providing students full rhetorical and discursive repertoires for academic, civic, and community engagement.

This book productively assembles and dissects a theoretical framework built from, and in support of, lived experience. To concerns about outcomes in FYW, WAC, and transfer scholarship, it offers ways of thinking about orienting writing curricula, pedagogies, and programs around students' *incomes*, their existing, ongoing linguistic and cultural practices, and their movement across academic contexts and communities of belonging. In its attention to writing and literacy practices across contexts, the book speaks to the intersecting interests of translingualism and transfer, recently sketched out by Rebecca Lorimer Leonard and Rebecca Nowacek in "Transfer and Translingualism." Guerra's book extends to transfer scholarship and pedagogy a framework not only for recognizing and valuing a fuller range of discursive resources that students make use of in their everyday lives, but also for recentering programs and practices accordingly, situating them in local contexts. Additionally, the text offers ways to reconsider the kinds of critical, reflective dispositions writing educators want to cultivate in all students moving across these varied social spaces. This work provides composition and literacy studies more broadly a pedagogical, programmatic, and research orientation that is dynamic and responsive, challenging us all to engage as citizens-in-the-making at a time when it is more urgent than ever.

Amherst, Massachusetts

Works Cited

Barrett, Rusty. "You Are What You Speak: Language Variation, Identity, and Education." *Other People's English: Code-meshing, Code-switching, and African*

American Literacy. Vershawn Ashanti Young, et al. New York: Teachers College P, 2014. Print.

Byram, Michael. *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence.* Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1997. Print.

Kerschbaum, Stephanie. *Toward a New Rhetoric of Difference.* Urbana: NCTE, 2014. Print.

Lorimer Leonard, Rebecca, and Rebecca Nowacek. "Transfer and Translingualism." *College English* 78.3 (2016): 258-64. Print.

Wan, Amy. *Producing Good Citizens: Literacy Training in Anxious Times.* Pittsburgh: U of Pittsburgh P, 2014. Print.