

Editor’s Introduction: Honoring our Past, Living our Present, and Fighting for our Future – La Lucha Sigue

Isabel Baca

University of Texas at El Paso, on land of the Tigua and Mescalero people.¹

Yndalecio Isaac Hinojosa

Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi, on land of the Karankawan people.²

De nuestra gente, con nuestra gente y para la gente.

We proudly introduce *Latinx Writing and Rhetoric Studies (LWRS)*, a refereed academic journal sponsored by the NCTE/CCCC Latinx Caucus. Founded by then caucus co-chair Iris D. Ruiz, *LWRS* will play an integral part for enacting the vision and mission of the NCTE/CCCC Latinx Caucus. *LWRS* is a venue to “exchange ideas,” a repository of information to “serve as a resource for members, the educational community and the general public,” and a network of writers to “support activities that promote the learning and advancement of students and teachers of color” (Latinx caucus, p. 1). Our platform is meant for the scholar-teacher (and we might add scholar-activist) whose interests include writing or rhetoric studies that center on Latinx communities, diaspora, identity, and cultural practices. As editors of *LWRS*, our primary goal will be to provide readers with a robust multimodal and dynamic publication that features articles about literature, rhetoric-composition, critical theory, creative writing theory, reading theory, border theory, applied linguistics, literacy, and professional issues related to the teaching and creation of Latinx epistemologies. To achieve this goal, we aim to publish authors and scholars that represent the full range of institutional types through their intellectual and community labor and whose contributions to *LWRS* will transcend the traditional

boundaries of our disciplines to offer not only new knowledge but also shape existing knowledge.

Indeed, it has been an honor to serve as the first guest editors for this inaugural issue, an issue we themed on recovery and transformation. Recovery as a way to make visible what may have been lost, and transformation to lead us into what may lie ahead for us all. From the moment we were appointed as editors, we strived to bring forth an issue that would embody the beauty of the diverse cultures and languages that make up Latinx *peoples*. Yes, we would like to place an emphasis on the plurality and diversity that is Latinx. At the same time, we also wanted to demonstrate the challenges that we, as Latinx, continue to face and the individual and collaborative efforts de nuestra lucha in and outside academia as well as in our respective fields of study. We made a commitment to one another to establish *LWRS* as an instrument that could carve out a new discursive space, where the places made within that space are done so by nuestra gente, con nuestra gente y para la gente. We envisioned *LWRS* to serve as national and international voices that could cut across disciplinary and geopolitical borders. For this issue, we felt that the contributions selected will add, through forms of recovery and transformation, to our Latinx history, experience, and identity; for the range and depth of each piece speaks to the heart, spirit, and intellectual vigor of our gente and of our work as editors.

Our Work as Editors

There's work to be done for our profession, for people of color in our profession and in our classrooms, work to be done for Latinos.
— Victor Villanueva, Jr.

In 2018, we began our work to produce the first issue of *LWRS*, but we must acknowledge that this work is built upon the work of others in our community. *LWRS* extends a legacy that first began with the *Capirotada* newsletter, founded and first edited by Alfredo Celedon Lujan for NCTE's Latino Caucus. Published in the summer of 1994, this first newsletter, made as a one-page trifold, featured a column by then caucus co-chair Victor Villanueva Jr.³ In his column, Villanueva calls us to action: “[t]here’s work to be done...”. Cecilia Rodriguez Milanes, who was later charged with producing and editing the newsletter, told us that *Capirotada* was “important work,” important because it “gave folks who couldn’t make it to the conferences a sense of ‘who we were,’” an expression she directly tied back to Lujan’s “¿Quién somos?” question that

he first posed to readers in that first newsletter. Now, almost twenty-five years later, as editors we recognized that there is still much more “work to be done” as Villanueva put it back then, and that that work can begin by designating *LWRS* as a discursive space where we as Latinx can express and define *quién somos* on our own terms. So, we set out to form *LWRS* in ways that can support our profession, our people of color, and our gente.

To begin, we were charged by Senior Editor Iris D. Ruiz to develop and create *LWRS* for our rhetoric and composition / writing studies profession, and to do so with the vision and mission of the NCTE/CCCC Latinx Caucus in mind. This meant that we needed to ensure *LWRS* was a refereed academic publication, first and foremost. We needed a publication that would serve not only as a venue to exchange ideas but also as a resource for learning and as a vehicle that could provide opportunities for our Latinx caucus members to advance, both in their profession or comunidades. So, with that in mind, we set out to produce the first issue and sent out a call for submissions to various listservs, including our own Latinx caucus listserv, on January 24, 2019.⁴ In our call for submissions, we asked contributors to consider the following questions:

1. What do transformative modes of leadership look like for Latinx, our gente?
2. What are possible transformative pedagogies that can be effective when teaching Latinx populations?
3. What transformative modes of engagement best serve or embrace interconnectivity for identity formation, theorizing, or social change?
4. In terms of recovery, how can activism play a role for Latinx communities?
5. What cultural or pedagogical practices aid rhetorical recovery?
6. How can Latinx develop rhetorical concepts or approaches in and out of the classroom to account for rhetors who are excluded from traditional rhetoric?

We received numerous submissions by our March 25, 2019 deadline, and we called then upon the *LWRS* Editorial Board to blindly review submissions.⁵ For further assistance and where appropriate expertise was necessary, we sent other submissions to the Editorial Board of *Open Words: Access and English Studies*, a refereed publication co-edited also by Yndalecio Isaac Hinojosa (with Sue Hum and Kristina Gutierrez). When it came to the peer review process, we made it our priority to break away from what seems to be the norm in publication processes, oppressive methodologies in the rituals and editorial practices found throughout the profession. To set us apart, we set a priority to offer *LWRS* contributors something we felt publication processes within the field lacked, mentorship.

As editors, we set into place editorial practices for mentoring writers, especially young scholars – young Latinx scholars emerging in the field. First, we voiced our goal to mentor writers in our invitation to peer-reviewers: “Part of our mission as co-editors at *LWRS* is to provide mentorship, especially if a manuscript has the potential to make a significant contribution to the field, so we encourage not only constructive but also ‘productive’ feedback in ways that can strengthen manuscripts.”⁵ In the review process, we called for productive feedback from our reviewers. Often, as is the case with blind reviews, criticism and/or constructive comments over the work may leave authors with little to no clear path on how best to strengthen their work. To solicit productive feedback from reviewers is to ask reviewers to go above and beyond and provide ways for how best authors can improve their manuscripts. Second, we performed additional editorial reviews after authors submitted revised manuscripts that underwent a revise and resubmit process. That means that any contribution to *LWRS* will go through at least four reviews: two blind reviews and two editor reviews. During our editorial reviews, we reached out to several authors to discuss the status of the manuscript, options for making the work more accessible to readers, thoughts on how best to further strengthen areas, and/or the significance of their contribution to *LWRS*, especially for our Latinx audience. Thus, in most cases, our editorial review called for an additional set of revisions. Some minor. Some major. But all revisions performed were done so as part of our process to work with our contributors closely. Together, we engaged in mentored writing.

We learned early on that mentoring writers also required providing writers with resources, especially if those resources were to play an instrumental role to further develop the quality of submissions. So, as editors, we extended our editorial practices to include, at times, supportive measures, such as intellectual labor in locating resources and expenditures at our own expense. These measures were, in a small way, our opportunity to support scholars, especially scholars of color in our profession. When institutional and financial support is limited, as one of our contributors put it, that limitation can be “another barrier of research” for scholars of color. To aid contributors, when necessary, we provided much needed resources at the direction of our reviewers’ comments or our editorial feedback. We sent various books to some of our contributors (when access or resources to that material was limited) directly from Amazon.com or other web ordering services. In addition to books, we sent book chapters or articles in PDF to some of our contributors too. Our supportive measures took place not only to provide access to such material but also to strengthen our contributors’ arguments or to connect their work further with current scholarship in the field.

Lastly, as previously mentioned, *LWRS* carves out a new discursive space in our profession, but to support that space, we need to align that space with structures that promote success and retention for scholars of color in our profession, especially in terms of promotion and tenure. We met several times with founder Iris D. Ruiz to

discuss how (in moving forward) this journal could offer our gente acknowledgement, accomplishment, and advancement. Our discussions led us to consider several ways on how to meet these goals.

First, we placed land acknowledgements into the design of our publication. All institutional affiliations associated with contributors are designated a land acknowledgement. The acknowledgements serve to remind readers of our ongoing responsibilities to the Indigenous peoples of these lands. As editors, we recognize the criticisms and the performativity engendered by this practice, but in the end, such acknowledgements as our practice provide readers the opportunity to be unsettled or disrupted to know that *la lucha sigue*.

Second, we committed to develop *LWRS* into a top tier journal in the field. We applied for an International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) designation with the Library of Congress. Our designation helps to acknowledge *LWRS* as an official academic publication on record. The ISSN distinguishes this publication from other publications and records our issues with the Library of Congress. In addition to our official status, we hope that our laborious review process and our editorial practices (all aimed at providing support and mentorship in the publication process) pave the path forward to establish *LWRS* as the sought-out venue to publish. We want practitioners and scholars in our field to recognize *LWRS* publications as noteworthy contributions to the field and/or vigorous accomplishments from our contributors.

Third, we decided to organize the editorial management structure in such a way to provide editorial mentorship and extend the professionalization merits de nuestra gente. Much like the work that began with *Capirotada*, our work at *LWRS* is a community effort, and such work is done so in the spirit of helping to advance our communities. At *LWRS*, Senior Editors will administrate and oversee the journal and provide a final review of copy for publication. Procedures for soliciting submissions, assigning blind peer-reviews, conducting editorial reviews, and producing annual issues shall fall to our appointed Guest Editors. On a two-year appointment, our Guest Editors are charged with the responsibility, production, and release of two consecutive issues. We will stagger their appointment schedule so that there is a one-year overlap between editors. The benefit for this overlap is twofold: (1) to maintain a level of congruency in our editorial practices and in our issues and (2) to establish a rotation where the incumbent guest editor mentors the newly appointed guest editor throughout the publication processes. Whereas Senior Editors are accredited with service to the profession in academia, appointed Guest editors are accredited with the publication of an edited journal issue. Our management structure offers Guest Editors not only *mentorship* in editorial work for *LWRS* but also *activity* in scholarly work for promotion and tenure. In some small way, this journal and its editors and contributors encompass altogether the work to be done for Latinx.

Our Contributors' Work in this Issue

We are excited to present the 2020 inaugural issue of *Latinx Writing and Rhetoric Studies* (LWRS), and we are grateful for the scholars, practitioners, students, poets and artists who contributed scholarship or creative work that centered on recovery and transformation themes. A letter from Iris D. Ruiz, founder of the LWRS journal and long-time member and former co-chair of the NCTE/CCC Latinx Caucus, opens our issue. In her letter, Ruiz reminds us of the importance of self-representing and advocating for publication venues within the field of Rhetoric and Composition. With the publication of this issue, we are closer to this goal, closer to a transformative change.

Throughout the pages in this issue, you will find images by photographers Antonio Villaseñor-Baca and Gaby Velasquez. These images depict the memorial honoring the victims (listed below) from the Walmart mass shooting in El Paso, Texas on August 3, 2019.

Jordan Anchondo
Andre Anchondo
Arturo Benavides
Jorge Calvillo García
Leo Campos
Maribel Hernandez
Adolfo Cerros Hernández
Sara Esther Regalado
Angelina Englisbee
Raul Flores
Maria Flores
Guillermo “Memo” Garcia
Alexander Gerhard Hoffmann
David Johnson
Luis Juarez
Maria Eugenia Legarreta
Ivan Filiberto Manzano
Gloria Irma Márquez
Elsa Mendoza
Margie Reckard

Javier Amir Rodriguez

Teresa Sanchez

Juan de Dios Velázquez

The Walmart shooting in El Paso urged us to address this tragedy. We witnessed how it brought our gente together; how it transformed a border community; and how together people worked toward recovery, an ongoing process and journey. In addition to the images, the article “Interview with El Paso Strong Mural Artist Gabe Vasquez” provides readers excerpts (both in texts and video form) from an interview with Gabe Vasquez. Vasquez, the artist responsible for creating the *El Paso Strong* mural, was interviewed by Elvira Carrizal-Dukes, who recounts her lived experience of that day as she discusses and presents her interview with the artist. We hope the images and excerpts allow you, as reader, to pause and reflect on recovery and transformation as you read longer articles found in this issue.

For this issue, our lead article, “Rhetorics of Translation in Tino Villanueva’s *Cronica de mis años peores* (*Chronicle of My Worst Years*),” is by Aydé Enríquez-Loya. By examining translations, including her own, Enríquez-Loya recovers Villanueva’s work and demonstrates how this work becomes a story suppressed by translation informed from various influences, such as migrant worker history or her own background as a Texas Chicana. What her examination shows is that translations are a reinterpretation of a text filtered through a translator’s ideological, rhetorical, and cultural understandings.

Next, we present work by Kelly Medina-López, who exposes the Western colonial alphabet as a sustained and systematic technology of colonial oppression in “Pardon My Acento: Racioalphabetic Ideologies and Rhetorical Recovery through Alternative Writing Systems.” By using testimonio to support her argument, Medina-López explores processes of naming and disnaming and proposes using alternative writing systems to provide a method for reclaiming agency and autonomy. She calls on readers to consider alternative writing systems as a tool for marking difference. To underscore her argument, she utilizes emoticons throughout the text to engage and exemplify an alternative writing system.

Found also in this issue is Jaime Armin Mejía, who offers his essay titled “Mexican Food, Assimilation, and Middle-Class Mexican Americans or Chicanxs.” In this essay, Mejía addresses the field of Rhetoric and Composition by exploring how teaching a course on Mexican food may allow us to address many of the rhetorical dimensions we use in our writing classes. In his essay, Mejía simultaneously highlights

the deeply rooted issues of assimilation and our identities as middle-class Mexican Americans or Chicanxs.

Addressing a college-writing initiative, doctoral student Ana M. Cortés Lagos describes the creation and development of a first writing program in a Chilean university in her article, “Inventing PLEA. A Social History of a College-Writing Initiative at a Chilean University.” Her work is of significance because she stresses the importance and necessity of historicizing projects like this in order for local traditions to develop disciplinary awareness and enter a dialogue with other writing studies traditions on a global scale.

“Poets in the Classroom: What We Do When We Teach Writing” features Laurie Ann Guerrero, with students Sabrina San Miguel and Cecilia Amanda Macias. Guerrero held consecutive positions as Poet Laureate of the city of San Antonio (2014-2016) and the State of Texas (2016-2017). In the spirit of reaching out to the community, Guerrero, the Writer-in-Residence at Texas A&M University-San Antonio, introduces two up and coming student poets. Guerrero shares their work with our readers because of “their persevering commitment to their education, to their art, and to their brave and difficult emotional / physical / spiritual work.” We are happy to showcase Guerrero and her students in this issue for our readers.

Switching gears, in the essay “Always Been ‘Inside,’” J. Paul Padilla offers readers a form of alternative rhetoric by stringing together vignettes as a way to meditate on rhetorical recovery and transformation. These vignettes offer readers an opportunity to see how writers, like Padilla, can engage in critical analysis through personal meditation. His work explores the dynamics of *doxa* and *kairos* and delinks readers from the genre of traditional scholarly writing. His meditations relate to cultural definitions of, and self-definitions for, Latinx communities.

In our final article, “Rhetorical *Herencia*: Writing toward a Theory of Rhetorical Recovery and Transformation,” Cristina D. Ramírez explores how Latinx scholars can develop rhetorical concepts and/or approaches in and out of the classroom to account for rhetors who are excluded from traditional rhetoric. Ramírez does this by introducing and defining the concept of rhetorical *herencia* (heritage) while focusing on her grandmother’s recovery work.

We conclude our issue with two book reviews. Juan C. Guerra examines the scholarly collection *Bordered Writers: Latinx Identities and Literacy Practices at Hispanic-Serving Institutions* edited by Isabel Baca, Yndalecio Isaac Hinojosa, and Susan Wolf-Murphy. Marlene Galván assesses Steven Alvarez’s *Brokeing Tareas: Mexican Immigrant Families Translanguaging Homework Literacies*.

We are breaking ground with *LWRS*, the first journal in the field with an all Latinx editorial board and with a focus on solely Latinx writing and rhetoric. We are grateful for the opportunity to guest edit this inaugural issue. This issue and all subsequent issues can be found online at <https://latinxwritingandrhetoricstudies.com>, a website initiated by Christian Rivera. It is with hope that we look onto the future. It is with courage and determination that we continue our work. Our *lucha* is far from over. Let *LWRS* be a space of expression, opportunity, and dialogue.

Con respeto a todos y gratitud,

Isabel y Isaac

Endnotes

1. Land acknowledgement – Shepherd, J. P. (2019, March). "Indigenous El PASO": How the Humanities help us SEE El Paso as a native place. Retrieved March 21, 2020, from <https://humanitiescollaborative.utep.edu/project-blog/indigenous-el-paso-how-the-humanities-help-us-see-el-paso-as-a-native-place>
2. Land acknowledgement – Lipscomb, C. A. (2016, May). "Karankawa Indians." Retrieved June 9, 2020, from <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/bmk05>
3. The first newsletter (and a few others) can be found under the archive section on the *LWRS* website.
4. The call for submission for our inaugural issue can be found in the archive on the *LWRS* website.
5. The invitation for review can be found in the archive on the *LWRS* website.

References

- Latinx caucus. (n.d.). Retrieved June 7, 2020, from <https://ncte.org/groups/caucuses/latinx-caucus/>
- Villanueva, V., Jr. (1994). *Abrazos. Capirotada*: NCTE's Latino Caucus Newsletter, 1, 1.

LWRS: Latinx Writing and Rhetoric Studies
<https://latinxwritingandrhetoricstudies.com>

ISSN 2687-7198

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