

INTRODUCTION.

LEARNING, JUSTICE, AND COLLABORATION IN OUR WRITING SITES

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I believe that we can use our [field's] entanglements to achieve several goals: to develop courses that better prepare all our students for the actual lives that await them; to undertake scholarship and research that explore the similarities between the readerly and the writerly; to make the holistic nature of our work more visible to the public; and to affirm that we are all, as authors and readers, engaged in what Rosenblatt calls transactional relationships with texts. We can embrace our entanglements to re-vision our language, texts, and theories in order to “see—and therefore live—afresh.”

— Anne Ruggles Gere, “Presidential Address 2019—
Re-visioning Language, Texts, and Theories”

When Anne Ruggles Gere became president of the Modern Language Association in 2018, 111 years had passed since the organization had entrusted the position to a scholar of what we now refer to as writing studies, a consequence of longstanding divisions in the MLA (Gere, “Presidential Address” 454 and “My Kairotic” 56). Referencing Ann E. Berthoff’s notion of “killer dichotomies,” Gere spoke against these divisions in her presidential address, calling on the organization’s members to imagine the field more inclusively. “It is time,” she declared, “to move beyond the divisions in English studies and recognize that literary scholars’ underconceptualization of writing and composition scholars’ underconceptualization of reading have led our profession to destructive collisions” (“Presidential Address” 452, 457). She has been putting this message into practice throughout her career. Gere’s scholarship has repeatedly broken new ground, inviting us to conceptualize our fields and sub-fields more expansively and interactively. *Sites of Writing* builds upon the manifold contributions of

Anne Ruggles Gere and, in that spirit, invites readers to embrace more capacious imaginings of our disciplinary spaces.

Comprised of essays by leading scholars, including some of Gere's former students, this collection includes pieces on disciplinary history, language and literacy, writing across the curriculum, digital rhetoric, writing's extracurriculum, assessment, English education, and more. By connecting these multiple fields of activity, *Sites of Writing* aims to answer Anne's call to move beyond English studies' divisions. To borrow a phrase from her introduction to *Writing Groups: History, Theory, and Implications*, we hope this collection "helps transform dichotomy into dialogue" (6). We also hope our project exemplifies several of her own values as a scholar. As we see it, Anne's field leadership has not been about defending existing disciplinary structures (as if, for example, the field of writing studies was a fortress under siege). Rather, her vision has been about holding firm to a particular view of writing (as a powerful social and cultural activity) and to a series of interrelated professional commitments: to teaching and learning, to justice, and to collaboration. With these commitments at the center of her work, Gere and her collaborators have capitalized on the potential of literacy, broadly conceived, to enable cultural transformations, transforming writing studies (and other fields) in the process.

Accordingly, while the model of Anne's career was a major impetus bringing together the diverse voices of this collection, our aim for readers goes beyond seeing this text as honoring a single field leader. We urge readers to consider how the accounts assembled exemplify collaborative conversation about the history of writing studies as a field, about the importance of its impact across multiple academic and social divides today, and about the many ways continued thoughtful leadership in research and teaching will expand existing sites of writing and launch new ones. Collectively, we can continue building the inclusive sites of writing Gere's work models.

In the introductory remarks that follow, we elaborate on the three professional commitments we've just highlighted—to teaching and learning, justice, and collaboration. We conclude with an overview of the book's sections and chapters. First, however, we address this book's affiliation with the *Festschrift*, since one way we aim to honor Anne Gere's legacy is through our engagement with the genre's conventions.

A WRITING FESTIVAL FOR ANNE AND THE FIELD

A *Festschrift* is an edited volume that celebrates the special achievements of a field's honored scholar by other leading scholars, including some of the honoree's former students. Among classical scholars, the first significant *Festschrift* to

honor an individual was published in the 1860s (Whitaker 352). Since then, the *Festschrift* has become an established academic genre, serving not only to recognize a field's leading figures but also to reflect on the field's development and forecast new directions inspired by the honoree's work (Horowitz 234). Our book shares such aims. Given Anne Gere's remarkable career, we joyfully embrace the name of the genre: the word *Festschrift* is a combination of the German words for "festival" and "writing," and we along with all our contributors enthusiastically present this festival of writing in Anne's honor. But like exemplary works in the *Festschrift* genre, this prose party has other purposes, both "retrospective" and "prospective" (Horowitz 237). Some of the pieces gathered here reflect on Gere's work to enrich our understanding of the development of writing studies and related fields; others extend her concepts and methods to new sites or apply them in novel ways. But whether their chapters help us better understand who we have been or who we might be, all of the contributors attempt to embody Anne's commitment to collaboration as a path to knowledge-making. We balance our salute to her work with a reaffirmation of her view of scholarship as a communal and ongoing process. This *Festschrift*, then, offers a tribute not only to Anne but also to her many collaborators along the way, including those not directly contributing chapters here, as well as to future pathways she has helped define.

Though some academic presses shy away from the genre, we believe that the *Festschrift* will claim a vital space in writing studies in the coming decades. An emerging discipline throughout much of the 20th century, writing studies has reached a point in which acts of field definition often proceed by reviewing where we've been. As we're "naming what we know" to one another and teaching "writing about writing" in our classrooms, we expect *Festschriften*—which, as one scholar has noted, are "decisive to the development of a discipline"—to proliferate (Horowitz 237). In fact, a *Festschrift* was recently published for Charles Bazerman in the same series as the present book, and another, *The Hitchhiker's Guide to Writing Research*, honored Steve Graham's contributions to research and teaching as related to writing studies (Rogers et al.; Liu et al.). Thus, as writing studies scholars, we should reflect on what we want *Festschriften* to look like in our field.

In our own exploration of the genre, we've found that *Festschriften* are often judged on their "coherence," even as their "variety of subjects and approaches" is often (though certainly not always) celebrated (Colăcel 38; Klingbeil; Nwahunanya 122–23; Richetti 237–38, 241; Whitaker 353). Though not without its challenges, this tension between coherence and variety has turned out to be an exciting space for us to work in as editors. We think that such genre expectations are particularly well suited for recognizing scholars like Gere, whose vision of literacy as "a capacious space where reading and writing ... support and nurture each

other” has offered so many focused explorations of its social power in individual writing sites (“Presidential Address” 451). Indeed, the enriching experience of assembling this collection has highlighted—for us as editors—ways that writing studies, as a field, increasingly blends an emphasis on studying diverse individual sites of literacy in action with possibilities for formulating larger conceptual frameworks, or navigating between individual case studies (such as of a classroom or of a particular extracurricular space) and broader-scale histories and theories. We anticipate that readers coming to this multi-faceted essay collection will take away questions about, and ideas for, seeking this balance in their own work.

Moreover, the nature of Anne’s work mitigates against some of the genre’s more problematic aspects, such as its history with respect to gender. Irving Louis Horowitz has observed that “the *Festschrift* honored the fathers of science and culture, but no less, served to identify the sons and grandsons as well” (235). The quotation is unfortunately, cringeworthy *accurate*: far too few women have received a *Festschrift* in their honor, especially during the genre’s first hundred years. Writing about *Festschriften* in classical scholarship, Graham Whitaker notes, “Women honorands are few before the 1960s and, even afterwards, there are only one or two each year until the 1980s” (365). Celebrating scholars like Anne Gere, whose groundbreaking work on the writing practices of turn-of-the-century clubwomen helped to transform our field, has transformative potential for the genre as well (Gere, “Constructing Devout Feminists,” “Kitchen Tables,” *Intimate Practices*, and “My Kairotic”). A related critique of the genre is its capacity to reinforce “academic conventions and dominant forms of knowledge,” creating a “culture of conformity” that can “diffuse dissent” (Nagasawa et al. 1; Colăcel 39–40). A focus on Gere’s scholarship tempers these genre troubles as well; her emphasis on neglected sites and figures, along with her many boundary-crossing efforts, are important aspects of her field leadership.

Overall, we envision readers of this book taking note of ways that Anne Gere’s career often embraced outlier positions that pushed the field forward—and then asking themselves how they might extend such pioneering work even further. Given Gere’s repeated calls to focus on women’s under-studied literacy cultures, for example, what still-under-researched writing communities might claim a spotlight now, in research and teaching? What methodological approaches that Anne has used so creatively in her own scholarship could be adapted to such new inquiry?

ANNE GERE’S FIELD LEADERSHIP

One way to illustrate Anne Gere’s field leadership is to consider her prominent roles in our national organizations, institutional service at the University of

Michigan, directorship of the Joint Program in English and Education (JPÉE), work for the WPA Consultant-Evaluator Service, and editorial responsibilities. Several chapters here bring these aspects of Anne's career into relief.

We also see Gere's leadership reflected through her mentoring of undergraduates, graduate students, preservice teachers, primary and secondary school teachers, college instructors, and educational administrators. Many, many people can claim Anne as one of their teachers, and her influence on these many lives—her legacy as a teacher—is immeasurable. In testimonies woven throughout the collection, we celebrate Anne the teacher (of teachers) as well.

Then, of course, there is Anne Gere the writer and scholar—the author or co-author of a dozen books and over one hundred essay publications.¹ Though we don't pretend that we can do justice to the depth and breadth of this remarkable legacy, we've highlighted several significant nodes of her scholarly activity. In each of eight sections, our contributors reflect on, apply, and extend the concepts, methods, and theories central to Gere's scholarship. Following, we provide an overview of sections and chapters. Here, however, we offer another way of understanding Anne's leadership as scholar.

Anne has certainly made many methodological and theoretical contributions to writing studies—most notably, those related to her historiographies of writing groups and clubs outside of the university. However, her leadership as a scholar has not primarily been about the development of a particular approach or theory. Gere has led our field, in large part, by holding firm to professional commitments and by utilizing many different methodologies and theories in order to re-vision (or, to use another of her metaphors, restructure) the field along those lines (*Into the Field* 1). Three commitments we highlight throughout this collection—to learning, to justice, and to collaboration—accordingly underscore a coherence in her work consistent with a *Festschrift's* aim of providing a focused portrait of a scholar's legacies. Thanks to Anne's own integrity as a scholar, these notably feminist professional commitments radiate from every section and chapter of the book.

ENACTING A COMMITMENT TO STUDENT LEARNING— AND LEARNING ALONG WITH STUDENTS

Anne Gere pursued her Ph.D. for pedagogical purposes. Having studied British and American literature for her bachelor's and master's degrees, Anne discovered that, as a young high school English teacher, she knew little about how to teach writing to her students (Gere, "Presidential Address" 451 and "My Kairotic")

1 For a comprehensive listing of Gere's extensive publications, see her CV at <https://sites.google.com/umich.edu/anne-ruggles-gere/curriculum-vitae>.

49). She was, in other words, motivated to learn for the sake of her students, and this motivation and approach to the craft of teaching—i.e., improving student learning through her own learning—has continued throughout her professional life, giving shape to her various academic projects and extracurricular pursuits.

Shortly after completing her Ph.D., for example, Gere was asked to teach a course called “Theories of Writing Instruction” at the University of Washington. But her Ph.D. program hadn’t offered the guidance about teaching writing that she had been hoping for, and, despite learning about rhetoric and literacy studies from scholars outside of her program, she still (in her own words) “felt almost fraudulent offering advice about how to teach writing” (“My Kairotic” 51). The solution to this problem was once again to keep learning, this time by developing the Puget Sound Writing Project, a local site of the National Writing Project. Reflecting on her connections with the NWP, Anne writes,

The NWP model, with its emphasis on teacher expertise and one’s own writing, helped me understand writing instruction in an entirely new way. Watching an excellent teacher of first graders show how she had her students create narratives, seeing a middle school teacher’s demonstration of strategies for drafting and being captivated by a high school teacher’s display of seventeen versions of one of his poems to emphasize the importance of revision—these and many other presentations by highly effective teachers stimulated my thinking about writing. This, combined with joining a writing group and embarking on a program of self-study to read authors like Janet Emig, Ed Corbett, and Donald Murray along with a host of writers in the journals *College Composition and Communication* and *College English* who had not been part of my graduate education helped me feel more confident about writing instruction. (51)

And in addition to making her a more effective teacher, what she learned from teachers and writers in the Puget Sound Writing Project prompted her to want to learn more about writing groups (52). The result was *Writing Groups: History, Theory, and Implications*, published in 1987. The book itself represents a significant scholarly achievement, but it also serves as a testament to a version of the scholarly life that recognizes teaching and research as mutually enriching practices.

A noteworthy aspect of Gere’s ongoing learning as a teacher has been her ability to find her own teachers *everywhere*. Throughout her career, Anne has cultivated opportunities to learn from anyone and everyone, even when—perhaps *especially* when—they’re not card-carrying members of her own disciplinary

circles. In graduate school, this meant a foray into literacy studies, prompted by the work of British anthropologist Ruth Finnegan (52; “Presidential Address” 451). In her work with the NWP, it meant learning from an exemplary first grade teacher (and many other teachers as well). And in subsequent years, it meant learning from voices *outside* of our academic walls. In developing her article “Kitchen Tables and Rented Rooms: The Extracurriculum of Composition” and her subsequent book *Intimate Practices: Literacy and Cultural Work in U.S. Women’s Clubs, 1880–1920*, Gere found more writers she could learn from. In doing so, her scholarship has helped our field understand its activity and membership more expansively, while contributing to theories of multiple literacies in action (Gere and Robbins, “Gendered Literacy”). Distinguishing “pedagogy from the traditional pedagogue” (80) in her “Kitchen Tables and Rented Rooms” article, Anne writes that “composition’s extracurriculum shows the importance of learning from amateurs. After all, as the Latin root *amatus* reminds us, members of the Tenderloin Women’s Writing Workshop or the Lansing, Iowa Writers Workshop write for *love*” (88).

Which brings us back to Gere’s students. Anne has always held a high view of her students, seeking not just to teach them but also to learn from them. In that vein, one of the central theoretical ideas that Anne put forward in her MLA presidential address for overcoming the divisions in English studies was the subject of a dissertation by her then-recent graduate student Elizabeth Hutton, whom Anne publicly acknowledged (“Presidential Address” 454).

This posture towards her students, along with her eagerness to find teachers everywhere, also shaped the ethos of the University of Michigan’s Joint Program in English and Education, which, beginning in 1988, Gere chaired or co-chaired through the remainder of her tenure at Michigan. Anne’s graduate students always found a teacher and fellow learner who, to borrow her own language from “Kitchen Tables and Rented Rooms,” “see[s] them as individuals who seek to write, not be written about, who seek to publish, not be published about, who seek to theorize, not be theorized about” (89). And Anne’s students have also found that the doors leading to other disciplines, and beyond the walls of the academy, are wide open. In her chapter in an edited collection on *The Doctoral Degree in English Education*, Gere asserts that the “interdisciplinary nature of our field ought to foster the wider vision and freer exploration of our students” (“Establishing the Field” 162). Her own teaching and learning have helped to make this claim a reality.

CHAMPIONING A COMMITMENT TO JUSTICE

In the *College Composition and Communication* article “Communal Justicing: Writing Assessment, Disciplinary Infrastructure, and the Case for Critical

Language Awareness,” Gere et al. remind us that social injustice is a *structural* problem and, therefore, that justice work in writing studies must address the field’s *infrastructure*. They write,

For justicing in Writing Studies to be sustainable and scalable, its target must extend to ... the disciplinary codes, conditions, and conventions that guide, practice, and shape how knowledge in the field is created, curated, and circulated. This disciplinary infrastructure includes (but is not limited to) the *pasts* that provide the field its historical memory, the *policies* that structure disciplinary norms and imperatives, and the *publications* that provide the field a way to publicize innovations and organize intellectual commitments. (386–87)

The statement is one that Gere’s leadership has repeatedly embodied. Throughout her career, Anne has helped our field re-vision its past, policies, and publications to be more inclusive and equitable, and her historiography is at the heart of this work.

Consider again her scholarship on the writing and literacy practices of the extracurriculum. In *Intimate Practices*, Anne critiques the ways that “public perceptions ... have stereotyped women’s clubs as white middle-class groups, thereby erasing the varying class, racial, and ethnic/religious backgrounds represented in the club movement” (3). She continues, “This book counters such stereotypes by considering clubs formed by women from Mormon, Jewish, working-class, African American and white Protestant backgrounds. Women representing a rich variety of social positions formed clubs in cities and towns across the country” (3). The significance of Gere’s scholarship goes beyond a critique of public perceptions, however. By focusing on vital yet neglected figures such as Josephine Ruffin and Angel DeCora, Anne has challenged and helped to re-vision our field’s historical memory (*Intimate Practices* 162, 165–66, “Kitchen Tables” 84, and “A Rhetoric”).

Gere engages in this sort of justice work in her MLA presidential address as well, going beyond the “re-visioning” of “language, texts, and theories” suggested by the talk’s title. Even as she addresses the divisions between literary scholars and writing scholars in English studies, she makes an implicit but powerful parallel argument born of her career-long commitment to feminism. Reread the speech again, and you’ll find that the stars of the speech are women: Anne recognizes executive directors Phyllis Franklin, Rosemary Feal, and Paula Krebs (450); quotes past president Florence Howe, herself quoting Adrienne Rich (451–52); highlights Rich’s “When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-vision,” written for the MLA Commission on the Status of Women in the Profession (452); applies Berthoff’s notion of “killer dichotomies” (452); builds on the work of former

graduate student Elizabeth Hutton by presenting Louise Rosenblatt's "transactional theory of language" as a way forward for the field (452, 454–55); and spotlights the scholarship of Gertrude Buck, whose name Anne chose for her collegiate chair at the University of Michigan because she was "the first woman in the United States to earn a PhD in rhetoric and composition" (454 and "My Kairotic" 56). The address is a masterclass in constitutive rhetoric, not only calling *for* a particular vision of the field but also calling us *into* one.

We could go on and on, discussing, for example, Gere's resistance to our field's "implacable secularism," which has sometimes hampered students and faculty members who are interested in writing about religious topics and beliefs (Brandt et al. 47; Gere, Foreword ix and "Constructing Devout Feminists"). Or we could point to her team's refusal in their longitudinal study on developing writers to adopt, as she put it in the introduction to *Developing Writers*, "a single definition of writing development, because such a definition could lead instructors to expect students to follow a single path in their development as writers" and "would not value the diversity of available methods and of students themselves" (2). Our contributors explore such aspects of Anne's vision in more detail. Within individual essays, we anticipate that readers will see a shared commitment to justice work, along with a related value guiding Anne's career—approaching learning and seeking justice as communal activities. Along those lines, in the "Communal Justicing" article, Anne and her colleagues write, "To change the disciplinary infrastructure that shapes assessment, justicing must be *communal*: we all need to participate in the revision of the pasts, policies, and publications on which writing assessment depends" (386). Throughout Anne's career, the second word of the article's title has indeed gone hand-in-hand with the first.

EMBRACING A COMMITMENT TO COLLABORATION

Anne's approach to scholarship is deeply collaborative, embracing the "social view of writing and knowledge" embodied by the writing groups and women's clubs that she has studied (*Writing Groups* 5). And as with the call to communal work in the "Communal Justicing" article as well as her rejection of disciplinary divisions in her MLA presidential address, she has emphasized the importance of collaboration in her own writing. In her introduction to *Roots in the Sawdust*, for example, Anne asserts that "the Puget Sound Writing Program ... demonstrated the power of collaborative work" (3). Relatedly, she and Kel Sassi conclude their textbook *Writing on Demand for the Common Core State Standards Assessments* on the following note:

One thing is for certain: we need to collaborate. We can't do it alone. We have to work with our colleagues—be they down

the hall, at the next building, in higher education, across the country, or in one of our professional organizations. There is support available in consulting each other, strength in consensus-building around new curricula, and power in collective action. It is a time to tap into those rhetorical skills we teach our students each day and use them to shape the future for our students. (203)

Given her calls for and commitment to collaboration, it is unsurprising that Gere has found an academic home in interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary institutional spaces at the University of Michigan, including the Joint Program in English and Education and the Sweetland Center for Writing. Whether it is helping Ph.D. students navigate the overlapping domains of writing studies and English education or investigating writing-to-learn pedagogies with STEM colleagues, Anne thrives on the collaborative “interactions” that take place between academic disciplines (Gere, “Establishing the Field” 159–62, “My Kairotic” 55–56, and *Into the Field* 4).

The focus on “interactions” in the previous sentence is Anne’s. Indeed, when discussing the relationships between our various fields of activity, Anne has supplied us with a number of refined images for re-visioning our work together. In her introduction to *Into the Field*, Gere critiques the use of the “bridge-building metaphor” to portray the relationship between composition and other disciplines because it “assumes an unproblematic and unidirectional borrowing by composition” (1). In its place, she proposes we conceptualize interdisciplinary efforts as “restructuring” activities; she notes, “Restructuring connotes radical realignments and a critique of the disciplines being restructured, and it suggests that change, disruption, and even challenges to prevailing knowledge emerge from interdisciplinary relations” (1). Borrowing from physics, she invites us to think of our “field” as “a kind of charged space in which multiple ‘sites’ of interaction appear” (4). Twenty-five years later, in her MLA presidential address, she elaborated on the idea. After lamenting that “divisions between literary scholars and writing scholars have led to ‘destructive collisions,’” she returns to physics to reframe the situation:

However, collisions have a bright side because, as quantum mechanics teaches us, they lead to entanglement. Entanglement happens when collisions between particles create pairs in which particles behave in tandem, so that affecting one particle affects the other no matter how far apart they are. When two particles are entangled, information about one improves knowledge of the other. (456–57)

By highlighting the knowledge that comes with entanglement, Anne teaches us, once again, that our teachers are to be found everywhere. Without glossing over the divisions in our field, she suggests that we can address them by re-visioning our collisions as sites of connection and communication.

The idea that we might learn to see points of contact and possible collaborations in our divisions applies to our relationships with those beyond the academy as well. Drawing on remarks by French philosopher Simone Weil, Gere notes in “Kitchen Tables and Rented Rooms” that “walls can be a means of communication as well as a barrier,” and she recommends that “we listen to the signals that come through the walls of our classrooms from the world outside” (76). The last line of the article leaves readers with a challenge along these lines. “The question remains,” writes Anne, “whether we will use classroom walls as instruments of separation or communication” (91).

But perhaps the most potent image from this article is the kitchen table itself. Tables are ubiquitous. Like the one found in the home of Richard and Dorothy Sandry in Lansing, Iowa, where a group would “meet on Monday evenings during the lull between fall harvest and spring planting” to “spend two hours reading and responding to one another’s writing”—they serve as a sign for and site of collaborative activity (75). Anne’s career has been spent at such tables. Ask graduates of the Joint Program in English and Education to discuss the program’s strengths, and they’re likely to tell you about the support and mentorship they received through “Chalk and Cheese,” the mid-week table gathering of JPEE faculty and students in the program’s office. And students who conducted research with Anne will have a similar story. In the introduction of *Developing Writers in Higher Education: A Longitudinal Study*, Gere et al. write, “Given the large amount of data collected across five years, this was a highly collaborative project requiring many hands, and various configurations of us sat around the oak table in Anne Gere’s office week after week and year after year to plan and analyze” (13). Moreover, Anne and her team have also ensured that such collaborations can continue: they’ve made the data from the study publicly available in order that, in their own words in the conclusion of the collection, “others can join us in investigations that can lead all of us to do even better at preparing students for the life-long journey that is writing development” (325). You, too, in reading this Festschrift honoring Gere’s commitments and associated ways of doing work in writing studies, are invited to the table.

OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS

The many voices included here are a testament to Gere’s influence, in and beyond writing studies, at national and local levels, within JPEE and across departments

at the University of Michigan, and inside and outside of the classroom. We have organized this collection's core content in clusters highlighting major themes in Anne Gere's expansive oeuvre. Meanwhile, in the spirit of Anne's work, we've sought to make the writing processes for this collection as collaborative as possible. A notable number of the chapters are co-authored. We encouraged contributors to read drafts of others' work while composing their own, and to make connections between their essays and others in the collection, publications by Anne herself, and major points about the field identified in this introduction and throughout the text. In all these ways, we hoped to provide readers with threads connecting the individual essays to the book's larger themes while also signaling opportunities for continued field growth through diverse sites of writing where Anne Gere brought leadership.

Part 1, "Framing Our Fieldwork," presents four essays demonstrating ways that Anne—through her professional affiliations, interpersonal networking, and research itself—has shaped multiple subfields of writing studies and related humanities enterprises. Readers coming to this section will find a compatible array of approaches for joining in the ongoing endeavor of field formation. Ellen Cushman, in "Anne Ruggles Gere: An English Studies Scholar Par Excellence," outlines the intellectual, methodological, and leadership vision embodied in Anne's career. Beginning with a survey of major publications, Cushman then reflects on Gere's program leadership at the University of Michigan for the Joint Program in English and Education. The essay salutes Anne's notable shepherding of students and scholars as shaping English studies itself along the way.

Doug Hesse's contribution, "Thirty Years after *Into the Field*," revisits in detail one of Gere's most influential publications, 1993's *Into the Field: Sites of Composition Studies*. Hesse reflects back on his original response to reading that groundbreaking text. To illustrate that book's move to highlight the generative energy of composition as a field of study, he revisits its table of contents, where Anne had assembled a group of key scholars to help make the case for the field as a site of interactive theory-making. Hesse spotlights a number of specific ways in which that volume achieved impact, setting and anticipating agendas still relevant today. In "Rescuing Reading: Centering Real Readers," Lizzie Hutton taps into what she sees as Gere's "longstanding commitment to surfacing the agentic power of literacy practices and perspectives traditionally overlooked by the academy" to show that such a commitment can help "rescue reading from the deficit narratives that keep it so stubbornly consigned to the margins of our field."

Extending Hesse's and Hutton's reflections on Gere's scholarship as consistently pushing writing-linked fields forward, Morris Young highlights Anne's support of still-underrepresented scholars and their contributions. Thus, "Language, Literacy, and the Intersections of Identity" appreciates Anne's robust

theoretical framework for analyzing ways people have used their literacies to enact identity-oriented agency. One especially revealing element in Young's analysis takes the form of his revisiting Gere's University of Michigan dissertation, titled "West African Oratory and the Fiction of Chinua Achebe and T. M. Aluko." As a former student who produced his own dissertation under Anne's guidance, Young explains that, from graduate school onward, his scholarship content and ways of writing have been shaped by her intellectual mentoring. She has, he affirms, guided his efforts, as he puts it, "to compose a professional life, to weave together a personal and cultural history of literacy, a critical awareness of the intersections of language, literacy, and identity, and a developing sense of [him]self as a writer."

Part Two, "Learning from Language and Linguistics," focuses on a key dimension of Gere's scholarship and teaching. These essays speak to one another in their affirmation of linguistic diversity, in their commitment to socially contextualized study of language, and in their attention to how writers, readers, and speakers make culturally significant decisions in all their language choices. Readers of this section will take away concrete ideas for putting language study in dialogue with writing studies. They will also find big-picture inquiry possibilities for future research linking these areas of scholarship to classroom teaching and research on writing praxis as a language-building enterprise. Kel Sassi's essay, "Dakota Language, Rhetorical Sovereignty, and the Ineffable Influence of Anne Ruggles Gere on English Studies" honors Anne's role in promoting understandings of Native sovereignty rooted in a critique of ways that the English language served as a tool of assimilation pedagogy. Sassi affirms Anne's influential modeling of listening across cultures, respecting rhetorical sovereignty, honoring Native American writers, and generating resources to support teachers of Native students. To exemplify this vital legacy of Gere's leadership, Sassi describes her own collaborative contributions to a Dakota Studies initiative at North Dakota State University, as well as programs at Sitting Bull College on the Standing Rock Reservation. Linking her learning about how, as she observes, "[l]anguage holds ... cultural values" to teachings from Anne—as well as from Anne's daughter Cindy and granddaughter, Denali—Sassi urges readers to confront our complicity in "settler colonizer history."

Laura Aull's "Language Knowledge and Linguistic Justice" provides another compelling example of Gere's impact on language studies. Aull explicates a still-evolving project that is extending work by Gere and several of her students, who have argued that attention to language itself enriches what we can know about genres, assessment, and language-related ideologies. Adapting methods from Gere et al.'s 2019 *Developing Writers in Higher Education*, Aull shows how student interview data, when interpreted via analysis of rhetorical moves, can

expand our linguistic knowledge, thereby promoting appreciation of social justice issues related to language variations. Anne Curzan's "Re-visioning the Role of 'Grammar' in Writing Studies" rounds out this section by revisiting definitions of "grammar" and what she notes have been debates "about the role of grammar in writing classrooms" as a productive way to address the sometimes-assumed dichotomy between grammar and critical or creative engagement in texts and text-making. This chapter echoes a theme of Anne's 2019 MLA presidential address, wherein she resisted the "killer dichotomy" between reading and writing. Curzan therefore joins Sassi and Aull in reminding readers that Gere's career-long emphasis on language study has persistently promoted communal goals for social justice.

Part 3 addresses the "Disciplinary-Crossing Dynamics" of Gere's legacies. These essays model for readers an array of approaches for interdisciplinary inquiry and pedagogical practices affirming the centrality of teaching itself in writing studies. In "Writing to Learn and Think Critically in STEM," Mike Palmquist celebrates the writing-across-the-curriculum (WAC) dimensions of Anne's career while stressing the benefits of, as he puts it, "[d]istinguishing between writing to learn and writing to engage." His chapter extends his own previous work on that topic "by exploring how complex writing-to-engage tasks in the STEM disciplines can move beyond writing-to-learn activities into assignments that begin to engage students in writing in the disciplines." In calling for such an agenda, Palmquist credits Gere for pedagogy and research on "how to use writing ... to engage students in course content in a way that goes far beyond working to remember and understand" major concepts, instead cultivating a practice that "deepens" students' critical thinking. Ginger Shultz, Amber J. Dood, and Solaire A. Finkenstaedt-Quinn present a related argument in "STEM Courses as Sites of Writing." Illustrating Palmquist's point about WAC, writing-to-learn (WTL), and writing-in-the-disciplines (WID) as building disciplinary understandings as well as conceptual learning and critical thinking across disciplines, they revisit the work of MWrite at the University of Michigan. Revisiting student interviews situated in the specific context of undergraduate chemistry courses, they examine how students perceive their experiences of writing and WTL in STEM courses.

Like her fostering of WAC and WID, traceable back to early-career texts such as *Roots in the Sawdust* (1985; republished in 2012 by the WAC Clearinghouse), Gere's linkage of pedagogy-based research to her directorship of the Sweetland Center for Writing has enabled new digital literacies in the classroom and beyond. Naomi Silver's "Sites of Digital Writing and Community: Anne Gere and the Sweetland Digital Rhetoric Collaborative" salutes a more recent path of Anne's scholarship. Drawing on her interviews of several program collaborators, Silver offers a narrative history of the Digital Rhetoric Collaborative

that highlights its field-wide impact and, in so doing, emphasizes “the work and influence of Anne Ruggles Gere.”

At the center of our volume, Part 4, “Engaging the Extracurriculum,” foregrounds one of Anne Gere’s most influential publications, “Kitchen Tables and Rented Rooms: The Extracurriculum of Composition” and her associated *Intimate Practices* monograph on literacy practices in the women’s club movement. Essays in this section share scholarly commitments to building on that pioneering work. As such, they also invite readers to revisit Anne’s original publications in this groundbreaking area and to take note of how she framed her then-new concepts and inquiry methods, thereby generating expanded scholarly possibilities for others. Readers will be able to note similarly generous moves by the authors of these contributions to the Festschrift.

Beverly J. Moss opens this cluster with “Phenomenal Women Gettin’ It Right in the Extracurriculum.” Moss’s case study addresses how literacy practices in a contemporary Black women’s club, Phenomenal Women Incorporated (PWInc), promote community-building. For Moss, studying this club takes up Gere’s mandate to “consider the various sites in which the extracurriculum has been enacted, the local circumstances that supported its development, the material artifacts employed by its practitioners, and the cultural work it accomplished” (“Kitchen Tables” 90). Rona Kaufman, like Moss, builds upon Gere’s study of clubwomen’s literacy agency. For Kaufman, doing so produces an analysis of cookbooks published by Reform Jewish women in Seattle across many years of the 20th century. Accordingly, Kaufman’s “Laying the Matter on the Table” considers how, as her subtitle “Composing Kitchen Judaism” signals, this group’s collaborative cookbooks also represent collective authorship in a genre enacting public negotiation of women’s multiple identities as individuals and as members of a Jewish sisterhood. Elizabeth Vander Lei’s “‘Now I Think with My Own Mind’” essay then presents a reminder that Gere’s focus on women’s literacies in her “Kitchen Tables and Rented Rooms” text and her associated book on clubwomen, *Intimate Practices*, also supports interpretations of the ongoing literacy practices of Black Americans in the civil rights movement. Seeking to promote critical histories of activist literacies, Vander Lei advocates for a close study of Malcolm X’s linguistic metaphors. Positioning Malcolm X as “one of America’s most famous beneficiaries of an extracurricular education,” Vander Lei (consistent with her subtitle’s “Epistemic Disobedience” concept) emphasizes that this “homemade education enabled him to think decolonially.”

One important site of Anne Gere’s field-shaping leadership has been in her advocacy for principled assessments of writing. Part 5, “Advancing Assessment,” celebrates this commitment. We expect readers of this cluster to find not only concrete ideas for enhancing assessment in their classrooms but also useful

frameworks for theorizing this vital topic. J. W. Hammond's "The Extracurriculum of Writing Assessment" connects concepts from Gere's scholarship on the extracurriculum to a vision for assessing writing that embraces its extracurricular sites. These include, Hammond demonstrates, such contexts as office culture, the algorithmic tools and platforms ubiquitous in writing today, and both self-sponsored and social-media-based exercises of "expert" determinations of "fitness." Taking Gere's scholarship as a point of departure, his chapter draws on present-day and historical examples to illustrate the ways that, as he notes,

- (i) the extracurriculum of composition is always already subtended by writing assessment; (ii) public life is policed by extracurricular testing regimes; (iii) everyday linguistic judgments are encoded into and enforced through digital programs and platforms; and (iv) the specter of extracurricular assessment haunts and possesses academic assessment, conditioning curricular practices and priorities.

A collaborative essay by Jathan Day, Naitnaphit Limlamai, and Emily Wilson joins Hammond's call to build on Gere's sustained interest in assessment practices. These co-authors advocate for connecting assessment to students' lived experiences in and beyond the classroom. Their "Toward a More Human Approach to Assessment" paints verbal portraits of classrooms ranging from a small private university in Saudi Arabia (Wilson) to a teacher education program in the U.S. Southwest (Limlamai) to online courses (Day). Together, they aim to enact Gere's advocacy of making assessment a tool preparing students "for the actual lives that await them" (Gere, "Presidential Address" 457). While this topic has claimed much of Anne's attention as a classroom teacher and a leader of enterprises like National Writing Project sites and the Sweetland Center for Writing, assessing has also been a role she has regularly taken on through the WPA Consultant-Evaluator Service. A collaborative essay by Shirley K Rose, Deborah H. Holdstein, Chris Anson, Chris Thaiss, and Kathleen Blake Yancey, "The Intellectual Work of Writing Program Review," honors this combination of professional service and scholarship-in-action in Gere's career. Their remembrances highlight, too, Gere's blending of professional service with scholarly vision. In revisiting approaches to program assessment gleaned from collaborating with Gere, they simultaneously extend the profession-shaping reach of their past communal program-building.

Consistent with her role as director of Michigan's Joint Program in English and Education, Anne has maintained an active agenda in teacher education, both in preparation of preservice educators and in their ongoing professional development. Publications like her coauthored methods textbook, *Language and Reflection*; her

co-edited *Making American Literatures* based in a multi-year NEH-funded project; and her collaborative *Writing on Demand: Best Practices and Strategies for Success* all speak to this commitment. The essays in Part 6 also affirm this influential element in her career. This section may have special value for other teacher educators. But we urge all readers, additionally, to mine these essays for their affirming vision of writing studies as a path to connectivity: between secondary school and university, between classroom practice and research, and between graduate program leadership and multiple landscapes of writing and learning. In this sense, readers can see teacher preparation (and growth) as ongoing, and as enriched by many sites of learning within and beyond classrooms.

First, Christine Farris, in “The Readiness is *Not* All,” makes the case for a goal named in her chapter’s subtitle: “Strengthening the Bridge from High School to College Reading and Writing.” Farris focuses on the professional development of high school English instructors who so often shape the writing habits and expectations students bring to college. Describing a series of summer institutes fostering cross-level collaboration, she advocates for increased opportunities for college-level writing specialists and secondary educators to connect their learning and teaching. Jennifer Buehler, in “Writing Through the Complexities of Culturally Responsive Teacher Education,” then offers discussion of a specific program initiative embodying the bridging Farris hopes for; Buehler explains how this multi-year project generated multiple sites of collaborative writing for the research team. She describes innovative pedagogical approaches Gere and three coresearchers designed for the Teachers for Tomorrow initiative (a curriculum for prospective secondary educators seeking careers in urban and under-resourced schools). Buehler also analyzes how the team wrote multiple journal articles for different audiences to report on their initiative. She explains how this collaborative composing—across several years—exemplifies Gere’s commitment to teaching junior teacher-scholars how to produce meaningful academic writing. In the final chapter of Part 6, “Changing with the Times,” Ebony Elizabeth Thomas, who succeeded Gere as chair of the Joint Program in English and Education at the University of Michigan, interviews Anne. Together, they explore questions about the development of the field of writing studies, about Gere’s research, and about the interdisciplinarity of JPÉE. Anyone interested in building an academic program guided by principled envisioning will find much to savor in this exchange.

How does writing studies—now and in the future—best interact with broader humanities sites in academe and beyond? How can writing studies shape our efforts to do all our work ethically, while coping with the many pressures we face as citizens today? Readers drawn to such questions will find powerful experiential accounts and calls to action in Part 7, which is grounded in Gere’s sense of writing

as always a potential site for ethical action. This section honors her contributions to studies of rhetoric as a pathway to cultural influence, productive social interaction, thoughtful engagement with institutional challenges, and spiritual renewal.

An essay by MLA Executive Director Paula Krebs situates Gere's career in the vital context of public humanities leadership during a time when the liberal arts require inspired leadership. In her chapter, Krebs is therefore "Making the Case for Reading and Writing and Teaching and Research" as invaluable enterprises while honoring the example Anne's career provides of that very work. Krebs posits that writing like Gere's, which continually addresses gaps between specialist humanities expertise and public needs such as the promotion of listening-oriented civil discourse, models how to make the knowledge of humanities fields accessible and useful beyond the academy. Such cultural stewardship, Gere has always known and shown, requires a sustained commitment to learning from others as well as teaching with expertise. In that vein, in their coauthored essay, "Listening, When the Listening Is Hard," Cheryl Glenn and Heather Brook Adams celebrate Gere's longstanding commitment to a practice she articulated in 1987's *Writing Groups: History, Theory, and Implications*, anticipating by more than fifteen years Krista Ratcliffe's *Rhetorical Listening*. They explore possibilities for making difficult listening productive by rethinking the dynamics between rhetor and non/listener, especially when that non/listener might be ourselves.

As the essays by both Krebs and Glenn and Adams acknowledge, carrying out our responsibilities in today's university settings is increasingly challenging. With this often-stressful context in mind, Margaret Willard-Traub and Debbie Minter proffer "Intimate Practices for Neoliberal and Pandemic Times." Resisting a tendency in writing studies to perform a particular brand of scholarly rigor and to devalue reflection as an individual and inward-looking activity, they revisit Anne's focus in *Intimate Practice* on clubwomen's literacies. They assert, with Gere, that the affective and social ties these women fostered among themselves did in fact result in increased abilities to shape public culture. A similar fostering of shared critical reflection and purposeful collaborative rhetoric, they argue, can gird today's scholar-teachers for facing many challenges to agency arising from today's neoliberal society.

In the final essay in this cluster, "For Sites Both Sacred and Secular: Composing a Language to Bridge Spiritual Identity and Rhetorical Practice," Heather Thomson-Bunn invokes Gere's call to recognize the place of religion and spirituality in academic discourse. Thomson-Bunn recalls how, in 2001, Anne wrote in *College English*, within her "Articles of Faith" contribution to a multi-vocal symposium-like essay, that "[t]hose who wish to write about religion not only lack the highly complex and compelling language of, say, queer theory, but they face an implacable secularism" (qtd. in Brandt et al. 47). In a rhetorical space she

credits Gere with helping to create, Thomson-Bunn traces signs of an enabling vision for spirituality in works over the past two decades that have answered Anne's plea.

Our closing essay cluster, Part 8's "Reflections and Recollections," reaffirms Anne's own self-reflexive praxis, her encouragement of creative reflection, and her ever-sensitive commitment to individual relationships as touchstones of feminist work conjoining the personal and the professional, the relational and the broadly social. Jennifer Sinor's "The Space between Butter and Salt" can be read both as a salute to Anne Gere's valuing of personal writing and an embodiment of its social power. In her braided essay Sinor represents a writer whose creative voice—eschewing any need to perform disciplinary specialist expertise—nonetheless draws on deep intellectual-academic roots to make a story-based case for writing as a healing force. Thus, implicitly, and through the nuance of storytelling, Sinor affirms that subtle writing like Anne Gere's own can enrich daily life through nonlinear narrative channels. Similarly, the second essay in this closing cluster presents a personal story from Victor Villanueva. In his chapter, "Memories," he shares the history of being the first graduate student to claim Anne Gere as a mentor. In recalling her patient but demanding guidance, continually reiterating unshakeable confidence in his abilities, Villanueva—writing now from a position of revered leadership in academe himself—urges readers of this volume to join both of them in affirming literacy histories and personal storytelling as powerful agents of knowledge-making, but also of interpersonal care. Even readers who have not had the benefit of personal learning connections with Anne Gere will be able to tap into this section's illustration of the personal as a vital site of writing, since the memory pieces from Sinor and Villanueva memorably exemplify the attention to writerly craft so evident, too, in their many other well-known texts. Simultaneously, of course, these pieces that make up our closing section reaffirm the *Festschrift* genre itself by reminding readers of personal writing's rhetorical power and significance.

Blending the personal and professional, Anne Gere's "Coda" rightly claims the last word. In an expression of gratitude for this collection's essays and authors, she also indirectly celebrates, we propose, this book's bringing together of diverse sites of writing, unified by the intellectual, ethical, and community-oriented commitments also embodied in her career.

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