

## We Cannot Teach Composition in Isolation; Anything We Say is Culturally Shaped: An Interview with Shirley Wilson Logan



Nabila Hijazi

**Abstract:** In this interview, Shirley Wilson Logan reflects on her major roles as a scholar, teacher, and an administrator. She describes her journey as chair of the Conference on College Composition and Communication, only one of a few black women to do so. Logan is also credited with launching the study of African American women's rhetoric as a field, writing one of the early books on African American women rhetors. Logan discusses her motivations for writing this book, *With Pen and Voice: A Critical Anthology of Nineteenth-Century African American Women*, and makes connections between her scholarly focus and her work as both a teacher and an administrator.

### Professor Logan's Bio:

Shirley Wilson Logan is a recently retired Professor Emerita of English. She specializes in nineteenth-century African American rhetoric, with an emphasis on women's oral and written performances. She helped launch African American women's rhetoric as a field by publishing two books on this topic, *With Pen and Voice: A Critical Anthology of Nineteenth-Century African American Women* (1995), and *"We are Coming": The Persuasive Discourse of Nineteenth-Century Black Women* (1999). Logan's interest in rhetorical education culminated in her third book, *Liberating Language: Sites of Rhetorical Education in Nineteenth-Century Black America* (2008). She has published several individual essays on women from this period, including Ida Wells, Anna Julia Cooper, Victoria Matthews, and Frances Harper, as well as critical examinations of the rhetorical activities of black men and women across the nineteenth-century.

Logan has also published a number of essays on approaches to teaching writing in twentieth- and twenty-first century multilingual classrooms, including studies of the impact of rapidly evolving technologies. She is also the co-editor, with founding editor Cheryl Glenn, of the Southern Illinois University Press Series: Studies in Rhetorics and Feminisms. The series has published twenty-four titles, over the past fourteen years, of both traditional and cutting-edge scholarly works exploring relationships between rhetoric and feminism within various genres, cultural contexts, historical periods, methodologies, theoretical positions, and methods of delivery.

Logan is also working on a rhetorical biography of Frances Ellen Watkins Harper (1825-1911) that traces critical connections between her role as a social activist, her literary productions and rhetorical performances and her life experiences, starting with her early years in Baltimore, Maryland.

**Nabila Hijazi (NH):** Please explain your educational background. What specifically attracted you to the field of English, composition and rhetoric in particular?

**Shirley Wilson Logan (SWL):** I attended Johnson C. Smith University in Charlotte, North Carolina, with the intention of majoring in math, but after a semester in an advanced Algebra course, I realized that I was not going to be a good candidate for a degree in this field. My appreciation for the power of language led me into English. I was also especially fond of a professor who introduced me to the works of James Baldwin and Richard Wright and inspired me to become an English major. At the time English studies meant literature because there were no degrees in rhetoric and composition. I finished with a degree in English, summa cum laude, and began taking graduate courses in the summer at the University of North Carolina towards a master's in English. I studied a collection of short stories, Richard Wright's *Uncle Tom's Children*. During those early years, I taught in various public schools in Charlotte and

in Prince George's County Maryland, and at Howard University.

Circumstances eventually led me to the University of Maryland, and there, I took graduate courses in education and in the emerging field of rhetoric and composition because I was interested in teaching. I eventually received a PhD in Curriculum and Instruction. Due to family commitments, I started my PhD studies 15 years after I completed my Master's degree. We settled here in College Park not because of the University of Maryland, but mainly because John, my husband, was stationed nearby at Walter Reed Hospital. We were living five minutes away from campus.

This is how I ended up at Maryland.

After my third child was born, I needed more flexible, car-pool friendly employment. I applied to teach English at the University of Maryland as an adjunct at the same time that the Junior Writing Program (later the Professional Writing Program) was being launched. Michael Marcuse, the founding director, asked instructors to write articulated syllabi explaining what we were teaching and why causing me for perhaps the first time to attend to why I taught language usage in very intentional ways. Fortunately, a few years after I joined PWP, Jeanne Fahnestock joined the English faculty and provided the Program with a clearer understanding of the strong ties between rhetoric and writing. With the support of *A Rhetoric of Argument*, her co-authored textbook with Marie Secor, and a series of workshops, we were brought up to speed. We were encouraged to attend summer Penn State Rhetoric Conferences and other events rich in rhetorical concepts, with some of the leading scholars in the field. This was a critical time for many of us who were mainly literature-trained teachers for whom the field of rhetoric was new. I also took a technical writing course with Michael Marcuse, along with the courses in curriculum and instruction.

**NH:** So what made you teach for the English Department instead of the Education Department?

**SWL:** Once I started teaching for the English Department, I stayed with the English Department. When I finished my PhD in 1988, I began to be offered administrative positions such as the Assistant Director of the Professional Writing Program. Eugene Hammond, chair of the English Department, offered me the tenure track position, and the same time I was hired, I was also made the Director of the Professional Writing Program, and I served in that position for seven years.

**NH:** In what ways has your educational background influenced your teaching, both undergraduate and graduate sources?

**SWL:** I was more directional to the undergraduates, but I believed in a conversational teaching style in which the teacher gets out of the way of student learning. If you want to learn something for yourself, then you have to articulate it and explain it to others; you must own it in a different way than if the teachers just give you the information. So, I am not in favor of the "Banking Model," as I like interacting with the students.

**NH:** Can you explain what pedagogical theories and key ideas influenced your teaching approaches and philosophy? And what types of activities did you employ in the classroom and why? What did this look like in undergraduate, upper division, or graduate classes? Is there a difference?

**SWL:** I guess one pedagogical approach would be Janet Emig, *The Web of Meaning*. People who were writing during that period generally talked about the teacher getting out of the way. That would be one of the pedagogical theories that greatly influenced me. I just always believed that individuals understand concepts more effectively when they have to speak them—they have to speak out loud or to themselves, rather being the vessel. In terms of an actual lesson, I might consider asking an undergraduate class to read a text and ask them to give it back to the class, explain it, instead of my lecturing on it. For instance, when you read a text and highlight certain parts, you do not necessarily understand or digest the information until you articulate it in your own words and explain what you have read. So, the main part in the learning process is giving back in your own words as you understand something, by which I call this "active learning" where the student has to do something to show understanding of the text and interact with it and other people who read the text. That the understanding exists in the middle of the interaction. Nevertheless, I would be more directional to undergraduate students than graduate students in the beginning because they are not quite ready to articulate the ideas, so I try to model it for them: show them how they can take information and process it in their own words and be in those Perry model stages of learning where students want



the teacher, as an expert and the source of knowledge, to tell them, the vessel, what to do and to pour that knowledge into them. I focus on moving them away from that approach but it is important to take it step by step, not start with it right away. However, for graduate students, I would do more of this than for undergraduates, since graduate students are able to give back and articulate what they learned instead of waiting for the teacher to give the information to them and just lecture.

**NH:** Can you please explain your research areas or areas of specialization.

**SWL:** I have been interested in African American women's rhetoric, nineteenth century black rhetoric, and mainly black rhetoric in general, especially Ida Wells. I discovered that Ida Wells was an amazing nineteenth century Black woman who gave speeches. I got very interested in her work and wrote several articles on her. My Master's thesis from University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill was on Richard Wright, so for me it was a wonderful conversion because I wanted to study African American culture, as I felt there was so much missing about this culture in the classroom, and yet I wanted to study rhetoric. So what a wonderful way to do both by studying the rhetoric of Black people. And who had a better need for rhetoric than Black people in the nineteenth century, when most of them were enslaved? They had different kinds of exigencies; my scholarly interests and educational background were a perfect fit because they allowed me to study the rhetoric and apply it to the experiences of African American people. The nineteenth Century was important because everything was happening then, and it was the time when Black people had to end slavery and argue for their rights.

Eventually, I helped launch African American women's rhetoric tradition as a field and published two books on this topic, *With Pen and Voice: A Critical Anthology of Nineteenth-Century African American Women* (1995), and *"We are Coming": The Persuasive Discourse of Nineteenth-Century Black Women* (1999). I also published several individual essays on women from this period, including Ida Wells, Anna Julia Cooper, Victoria Matthews, and Frances Harper, as well as critical examinations of the rhetorical activities of black men and women across the nineteenth-century. More recently, in 2015, I presented "Risks, Rewards, and Failures of Passionate Feminist Teaching" at the CCCC, and chaired a roundtable discussion titled "Taking Risks in Feminist Methods and Methodologies."

However, it would be wrong and foolish of me to say that I single-handedly launched research in the tradition. It is important to emphasize that there were many other women writing about and researching the rhetorical contributions of black women. You can even consult the works cited list of *With Pen and Voice* (see pp. 160-63) to see that I cite many predecessors who were doing this work before I did, such as Karlyn Campbell, Hazel Carby, Frances Smith Foster, Sharon Harley, Lillian O'Connor, Nell Painter, and Mary Helen Washington, to name a few. I joined the conversation and treated the women I studied as public speakers, rhetoricians, and focused more intentionally on their rhetorical contributions in articles, books, and conference papers and lectures.

**NH:** With arguing for rights in mind, to what extent and how did teaching composition build upon or attend to a tradition of individuals advocating for themselves? Did you use the work of 19th century African American rhetors in your classroom directly or as inspiration for your daily heuristics? If so, in what ways? As a Black feminist, what do you see is the purpose of teaching writing? What ideas inform or whose works inform that answer?

**SWL:** It has to do with samples. I incorporated some African American texts which I study only to the extent of using as models; that is one way to use them as imitation. You give students models and let them see how they can imitate them and move to their own models. I found it useful always to use models. For example, I would give them a text written by a nineteenth century woman and tell them here is how one in the nineteenth century would have written or articulated the issue of lynching, like how Ida Wells wrote this or how she used some rhetorical appeals, the pathos she used when she talked about losing her two friends. And what kind of pathos if we are discussing similar issues today. I always start with discussing the exigence and after discussing the rhetoric of the piece, I move to the principles of wiring and sentence level issues. Through this, I got students engaged in important issues and then moved to stylistic issues.

As far as my own scholarly published articles, I used them in my graduate classes. Most of my articles were rhetorical analysis, so if the assignment in my class is a rhetorical analysis one, then, I would use one of my articles as a model. Other than that, I did not use my own writings in my own classes.

**NH:** How did you become interested in your research topics and areas of specialty? What historical, cultural and personal forces influenced or drove your decisions?

**SWL:** I am an African American woman who grew up in the South, in South Carolina. I remember when I sat on the bus, there was a line drawn on the floor of the bus. African Americans had to sit behind the line. That was very real for me. When the laws were changed, I remember those days vividly when I sat on the bus above that line. That experience had shaped me and all Black children. The feeling of inferiority was real. Some escape it and some don't.

I was fortunate to have parents who were college educated. There was never any question as whether I go to college. I was aware of the sense of making something out for myself. I marched on the streets of Charlotte, North Carolina, to change the sitting area of Black people in theatres. It was during the Civil Rights Movement period, and that's what made me want to learn about my people and to write about their contributions and how their language practices helped to shape this country. It was very much a part of what I am. It is ingrained. When you enter a room, you always bring all of your baggage with you. So, I decided to use all of my baggage for my cause.

**NH:** Can you define your cause, or motivation, as a scholar? What are you trying to achieve with your work?

**SWL:** My cause would be that we claim to recover arguments from persuasive texts from previous times, particularly those produced by underrepresented people to reclaim them and to use them as examples of how we can argue today for issues around contemporary things that matters. This goes back to the idea of models, and it comes of out of my own amazement when I first discovered these texts from nineteenth century women like Frances Harper, Ida Wells, and Anna Cooper, that they were addressing those issues and expressing them so well and so articulately, and I did not know about them. I thought wow! Wouldn't be good to try to advance to help people to see how these folks were, with less advantage and less education, able to develop these skills to express themselves?! I see this as a motivation for young people today who are trying to articulate matters of concern and to see how important it is, and going to the stylistic level to see how important it is to express the ideas very well, so their voice is heard. When I wrote my dissertation, I kept my sister's dissertation on my desk, while telling myself, this is my sister's dissertation, which was about music, and which I know nothing about. That dissertation became a source of inspiration for me since as a person of color who was brought up in the South in the fifties and sixties; we did not have that many examples of anything and the idea of inferiority, and all of that. So, it became a model for me that inspired my educational growth and attainment.

**NH:** What are your thoughts on the relationship between composition and race? I know you've done work on this topic and see it as a vital area of scholarship that compositionist scholars should pursue. Can you talk about your interests here?

**SWL:** One essay in particular I remember writing about this topic is a piece called "When and Where I Enter," which was published in *Feminism and Composition Studies: In Other Words*. In this essay, I talk about my own identity as a black teacher in a white classroom. I found that interesting in the early days when I started teaching at Maryland. I am aware that some students went to the office and complained: "I didn't come to Maryland to have a black teacher. If I wanted a black teacher, I would've gone to Howard University." Also, when teaching certain texts, such as Martin Luther King's "I have a Dream" speech, I witnessed silence in the classroom; students were kind of mentally tuned out because they didn't want to discuss the race issues again.

**NH:** What are your thoughts on the relationship between composition and race? It is a vital area of scholarship that compositionist scholars should pursue. What are some ways to overcome students' resistance to discuss the idea of race? And is this still a problem today? What advice do you give for this situation?

**SWL:** The relationship between composition and race has to do with definition. It is important to talk about topics and difference when it comes to composition and race. If we do not talk about it, it becomes a default. I just read a manuscript for the series that founding editor Cheryl Glenn and I edit, and the author had to negotiate the frequently overlapping terrain between a focus on white women and a focus on white and African American women. So, I guess maybe what I would say about composition and race is that we cannot say we are not going to talk about race because we are always writing about some raced body and its interaction with other raced bodies. As for language use, if we read race as difference, it is important to acknowledge other versions of English(es) and accept the fact that we are a multilingual and multiracial society. Even the writing that we do represents composites of the languages of the world. So, if we associate race with difference, it is hard not to talk about it and its relationship to writing, the different English(es) and Black English, so how can you avoid that?! The writing we do is a composite of everything around us. Race as a difference has always been part of composition as a field.

**NH:** How have the intersections of your work—African American rhetoric, with an emphasis on women's oral and written performances and African diaspora—helped you re-examine the field of composition studies?

**SWL:** When we think about how people compose, we have to think about all of them and what they bring to it. We have been teaching composition in isolation and behind closed doors without realizing that anything we say is culturally shaped, so you can't leave those things out, and there is no such thing as pure composition. You can't teach composition separate from the lives people are living; that is why I try to bring all of these things to the classroom.

**NH:** What is your view in terms of how the world of composition has changed in terms of theory and practice?

**SWL:** I don't think it has changed very much; there are some who teach current-traditional writing, while others are doing technical and scientific stuff, and it is almost as if they are on two different tracks. There might be a little of a spillover from one to the other, but I don't have a strong sense of the extent to which teaching has changed. I am particularly interested in code meshing. There are many changes among certain populations. On one hand, there are teachers who are on the ground teaching and grading the papers, and there are the theorists and the directors of some programs who don't engage in teaching writing. They write their own articles and theorize about writing in these articles. So, we have two tracks.

**NH:** Can you elaborate on this idea of two tracks, specifically, if you see these two tracks overlapping with tenure-track and non-tenure track positions or positions at research versus teaching institutions? Based on your time in the discipline, can you speculate how these two tracks transfer into what the discipline values? Where would you like to see the field go?

**SWL:** We have the same issue here at Maryland: professional track faculty and the tenure track faculty. The two tracks issue is a battle that I have fought. I came as a professional writing instructor, before I became a full-time tenure track faculty. There are certain expectations for each category. Many look down on those who are not tenured, and I do not think the issue has changed much.

There is still a rigid division between the two tracks, and there hasn't been enough to bridge the gap. There is still the top-down approach towards non-tenure track faculty. I do not know much about other institutions, but I think there have been efforts elsewhere and many are becoming invested in resolving the gap between the two tracks. I know that Doug Hesse, the president of NCTE, has been doing a lot on the grounds in effort to ease the tension and the difference in perspective between those who are engaged in actual teaching and grading and those who are engaged in research and are not always in the classroom. So, there is the hierarchy. When you go to CCCC, there are differences in how the programs are structured: theory and practice. The sense that adjunct teachers who are teaching academic and professional writing are less theoretical and ultimately less in prestige. So, the ideal would be to merge these two track together and see that they are mutually dependent on each other and that they need to support each other—that is what I would like to see. An example of a healthy, positive change at the University of Maryland is hiring a new director for the Undergraduate Writing Center and advertising for the position as tenure track: joining the practical and the theoretical approaches together. But I still think we have a long way to go, and I do not think that it is going to be completely solved any time soon. Once we deviate from viewing Academic and Professional writing courses as skill courses, we will hopefully start to see a change. So, the issue has been cultural and deeply ingrained.

**NH:** So what do you make of the differences and controversies regarding the teaching of various English(es) and dialects in our discipline?

**SWL:** I just don't know how much has changed on the ground. I don't really know. When I read dissertations, proposals, and manuscripts, I don't know how much has changed in terms of the practice of the dialects. Geneva Smitherman writes about this in her work. Also, Vershawn Young writes about these issues in "Die Nigga Die" and other work. There is some awareness about language diversity, but not enough adoption of the new practices since people are worried about getting jobs. People are conscious about the potential financial drawbacks of Student's Rights to Their Own Language, because it affects their financial position. I am less concerned about the language part but more about the respect of other people. Insisting on a certain way of writing or speaking, go ahead, but I wish we could somehow decouple that from how we value the human being. These issues are all intertwined, and it is hard to separate them. But many teachers still don't change their attitudes about the importance of language diversity.

**NH:** What might we do to challenge this ideology of having one standard and having multiple standards? Does that have something to do with our discipline identifying first-year writing courses as composition *in toto*?

**SWL:** It is imperative to think of our use of the word "Standard" which implies there is a standard that is monolithic and whatever everyone else is speaking is below. Other scholars talked about the idea that the "Standard" represents a kind of blend already, so we can get away from the idea of Standard English. To see it as a soup or a composite might be one way to move away from this. Also, the current change we recently made to our first-year composition course curriculum is a sign of a positive change, in which we acknowledge the different standards. Including readings that focus on language diversity helps students see the fact that when they go to the workforce, it is already a blend; it is not like code switching between home language and professional language. It is already there.

**NH:** Can you think back to your CCCC chair's address? Please reflect on how you think the field has taken up your call. What might you revise in your call-in retrospect? Do you think your message was well received?

**SWL:** I know I was assessing the CCCC position statements and asking to what extent we have actually lived up to our principles. What role do these statements play in having us respond to the needs of our students? When I did that speech, I had colleagues in the field record quotations from historical black women like bell hooks, Zora Neale Hurston, all black women, some from the nineteenth Century, and some from the twentieth century, who made some powerful statements. The recording was played alongside my speech. I wanted the audience to really hear what they were really saying instead of just reading these women's quotes off my paper. I printed them up and identified women in the field in rhetoric and composition to record them. So when I got to those passages in my speech, I would hit the tape, and the audience would hear someone like Jackie Royster's reciting them. My daughters read some of Maria Stewart's speeches. These voices came in through loud speakers, and nobody else has done this since then. Everybody is now using videos and PowerPoint, two screens, etc. I didn't want the audience to read the statements; I wanted them to hear what these women said. Whatever I did, I did a lot of work. I know that people reference my talk; I don't think anybody objected. When I was the Chair of CCCC, I delivered my speech in New York, downtown Manhattan. It was the time when America was preparing to invade Iraq and that time it was March. A lot of demonstrations were going on in Time Square. It was all at the same moment. And I was trying to say: "Does anybody know that CCCC conference is going on?" All of these events were going on in the world. So my speech was delivered at the right moment. Many missed the conference because they were trying to demonstrate opposition to the invasions, but we held it anyway. That was the kairic moment when I gave my speech, and it resonated powerfully-- I believe.

**NH:** As a past Chair of the Campus Writing Board at the University of Maryland, do you feel that your interdisciplinary approaches have served you as an administrator? If so, in what ways?

**SWL:** I was the organizing chair of the Campus Writing Board back in the 80s. The acting Dean of Undergraduate Studies organized the first Writing Board, but it then died out. We implemented it again in 2010. The idea was to bring faculty from all the different disciplines together to talk about the role of writing in their disciplines and to share ideas and to remove the misunderstanding among faculty across campus about what writing teachers do. In our writing courses, people are looking at us suspiciously since we have two writing courses that all students have to complete to fulfill general education requirements. Faculty complained that students still "don't know how to write" after taking these courses. We wanted them to see what we are doing. We wanted to help them realize that we can't bear all of the responsibility for teaching writing. We want them to know that there are some things that they also need to do. We wanted to bring everybody to the same table and get them on the same page about writing, so we developed a website that lists different kinds of activities and resources people can use to teach writing. We were trying to get everybody to talk amongst themselves about writing and not just see it taught only in the general education writing courses that students are required to complete at Maryland in their 1st and 3rd year<sup>[1]</sup>. We want faculty from across campus to see that writing is meaning making, and knowledge is achieved through articulating information. We used to meet two or three times a semester, but there were so many misunderstandings; it was quite frustrating and a challenge to get everyone on board because they still wanted us to fix their students' writing. We insisted that each college sends a representative to serve on the board, and they came kicking and screaming, but most of them did not have an interest in writing, so one summer, I think it was the summer of 2009, I was thinking there has to be some other way to do this or to supplement what we were doing. So Wayne Slater, a colleague in the College of Education, and I met and decided to hold a conference in fall 2014; it was mainly for campus faculty as a way to increase the prominence and the attention to writing, but it turned out to be more like a professional conference. People from other schools came to hear about the teaching and research of writing. That occupied all of my time for the next year. It was a huge success. First we consulted with Donna Hamilton, then Dean of Undergraduate Studies, who advised us to go to every college and ask for money from each department to support the conference, especially since they were all concerned about writing. The conference brought campus conferees and fifteen of the leading scholars in rhetoric and composition to examine critical issues in theory, research, and best practices in university academic and professional writing courses, especially in the context of the Common Core State Standards Initiative. It was a good way to promote and call attention to writing. And my work in the field of rhetoric and composition helped me organize the conference; my acquaintance with many of the leading scholars helped us get them to participate.

**NH:** Based on your tactics for an effective WAC program, how is this work different from working as a professor teaching courses? What is your advice for newly minted WPAs or WAC administrators?

**SWL:** The idea about informing other professors from different disciplines about what we do in the writing courses has been fruitful. It would be beneficial to design projects where writing teachers and subject teachers come together to propose courses or design assignments. It is great to reach out to different departments and to get rid of the antiquated ideas which many professors in other departments have about writing courses and what to teach in them. It is imperative that they see writing as a way to learn, that every time students write in their subject area is a type of

writing and for faculty to come together to collaboratively design some of the writing courses and engage in interdisciplinary efforts to read some of the proposals from teachers who are trying to teach a course and how that course is going to reflect certain writing skills and eventually approve them. This would be a good model in which Writing Board members come together and design.

**NH:** Also, you have been an editor of a book series and collections, what are some key areas you want to see people explore?

**SWL:** The series I am currently working on is called “Feminism and Rhetoric.” I would like to see more diversity; most of the books we’ve published are about White women, which is fine, since there is a lot that we need to know about them, particularly in the nineteenth century and bring their issues up to the twentieth century. But more important and exciting is to look at women from other culture. Our own Jessica Enoch is working on a critical anthology entitled “Mestiza Rhetors: An Anthology of Latina Rhetorical Activism in North America, 1880-1920,” that she is coediting with Cristina Ramírez. Since there is no available anthology that focuses solely on Latina rhetors, this anthology’s intent is to bring together the primary work of understudied Latina rhetors and social activists who published their work in Spanish and English in various North American locations such as Texas and Mexico. The anthology has texts in both Spanish and English. So, this type of anthology tells us that it is not just about English or the US. Putting the two languages side by side is fascinating. I hope we can have more books and anthologies like this. Also, now we are working with editors of a science anthology with women scientists and the idea of motherhood. I think this is going to be the first that discusses the sciences and how women worked with science as a topic. So, it is not just about different cultures or languages; it is about different topics too. Also, none of the books in the series Cheryl and I edit focus on African American women even though I have publications of my own. I hope we soon have the opportunity to publish books in the series with this focus.

**NH:** When it comes to publishing works on minority figures, what challenges do you see as editors? What advice might you give to people who want to publish in this area as an editor?

**SWL:** One of the challenges that I see is that the Press is understandably concerned about demand. We have to make the case that there is enough demand and interest in minority figures topics. It cannot be just a niche market where only few people might be interested and few people will buy it and want to read it. There has to be a bigger audience and I believe there is. Perhaps we have to do a better job of encouraging the scholarship in this area.

[For example, your work, Nabila, with] Arab Muslim women [...] I feel this is the right time; many people want to know and read about what these Muslim women did regarding certain issues. You can engage in something similar to what Jess Enoch and Cristina Ramírez are doing, where there is a culture blending: one foot in US culture as we understand it today and this emerging culture that we are creating even as we speak.

So advice: it seems according to the research you have been doing, you found some Muslim Arab women who predate the women we write and publish about in our series and collections. So you need to go ahead and make the argument that look there are some Muslim women who have been doing and did it before and know the same strategies—they were versed in rhetorical theory and speech writing and communication, so the field is not restricted to Judeo-Christian women.

**NH:** Thank you for the encouragement and the interview; your support and work have been a source of inspiration for me and others as well!

## Notes

1. UMD has two required writing courses: one taken in the first year, Academic Writing, and the next in the 3rd year, Professional Writing. ([Return to text.](#))

## Works Cited

Cooper, Anna J. *A Voice from the South*. Negro Universities Press, 1969.

Enoch, Jessica and Cristina Ramirez, eds. *Mestiza Rhetors: An Anthology of Latina Rhetorical Activism in North America, 1880-1920*.

Emig, Janet A., Dixie. Goswami, and Maureen. Butler. *The Web of Meaning: Essays on Writing, Teaching, Learning*,

*and Thinking*. Boynton/Cook Publishers, 1983.

Fahnestock, Jeanne, and Marie Secor. *A Rhetoric of Argument*. Random House, 1982.

Harper, Frances Ellen Watkins, and Frances Smith. Foster. *A Brighter Coming Day: A Frances Ellen Watkins Harper Reader*. Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 1990.

Logan, Shirley Wilson. *With Pen and Voice: A Critical Anthology of Nineteenth-Century African-American Women*. Southern Illinois University Press, 1995.

---. "When and Where I Enter": Race, Gender, and Composition Studies." *Feminism and Composition Studies: In Other Words*. Ed. Susan C. Jarratt and Lynn Worsham. Modern Language Association, 1998. 45-57.

---. *"We are Coming": The Persuasive Discourse of Nineteenth-Century Black Women*. Southern Illinois University Press, 1999.

---. *Liberating Language: Sites of Rhetorical Education in Nineteenth-Century Black America*. Southern Illinois UP, 2008.

Young, Vershawn Ashanti. "Your Average Nigga: Language, Literacy, and the Rhetoric of Blackness." Doctoral dissertation, University of Illinois at Chicago, 2003.

Wright, Richard. *Uncle Tom's Children*. Harper & Row, 1938.

"An Interview with Shirley Wilson Logan" from *Composition Forum* 38 (Spring 2018)

© Copyright 2018 Nabila Hijazi.

Licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike License](#).



Return to [Composition Forum 38 table of contents](#).