Encounters With Writing: Becoming-With Posthumanist Ethics

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Abstract
In this article, the authors (re)think writing as an ethical endeavor to explore and to cultivate more inclusive orientations for writing research and teaching. Situated in posthumanist scholarship on intra-activity, trans-corporeality, and translingual assemblages, they provide data–theory encounters that resist the privileging of alphabetic print, standardized written English approaches to writing pedagogies that have detached writers from the contextual doing/being/feeling demanded of composing-with-all-bodies. Data in the article are drawn from three separate research projects. Diffractively reading data through posthumanist theoretical concepts, the authors highlight the tensions and insights produced from their analysis to provoke an ethico-onto-epistemological shift in writing studies and classroom pedagogies, and to enliven the ethical work of exploring and cultivating more inclusive orientations to writing research and teaching.

Keywords
posthuman, ethics in research, writing, affective literacy, translingualism

In this article, we engage posthuman philosophies as an ethical endeavor to explore and cultivate more inclusive orientations for literacies, ones that integrate both language and literacy practices we know and are familiar with, as well as those language and literacy practices that might yet be unknown. The philosophical perspectives on knowing (epistemology), be(com)ing (ontology), and doing (axiology) in posthumanist scholarship urge us to pursue lines of inquiry that explore the practical/theoretical possibilities of posthumanist thinking for the research and teaching of writing.

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Posthumanist scholarship is rooted in a relational ontology, meaning that we come to know through our being with and in the world—a world of lively relations between humans, nonhumans, and more-than-humans that is referred to as ethico-onto-epistemology. Therefore, we write knowing/be(com)ing/doing together to demonstrate that in a relational ontology, these cannot be separated; knowing, being, becoming, and doing are co-constituted (Barad, 2007).

Our scholarship emerges from the rich histories of multimodality (Kress, 2009; Pahl & Rowsell, 2010), bi/multilingualism (Anzaldúa, 1987; García, 2009), and New Literacy Studies (New London Group, 2000). These bodies of work continue to influence how we think about language and literacies, particularly as they relate to what we understand as writing and how we conceptualize and research language and literacies. We highlight this robust scholarship not only to acknowledge its enduring impact but also to impress the importance of humbly continuing to question, rethink, and stretch language and literacy education. We believe it is a generative act for research and practice to continue to rethink writing relations as we bring together posthumanist studies with language and literacy research.

Rethinking writing is a matter of ethics for us. A posthuman orientation in language and literacy animates the complexities of teaching and learning as intricate and dynamic relationships that emerge under particular conditions of possibility. For example, in a writing classroom, as bodies, paper, languages, pencil, digital media, and desires work in concert, new realities (new texts, new ideas, new motivations, new identities, etc.) are produced. Through this perspective, we enter into an analytic gaze focused on the in-the-moment realities of students, teachers, sensations, materials, cultures, languages, and other semiotic materials coming to be together. This is an ethical orientation that relocates the teaching of writing on the interdependence of human-nonhuman-life by attending to the entanglements of writing and its multiple productions rather than focusing on human pursuits alone (Kuby, Spector, & Thiel, 2019).

Posthuman philosophies offer us a way to consider language and literacy pedagogies and practices, the consequences and opportunities these practices might produce for writers, and the complex ways writing might emerge otherwise in the making of craft. Take for instance a “writing rule” commonly found in U.S. classrooms that asks children to inscribe a few sentences before illustrating is allowed. Not only does this produce illustration as secondary to written text, it also positions children who want to engage with visual storytelling as not-yet writers. Also, when we locate writing in humans alone, some people are considered “good” writers while others are not. However, when we follow the productions of writing practices, pedagogies, and policies, we are able to see the materializations these discourses create positing a more ethical way of crafting pedagogical worlds. Therefore, our purpose is not to redefine what is writing or not but perhaps consider not yet known possibilities (of writing).

In the broader educational community, Snaza and colleagues (2014), among others, have begun to wrestle with the criticalness and ethics of posthumanist work in curriculum studies:
We are forwarding posthumanism not as a new “discourse” per se, but rather we are forwarding posthumanism as a way of recognizing that a wide variety of seemingly disparate critical approaches (feminism, anticolonial and antiracist thought, technology studies, ecology, etc.) have a common ground in directly challenging the ways humanism has restricted politics and education. . We problematize all human/humanist-centric theories because previous critiques of humanism’s violence have functioned as what Sedgwick (1990, p. 85) calls “minoritzing” discourses—discourses that matter to some people (women, the formerly colonized, etc.) and can be easily dismissed or ignored by those with the privilege of not needing, wanting, or choosing to care. We believe posthumanism pushes intersectionality to the point where no one—no matter their field, interest, or position of power—can afford to ignore these critiques. (p. 41)

We find such insights thought-provoking, helping us see how the world and all the bodily relationships in it come into being relationally. We are inspired by feminist scholarship (Barad, 2007; Haraway, 2016) that encourages us to consider how we are response-able in all the lively relations we are entangled with daily, no matter our desires to participate or not.

In this spirit, the purpose of this article is to provide encounters with writing from three different language and literacy research studies in the United States. Each of these encounters was chosen for its potential to offer new insights about writing education and research when explored through a posthuman perspective. We focus on (a) writing as intra-activity; (b) writing as trans-corporeal, porous, and lively; and (c) writing as translingual assemblages. We do not see these three analytic encounters as unrelated but have pulled them apart for illustrative purposes. We begin by situating posthumanism as a conceptual and ethical apparatus to explore writing practice and share our understandings of diffraction as a way of thinking with theory and data. In the analytic encounters that follow, we each put to work a few posthumanist concepts with data to enliven a posthumanist ethics for writing. We conclude by exploring several provocations from our diffractive readings.

**Posthumanism as an Ethical Regrounding for Writing Practice and Research**

We acknowledge that the term posthuman is defined in multiple ways by different scholars. For starters, posthumanist traditions are referred to by several names, each with distinct yet overlapping features and histories, such as feminist materialism, new materialism, political ecology, and animal studies, to name a few. In addition, posthumanist ways of knowing/be(com)ing/doing in the world connect to, but are not synonymous with, Indigenous studies and the knowledges Indigenous thought has produced (Tuck & Yang, 2014). Although there are differences in each of these theoretical perspectives, all seek to reimagine and reconsider understandings about the ways multifarious entities enter into, sustain, and enmesh with worldly relations.

Postfoundational scholars’ writings rethink many long-held assumptions about “subject” and therefore researching/teaching practices, as well. In an attempt to move away from anthropocentrism and the Cartesian all-knowing subject, posthuman traditions
have recast subjectivities (Braidotti, 2018), where the “subject does not exist ahead of or outside language [and materials] but is a dynamic, unstable effect of language/discourse and cultural practice” (St Pierre, 2000, p. 502). Anthropocentrism sees humans as the most important or essential element of existence. For us, posthumanism is not about getting rid of humans but rather seeing them as a part of relations with nonhumans and more-than-humans.

We see Braidotti and St. Pierre’s discussion on subjectivity similar to Barad’s (2003) writing that “relata do not preexist relations; rather, relata within-phenomena emerge through specific intra-actions” (p. 815). In posthumanism, subjects are both human and nonhuman, both produced and producing, both material and discursive, with neither preceding the other. When there is not a unified subject separate from other entities but rather entangled as a whole, then concepts such as validity, reliability, and generalizability are unthinkable because the posthuman subject is emergent, unpredictable, and nonreductive.

Braidotti (2018) also explains that while posthumanism is lodged within the physical, such as people, places, and things, it is mostly a conceptual tool that “provides a frame to understanding the ongoing processes of becoming-subjects in our fast-changing times” (p. 5). As such, she does not see posthumanism as defining, or closing off the possibilities of subjects, but rather as a way to consider the various and complex configurations, alliances, assemblages, and constructions where human and nonhuman subjects are formed and potentially reformed. We find this particularly useful for this article, where we seek to consider the ways writing and writers have been formed through some classroom practices found in the United States and the possibilities and potentials to be reformed through an attention to how writing and writers could become/are becoming otherwise. In our examples below, we are intentional not to close off what might be defined as writing (or not).

Reforming does not mean the absences of the original (e.g., humans), but instead reshaping and reimagining the possibilities of what the original can be. Take, for instance, clay work. An artist might begin by molding the clay into a bowl but later change the shape to a plate. Still, the clay remains. Once the clay is glazed, fired, and hardened into a plate, it is much more difficult to see the potentials for the clay to be anything other than a plate. However, it is possible to reshape the shards into something different or use the plate for something other than plate-like things. The clay remains—but reformed.

Just like clay, writing as a conceptual practice can be reformed. Using a posthuman perspective, it is never simply one or the other—traditional writing or nontraditional writing—but a multiplicity and convergence of many possibilities. Therefore, in this article, we embrace Braidotti’s (2018) notion that “all human and non-human entities are nomadic subjects-in-process, in perpetual motion, immanent to the vitality of self-ordering matter” (p. 6). As such, we can read writing and writers as shifting, changing, and becoming more than they once were.

As a conceptual and theoretical tool for literacy education, posthumanism would be less concerned with definitions of what constitutes “good” or “bad” writing/writers, and more concerned with what those discursive labels produce for literacy practices
and the lively potentials thereafter for all matter, human or otherwise. Potentiality could materialize writing as a neoliberal construct that monetizes writing and writing instruction as dependent on economic subjects, including testing booklets, pencils, writers, teachers, scoring protocols, and so on. And potentiality could materialize writing as a justice-oriented construct that fashions writing and writing instruction as a practice to craft more equitable worlds.

Embracing writing as being lived out in multiple facets “pave(s) the way for an ethical regrounding of social participation and community building” (Braidotti, 2010, pp. 203-204). As Davies (2014) writes, “ethics, as Barad defines it, is a matter of questioning what is being made to matter and how that mattering affects what it is possible to do and think” (pp. 10-11). Therefore, we see a posthuman conception of writing as an ethical one in that it forces us to consider what might be and what might have been missed or excluded (for more on posthumanism, see the supplemental material online).

**Reading Data and Theory Through One Another: Diffraction**

As we delve into the multiple and potential ways writing might be produced, we do so using the theoretical tool of diffraction, a concept that comes from physics. In its simplest terms, diffraction refers to the ways waves bend and spread out when they encounter obstructions and the patterns and differences that are made through these encounters. As a methodological tool, diffraction concerns itself with “differences that our knowledge-making practices make and the effects they have on the world” (Barad, 2007, p. 72) and seeks to notice these differences and explore their effects. A diffractive approach does not attempt to categorize data or try to compare and contrast events. Instead, diffractive practices explore the differences that are made on/in the world by asking what do these data/theories produce? Davies (2014) writes,

Diffraction as a concept for thinking about the generation of data or the analytic work with that data does not try to fix those processes so that they can be turned into a methodic set of steps to be followed. Rather, it opens the possibility for seeing how something different comes to matter, not only to the world that we observe, but also in our research practice. (p. 3)

Therefore, a diffractive methodology is less concerned with defining phenomena and more concerned with what becomes possible and not possible for phenomena, such as literacies, after the constructions of phenomena have been made, how the lines have been drawn, and what differences occur when the lines are redrawn.

A diffractive reading asks researchers to do several things (Lenz Taguchi & Palmer, 2013): (a) to read data into each other to see what diffractive patterns emerge—or the distribution of possible paths when two or more things encounter each other; (b) to explore differences that emerge at the intersections of varying amalgamations of data, theory, and method; and (c) to embrace a knowing with data where a researcher can never be outside of their observations, understandings, and analysis but is always
deeply entangled with them. Researchers are part of the boundary making that crafts realities through engaging with data and analysis.

We attempt to make sense of our individual research projects collectively by embracing diffractive reading as part of our analysis. Moving away from comparative analysis and categorizing through codes, our work diffractively reads data through several posthuman concepts, or what might be referred to as “thinking with theory” (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012). Through a diffractive reading, we aim to explore what becomes possible in literacy practice when we think with posthuman theories. In the analytic encounters that follow, we each draw on the theories of different scholars whose work we read as posthumanist to help us think otherwise about writing.

Inspired by Pacini-Ketchabaw, Kind, and Kocher’s (2016) book about children and materials, each of our individual sections begins with a paragraph of verbs to illustrate the liveliness of writing as both a noun and a verb. We then each grapple with our understandings of writing in multiple contexts and how posthuman theories help us see writing in new ways, as more than it once was before.

**Encounter 1: Rethinking Writing (by Candace Kuby)**


These are the entangled agencies of writing/humans/more-than-humans. My (Candace’s) intention is to attend to the potentialities of writing: how we might reconceptualize writing differently or what gets to count as writing. This work stems from a researcher/teacher partnership since 2010 with Tara Gutshall Rucker, where we opened spaces in Writers’ Studio for children to be writers with a range of materials (e.g., art supplies, digital tools, books) (see Kuby & Gutshall Rucker, 2016; Kuby, Gutshall Rucker, & Kirchhofer, 2015). We struggled with what to call what was going on in Tara’s room when we put out these materials and invited students to “go be a writer.” Encounters in Writers’ Studio prompted us to consider what happens if we shift our focus and rethink the human-centeredness of writing.

Questions that guided my thinking with data from Tara’s room and posthumanist theoretical concepts include the following: What is produced when we shift the focus from the human and reimage writing from a posthumanist perspective? What might writing become? What might writing do?

As an illustrative example, I share a 6-min clip of Billy (pseudonym), a second grader, working with a large piece of red butcher paper in Writers’ Studio (see the online supplemental file link at the end of the article to access video file). Tara’s U.S. classroom was composed of 23 second graders of varying economic, racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversities. This intra-action with red paper, peers, scissors, glue, tape, a preservice teacher, desks, Tara, beliefs of “school ways to be a writer,” and me happened 3 months into the school year.
Concepts to Think/Play/Make With: Ethico-Onto-Epistemology, Intra-Activity, and Enacted Agency

I think with three posthumanist concepts as a way to produce new thoughts, ideas, and questions about how we conceptualize writing. First, *ethico-onto-epistemology* is the philosophical concept that knowing/be(com)ing/doing cannot be separated (Barad, 2007; Lenz Taguchi, 2010). We come to know through our entanglement with other bodies (human, nonhuman, more-than-human) in the world. This being/knowing is inherently about ethics or relational doing(s), as we are in mutual response-able relationships with other bodies. Therefore, we have to consider the ethics of (rethinking) writing. How we as educators conceptualize writing has material consequences that are both productive and restrictive for learners and materials.

Second, *intra-activity* is the entanglement of humans, nonhumans, and more-than-humans producing new realities, knowledges, and literacies—dynamic forces of agency. This neologism created by Barad (2007) differs from *interaction*, which is about human, social relationships. This also relates to Barad’s discussion on material-discursive relationships. For Barad (2003), discourse is not language, but rather what restricts or opens up possibilities for what we do and say. The material-discursive ways of knowing/be(com)ing/doing are in a mutually constituted relationship with each other.

Finally, situating research in a posthumanist stance forces us to rethink agency. *Enacted agency* is the lively relationship between humans, nonhumans, and more-than-humans (Barad, 2007; Hultman & Lenz Taguchi, 2010; Kuby, Gutshall Rucker, & Darolia, 2017). An anthropocentric view of agency locates agentic actions in or coming from the human. Humans act on the world. Humans create change. Humans are agentic. However, within posthumanist scholarship, the material world is entangled with/in producing agency. Enacted agency is a force emerging between people and materials, not residing solely in what might be called individual bodies (e.g., the human or the pencil or the paper). As Barad (2007) writes, “It [agency] is not an attribute of subjects or objects (as they do not preexist as such)” (p. 178). In other words, bodies do not preexist relationships; they come into being through/with/in relationships (enacted agency). Thinking with the posthumanist concepts of ethico-onto-epistemology, intra-activity, and enacted agency illuminates how a posthumanist view of knowing/be(com)ing/doing intra-actively produced and continues to produce new ways of reimagining writing.

Data-With-Theory

I share the video clip of Billy, in which I doubled the speed of an original 11-min clip to create a 6-min version (see the online supplemental file link at the end of the article to access video file). This clip had very little human dialogue in it. I inserted a voiceover of myself thinking with the posthumanist theoretical concepts discussed above with this data. My university ethics review board required consent forms signed by guardians but not assent forms for young children. We read a youth recruitment script and informed children they could withdraw from the study at any time. We know there is discussion, particularly among early childhood scholars and the qualitative inquiry community, that is pushing us
to think about ethics and ongoing consent with children (not one-time consent on children). This is an area we are interested in and have worked to consider in our research. The idea of ongoing consent within the constraints of long publication timelines, finding children after they move to another school, or after a researcher is no longer in the classroom is a difficult one that needs more consideration.

**Ethical Encounters**

If knowing, be(com)ing, and doing are inseparable, meaning we come to know—know what literacies we are creating in the moment of be(com)ing with the materials—then we cannot always expect children to tell us what they are producing beforehand or even in the moment. Billy appeared to supply an answer to his friends and the preservice teacher that would appease them. He said he was going to make something and then write a poem about it. What the pop-up part would become was unknown to Billy, but if he tagged on, “write a poem about it,” then he seemed to know that it would legitimize others’ inquiries. And it did. The preservice teacher walked away and peers did not ask more. It seems Billy felt constrained by material-discursive expectations of what it means to be a writer at school, especially with the large red paper.

It is in the relational moments of working-with-the-world that literacies come into being. Billy did not know how the materials would work for/with him, and he did not seem to be frustrated with the emergence of three-dimensional (3-D) artifacts. Billy appeared comfortable with not knowing exactly what the materials were becoming and in the process reshape the idea of needing to brainstorm and prewrite a draft as a writer. In this case, Billy did not write or sketch a draft, and so did not have to name what the red paper would become before working with it. Billy seemed willing to let the red paper intra-act with him in the moment—to create new realities, new literacies, and new ways of be(com)ing with paper, glue, tape. If being a writer is about working with the material-discursive world to create, as was the case in this Writers’ Studio, then it caused me and Tara to question the following: Is this writing? Does it matter what we call this intra-action(s)? Is working with red paper enough as a writer? Or should we require Billy to produce something alphabetic to go with it? What would a parent say? A principal?

We (Tara and I) are coming to believe that perhaps we do not need to define and label what writing is. In doing so, we limit the potentialities of what might come to be and thus limit knowing and relationships. However, we find ourselves stuck with/in language. What should we call Billy–red paper–glue–scissors, as we believe within the politics of schooling that it does matter what we call this intra-action? If we label this as play, then it is not valued the same as writing in a context of standardization and accountability through neoliberal tactics of testing, categorizing, and remediating children as literacy learners. If we label it writing, Tara has more potential to legitimize space and time in the school day for knowing/be(com)ing/doing in this way. For us, what gets labeled as writing is an ethical matter that shapes what literally comes to matter in a classroom.

We found that children used alphabetic writing when it served a purpose either in the processes of creating or for a future user of the artifacts—whether it was an
intra-active piece like Billy created, or a game board, or a how-to video, or a drama to perform, or a book. Tara and I had to reimagine what counted as writing when we put out a range of art materials and digital tools and invited children “to go be writers.” We could no longer narrow what counts as writing to alphabetic print and require students to always have an alphabetic component to their writing/literacies. We began to see how alphabetics was one mode they might choose to compose with, and they would do so as needed. Therefore, if we believe in an ethico-onto-epistemological view of the world coming to be, then we have to resist binaries of what counts as writing—or not. This is a matter of ethics of what comes to matter. By providing spaces for children/materials/discourses to become together as writers, we honor the ways that humans, nonhumans, and more-than-humans intra-actively come into being as writing/writers.

With these new insights and questions, pedagogy shifted for Tara. Posthumanism pedagogy is/became rhizomatic in nature—unexpected, uncertain, and full of newness. To help us understand what was happening pedagogically in Tara’s classroom, we borrowed a concept called pedagogical documentation from Reggio Emilia schools in Italy and the work of Lenz Taguchi (2010) in Swedish preschools. We used video and audio recordings as a way to not directly intervene as children were composing with materials—instead to watch what was unfolding, the new relationships and literacies that came to be. At times we did sit down to talk with students, but we were careful not to suggest something that students felt they had to do to comply with our vision. We began asking questions: How is the paper working with you today? Are there other materials you need to be a writer? How are you being a writer or learner with these pieces of yarn or googly eyes, feathers, words, or papers? These questions shifted the ways we thought about conferring with students and the material-discursive messages of what it meant to be a writer.

Assessment shifted as well. While Tara still was required to teach writing units on personal narrative, nonfiction, and poetry, we worked within these spaces to invite children to imagine and be different kinds of writers than perhaps they had been in other classrooms. We focused more on processes of literacies coming into being, rather than solely on products. Our shift was to the literacy desirings unfolding in fluid, messy, unpredictable ways with materials (see Kuby & Gutshall Rucker, 2016), and also to what was produced. We noticed that students did just as well, if not better, on district writing assessments where they had to use prompts to alphabetically respond. At first, Tara was hesitant to “allow” children to be writers in the ways described above, fearing they would not develop the skills of brainstorming, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing in a variety of genres and therefore would do poorly on district assessments. However, over the years, she has noticed the productiveness of fostering spaces for children to be writers with a range of materials and how it did not negatively affect their performance in district assessments.

As researchers, we are intrigued with clips such as the one with Billy, where we witnessed children-working-with-materials and materials-working-with-children, not always with a clear end goal. Instead of focusing on the human and talk, we found many clips that were for the most part silent, but of course full of intra-actions. This shifted our research focus and practices. We often find video clips of projects that we
feel we are entering in the middle without “evidence” of what came before or if the project was ever completed. Instead of dismissing these for the fear that we do not have enough data, we focus in a Deleuzian sense on entering in the middle. For example, we do not know if Billy ever had an end product beyond the 3-D pop-up papers seen in the video. We do not know if he created alphabetic poetry like he said he would. To us, the working-with-paper (and . . . and . . . and . . . ) seen in the video is writing, not a brainstorming or prewriting activity for an alphabetic poem to come later. In other words, the writing process is writing—not something we do to get to writing at the end. We do know that Billy engaged in alphabetic representations (as well as visual, embodied ones) with multiple genres throughout the year, although this is not evidenced in the video clip. In summary, this data–theory encounter suggests that nailing down and defining what writing is perhaps limits the potentialities of writing and ways of knowing/be(com)ing/doing (see Kuby & Gutshall Rucker, 2016, for an extensive conversation on defining writing).

Encounter 2: Rethinking Bodies That Write (by Jaye Johnson Thiel)

Bodies move, idle, swell, rot, absorb, leak. Bodies hold, break, bend, rip, tear, heal. They wrinkle and fade, sharpen and shine, squeak and hum and whisper as they gently graze against other bodies. Composed of elements such as flesh, minerals, water, plastics, polymers, nitrogen, oxygen, sugar, and energy, they cross boundaries, seep into, onto, and out of one another. They create, destroy, desire; they are unfixed, unpredictable, and unruly. Bodies are opaque, transparent, translucent—trans-corporeal.

I (Jaye Johnson Thiel) begin this section with the posthuman notion that all matter—human, nonhuman, more-than-human, and otherwise—is a body. One does not need to be made of flesh to be considered a body. Pens, paper, tables, chairs, walls, floors, windows, doors, trees, birds, squirrels, fences—all bodies, too. Furthermore, I echo the sentiments of Bennett (2010), who posits that all bodies “seek alliances with other bodies to enhance vitalities” (p. 118). Therefore, my intention is to reconsider the notion that human bodies alone are producers of writing; instead, they write in concert with many bodies.

After five years working with children in a community makerspace located in a multilingual, multicultural, working-class neighborhood in the southeastern United States, I have come to notice the flows and possibilities of writing when we pay attention to the trans-corporeality of bodies. Perhaps if I had stayed in a K-5 public school, I would not have noticed the ways in which bodies comingle, cocreate, and cowrite. But there was something in the porosity of the out-of-school setting that helped me see writing as much more than children’s bodies at work: It was also an entanglement of bodies at play.

Many questions have sprung from my time at the community center (which I call the Playhouse), questions that I continue to grapple, tug, and tussle with almost daily. However, these are the questions I focus on here: How are literacies, particularly conceptions of writing, produced differently (i.e., socially, culturally, politically, economically)
when all bodies are considered lively? What is possible for literacies when the trans-corporeality and porosity of writing bodies are paid attention to?

I attempt to illustrate potentialities for these questions in the following sections, inviting readers to dive into posthuman concepts and engage with a moment at the Playhouse that helped me see writing as otherwise.

**Concepts to Think/Play/Make With: Trans-Corporeality, Porosity, and Liveliness**

As concepts, porosity, trans-corporeality, and liveliness have shifted my understandings of what writing has the potential to be. Porosity and trans-corporeality (Alaimo, 2010) remove boundaries between the outside and inside, allowing for a permeability that attends to the “interconnections, interchanges, and transits between human bodies and nonhuman natures” (p. 2). This permeability allows the outer world to flow through all bodies (Bryant, 2012), “influencing and modifying each other in all sorts of ways.” Perhaps all bodies do not share collective aspirations and understandings, but their acknowledgment in the emergence of creation is not only necessary but ethically imperative. As Alaimo (2010) writes,

> Indeed, thinking across bodies may catalyze the recognition that the environment, which is too often imagined as inert, empty space or as a resource for human use, is, in fact, a world of fleshy beings with their own needs, claims, and actions. By emphasizing the movement across bodies, trans-corporeality reveals the interchanges and interconnections between various bodily natures. (p. 2)

Trans-corporeality does not bracket the biological or human endeavor from other bodies but recognizes its inseparability and its force within the collective. As many posthuman scholars have pointed out (Alaimo, 2010; Barad, 2007; Hekman, 2010), to bracket the human body away from, as greater than, as merely discursively produced, or as passive rather than lively fails to notice the ways humans are forever entangled with the lives and deaths of all living and nonliving entities. Humans produce. They just do not produce alone. Researchers must seek the sites of interconnectedness.

Through trans-corporeality and porosity, we can begin to see the world outside ourselves as also lively. Both Bennett (2010) and Bryant (2012) speak of the intimacy of bodies, and thus the liveliness of those bodies as they cross boundaries. We are intimate with many things that we remain woefully unaware of: contaminants, bacteria, minerals, vitamins, ultraviolet (UV) rays, fiber optics, sound waves, plastics, and even constructs of racism, classism, and gender normativity—just to name a few. I use my own body as an example of how we become intimately connected to the liveliness of matter unknowingly.

In the 1980s, when I was approximately 15, there was a cultural movement in my U.S. high school to adorn bodies with gold jewelry. I desperately wanted to be part of this movement, to become human-body-gold-body like my peers, to fit in with the more affluent crowd that at the time, I thought I wanted to be more like. I soon owned a gold chain and a pair of gold hoop earrings, most likely gifts I received for a birthday
or holiday. Within hours of wearing these items, my skin started to morph. Where there had once been smooth pink skin, patches of red, burn-like circles flared up, accompanied by tiny red dots all over my torso and arms that itched uncontrollably. My earlobes became scaly overnight. I was miserable. But being young, I covered these places up with makeup, put on the gold jewelry, and pushed through the pain. By the end of the following day, my skin was worse. The next morning, my eyes were swollen. Whatever was happening had consumed my entire body. The rash was everywhere, warranting a visit the doctor.

The dermatologist took one look at me and said, “You are allergic to nickel. It has entered your bloodstream. One more day of exposure would require hospitalization.”

She explained that nickel is in all metals and is added to all jewelry, as gold cannot stand alone to create chains, earrings, and rings. Even the button on blue jeans has nickel in it. Nickel had seeped out, through my skin, and leaked into my bloodstream. It was everywhere. I was its host and it had taken over my body, slowly killing it. Woefully unaware of the liveliness literally around my neck, I was being devoured. Although I had accounted for the liveliness of the jewelry in what it could produce for me as a teenager socially, I had failed to consider the ways that metals are lively in our lives otherwise. I had missed the trans-corporeality and porosity of nickel and what its liveliness could do to other bodies. For me, the composition of the gold jewelry was passive, part of a dematerializing network (Alaimo, 2010) I had no need to consider—until I did.

But what does this have to do with writing? Perhaps this same attention to the permeability of bodies has something to offer to the ways we think about literacies as well. I will attempt to grapple with these interconnections through the story that follows. The data I have curated below come from a 5-year-long project working alongside people, places, things, and more at the Playhouse, crafted from a coalescing of the rhythms of the community, children’s interest, social class–sensitive pedagogies (Jones & Vagle, 2013), feminist theory, Reggio Emilia philosophies, and commitments to justice and equity.

**Data-With-Theory**

Most days, the Playhouse is a whirlwind of activity. Any given afternoon, one might see paper scattered, fabric sown, paint splattered, and clay smooshed. There is an energy of making, thinking, and world-changing at the Playhouse that can both amaze and frustrate its human interlopers.

One particular day, I walked in to discover several of the children had found inspiration in corrugated cardboard mats that were donated by the local food bank and originally used to separate fruit during packing. These large purple rectangles seemed more like shields to a group of young boys, and they each entered into a relationship with these cardboard pieces as they tried to figure out the best ways to craft handles onto one side. The forging of cardboard swords soon followed. As conversations and material collided, costumes began to unfold. Black fabric cut and twisted into armor and black paint crafted pseudo beards and mustaches.
Soon the boys-cardboard-paint-fabric collaborative asked if I would film as they enacted a battle. For this, they needed not only the digital technology of my phone to enter the fray but also the world beyond the walls of the building. So, people-and-things bled into the outdoors. The playground offered a clearing where there were few trees, much dirt, and semi-level ground. This offering seems to be the perfect spot to begin.

Bodies of swords, fabric costumes, children, shields, and dust clouds began to swarm around the playground in battle. Jumping, falling, bending, yelling, bodies circled in and out of the digital frame, in and out of battle, in and out of play.

As I look back on the video, the trans-corporeality of writing bodies certainly shines. The stories that materialized were made possible through the coming together of bodies—the obvious bodies including humans, paint, fabric, and cardboard but also the bodies of other things that are not physically present, such as books about medieval knights and superhero movies that these young folks carry with them into playful storytelling. Writing is not simply performed by an autonomous subject conquering the world. As I have written elsewhere (Thiel, 2015), literacies are not bound by one body alone but rather are lived through the entanglement of bodies. Notebooks in and of themselves are not writing. Neither are tiny fingers pecking keys or gripping pencils as lead makes marks across white and blue. They co-orchestrate. They make together.

This is not to say that all writing practices are not porous and trans-corporeal. Ink bleeds onto paper and forearms as hands attached to bodies sitting in desks busily cross over the pages making marks they have learned will communicate with the world in a specific way. Just as paint bleeds onto cardboard shields, swords, and fingers on hands attached to bodies fencing across a playground while making marks they have learned will communicate with the world in a specific way, as well. But that’s just it. Different bodies offer different configurations of what is possible for writing. Writing can materialize through bodies that create physical inscriptions on paper (i.e., pen-paper-computer-human-chair-electricity/etc.) as well as through bodies crafting a battle on a playground (i.e., cardboard-paint-fabric-playground-daylight-humans/etc.). Both have the potentialities of writing—bodies coming together to craft stories.

The point is, bodies never work alone. They seep into each other, leaving traces and imprints to craft worlds. I still have a small knot on the side of my finger where pencils and pens rest while writing. The trans-corporeality and porosity of things, places, people, nature, and otherwise is a world-making practice, and world making has the power to allow some things to happen and others to not happen. For example, if the fruit-packing cardboard had not been at the Playhouse that day, I do not think swords and shields would have materialized, although one can never really know. The purple, wavy packing cardboard inspired the world making that unfolded that day. It opened up different possibilities.

**Ethical Encounters**

Ethically, considering the trans-corporeality of bodies is particularly important when we think about what gets to count, who gets to count, and how they are being counted. Trans-corporeality concerns itself with the human as inseparable from the more-than-human
world as well as the ways difference gets produced onto and through bodies from these entanglements and acknowledgment of such entanglements. Often when educators and educational researchers engage in childhood literacy practices, we do so in what Alaimo (2010) would call a dematerializing network. Dematerializing networks attempt to sever bodies from the rest of the event. In literacy practices, this might mean more-than-human bodies of writing are ignored or certain materials and practices are not accepted. It also might mean that the bodies of humans are ignored, particularly the ways bodies are classed, raced, and gendered—such as the ways they are constructed through perceptions of acceptable/unacceptable materials and practices.

For instance, I have shown the Swords and Shields video to others several times. Each time there is at least one person who brings up sword-fighting bodies and asks, “Are you concerned about these young men being engaged in this type of play?” Typically, my answer illustrates that I’m more concerned with the ways people are reading and dematerializing the bodies of 7- and 8-year-old Black and Brown children from a working-poor community (a) as men, (b) as violent, and (c) as problem-bodies while holding cardboard swords and cardboard shields. Human bodies—who were also designing, inventing, running, jumping, remixing, painting—now are being seen as other bodies, as bodies that are too lively because they are being severed from the event and entangled in a raced, classed, and gendered discourse about their bodies that rematerializes them differently.

Just as Alaimo (2010) traces the proletariat lung to show the very real social and physical materialities of race and class on a human, what becomes of the skin of young Black and Brown boys from a working-class neighborhood? How is the skin being politicized, institutionalized, and socially constructed across contexts? Alaimo (2010) explains,

The human body is never a rigidly enclosed, protected entity, but is vulnerable to the substances and flows of its environments, which may include industrial environments and their social/economic forces. (p. 28)

What material outcomes of racism, classism, and sexism are embedded in the ways these young boys get to play, read, and write when some see them as dangerous? What material potentialities are discursively constructed through the ways their bodies are being dematerialized and rematerialized? And how does the porosity of these materializations leak into the literacy classroom, with the potential to construct place-based inequities and very real bodily trauma?

If we were to map writing bodies in a variety of contexts, what might we be missing in literacy practice, pedagogy, and policy? My guess is, quite a lot. Just as nickel had unknowingly seeped into my bloodstream from jewelry, I suspect narrowed understandings and unjust practices have seeped into the teaching and learning of literacies in even the most progressive classrooms. For example, dematerializing policies that often locate problems in individuals tend to ignore material ramifications of political, social, and economic world making, and thus writing instruction often becomes about how can we fix a body rather than what can bodies do.
Bennett (2011) reminds us that to understand social practices, it is necessary for us to understand the nonhuman components within those practices. This requires a special attention to the ways bodies are porous and trans-corporeal, rather than dematerialized networks seen as separate from the rest of the environment. Our relationships with the more-than-human, not-quite-human, and nonhuman all directly correlate with our relationships with humans and thus the ways we engage in humanizing or dehumanizing practices, pedagogies, and policies. For writing, this means that only when we pay attention to the ways all bodies write as a collective will we be able to engage in the ethical practices that so many bodies desire and all bodies deserve.

Encounter 3: Rethinking Language and Writing (by Angie Zapata)

Languages grow, travel, shift, carry, teach, change minds, comfort, heal, hurt, scare, tickle, move, produce. We craft, tinker, record, copy, paste, move, and then move them again with/through blocks, pencil, or digital device. Languages demand, encourage, woo, wound, play, and dance with/through the prosody of our voices. We sing, scream, laugh, or whisper them aloud with/through emotion as they are shaped by and reshape the histories of our own and our mothers’ tongues. Languages do not live alone or in the mind, but also become with the material ecology and vibrancy of the bodies—human, nonhuman, and more-than-human, affects, spaces, and activity they encounter.

How we are with languages from a posthumanist stance demands attention to the intertwined/stickiness of languages with bodies, objects, space, and environmental ecology, among other symbol systems, for making meaning (Canagarajah, 2017; De Costa et al., 2017; Jordan, 2015; Pennycook, 2017; Pennycook & Otsuji, 2014; Shipka, 2016; Shohamy & Gorter, 2008). My (Angie’s) section explores the entangled relationship between students’ translingual literacies (Canagarajah, 2015, 2017)—the ways in which languages, language varieties, literacies, and semiotic materials are bound/meshed together in practice—and spatial repertoires (Pennycook, 2016), or the linguistic resources enlivened through a particular space, objects, the sensorial, and activity. By encountering translingualism and material ecologies in this way, we can experience the linguistic–semiotic complexity of an adolescent language arts setting and how translingual writing is lived out in a seemingly English-dominant public space in the mid-west United States.

As teachers’ and students’ languages and language varieties come into contact in writing classrooms, I turn to posthumanist thought to explore the relevant questions produced within me, including the following: What writing processes and texts are produced when standardized written English is decentered and more expansive views of languaging as a translingual assemblage invigorate writing classrooms?

Concepts to Think/Play/Make With: Translingual Literacies and Spatialized Repertoires

Guided by this question, I diffractively read data through the scholarship on translingual literacies (Canagarajah, 2015, 2017) and spatial repertoires (Pennycook, 2016, 2017) to
consider the potentiality of writing as a translingual assemblage. Translingualism, as theorized by Canagarajah, understands linguistic resources as an activity with a broader repertoire of semiotic resources for communication. Translingualism is thus a more expansive semiotic landscape, more than language, that considers linguistic encounters with the materiality of space, place, matter, and semiotics. It also draws attention to the importance of understanding language as emerging in activity, emphasizing the rhetorical contextual languaging produced in a particular place and time. Understanding multilingual writing and writing processes as translingual invites us to consider how writing transcends notions of discrete languages that can be held still and replicated and instead contemplate how language becomes in relation with other semiotic resources and ecological matter.

I bundle the work in translingualism with paradigmatic concepts from language scholars thinking with posthumanist thought, particularly Pennycook’s (2016, 2017) notion of spatial repertoires, to explore multilingual writing as a production of linguistic-affectual-material togetherness. Drawing on feminist new material studies, Pennycook articulates spatialized repertoires as relations between language, space, objects, and activities to suggest that languaging must be understood as emergent and as intra-acting with vibrant ecological matter, rather than as solely originating from or mediated by the human. In their work, Pennycook and Otsuji (2014) illustrate how languaging cannot be fully accounted for without consideration of the material–discursive ecology available in a particular space, at that time and activity. In their analysis, rather than focusing on either language-to-language relations (i.e., bilingualism, code switching, multilingualism, translinguaging) or language-to-person relations (i.e., competence, individual repertoires), Pennycook and Otsuji focus on the togetherness of space, objects, the participant’s practices, and languaging as a part of an assemblage. Their analysis animates the performative, sensorial, and emergent nature and the doing/being of languaging, rather than the production and mediation of language by the human.

Rethinking translingual literacies with posthumanist thought suggests multilingual and multimodal repertoires as braided, emergent systems of activity deriving from intra-actions among writers (i.e., Kuby & Gutshall Rucker, 2016), their affectual intensities (i.e., Lenters, 2016), their languages (i.e., Zapata & Laman, 2016), and a broader material–discursive ecology (i.e., Pennycook, 2016; Zapata & Van Horn, 2017). Reimagining translingual writing in relation to a wider spatial repertoire, and as not residing solely in the human, helps us reenvision both writing and the teaching of writing as a constellation of resources at play rather than a set of discrete skills to secure.

Data-With-Theory

The data in what follows were produced during a larger year-long, qualitative study of the multimodal, multilingual, and material practices among adolescent youth (Zapata, Franks, & Moss, 2017). This public school classroom served on average eight to 12 sixth graders of various economic, racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversities. We focused data production on the texts and text processes among students reading, writing, and making art oriented toward making for a better world (Bomer & Bomer, 2001). During this research in the fall of 2015, Concerned Student 1950 at the University of Missouri
(Mizzou) and the Mizzou football team held campus protests to bring awareness to the
systemic institutional racism experienced by marginalized student communities
(Brooks, 2016). These related justice-oriented events happening in our immediate
community bled into our research as teachers folded photographs and media texts
about the protests into the curriculum as texts for students to respond to and discuss.

This research project culminated in a daylong public event for the students at The
Bridge, an inclusive space for critical discussion and learning at the Mizzou College
of Education. In addition to having a public platform to circulate their texts and mes-
"I

Multiple chalk markers of different colors were available in a container attached
to the board. The boards were mounted and rested on the carpeted ground for writers
to compose in comfortable positions. The immediate area surrounding the boards
was open, contributing to the collaborative nature of the writing experience with/
through the boards. The boards themselves were also large enough for writers to
compose independently on one side, as others huddled together. It was not uncom-
mon to observe an audience gather around writers at work to observe and receive the
writing produced in the moment. There was quite a bit of enthusiasm among the
school-aged students to write on the boards and to offer messages of support for the
university community.

Among the participating students was Ahmed, a 13-year-old boy of Egyptian
descent placed in a sixth-grade special reading classroom by virtue of his school-
impended language status as an “English learner.” Ahmed spoke Arabic and English
and was one of three multilingual students in this classroom historically taught as an
English-only setting. As Pennycook and Otsuji (2014) have argued, the data focused
on Ahmed’s languages and literacies are not the focus of our analysis of translingual-
ism, but they do provide relevant research history needed to understand how an assem-
blage of people and things in one moment involves a range of linguistic, cultural,
artifactual, pedagogical, and affectual resources.

Now entering the data that animate Ahmed-his-languages-the-Board-desires-for-a-
better-world, I theorize these data encounter as a translingual product/process of the
spatial repertoires available in the immediate writing space around the boards. Leading
up to this moment, Ahmed had just shared his activist art focused on bullying aware-
ess with professors, students, and other university community members in The
Bridge gallery setting. Ahmed sat before one of the large oversized boards in the col-
lege library, away from the larger group. Soon, an audience of university members
gathered around him. Immersed in the day’s activities focused on producing and shar-
ing art to make a better world, attached to the invitation to contribute a message for the
future of the university in a time of sociopolitical unrest, entangled with feelings of
hope and happiness for a better world, an intra-action of Ahmed’s hands—the thick green chalk marker, with/through the oversized, heavy, and colorful material text before him produced a record of a short poem. It read as follows:

I wish for the future of Mizzou, happiness for you. And if you ever want to go up, you must never give up.

Japanese script printed in green chalk marker had been previously published by another contributor in the top right corner of the board. Ahmed looked up, saw the characters, and then added “سعادة” in Arabic script to the board. Upon completing the script, a White, English-dominant audience member exclaimed, “How wonderful!” and asked Ahmed what the scripts say. Absent was a written translation for non-Arabic speakers, leaving multilingual listeners (Flores & Rosa, 2015) the task of seeking its meaning. Ahmed explained its meaning of “happiness” and later noted it was good for others to learn new languages.

Entangled with this new linguistic-semiotic contact zone—the Japanese text, the English print, tools to write, optimistic messages for a stronger university—Arabic script emerged. This is a spatial repertoire at work. Of importance are not just the linguistic resources but also the ecological and affectual conditions of possibility (Barad, 2007) that produce translingual texts/processes. A focus on the assemblage of linguistic and nonlinguistic interactants shifts our analytic gaze to the multilingual production of English-Japanese-Arabic, hopes of happiness for the university, the markers, the board, the open space to compose, and an audience of multilingual listeners positioned to receive writing in languages other than English. And still, this translingual production is a part of broader political activity and set of interactions around the affectual intensities of anti-racism activism on campus at that time. Clearly, Ahmed and his linguistic histories in this spatial repertoire matter, but it is the dynamic intra-actions with and through diverse languages-materials-affects-activities-space that emerge as most salient in this analytic encounter as together they produce a new translingual textual landscape.

Ethical Encounters

A diffractive analysis illuminates how translingual writing processes/productions do not belong solely to the human or to the tools themselves. The new translingual text did not originate in Ahmed but came to be in an emerging translingual space where Ahmed shaped and was shaped by the linguistic-material-affectual intensities producing him/languaging/writing. A posthumanist orientation to this translingual moment animates how bifurcations between languages (i.e., English-only/multilingual; bilingual/multilingual; standardized English/Englishes) are disrupted when affects-bodies-space-civic-oriented-ethos shape the composing event, suggesting possibilities for all writing classrooms, even those that can “appear” English-dominant.

This data–theory encounter also animates how treating multilingual writing as a tightly knit system free of other semiotic-object resources distorts conceptualizations
of language and writing and their resulting texts and processes. The translingual text and process was a product of the spatial repertoire enlivened in that moment. Posthuman theories open the potential for multilingual writing pedagogies to focus on more than the linguistic capacity of writers and their audiences and challenges practices of linguistic purism that treat languages as discrete resources that can be separated, held still, ranked, and replicated. Instead, this data–theory encounter reveals multilingual writing as an emerging production of ‘languaging and . . .’ It demands an ontological shift toward writing in relation to languages and the material and affectual and rhetorical and audience and . . .

Diffractively reading the data–theory encounter in this way illuminates how the spatial repertoire in writing classrooms matters, raises questions of how classrooms can invigorate conditions of possibilities for translingual writing, and calls for deliberate shifts in the linguistic-material landscape of writing classrooms. For writing assessment, this analysis challenges us to reconceptualize writing not as command of standardized written English, an approach that has historically delegated bi/multilingual writers as nonwriters, but as translingual-semiotic-material dexterity, with a close eye on how the writer enters into the rhetorical-contextual-material-affectual languaging demanded of a writing experience (Guerra, 2016; Horner, Lu, Royster, & Trimbur, 2011; Leonard, 2014).

The ethical work of a material turn in multilingual writing is not only entangled with a sense of justice to unfreeze the deficit monoliths of bi/multilingual writers. The ethical work of a material-turn and spatial orientation in multilingual writing also engages a ‘new way of thinking about life and politics in the multilingual writing classroom, a ‘dream not of a common language but of a powerful infidel heteroglossia’ that can take us towards other ways of thinking about humans, culture, nature, and politics’ (Pennycook, 2016, p. 458). Reimagining multilingual writing as translingual through posthumanist thought resists constructs of linguistic purism and reification of dominant norms, and enlivens instead new ways of thinking about writing/languaging/bodies/space/activity as a translingual assemblage, an emergent and vibrant agentive force.

Newness Produces New Realities: Ethical Insights From Posthumanist Data Encounters

Thinking with posthumanist scholarship and data animating writing is ethical work by focusing on how the entanglements of human bodies, nonhuman bodies, and more-than-human bodies shape and are shaped ecologically, socially, politically, and affectually and analyzing “the power relations at work between them” (Braidotti, 2018, p. 12). Rather than understanding writing solely as outcomes and bound products, writing might be better understood as practices and processes of potentialities or the not yet known, as our three examples illustrate. Although the teaching and researching of writing as a process is not new (i.e., Flower & Hayes, 1981), a posthuman conceptualization does help us begin to map how writing is produced and lived out in different
ways through different material conditions (i.e., relational ontology) that are inextricably linked to the connectivity of space, languages, objects, discourses, affect, and people, none of which can be extracted from the other. Just as critical theories have worked toward an unfreezing of deficit monoliths that often subtract (Valenzuela, 1999), delegate (Delpit, 2006), and colonize and terrorize (Anzaldúa, 1987), posthuman theories work toward a more just world by exploring what phenomena—such as deficit monoliths—produce and the very real consequences they have on the worlds they create, such as the worlds of young writers.

As we rethink the potentialities of writing, boundaries between what some define and do not define as writing blur, leaving some literacy educators uncertain as to how to conceptualize writing. For example, when Candace has shared video data of second graders making Robin Hood hats, airplanes, or an orange paper frog puppet during Writers’ Studio, some have responded by stating, “That isn’t writing” or “That isn’t literacy.” Jaye Johnson Thiel has similarly been told that the writing produced from the afterschool Playhouse does not count as it is not in schools. And while encouraging translanguaging literacies in writing classrooms, others have responded to Angie with comments such as, “Teachers won’t get that; they can barely handle having other languages in their classroom. Teachers are too concerned with teaching standardized written English.”

Demarcations such as these reinforce fixed outcomes for writing (i.e., either something is or is not meeting historically sedimented norms and discourses) and reify colonized and normalized ways of thinking about writing as a standardized product. We do not aim to suggest that the human does not matter, nor that there is not a place for shared understandings of writing. Rather, we turn to posthumanism for its emphasis on the doing/being/living of writing in a variety of different ways—all of which make some things possible and other things not possible—and perhaps most important for researchers, slowing down to analyze those possibilities and their multiple and varied potential outcomes. This is a stark contrast to an emphasis on writing as a mass-produced and stagnant final product to hold still, assess, remediate, commodify, and reinforce colonized ways of thinking that often only serve to fortify assemblages of power and to advance capitalism. As Braidotti (2018) notes,

> Because power...is a multi-layered and dynamic entity and because as embedded and embodied, relational and affective subjects, we are immanent to the very conditions we are trying to change, we need to make careful ethical distinctions between different speeds of both knowledge production—with the predictable margins of institutional capitalization—and the construction of alternative knowing subject formations. (p. 12)

We consider this to be an ontological and epistemological shift, rooted in ethics and co-constitutive relationships between human, nonhuman, and more-than-human subjects, that can deliberately work to remake writing pedagogy, assessment, and research.

Posthumanist scholarship speaks to more expansive possibilities for writing spaces like classrooms and afterschool settings, and to shared data encounters to help teachers, teacher educators, and researchers reconsider the response-ability (Barad, 2007; Haraway, 2016) of the decisions we make in writing pedagogy, assessment, research,
and policy. Posthumanist scholarship slows us down at the thresholds and asks that we consider how writing is being thought of and the power relationships these conceptualization create. The reimagining of writing as intra-active, trans-corporeal, porous, lively translingsual assemblages invites us (teachers, teacher educators, researchers) all to revisit how we conceptualize writers/writing/processes/bodies/products/languages, not solely as a future-oriented outcomes, with emphasis on the command of conventions, genres, and audience, but as material-discursive becomings shaped by the contextual demands of space, time, and all bodies. We are encouraged by literacy and language scholars who are thinking-with-posthumanist-concepts and diffractively reading them with writings on race (Franklin-Phipps & Rath, 2019), social class (Thiel, 2015, 2016, 2018; Thiel & Jones, 2017), language diversity (Pennycook, 2017), and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) communities (Wargo, 2019).

We are inspired by Braidotti (2018), who writes, “The driving force for knowledge production is therefore not the quest for knowledge for disciplinary purity, or the inspirational force of radical dissent, but rather the modes of relations these discourses are able and willing to open up” (p. 14). Closing off discourses of possibilities for writing in the name of standardization, normalization, commodification, tradition, or otherwise is to overlook the dynamics of objects; places; ecological, political, affectual, and linguistic resources; and. . .and. . .and. . . We find much hopefulness in posthumanism and are energized by the ethical orientation at the heart of this work.

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