

Shirley Logan Interview Transcript

October 29, 2009

Matt: Well, first, Professor Logan, we would like to thank you for coming to chat with us. We usually start with the first question on our list, which is “How did you get into Rhetoric and Composition? How did you get to do what you do?”

Logan: That’s a good question, because, obviously, when I was coming through graduate school, there was no Rhet/Comp program (all laugh). I actually got my Master’s from (the University of North Carolina at) Chapel Hill and I wrote a thesis on Richard Wright’s short stories. And then I began to get interested in—well, I’ve always been interested in studying about how people develop abilities because of, I guess, my interest in teaching. And so, I continued to teach primarily high school English and ended up teaching at Howard University, went to Washington D.C. and started teaching at Howard University. And, then later, this stamp came out—Ida Wells’ stamp—which is now a part of a series, “Black Heritage.” I became very interested in Ida Wells. I’d never heard of Ida Wells, and I thought, “Who is this Ida Wells?” So, I began to do some research into Ida Wells. And, by studying Ida Wells—my first papers in rhet/comp were on her anti-lynching speeches—and it was then that I realized that there was a way for me to merge my interest in studying African American people and studying literacy practices: by looking at text by 19th century—well, I didn’t decide to do 19th century but that turned out because Ida Wells was 19th century and I just kind of stayed in the 19th century. And even with my, even with my doctorate, I did not—the degree was in education; it was in curriculum and instruction, not in rhetoric & composition because still in Maryland, you could not get a degree in rhetoric & composition. However, there were colleagues there who were looking at this field and who were pointing those of us who were interested in the direction of things like Four Cs (the convention), the Penn State conference in Rhetoric, and began bringing in texts like Perelman’s *The New Rhetoric* and other texts that will form the way you understood how people used language effectively to make change. And so, that was kind of how I got into it: I kind of backed into it that way, and began to take courses, graduate courses, in the history of rhetoric, composition theory, but some of them even post graduate courses because this was, again kind of learning as you go, rather than now you have structured programs. So, I guess the short answer is Ida Wells (all laugh) for that one because I was curious about how could this woman be such a dominant figure in the 19th century, speaking out against lynching, talking about the liaisons between black men and white women in the 19th century, and I hadn’t even heard of her. So, I was—that kind of motivated me to find out what it was about her use of language that helped her to become a prominent figure.

Tony: What scholars in the field, that, you know, as you got into rhet/comp, what scholars would you say, in the field, in general, influenced your thinking the most?

Logan: Who were contemporaneous scholars?

Tony: Yeah, what, say, 20th century scholars either in Rhet. or in Comp. I know you mentioned Perelman already-

Logan: Oh, those theorists...yeah—

Tony: Theorists, as well as maybe in the conferences as well as maybe anybody—

Logan: Colleagues?

Tony: Yeah—

Logan: Well actually Jeanne Fahnestock, and I know you know that name, Jeanne Fahnestock is a colleague of mine at the University of Maryland who does work on the rhetoric of science. Perhaps you've seen her book, *Rhetorical Figures and Science*. She does a lot of work at the intersection of rhetoric and science because her belief is that rhetoric masks itself in those fields like science where you think "Oh, this is science, this is fact." So, she does a lot of work looking at things like the Bering Strait debates or the Watson and Crick on DNA and looking at the rhetoric and how they are using, arguing their positions in the same way that we would think of rhetoric as being in the domain of people in literature or in, in, for political issues. She says even in the sciences, so it's a very interesting way to think about the pervasiveness of rhetoric. She looks at the—she actually uses that book as an opportunity to talk about, to introduce the different figures of speech...what you used to study in high school English, but instead of using poems, she uses these scientific treatises, and says, "Look! These figures are everywhere." You know, so *Rhetorical Figures in Science*, a very interesting book. If you get a chance to pick up a copy—Oxford (University Press). So, I mentioned Jeanne, she was very influential on me. She came to Maryland a year after I started teaching there from Penn State. She actually had the privilege of meeting Perelman...a couple of years earlier; he had been at Penn State. So, she kind of brought that whole—she kind of introduced much, many of the Maryland comp people to rhetoric in a way that we had not had it introduced to us before. And, I took courses with her, so it was kind of a strange—I was not really her colleague at the time. I was an instructor, so there wasn't necessarily a conflict of two professors taking a course—I was an instructor; she was a professor. So, Jeanne Fahnestock had a lot to do with my interest in rhetoric and kind of pointed me and helped me to see ways that I could study African Americans' use of rhetoric, use of language. She helped to see that it was a form of rhetoric and how to apply it. I also, then, was able to put together people like Patricia Hill Collins' work on black feminism; that was very influential. Hazel Carby's book, *Reconstructing Womanhood*, which is about the women of that turn of the century period. I'm trying to think—Mary Helen Washington's collection *Inventive Lies* because Mary Helen Washington, who's also my colleague at Maryland, did a lot of that recovery work of recovering these texts by black women—she didn't do that much in terms of analysis, but she did that very important foundational work of recovering the text so that the rest of us could do stuff with it. But, somebody had to say, "Look, here it is." So, she calls herself an anthologist because her job was to make them available. She was generous and gave me a copy of a speech by Victoria Matthews, one of the women that I study in my work. She was influential simply

because she helped to make these texts available so that you could study. You would know that they were there, that their work was done. . . In composition, I'm trying to think, Mike Rose, I think. Certainly, Mike Rose just because his attitude about privileging the language that the student brings to the classroom and it's not so much about trying to convert them, but I like his idea of a kind of—I don't like the word *blending*; I know Geneva Smitherman says that you shouldn't think of it as meshing because it's really like, you know, "Why do we have to mesh?" But his approach to it is, I think, has been and continues to be influential. And of course Geneva's work--her early work--when she had the audacity to pay attention to the languages--the home languages--of students. Which I think is just so very important when we see ourselves as kind of gatekeepers with our language that we have to—the students have to leave what they bring outside the academy and learn this new academic language. And to question that, I think is very important. So her work was influential and Mike Rose's work for that reason. But I could go on (laughter). But, I'm having to draw from my influences in rhetoric and my influences in comp and then outside of that just to make the text available.

Tony: To expand that question a little bit, you mentioned Ida Wells earlier. Who were the people in the 19th Century? I imagine that sort of got you on a sort of snowball path, picking up personalities as you went, so to say. Who were those folks that sort of spun out from that relationship?

Logan: That I studied? From the 19th Century? Well, you can really start with Ida Wells and she'll take you to all the others. Because, she interacted with Frederick Douglass, and in fact she told Frederick Douglass that - you know, they were waiting - apparently they were on the same program and they were waiting backstage and Frederick Douglass was kind of nervous and he looked at her and said - you know, and I don't know whether he called her Ida or Mrs. . . . Miss Wells - but he said, "How come you're so calm about—you're about to go out and give a talk, aren't you nervous?" And she said something, I'm not going to be able to pull up the quote, now, but she said it's something about, "Well, I speak from the heart and what I have to say just comes whereas yours is more practiced and studied." But anyway, Frederick Douglass--Of course you can't *not* study Frederick Douglass, even if you say you're not going to study him--you're going to study him if you're studying 19th C. African American Rhetoric or even American Rhetoric. I think we need to start thinking of him—certainly anybody who studies 19th Century discourse should have read Douglass' narrative if nothing else. And so, then if you take Ida Wells, and you take her to that 1895 convention in Boston where women organized to defend her because she had been in England speaking against lynching - in England and people were saying, "why are you going over to England disparaging America by talking about what's going on with lynching?" You know the Nadir, that period at the turn of the century and so many of the newspaper publishers were writing horrible things about her and alluding to her being a loose Black woman. You know, the whole idea of the jezebel images. So Black women in American said, "This is wrong. We've got to organize and defend our sister." So they organized this conference in 1895. And at that conference you had Victoria Matthews and Francis Hargreaves. So all of the women in my anthology are the women who were at that convention so kind of the answer to that question about how I become interested in other women in the century, stemmed from them organizing this

conference to defend Ida Wells. That's why we had a conference. Black women in the academy at MIT in nineteen ninety-something, I guess you all--well, don't know whether you were born.

Tony: We were around. We were around. No worries (laughter)

Logan: It was a parallel for that and there were many people who drew analogies between that experience of women—black women organizing to defend another black woman Anita Hill and then again Selk, yeah. So it kind of started with Ida Wells and spun out from there and now Ana Cooper has a stand. She was there—so all those women were at that convention.

Tony: Another question I wanted to ask you. If you could go back to when you were a graduate student, or if you could write a letter to yourself as a graduate student now, what are some of the things as far as your career—as far as a career in rhetoric and composition, what is some advice you might give yourself now if you could actually do that—write a letter to your former self as a graduate student?

Logan: Wow, let's see. (laughter)

Tony: Maybe just one or two points.

Logan: Is that what are those things I wish I had known?

Tony: Yeah, basically.

Logan: Well, there are so many paths, you know. There's so much. I don't know that I'd—I don't know that I necessarily would change very much. I went about it a little bit differently than I can tell that most of you did. In that I didn't even start. I didn't even go back to graduate school—well, I got my Master's straight through from college. But then there was this long gap where I had the audacity to get married and have three children and then decided to go back to graduate school and there are times when I will think, wow, if I was just a little younger I could have done more. But I--

Tony: Well, I actually have four children.

Logan: Oh, four?

Tony: But I didn't do the. . . Well, I had three until . . . now I have a two-month-old baby.

Logan: Yeah? Wow.

Tony: But I'm—anyway, keep going.

Matt: He feels your pain.

Logan: But it wasn't painful. Because I wasn't in school at all whereas you're doing . . . you know, when I went back to graduate school, my youngest child was seventeen. So you know, I was feeling like, oh, I'm so old, and here I am going back to school. I never really went back to school full time. I was teaching at Maryland. We have an upper level writing requirement at Maryland in addition to 101. I don't know if you all have that or not. But, I was teaching and because I was teaching I got remission of tuition and I just sort of took courses at night or I'd wait, pick up a kid from something and between soccer practice and all I was grading papers and doing my own work. So it wasn't a very—it was very messy. It was a very messy kind of thing. And they also fortunately, Maryland took all of my courses from (UNC) Chapel Hill, so I didn't have to start at zero so that helped. And I had taken a few courses at Howard with some of the scholars over there, Arthur P. Davis. Some of those renowned scholars in African American Lit like Sterling Brown, I don't know if you know any of these names. So I had some of that and I would just say to my former self that, be sure that you're working on—I guess it would be easier for me to think about what I'd say to you.

Tony: That'll work, too!

Kendra: Please do.

Logan: The times are so different now. That to the Shirley Logan who was in graduate school when there wasn't even a degree in that, I just did the best I could. So I'd guess I'd say to myself, good job, Shirley! Good for you! (laughter)

Logan: But I think the key word for me is something bell hooks uses in *Teaching to Transgress* when she talks about passion. And about having a passion for your work. And you got to have that to sustain you, I think. Otherwise sometimes it's kind of difficult to keep going. And I knew I wanted to study black women and I wanted to find out—again, going back to Ida Wells and why I didn't know anything about her. Here I am at that time I think in my thirties, and I'm still having to do all this catch up and I wanted to make sure that future generations would have some record that she existed and of course other people had been writing a little bit about her. Of course, Jackie had written things on her—Jackie Royster. So it was about having something. Figure out what it is about your graduate work that's going to sustain you for the long haul because it's going to be a long haul. And you've got to really care about it in a way that's going to make it keep you going. People say well why do you study black women? Why don't you study something else so that you won't be put into a box? But that's what I wanted to know about and I'm thinking, well everybody is studying some ethnicity, right? You're studying someone—they're not neutral. You know; they are probably white—or whatever they are—so why do I have to apologize for wanting to study the people I feel like I know the most about. So that would be the one piece of advice I would give you: that it has to be something that you think is important enough that you're not just doing it. Well you're certainly not going to get rich. (laughter) There's not a better feeling I know and I am assuming you all want at some point to teach, right? There's not a better feeling than walking out of a class when you've had a really good class; that's the high. I mean, the other day I was telling some people at lunch I didn't have such a good one the other day. (laughter) I have a little

conflict going on in one of my graduate courses. But most of the time you think, 'Ok this is what it's about.' You're not going to let yourself perform poorly. That's when I learned grammar, for example, when I knew I had to go stand in front of some students and talk about it. So there is that pride you have in what you do that's going to sustain you. The other thing that is tricky, especially if you are on a tenure track (you know this is on down the line). Once you get a tenure track position, if that's what you want, but you have to figure out how to pick and chose how you're going to spend your time. You have to kind of stay focused on, you know it sounds crass, but you have to stay focused on getting in a position of job security. So getting tenure, I guess if that's what you want. I keep saying "if that's what you want" because I'm not sure it's necessarily what everybody in this room will want to do. But if that is what you want to do, you have to be in a position where you can speak without fear of retribution. Because now I can say anything I want. I don't have to be nice to anybody; I don't have to talk to anybody in the elevator. And it's actually a pretty good feeling. Not that that's a good thing. (laughing) Not because I am rude to anyone, but you know, it's helpful to be in a position—this is when you can really make a contribution, when you don't have those concerns. But you have to work to get there first. So it may even seem like a sell out, when you feel yourself jumping through all the hoops, and you know, think you don't really truly believe in but you're trying to get to the table...

Becca: Volunteering for everything.

Logan: Well you know, that you have to be careful about. You have to be careful about that. Because you've got to figure out what is really going to count for tenure. Because all that, they call that service, and all those go in one column. And it turns out, I found out, it doesn't mean a whole heck of a lot. (laughter) It doesn't really. Especially if you're representing some marginalized group. Then, of course, you're going to have to be the token. So you've got to figure out how much of that you're going to do also. But the trick is to figure how to get to the table so then you can do all the things you want to do. And I had to tell my daughter that, who's also an assistant professor at University of Minnesota. Because she's now going "Oh Mom, they want me to come and give a talk at the blank." I said, "Enid, you know that's fine, but what until you get tenure and then you can go and do all the neighborhood community stuff. Right now you've got to get in a secure position so that you can do what you want to do." It's an interesting kind of balance. Because you don't want to seem like a sellout, you know, or you're not working in the community and all that and doing all that. But wow, if you really want to work in the community, get in a position where you can do it and have some clout.

Natalie: So we talked a little about, or you mentioned at lunch, that you were interested in pushing the work you are doing in the 19th century forward, right, or connecting it to current moment. So how do you envision doing that?

Logan: Pushing it forward....you know I'm not sure. I'm trying to come to terms with that. Because I do know people, particularly with respect to community work and giving back and all that, it has to have some contemporary relevance. You know, they say, "Well what do you do?" Then I start telling them about Fredrick Douglas and they kind of glaze

over. (laughter) They are trying to figure out what to do about some literacy issues in their community right now. So I do a little bit of that in my last book, where I try, I sort of make a disclaimer, I'm not trying to jump over 200 years and say 'Ok, so now I have studied 19th century literacy practices and here is what we should be doing today—because it's not the same, it's a different world. So I was trying to figure out what is the essence though? Is there something there that we can take out of this that might be useful? I mentioned that there is this article in the *Washington Post* about these two young men in Baltimore that belong to a debating society right now, and there is a feature story on them--Jamal and Iggy. There is this wonderful quote by Iggy...I'm going to give my talk away. (laughter) He talks about how he is enjoying—of course they come from a very depressed area of Baltimore and they have very little support from their families—for any number of reasons. Yet, they are in the debate team and there's this wonderful quote; he really enjoys debating. He says, "You can get people to do things...with words, rather than with fighting or so on. You can use a language to get people to do things." Well duh—that's rhetoric as means of social change and that still applies. And here this is, what, 2007 that he is realizing this. That to me is the essence; that's the carry-over, the take away. The other thing that I think is a take away in terms of trying to bring it up present time is the idea of having an exigence. You know rhetoric always responds to an exigence, right? Lloyd Bitzer and the rhetorical situation. So their exigence was that, I think, a teacher that they were very fond of had been fired, and they were complaining to the school board about it. This was the exigence. So they went down and appealed and tried to represent him in a different way. And on the 19th century we had the exigence of slavery, we have our African Americans--we have the exigence of Jim Crow and Reconstruction. But there is always some exigence that can get people to feel motivated to want to learn how to communicate more effectively. That's about all I can think about in terms of how we can bring what I do forward.

Becca: Do you enjoy going to conferences?

Logan: (laughter) Where did that come from?

Becca: I'm thinking about Kristie, one of our professors, and a student went to the Feminisms & Rhetoric conference in Michigan just recently. And I just wondered, like at CCCC, are there some really exciting things that maybe we don't know about, that maybe you would plug for us to attend, as far as, well like I'm interested in 19th century women rhetoric as well, and I just thought, you know.

Logan: I was going to say, have you gone to RSA?

Becca: No, I haven't. Is that a good one?

Logan: That would be a good one if you're leaning more towards the rhetoric side. Of course, there is always that rhet/comp tension. I think the RSA is a good one. It's in Minneapolis in the spring, in May.

Becca: Communities in each conference are very peculiar to themselves, correct? Do you find people who are interested in this 19th century rhetoric more broadly, other than at certain specific conferences? Like finding interest in feminist rhetoric at conferences that are not labeled “feminist”? You know, you said people sometimes look blankly when you say “I’m studying Fredrick Douglass?”

Logan: (laughter) People are interested in it in the academy, yes. You know at Four C’s we have those Wednesday night special interest groups. For me, I’m kind of conferenced out—but for you it’s the most important thing you can do when you’re on a tenure track. You know how this works; you know the politics of this. This is how you get people to do things. It’s a complicated process. People tend to write letters for you- and why do they do that? It’s because they know you. You have to get people to write letters for you when you go up for tenure and such. People at your own institution can’t write those letters. That’s why you need to get to *know* people. Kathi Yancey couldn’t write that letter for any of you.

Becca: So in other words you solicit them, but you don’t know who writes the letters?

Logan: Right. You don’t know who writes the letters for you. For me, I had to put in six names of people I thought might write letters for me, and my committee had a list of six names as well. It varies for each school. The rule at my school is that they can’t take all of the names off of one list. So I might take Andrea Lunsford, probably one of the biggest names in composition, Jackie Royster, et cetera, and my committee might say we’ll put Keith Gilyard on the list, and so on. Six letters, and you never know who wrote them unless they decide to tell you. They don’t have to do this, it’s strictly voluntary and they don’t get paid for it, maybe a hundred dollars or something like that. But my point about the conferences is that they are your way to rub elbows with people in the field. You get to know these people and that’s when they will write letters for you. People say: Oh, I don’t mind writing a letter for him. I know him—I heard him give a paper.

Kendra: I want to go back to what you said about bridging between the 19th century and the current day and it just makes me think of the possibility of something being lost in translation. What is the disconnect? So I want to revisit the idea of translation, and the fact that something might be lost; how can we find the similarities in these worlds and how can we bridge it? You know, like understanding the need to rally for something? Understanding that something of exigence might be lost in translation. Do you think it has to lose meaning in the translation? Or to be lost in...

Jessica: the uptake? (laughter).

Logan: The uptake, meaning...

Becca: The “I get it”

Natalie: Yes, the effect on the audience.

Kendra: We've been reading about this, so we are using those terms. Like with exigence from the 19th century, I know something is lost for today. How can we make it relevant? You know like when there is a need to rally about something, but society has changed and ideas have changed and how do you think we can bridge that? For instance, I'm comparing it to a text that might have been written with the same power the same emphasis in Spanish, and when it's translated you lose something. So with the 19th century is there that same kind of loss from meaning then to meaning today? It's still some of the same material, but between the 19th century and today is a different world.

Logan: Bridge it... You have to abstract from it I think, what it is that's driving the person, what motivates the person to speak in one time, and then what's driving it today. Draw parallels from what was driving personal motives in that day. Ida Wells was concerned with lynching, and we don't have that same issue today. But what about violence toward black men today? You can think about parallel situations. And what about women? I'm thinking about the dissertation defense I had yesterday, and we were trying to think about why there are still so many issues today around women and the oppression of women. You can study Susan B. Anthony, study Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Maybe one way to bridge the gap is to de-emphasize the gap. Some interesting parallels between the campaign of Obama and Hillary, Frederick Douglas and Susan B. Anthony. So, maybe the point is also one way to bridge the gap is to de-emphasize the gap, and to talk about it more as a continuum. Although maybe we have resolved some issues, there are new issues that have emerged and the rhetorical principles that worked could still apply.

Kendra: What about in the classroom? Would it help to de-emphasize those types of, you know...

Logan: Yes that's exactly right, I'm glad that you used that term. They tend to tune out, and think "Oh that was way back then"...

Kendra: That's what I mean.

Logan: So maybe to the extent that you can set up parallel situations... I mean there was a lynching down in Texas--when was that? Where they tied up this guy--what was that, in the 90s? Wow, what a teaching moment there. So you think this is passé and to help them see that there may be new exigencies, but there are still the principles of how you accommodate materials to audiences and adapt your message to the situation--those things are going to hold. We're still studying Aristotle 2,500 years later--there must still be some relevance. That's a good point, to deemphasize the gap and not to stress so much that times are different. You answered the question, thank you.

Natalie: Nicely done.

Jessica: What's next for you?

Logan: Just in my work? Hmm...yes, well I don't know. I've got a sabbatical next semester so I guess I'd better get something going. There's a lot I did in the first chapter of my last book that was an overview of the literacies, what I called free floating literacies . The literacies of ordinary people. Particularly in the 19th century, and then beyond. I would like to perhaps go through the archives; the National Archives fortunately has a branch in College Park right across the street from me, actually. Where I can study some of the letters that some of the widows wrote to the federal government trying to get a pension, or to prove that their husbands were Civil War veterans and to argue for money for their families--to look at things like that. I found a letter from a woman much later in the century who wrote President Wilson, I think in the early 20th century, her name was Ester Haden, the letter was written in her own hand of course, giving him some kind of a lecture on something he needed to do. So the short answer is just a little bit more about ordinary people and the texts that they produced... I'm looking, you know, well of course people like Ida Wells and Frederic Douglass and Anna Cooper. They wrote books, everybody's heard of them. Although nobody had heard of them—I find myself now having to apologize for: “Well, why, why don't you study ordinary people? Everybody's heard of Anna Cooper and Ida Wells.” And I say, “Well, that's because we did that early work!” (laughter) which is so interesting now, I have to apologize for studying the famous black women; I'm so glad they're famous, you know. So that, that would be what I'd really like to do, to look at more of that kind of work. I found out that during the civil war black soldiers were in the trenches learning to read, you know, and that they had organized literary clubs while they were in the military. That's fascinating stuff, but I can't get much evidence of it. You have to go through maybe old newspapers. But, yeah, I'd just really would like to look more at what ordinary people—how they--what, what the discourses that they were producing that affected their lives. Because as quiet as it's kept, those famous people probably—maybe even many of them had never even heard of them and they may have had very little impact on their lives.

Jessica: I know what you're saying because I didn't hear of Ida Wells until I was in college.

Logan: Who's that?

Jessica: Ida Wells [indecipherable]

Logan: Well, right, so, so, but still now they're looked upon as done, you know, so, yeah.

Kendra: But you brought up the example of Aristotle: he's not “done.” (laughter). We still look at Aristotle.

Natalie: It's because—ordinary practices. I mean we all did that National Day of Writing. We celebrated here and with Dr. Yancey.

Logan: Right, right.

Natalie: Right? It connects it in an interesting way, right? That you're looking at the 19th century, those ordinary, everyday practices; and then the Gallery was attempting—I mean—

Logan: Just think about that. It's a wonderful resource, I'm sure they're gonna archive those submissions. Yeah, yeah. A repository for... and to study what people have—just what people in local commun—I never thought about that as a resource. I wonder, I guess Kathi would know how—where that's going to be archived once the celebration...I mean, are they still accepting even though—

Natalie: Yeah, they accept for another month or two—

Matt: Until June. Open for submissions until June. And the NCTE email this morning said there were 19,400; so they're going on 20,000.

Logan: Well there's your work. There's your...ordinary people, ordinary people. Wow!

Natalie: And we don't even have to do the research. (laughter and various reactions) And here it is, and...

Logan: Exactly, exactly. There were no limits, right, on what they could submit?

Natalie: And they allowed, like, a lot of different kinds of media; and you didn't have to have any like university or educational affiliation or anything, so... (laughter)

Kendra: It's going to be interesting to see, you know, how many apply that to their writing, though, like or did they actually do the extra revisions, you know, to the letter? The grocery list? You know, that they, you know, because it was going to be seen publicly.

Logan: Oh, that they may have been, yeah...

Kendra: Yeah, so I just...when I started to think of the gallery, I thought about that. I was like, "Well, how could..." Because I did it on FAMU's campus and it's kind of hard to convince people that, you know, they could submit everyday writing.

Logan: Oh, they thought it had to be something polished?

Kendra: They would definitely not do it until they attempted writing something, you know. You know, it was very interesting. So I'll be interested to see how that actually pans out.

Logan: But it's kind of a—outside of—it's a non-academic exercise, because it wasn't an assignment, was it?

Kendra: No, no. But they took it as an assignment because it was affiliated with the, you know, the organization.

Logan: Wow. Yeah, so that's what I really would like to do with my [time]. And of course I do also have a grandbaby. (laughter). One. Just one. (comments and congratulations) So, I'm kind of looking for a rocking chair—let you guys do this work. (laughter) There you go.

Jessica: And how old is your grandchild?

Logan: Two.

Kendra: Well, I know one of the questions is, “What’s on your nightstand?” I think you’ve kind of given us like an exhaustive library, but also, ‘what should be on our nightstands?’ is my question. What do you think we should, you know, as upcoming--

Matt: With all our free time, what should we be reading? (laughs)

Kendra: I mean you've done a lot of work for us, prepared the way, but what should we, you know, take on? Some of the classics; some of the few that you think we should read.

Logan: Well, sounds like you're reading all the, all the things you should be reading. I'm thinking, I'm pushing, thinking more, trying to think more globally; I'm kind of pushing out that way. We've just had Paul Matsuda, who does second language, you know, I think he's chair of the second language coalition. We had him the last...a couple of weeks ago. And we've been reading articles by Canagarajah—Suresh Canagarajah--Penn State--world Englishes. Just trying to think about--think a little bit more globally. So, and I'm reading...but I, particularly enjoyed, is the first year book, Maryland's first year book. Do you have a first year book? A book that you send to all incoming freshman?

Matt: Mm-hmm. Yes.

Logan: What is your book this year?

Matt: I'm not sure this year. Last year it was Ishiguro's *Never Let me Go*.

Logan: Okay, well this, ours this year is *What is the What?*

Matt: Oh, that's a very good book, mm-hmm. Dave Eggers' book.

Logan: What's his name? The other--not --the Sudanese... [Logan and Matt try to remember the central figure's name, which is Valentino Achak Deng]

Logan: I just want think outside of—of--yeah, outside of America, outside the United States. Just to think about how we construct the world. So I would recommend your thinking about, you know, reading, trying to read, texts that bring a different perspective,

or maybe even if the person is located in the US and bringing a different perspective...broaden...I just worry sometimes that we're a little too colloquial when I think about issues.

Natalie: Do you bring that into the classroom?

Logan: Yeah.

Natalie: What classes do you teach?

Logan: Well, I'm teaching Approaches to College Composition, which is the course that we require all our TA's to take before they teach 101. So it's not quite like the practicum I think you were talking about; it's more than that because they read a lot of comp theory. We start with Aristotle. We read rhetorical theory. Erasmus. We do, you know, we used to use Victor Villanueva's book. And then we read all the comp theories [that are] contemporary. And we also try to talk about "Okay, what are you going to do next?" Well, they're not currently teaching. They have to take this before they begin their teaching. So, what was your question? About what am I currently teaching?

Natalie: Oh, yeah, just what do you teach right now?

Logan: Oh, yeah. With having Paul Matsuda there to talk about second language writing and we read, in preparation for Matsuda also, we read some of his pieces, *The Myth of Linguistic Homogeneity*, I think, an award winning essay he wrote for *College English* and we also read some of Suresh Canagaraja's pieces, which are to me just fascinating to think about and he's written, he has a piece in Three C's that, I think when Marilyn Cooper was editor, so it wasn't too long ago that talks about world...about globalism.

Matt: Last fall I think maybe even?

Logan: No, for some reason I'm thinking Marilyn Cooper was the editor there.

Tony: I read a piece of his where he talks about a class that he taught where most of the students were African American

Logan: Mmhmm, and he mentions Geneva [Smitherman] a lot in that essay. That's the piece in *College English*, uh huh, but he also has a good one in Three C's. So, yeah, so we read those and we talk about Washington, and I guess this might be true here as well, about categories of difference in the classroom. I've been trying to help the students think about what constitutes difference and the fact that we are all different-- everybody in here is different and that it's not kind of, you know there is Standard American English that we all know how to speak, and then there are all these other people coming in that we've got to clean up--the Unwashed. Well, nobody really speaks Standard American English and I love to ask, my favorite question in my class is 'how many of you speak a dialect of English?' I say, 'raise your hand if you speak a dialect of English.'

Kendra: I know that one.

Logan: Did I use that in one of my talks? Well I gotta get another line then. (laughter) You know, it's the idea again of pushing them to think about themselves as part of a global community of speakers of language--and you know, more people speak English outside of the US than in it, so you know, they always say 'Well, when are we going to get over there and teach them how to, you know, it doesn't matter--they don't even care what version of English we're speaking here, which is kinda what Canagaraja was talking about. So, that would be something I would, you know, be very important to... as we look ahead.

Natalie: In addition to that class, what else do you teach at the University [of Maryland]? What other classes do you teach?

Logan: Actually this semester I'm teaching an honor's seminar in the rhetoric of abolition. Women, Rhetoric, and Abolition. It's a fun course. Got eight students in there--don't tell anyone, I don't think they know I've got such a small class. But we're studying, we started with Mariah Stewart and we're studying Abby Kelly and Angelina Grimke, and Lydia Mariah Child and coming right on up the century and it's, and we're reading *Dread*, Harriet Beecher Stowe's other abolitionist novel--we're not reading *Uncle Tom's Cabin*--which turns out to be a fascin-- have you ever read *Dread*? It's fascinating.

Becca: Is this graduate or undergraduate level?

Logan: It's an undergraduate, actually most of them are first year students, but they are honors.

Becca: Really, but you have eight? That is so cool.

Logan: It's a little bit under-enrolled because it's the first time that it's been offered.

Becca: That's really cool.

Logan: Uh huh. But we're reading *Dread* and having a good time of it, too. The editor, it turns out, the editor of the Penguin Edition, Bob Levine, is a professor at Maryland, so I think I'm going to have him come in and talk one day. So that's the other thing that I'm teaching this semester.

Becca: Are they writing for you, in this class?

Logan: They have to write two rhetorical analyses of texts that we're not reading in class.

Becca: And just taking a particular lens and...

Logan: Well we're using Hawhee and Crowley's book *Ancient Rhetorics* for what it is, modern students or contemporary students [the title is *Ancient Rhetorics for*

Contemporary Students]. That gives them the rhetorical tools to apply to the texts, because they don't have any background in rhetoric or even the language to talk about these texts. So we give them ethos, pathos, logos, and kairos and now, and next week we're going to talk about the topics--the topoi--and have them come up with the topoi in, for example, Lydia Maria Child's appeal. And it's very easy to do that. She has everything there for us.

Becca: So, what they are not reading for you already, not the assigned readings, do they have a list or are you asking them to go find rhetors?

Logan: No, I'm kind of working with them. You know, because we are also doing different genres. And visual rhetoric, you know, using different passages from *Blind Memory*--Markus Woods' book on images of slavery. Poetry. Elizabeth Chandler's poetry. Francis Harpers poetry. We're looking at drama--well, are we looking at any drama? I don't think we're looking at any drama. Novels, of course *Dread*. Other treatises.

Becca: Speeches...what a great class.

Logan: But they are so young. I just want them to be a little bit--they are so...I feel like I just, you know I've got this class and I'm just indoctrinating them. Because most of them are just out of high school. They are in the honors college. So they are gonna be--they are good students. But they don't have any experience--I can't tell which is better to have. You know, you wanna have something that they can draw on, but half the time I say 'you know so-and-so,' and they are like "uhhhh," so then I have to go back and bring them up. But they learn and they are quick studies. But they don't have anything to draw from. And I'm complaining--I've got eight students and no right to complain. No but that's--sometimes I just want them to be a little bit more sophisticated about it

Becca: They will be after this.

Logan: (laughter) Yeah, I know right?

Natalie: Well, we only have time for one more question--we have to go soon. So, does anyone have something they want to ask?

Matt: I'll ask one. So, you've talked a little bit the whole time about similarity and difference and navigating the tension between them. And the anecdote you mentioned reminded me of your C's talk which was, kind of a call to come together collectively without forgetting difference-- if I'm understanding that right. And the question you asked was "Does anybody know we're here?" So, when you look back on your call and the discipline's movement since then, how do you think we've--I shouldn't say we, we're not quite there yet. But how do you think the discipline reacted to that call? Does that make sense?

Logan: I think it's an evolution, it's a process of...you mean the profession?

Matt: Right. Because you mentioned one way to come together collectively without negating difference would be to look to--to re-read the statements, the position statements from both C's and from NCTE for example. And some of those have changed in the meantime and new ones have emerged--21st Century Literacies and things like that.

Logan: Some things I think, you know, we're making--we're doing well with and others are going to just be always around because that's just the way it is. So, I think we're making progress. I don't know how much. And it may be progress, just because, you know, who am I to define what progress is? So, it may not be the kind of progress that... but the fact that in, when was that, 19-- not too very long ago we brought, we're--what's the word I want? We reaffirmed the Students Rights to Their Own Language and that was something like 2003, but that was how many years before that (chatter)--were you there? I'm thinking--but it was still contentious. But I remember Geneva Smitherman--I made the motion, and Geneva seconded it--of course, Geneva is not mild at all so, I guess that's why they asked me to make the motion and she seconded it and then somebody questioned it and she said 'Well I guess that's because you don't--' (laughter). So I'm thinking 'this is deja'-- so that makes me think-- we're going back to progress. You know, I wondered, 30 years later, how we can still be at that point where people are resisting even reaffirming it. You know, we weren't adding anything, we were just saying 'we still believe that students have a right to their own language'-- that it just makes you wonder. There are some things that are battles that are really hard fought. And language is one of them. Ownership of language.

Matt: Well, thank you for coming and chatting with us

Logan: How, how, I was so nervous.

Matt: Well, I hope it was as enjoyable for you as it was for us.

Logan: Well thank you, and you're quite welcome.