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Review of Bruce Horner, Brice Nordquist, and Susan M. Ryan's *Economies of Writing: Revaluations in Rhetoric and Composition*

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Horner, Bruce, Brice Nordquist, and Susan M. Ryan, eds. *Economies of Writing: Revaluations in Rhetoric and Composition*. Utah State UP, 2017. 312 pp.

In 2012, Bruce Horner guest edited a special issue of *JAC* [http://www.jaconlinejournal.com/archives/vol32.3.html] focused on "Economies of Writing." In his introduction, he explains that the included essays originated from an October 2011 symposium at the University of Louisville, held in preparation for the similarly-themed 2012 Thomas R. Watson Conference on Rhetoric and Composition [http://louisville.edu/conference/watson/files/2012-conference] (453). The symposium, *JAC* issue, and subsequent conference raised questions and generated discussion over, in part, the relationships between economies and writing, the values assigned to our work, and the possibilities for change within these systems. Now, Horner and co-editors Brice Nordquist and Susan M. Ryan have continued these important discussions with a new set of authors in their 2017 collection, *Economies of Writing: Revaluations in Rhetoric and Composition*. This collection highlights how economies—*the* economy, our econom*ies*, the economic, broadly—inform and permeate all that we do. In demonstrating this ubiquity, the editors posit that "the economy" is not "a predictable, all-powerful monolith" (3), nor is it "neutral, self-producing, or self-sustaining" (5); rather, the economic must be understood as political. Our economies inform and are informed by institutions, pedagogies, language, media, and public spheres. The economies we work within both shape and are sustained by our ideologies and practices. Addressing topics that range from Pierre Bourdieu's 1977 "The Economics of Linguistic Exchanges" to more recent discussions of circulation and transfer, this collection reveals the intricate valuative systems that define our work.

Many of the included chapters demonstrate how economies face external pressures and intersect or overlap with other, often incongruous, economies, creating an exigence for this collection beyond what the editors and contributors might have predicted. Released in March 2017, *Economies of Writing* became available only five months after the 2016 U.S. presidential election and one month after the appointment of Betsy DeVos as Secretary of Education. Growing threats of budget cuts, deregulation, and privatization, as well as echoes of public distrust for academia, have become more palpable than many of us could have known, and increasingly, the pressures and material conditions of our work may run counter to our own aims and values. While these new politico-economic developments could not be directly addressed in this collection, I found that many of the essays provide readers insights for responding to such conditions. Steve Lamos's chapter, for example, struck me as having developed new meaning since its authoring. Lamos demonstrates how Nedra Reynold's notion of *dwelling*—the process whereby diverse individuals "make choices about where, how, and how long to remain in and engage with particular material and discursive spaces" (45)—creates long-term success for learners and, further, is a key difference between for-profit and not-for-profit educational institutions. While the chapter doesn't address new looming threats of privatization or deregulation under our current administration, it does address educational institutions that overvalue "standardization and outcomes assessment" (43) and provides us language and strategies for responding to them.

Indeed, each chapter provides us tools for acting within the different economic realms of our work. Accordingly, the collection is divided into four sections: "Institutional/Disciplinary Economies," "Economies of Writing Pedagogy and Curriculum," "Economies of Language and Medium," and "Public Writing Economies." In its

broad interpretation of both "economy" and "writing," this collection strikes the right balance between scope and focus. While some of the essays engage deeply with a more traditional understanding of the economic (e.g., budgets, labor), part of the collection's appeal is seeing how each author has interpreted and engaged the theme in a novel, sometimes more tacit, way. Regardless of their interpretation, however, nearly every essay is either rooted in concrete situations or uses concrete examples in its theorization, and each contains detailed statements of purpose, making clear to readers their economic focus and intent.

In Part I, the authors discuss navigating and negotiating the material conditions of their institutional and disciplinary economies, as well as the forms those economies take. While these opening essays give readers an immediate glimpse into the various possibilities for understanding and effecting local change, I noted that the common challenge these authors faced was always rooted in the tensions between two or more valuative economies: pedagogical versus administrative; disciplinary versus institutional; for-profit versus not-for-profit. Effecting change, then, means understanding and navigating the often adverse webs of economic influence, a particularly important skill in this cultural moment. At varying scales, these authors provide us rhetorical moves for addressing material conditions unsuited for our work as external forces make such conditions increasingly common.

Tony Scott opens the collection with a scenario familiar to many of us: while WPAs look for ways to conduct assessments democratically and constructively for student writers, these aims are often divorced from the material realities in which such assessments must be completed, often under administrations with vastly different "economies of value" (20). Likewise, a few chapters later, Joan Mullin and Jenn Fishman present another familiar tension between the writing studies microeconomy and the macroeconomy of academe in terms of research value. Solutions to these tensions, all three authors demonstrate, must respond to the demands of both economies, even when challenging one. While Scott acknowledges that more democratic approaches to assessment—such as Bob Broad's Dynamic Criteria Mapping—have helped bridge the two economies, he stresses that we must further develop such methods to give more attention to issues of labor and asymmetrical power relations among assessors. Though I had hoped Scott would provide a preliminary model of his own, he takes an important first step by putting out a detailed and necessary call for these new labor-conscious models. Mullin and Fishman, then, present a further developed solution with the Research Exchange Index (REx) [https://researchexchange.colostate.edu/]. Though ambitious, this database provides a promising alternative to traditional academic publishing. By implementing an editorial and review process for works regardless of their completion, publication status, or author(s), the REx responds to the demands of the academic macroeconomy while challenging what is valued as research and increasing equity and accessibility. The REx, then, has the potential to subvert the increasing privatization of academic publishing despite a national economy that rewards such enterprises. What the chapters in this section optimistically show is that, despite the entanglement of economies and conflicting valuations of our work, we can continue to effect change by increasing our awareness of economic structures and challenging the status quo when necessary.

The authors in "Part II: Economies of Writing Pedagogy and Curriculum" then continue this demonstration, but they narrow their scope from institutional and disciplinary demands to the economic considerations of the classroom. Anis Bawarshi's and Samantha Looker's essays pair particularly well in their considerations of the movement or transfer of knowledge between contexts. In a much-needed discussion of what learning transfer means in terms of use and exchange value within first-year composition, Bawarshi disrupts the common binary of *knowing-that* and *knowing-how* with his notion of *knowing-with*. This suggestion builds on a growing body of transfer research, including Bawarshi's own (e.g., Reiff and Bawarshi), that recognizes knowledge is not static, nor is its movement linear; rather, the transfer of knowledge is complex and messy, requiring abstraction and adaptation to new contexts (e.g., Brent; DePalma and Ringer; Wardle). In her chapter, Looker too addresses oversimplified representations of knowledge, looking specifically at the harmful distillation of rhetorical concepts in handbooks. Both authors encourage instructors to avoid the harmful commodification of knowledge in the classroom and to communicate writing and rhetoric's complexity and contextuality to students. Perhaps by doing so, we can better prepare students to navigate and transfer nuanced rhetorical knowledge between increasingly interwoven and often contentious academic, professional, and civic economies.

Yuching Jill Yang, Kacie Kiser, and Paul Kei Matsuda provide an important reminder, however, that rhetorical knowledge is not the only capital within the classroom. The symbolic capital we assign teacher identities, they argue, is also contingent on particular markets (e.g., classrooms) and how values are rhetorically negotiated within those markets. As a young female graduate student, I found this chapter particularly resonant. While my peers and I each work to develop and define a certain teaching ethos, this chapter serves as a reminder that the process is ongoing and such identities are variable and continually negotiated through both visible and invisible assets. For example, I often negotiate how revealing certain information about my background, education, and experiences might offset (or perhaps contribute to) different students' preconceptions of my age, gender, and linguistic background. I also frequently negotiate how to respond to the immediate needs of students, while also considering how my teaching might be reflected through course evaluations, observations, and teaching materials, or in other words, how my symbolic capital might eventually be converted to economic capital. Greater understanding of "how larger social forces assign value to various identity traits" (Yang, Kiser, and Matsuda 99) can be a powerful tool for both new and experienced instructors. As these larger social forces continue to shift, our own negotiations must change in response.

Rebecca Lorimer Leonard picks up on such negotiations in her own chapter, which focuses specifically on the fluctuating valuation of individuals' linguistic abilities, or "literate resources." Accordingly, this third section of the collection, "Economies of Language and Medium," of which Leonard's essay is a part, continues the discussion about movement between and actions within particular economies, but more so than the other sections, it discusses the makeup and infrastructure of such economies through language, policy, and digital composition. For instance, building from the work of Horner and John Trimbur, who found the cost-benefit assessments of federal language accommodations to be shallow, Scott Wible analyzes how EO 13166: Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency [https://www.justice.gov/crt/federal-coordination-and-compliance-section-180] has shaped, or in some cases, failed to shape, the healthcare sector's writing economy. In turn, Jay Jordan demonstrates how deeply the English language is entrenched in the fabric of the Internet, making many websites "important exemplars of translingual production" in a global writing economy (204). These chapters highlight the often less visible foundations to our economies. While Wible demonstrates how the effects of language, access, and policy can reverberate much deeper in a writing economy than often acknowledged, Jordan, as well as Christian J. Pulver, reveals invisible structures shaping our digital content and its circulation. Recognizing these influences becomes particularly important as government policies, commercial technologies, and global industries further intermingle in our institutions, affecting our work and our students in ways few fully understand.

Part IV likewise considers the structures of our economies, but with a focus on publics: digital public spheres (LeCourt); a local, environmentally-focused writing economy (Peters); and national politico-economic rhetoric (Ryder). In the book's final body chapter, Phyllis Mentzell Ryder provides an intricate analysis of the rhetorical strategies of neoliberal proponents, particularly their appropriation of democratic rhetoric. In many ways, this chapter makes explicit an underlying theme running through much of the collection. That is, while Ryder discusses strategies for overcoming neoliberalism nationally, an undercurrent of this collection is combating such harmfully capitalist, neoliberal rationalities in our work. As such, I believe the larger rhetorical strategies Ryder describes can also be scaled and applied to our work in the field. Namely, while she describes neoliberalism as fluid and continually appropriating, she lauds the Occupy movements for matching such fluidity through "constant education and kairotic action" (267): "Occupy spreads into as many pockets of neoliberal space as possible, demonstrating the extensive reach of both neoliberalism and the resistance" (265). Our own resistance, then, must match the fluidity of neoliberal breaches in our work, always looking for opportunities to identify and challenge these forces in our assessments, our research, our classroom practices, and the policies, technologies, and language we use.

Thus, as a whole, this collection does more than raise awareness of the economic dimensions of our work. Each essay demonstrates moments of tension, resistance, and negotiation within economies; the authors seek to, in some way, defy or leverage the economic to effect positive change, and in doing so, they implicitly, if not explicitly, encourage others to do the same. As Donna LeCourt discusses in her chapter, we often mistakenly act as though "the activity of knowing substitutes for action" (232). When we read this collection, then, it's important that we not only inform ourselves of these economic issues, but we must consider how we can actively

integrate this knowledge into our work to make a positive difference in the structures and valuations of our local and disciplinary economies. In our current politico-economic climate, I find myself, like so many others, reading scholarship with a renewed eye for resistance and change. By addressing a realm of our work that is frequently overlooked, I believe this collection introduces rhetorical strategies that are particularly pertinent for addressing current and growing challenges to the field.

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