

Draft chapter to appear in *Literacy in Transcultural, Cosmopolitan Times: A Call for Change*

**Public Engagement and Digital Authoring:
Korean Adolescents Write for/as Action**

Amy Stornaiuolo,
Jin Kyeong Jung
University of Pennsylvania

With the Syrian refugee crisis growing in scope and scale, an image gripped the world: a picture of 3-year-old Aylan Kurdi, a Syrian refugee whose tiny body had washed onto the Turkish shore. A powerful emblem of the human toll of the Syrian violence and the desperate plight of millions of refugees, the photo captured the world's attention as people from distant places came together via social media to demand action: to rally for international intervention in the Syrian crisis, to petition national governments to respond more directly and humanely to refugees, or to donate resources to those suffering. This image, and its role as a viral catalyst for change, serves as an example of the ways media can be produced and marshaled by networked citizens to effect change on broader scales. It also illustrates the myriad ways meaning is orchestrated across multiple modalities (e.g., image, sound, video, etc.) to expand, crystallize, and transform understandings about the significant challenges facing the world. In this chapter we argue that it is vitally important to prepare young people to become global citizens who can leverage these new digital tools and global networks to write, read, and curate impactfully and responsibly across local and global communities. We ground this argument in an examination of the networked Write4Change (W4C) community, which brings together educators and their adolescent students interested in collaborating, sharing, and circulating their writing with international peers. Specifically, we studied how W4C participants used new forms of networked writing—including multiple languages, multiple modes, and socially networked ways of collaborating and sharing—to work toward and engage in dialogue about social change.

As all the world appears to be on the move—with people, ideas, languages, and things circulating across national and cultural boundaries, facilitated by new forms of technological mediation (Appadurai, 1996; Jenkins, Ford, & Green, 2013)—one of the central questions facing educators is how to design learning opportunities that leverage these mobile, transcultural literacies. Research has demonstrated that educators are well positioned to cultivate opportunities for youth to connect and collaborate with distant others by means of networked technologies (Popkewitz & Rizvi, 2009; Silverstone, 2007), and indeed, that educational institutions play a central role in preparing youth to address extensive and multifaceted global challenges (Hull & Stornaiuolo, 2010; Mansilla & Jackson, 2011). We explore in this chapter how socially networked online spaces can offer opportunities to learn from and draw on diverse cultural resources and navigate boundaries between nations and cultures in open, thoughtful, and sensitive ways. We are particularly interested in how educators can engage with participatory forms of digital authoring in these spaces to help young people marshal multiple transnational resources to catalyze change in and across communities.

Drawing on Flower's (2008) conceptualization of writing as a form of action and engagement, we explore how W4C students learned not just to speak *up* or speak *against* something but how to speak *with* others and speak *for* their commitments, transforming themselves and others as they participated in “a new rhetoric of public engagement” (p. 2). We focus on the South Korean W4C participants, tracing in detail the trajectory of one young South Korean writer, Eunhye, as she engaged in participatory digital authoring practices across a 12-week activity cycle with others in her class and around the world. As participants collaboratively and individually imagined what constituted social change, they engaged both the personal and political, the local and the global, navigating and orchestrating across transnational networks and

digital tools. By honing in on Eunhye's process of participating in and across communities, modalities, and languages, we offer a rich portrait of what is entailed in engaging in a new rhetoric of public engagement - working toward transformation with, for, and against others in a public process of rhetorical inquiry and agency.

Global Citizenship through Writing for/as Action Online

In a globalized world where texts, ideas, and people circulate under reconfigured material and economic conditions - as people grapple not just with differences in language, culture, or ideology but with the heightened challenges of digitally mediated communication (Couldry, 2012) - educators face a pressing need to cultivate pedagogical orientations that build upon students' experiences and knowledge and frame cultural and linguistic diversity as a powerful resource to be navigated (e.g., Campano & Ghiso, 2011; Honeyford et al., this volume; Hull, Stornaiuolo, & Sahni, 2010; Orellana, Martínez, Lee, & Montaña, 2012). Rizvi (2009) describes these educational efforts as fundamentally mobile ones, as cosmopolitan-oriented educators create "pedagogic tasks that help students explore the criss-crossing of transnational circuits of communication, the flows of global capital and the crosscutting of local, translocal and transnational social practices" (p. 265). We find cosmopolitanism a helpful framework for understanding W4C, and online social networks more generally, as a fruitful context for developing global citizenship, whereby people see themselves as connected and "can move beyond tolerance of difference, important as that is, to reimagining, appreciating, and learning with it" (Hansen, 2014, p. 1). By framing difference and diversity as mobile resources for creating shared cross-cultural understanding, cosmopolitanism offers educators in a digital age a generative framework for creating spaces for empathy and understanding to develop across traditional divides. As both Honeyford and colleagues (this volume) and Whitty (this volume)

argue, cosmopolitanism can help unsettle mainstream, normative, and colonial discourses by opening spaces for different kinds of narratives and relationships to flourish.

We are particularly interested in the ways that online spaces, which invite participation and engagement across globalized networks of people and things, offer opportunities to engage in global citizenship practices, particularly in digital, informal spaces of engagement (Hull & Stornaiuolo, 2010; Sobré-Denton, 2015). Kim (2016), studying how online Korean dramas served as a site of multicultural learning for youth around the world, calls these globally-oriented online learning practices “transcultural digital literacies,” which refer to ways young people use “new technological affordances to learn, imagine, and create knowledge that traverses national boundaries and conventional cultural borders” (p. 199). One of the central ways we found W4C participants used technologies and networks to engage in global citizenship practices was through their writing online. Writing is now widely understood as a principal way of participating in complex textual ecologies, built through the collaborative creation, curation, and circulation of artifacts across intersecting networks (Brandt, 2015; Freedman et al., in press). These ecologies involve not only alphabetic texts but a range of available symbol systems, as people compose, remix, orchestrate, and assemble symbolic artifacts across multiple modes, media, and languages (Bezemer & Kress, 2008; Canagarajah, 2012; Lankshear & Knobel, 2011). Such an expansive definition of writing is implied in our opening example, as the image of Aylan gathered momentum and force as a lever for social action *both* in its role as a powerfully composed text itself *and* in its relations to other texts and symbolic artifacts (i.e., that contextualized and situated it in relation to the Syrian refugee crisis).

Writing, from such an expansive understanding, functions as a central means by which young people *participate* in the world now (Jenkins et al., 2009). Such active participation

involves youth bringing their knowledge, interests, and experiences to bear while engaging with others and creating representations online (Ito et al., 2013). Researchers studying how youth engage civically, especially in online contexts, call this kind of participatory engagement “connected civics” (Ito et al., 2015), as cultures, personal interests, expertise, and action intersect and overlap in online spaces. In framing writing as a means of participatory action, we understand that youth’s engagement in interest-driven, socially oriented communicative practices can function as a form of taking action or participating in the world. Flower (2008) describes such rhetorical action as fundamentally public in nature, as people create their publics while making their commitments visible through their composing. We extend Flower’s (2008) theorizing about the rhetoric of public engagement, as people engage in intercultural inquiry through their writing for transformative social action, to online contexts, particularly to the ways young people writing for and about change took action in the world through their rhetorical engagements online, with and for other adolescents. We ask how they participated in these spaces, and how their writing functioned as a kind of critical participation in global citizenship practices.

Studying Writing as Action through Connective Ethnography

Rooted in a multi-sited sensibility (Vossoughi & Gutiérrez, 2014), this study employs methods from connective ethnography, which traces how “multiple, simultaneous space-time contexts are coordinated and produced through activity” (Leander & McKim, 2003, p. 238). As a methodology oriented toward studying how phenomena travel across online/offline spaces and over time (Hine, 2015; Lammers, Curwood, & Magnifico, 2012; Leander, 2009), multi-sited, connective ethnography is a generative way of studying “circulations of discourse, the production of social imaginaries, and the forging of transnational networks across levels of scale

and connecting people across time and space” (Hall, 2004, p. 109). This study, in examining how participants’ digital authoring practices unfolded in the online community, is particularly concerned with how young people imagined themselves in relation to the world through writing. We take up such concerns by creating a portrait of one young writer; Lawrence-Lightfoot (2005) explains that *portraiture* is a qualitative method that positions researchers listen *for* a story (rather than listen only *to* a story) as they engage in narrative reconstruction. The story we listen for here is Eunhye’s, as she engaged in new forms of networked writing as a way to participate in the world, to imagine herself connected to others, and to see herself as intervening rhetorically to make change.

Write4Change in South Korea

As a part of a larger longitudinal global research project for youth based in the United States with partnerships in other nations (e.g., Pakistan, India, Canada, United Kingdom, and South Korea), the W4C online community links teachers around the world who are interested in connecting young people to real and meaningful audiences for the purpose of taking action to improve their communities by addressing inequities. Students create projects and participate in weekly challenges during 12-week activity cycles. The activity cycle we discuss in this chapter involved weekly challenges (e.g., “what inspires you?”) and three inquiry projects that moved students through a cycle of inspiration, inquiry, reflection, and action. The first project asked students, “What is your story?”, the second was framed around the question, “What would you change?”, and the final one asked, “What can we do together?” The teachers adapted and interpreted this in various ways for their individual sites, and the kinds of projects that the youths imagined were often inspired both by the online examples as well as their teacher’s interpretation. The students engaged online using a private Google community platform, which

allowed easy access to all participants using Google composing tools and foregrounded media that could be recorded on the site or uploaded with relative ease.

This chapter focuses on one of the two high school sites in South Korea, with one teacher and 21 students. The local site is located in Southeastern of Gyeonggi province, which surrounds the capital city of South Korea, Seoul. There has been a population increase in this area due to the urbanization plan of South Korea, such as implementing modern public transportation system to Seoul, yet is a greener environment than the metropolitan area. This new planned city has also grown to become one of the wealthiest areas in the Gyeonggi province due to the expansion of some major companies into the area since the 1990s. Not surprisingly, after the expansion of major companies into the area, a large number of transnationally experienced people (i.e., who have experiences in living abroad for their business or study purposes) followed suit and migrated into this area as well.

The high school that participated in the W4C project is surrounded by residential apartments not far from the city center. The school is a mixed-gender private school emphasizing global education by collaborating with other high schools in Japan and China in addition to some international schools in the area. The high school includes preparatory classes for college study abroad to China, Japan, and the U.S. Six native speaking teachers (Chinese, Japanese, American, Canadian, and British) are working at the school as full-time teachers. Since it is a private school, the tuition fee is slightly higher than a comparable public high school due to the extra fees for native speaking teachers and study abroad classes. Like other South Korean high schools, the primary concern of high school teachers and students is the college entrance exam. An English subject teacher volunteered to be our partner teacher, and she opened an after-school class with a group of volunteers consisting of 19 girls and two boys in the 11th grade. In total,

the teacher and the students had 22 one-hour weekday classes at the school by integrating the W4C online community into their classroom.

Creating Digital Portraits

We focus our portrait on one activity cycle, from November 2015 to January 2016. During this period, the South Korean students made 349 postings in the W4C community. In this chapter, we focus on three activities that comprised the main projects for this activity cycle, #mystory, #mychange, and #ourvision, which were designed so that the high school students could engage in an inquiry to action cycle. In addition to their project postings on the W4C community, the students' comments were used as part of the data from the online community. Given the fact that this study was based in the school classroom, we also collected data from face-to-face group interviews with the students, teaching materials, classroom observations, surveys, reflective memos, and both formal and informal conversations with the teacher. A collaborative Write4Change magazine published by the teacher, students, and the principal, including students' writing drafts and postings from the W4C community, was also included as a data source. To create the portraits of different students, we engaged in qualitative data analysis through coding, relying on the constant-comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) to identify themes in the South Korean students' writing practices as well as content analysis (Patton, 2002) to interpret how the students developed understandings of social change.

“Ways We Can Do Together”: Eunhye’s Vision of World History

We focus the chapter around one 16-year-old's online composing practices to create a portrait of how she engaged in social action through her writing, negotiating across languages, modes, and ideas to imagine herself in relation to the world more broadly. We chose Eunhye because of her enthusiasm and thoughtfulness in her W4C participation, which was recognized

not just by the teacher but by classmates and online peers (for example, she was one of the students featured in the group's W4C magazine). For the activity cycle we studied, Eunhye made 13 postings with 15 images and three videos and commented 42 times on her own and other students' postings. Eunhye, who defined writing as the "expression of my thoughts or feelings" on the initial survey, reported that she enjoyed her participation in the W4C community by sharing her experiences, feelings, and ideas and also by remixing modes. On the survey, she said that believed that writing and collaborating could produce important social transformation in the world, but that she did not have very much opportunity to do so through her writing.

Despite her postings and replies to the online community, Eunhye did not identify herself as a writer initially, nor did she participate visibly in classroom interactions that we observed. Eunhye was calm and a diligent student with a bright smile, whom her classroom teacher in an informal interview referred to as a "hard worker" who did what the teacher asked her to do ("해오라하면 딱딱해와요"). The teacher also pointed out that "she does not speak in public, but it is not necessarily a negative thing." Although she did not speak a lot in the classroom, she would not miss the opportunity to ask the teacher questions when needed. She used English mainly for her project writing and as a communicative language in the W4C online community. On the category of what inspired her, she shared her experience of singing a song from her favorite musical, "Les Miserables," with a YouTube video of the song, 'On My Own' from a movie of Les Miserables (12/12/15 posting). Eunhye added, "I was so impressed by this melody and the meaning of its lyrics." Although she actively used English language for her writing and practices in her daily life in and out of the W4C community, she only identified that she is a fluent speaker of Korean in the survey.

Writing to Connect Self and the World

On W4C Eunhye positioned herself in relation to other W4C members and to the world more broadly, both anchoring herself in a specific locality but also positioning herself as open and welcoming. In her first posting, she introduced herself along with her picture from Jeju Island, a Korean landmark where she went for a school field trip a couple of weeks before. In her introduction Eunhye showed excitement in joining the W4C community: “I think being part of w4c is so interesting and I hope to have fun here with you guys!” (11/2/15 posting). She also contextualized the picture for readers, explaining who she was and why she included that picture – in that way grounding herself in a local context and providing helpful background information. In her next two postings, Eunhye built upon that contextualizing as she shared some possible directions for her first project (#mystory). She described her participation in a school club oriented to volunteerism in Korea – an organization with more than 100,000 members nationally and internationally:

For my first **#W4Cproject**, I want to introduce about my school club, VANK. I joined this club a year ago when I entered high school. Do you know what VANK stands for? It is abbreviation of Voluntary Agency Network of Korea. Our club let many people around the world know better about Korea. So feel free to ask me whatever you are curious about Korea:) I would be very glad!! We also make friends from all over the world through website or e-mail and share information about each country.

Doing this project, I will share information about what we did in our club and what other vanky(world changer) did~ (11/3/15)

In this early posting Eunhye positioned herself as a “world changer,” someone who was committed to working with others to help the world know more about Korea. Even while situating herself in her local lived context (e.g., Seoul, Korea) and positioning herself as someone with cultural knowledge (e.g., the country’s history), she issued a number of invitations to others

in her writing. She was open and hospitable, signaling that she was interested in making friends around the world – and in so making those friends also helping in the broader mission of educating people about Korean history and culture. She offered helpful background information, directly engaging her potential readers by addressing them (“do you know what VANK stands for?”) as well as offering herself as a resource for whatever people wanted to learn about Korea.

All three of Eunhye’s projects were related one another, oriented to describing how to be a “world changer” through knowledge sharing and collective action. In all of her efforts, she situated her engagement in the local Korean context, navigating both local concerns but linking those to global ones. In her first project (#mystory) she built on her club activity regarding “Korean history” (11/7/15 posting), describing a number of social activities she participated in through that group. The majority of the project discussed the negative depiction of Koreans in a memoir by a Japanese writer used in American education (and popular around the world). After a lengthy rebuttal of the accuracy of its representation of historical events, she wrote, “I was so sad that Korean History was depicted so badly by this novel,” and then urged readers to examine the video she included. Her second project (#mychange) picked up on these themes of historical distortion but focused more particularly on world history education (12/4/15 posting). She included in her second project three pictures related to her topic, including a textbook of the Korean history, a poster of a South Korean drama which was an issue of possible influence of historical distortion, and a screencapture of a news with a caption of “practical training for teachers...strengthening teacher’s re-education” (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. Representing #W4Cproject through Images

For her third project (#ourvision), Eunhye offered practical solutions for this issue of addressing world history through education, moving not just to inform readers but to position herself as *working with them* to create change: “Starting my 3rd #w4cproject, I’m going to suggest ways that we can do together for students’ proper recognition of world history. In my project, #ourvision is divided into three categories; acquiring indirectly through TV, making proper textbooks, and executing reeducation for teachers” (12/11/15 posting, emphasis added). In tracing her work to both inform but also invite others into her efforts, Eunhye navigated the local and global, the personal and the political, with flexibility and sensitivity. Such public rhetorical engagement, we suggest, is a key cosmopolitan capacity for writing online now.

One of the most powerful dimensions of this negotiation of self and world was the way Eunhye drew on and across multiple cultural and communicative resources. In her third project, Eunhye suggested ways of participating in social change from a diverse group of people: director

of TV programs, audience of TV shows, students, teachers, and textbook writers and editors. Although she did not specifically mention current events in her posting, there was an inspirational debate and protest on ‘rewriting the South Korean history textbook’ in South Korea reported by BBC News on December 1, 2015. It seemed that the protest and debate in and outside the classroom at that time might have influenced her topic of #mychange. Those social issues were also deeply personal, connected to her aspirations regarding education. While she did not explicitly mention her dream in the draft of her second project (saying only that it was personally meaningful), she later clarified that personal connection in her response to a comment from a W4C moderator:.

I want to be a teacher and that's why I mentioned education is related to my future hope. Joining this #W4Cproject, I decided to be a teacher who helps students think critically since I realized how much it is important to do so. (12/5/15 comment)

As she revealed in the comment, Eunhye’s dreams of becoming a critical educator inspired many of her postings online. This personal connection sat in relation to other cultural and linguistic resources she drew upon, not just in popular culture or local news, but also in the world of her school and family, explored more fully in the next section.

Process-based Writing for Publication Outlets

By analyzing all the students’ postings on the W4C community, we were intrigued by how the South Korean high students valued and shared their writing process in the W4C online community, classroom, and magazine. The teacher spent time with students on their writing process, linking their acts of revision and feedback to higher impact of their work on others. In designing the classroom activity, the teacher showed that she was “willing to proofread students’ writings in class time for their final products” (11/1/15 Reflective Memo). The students received at least three layers of feedback: peer feedback from classmates, feedback from the teacher, and

comments from W4C moderators and members. In a group interview, some students mentioned that giving and receiving feedback in pairs, from the teacher, and from the moderators on the W4C online community were all helpful, and they were “thankful” before and after they uploaded their projects on the W4C community.

Of Eunhye’s 13 postings, six were process drafts, posted in the ‘Get Feedback’ or ‘Work in Progress’ tabs or explicitly labeled as a draft (e.g., she tagged three posts #brainstorming). One of her graphic organizers she used for her brainstorming the project was also published in the school Write4Change magazine (see Figure 2). In her brainstorming, Eunhye specifically asked, “What can we do together?” as a potential solution to her earlier exploration of the problem of world history education.

Our Visions

What can we do together?

TV programs

... should not pursue fun through changing the historical contents.
Maybe they could record high ratings through actors performance or adding interesting contents.
Changing and distorting the key factors of history cannot be allowed.

Historical dramas that are based in distorted facts.



Viewers

... should watch programs critically because those information can be untrue. Whether the factors are true or not should be considered importantly by viewers.

① acquiring indirectly through TV

writing staff of textbook

... should let students know various views of historical event.
... Should be more careful and considerable in including historical information.

students

... should think critically about facts they are receiving, even if they are in textbooks.
... so I think critical reading skills should be raised by students.

② proper textbooks

reeducation for teachers

... should change the recognition that 'education is only for students'
... solutions that has already been executed

[www.teacherville.co.kr
www.hstudy.co.kr

Figure 2 What Can We Do Together?

The magazine reveals how the teacher and the students valued the process of writing by showing work in progress, especially work that included comments from peers and teacher in the draft. In the draft of Eunhye’s third project #ourvision (see Figure 3), there are underlines, question marks, corrective feedback including comments in both Korean and English in the margin. Similar to the ways she participated as a commenter in the W4C community, Eunhye did not miss a question from her peer. Her classmate asked, “?? they는 누구고? 갑자기 왜 이 문장이 나왔는지 모르겠음;;” (Who are they? I do not know why this sentence came out here suddenly;;). Then, Eunhye replied, “나도 모르겠음” (I do not know either). The peer who gave the written feedback on Eunhye’s draft was a girl who also commented actively in the W4C online community and showed an active interaction with Eunhye in the online space as well.

Secondly, making proper textbooks for students should be done. The writing staffs of textbooks should let students know various views of historical event. In Canada, 'The Historical Thinking Project', promoting critical historical literacy for the 21st century is executed. It works with six distinct ^{and they're} ~~but~~ closely interrelated historical thinking concepts which suggests what students should do to think historically. They should establish historical significance, use primary source evidence, identify continuity and change, analyze causes and consequence, take historical perspectives, and understand ethical dimensions of history.] By ~~this~~ ^{participating in this project} project, students can think critically about facts they are receiving ~~even if they are~~ in textbooks. Teachers should let students raise their critical reading skills, using the ~~project I mentioned before~~ ^{skills used in other thinking project} project ~~I mentioned before~~. I thought that ~~kind~~ ^{this} of project which has been already executed in Canada should spread all around the world so that the students in all nations could learn proper historical viewpoints.

Figure 3 Interactions with Audience

In addition to the feedback from the classroom setting, we found out Eunhye revised her work after receiving feedback from the W4C community. As an example, a teacher from Canada commented on Eunhye’s 12/1/15 brainstorming posting. The Canadian teacher shared the curriculum used for critical thinking and compulsory history course in his school province, and we can see how Eunhye integrated the feedback for the Canadian teacher in the third sentence of

her revised draft in Figure 3. Eunhye expressed her gratitude for his comment on the W4C community, and the teacher and other students showed how comments from moderators or other participants across sites were beneficial for them as a way of supporting their projects as a community participant.

The teacher played a central role in Eunhye's writing process, not just in encouraging and supporting the idea of iteration but also in modeling how to negotiate audience and purpose in writing online. She was an active member of the online community, and she also regularly commented on students' drafts and work (both in class and online). For example, on Eunhye's posting of the draft on W4C, the teacher commented, "As I told you before, there is some history training that is being done to teachers. Why don't you look for those?" This question showed the practices are continued across time, modality, language, and context. The teacher showed her surprise by how "students are interested in social issues" while she was leading the W4C class (1/6/16 Interview, translated from Korean). The teacher's focus on the process of writing for change and impact was an important dimension in considering how Eunhye and her classmates came to see themselves as change agents participating in a public sphere through their writing – just as she took their work seriously, she suggested that others would as well.

Toward New Rhetorics for Public Engagement in Digital Spaces

In the recent "cosmopolitan turn" (Hull & Stornaiuolo, 2010, p. 94) in educational research, scholars and educators have been increasingly exploring how to prepare young people to be *effective* and *ethical* participants in a globally connected world. Not only do young people need to learn to communicate effectively - to use a variety of digital tools and rhetorical strategies to foster understanding across differences in language, culture, and circumstance - but to do so *ethically* - by being thoughtful, responsible, and hospitable interlocutors (see

Stornaiuolo, 2015). In this chapter we call attention to the ways socially networked spaces online can offer generative opportunities for educators to support and cultivate students' digital authorship and citizenship practices. We examine one such networked space, the Write4Change online writing community, to emphasize how young people leveraged a variety of resources to engage in new forms of authoring, particularly ones oriented to making social change.

We focused on one South Korean site and one student in particular in order to offer a detailed portrait of how these rhetorical and global practices unfolded in intertwined ways for our young focal student, Eunhye. In this particular site of the W4C project, the teacher, the principal of the high school, researchers, moderators of the online community, and their students collaboratively participated in the W4C project with the beliefs that (a) writing can be a powerful tool for social change in and outside the adolescent self and (b) these literacy practices would benefit the preparation for the future global citizens across nations, languages, cultures, and modes. Eunhye drew upon multiple resources dynamically and iteratively in her W4C engagement, focusing at once both inward and outward, on her local cultural context as well as her position in the world more broadly. As Eunhye navigated these transnational networks and tools, she intertwined the local and global as well as the personal and political – all toward the end of being a “world changer” across different scales and communities. We argued that her teacher's focus on the value of writing as an audience-oriented process supported Eunhye's work to bring her own experiences and expertise to bear in her work to connect with others.

We suggest that these online authoring practices demonstrated by Eunhye, which leverage the possibilities of multiple tools and networks in flexible and creative ways, highlight the power of public rhetorical engagement for cosmopolitan-oriented composing. Eunhye and her fellow W4C peers engaged in a fundamentally public process of rhetorical inquiry, following

their personally relevant interests but linking those to other conversations, issues, and people. The ways that they did so—by layering together multiple modes and languages, working across sedimented national, cultural, and linguistic boundaries, using rhetorical strategies to engage potential audiences, taking into account their own cultural beliefs and practices while considering those of others, grappling with issues of representation—were turned toward participatory purposes in the online space, both through their own participation in public spaces but through invitations to (and recognition of) other people as potential co-participants. We see that this engagement in new public rhetorics is oriented to transformation, not just transformation of the self, others, or the world but of the space itself. The online community was fundamentally shaped by young people’s rhetorical practices online. As young people like Eunhye positioned themselves as change agents in the world, they were not just looking toward the future—they were acting as change agents in the very moment of that rhetorical engagement, in and through their participation in public, networked forms of writing.

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