

**THE CHANGING ROLE OF
PROFESSIONAL WRITERS
IN THE AGE OF DIGITAL
CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION**

by

Nicole Lund

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of the University of Delaware in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Honors Bachelor of English with Distinction.

Spring 2016

© 2016 Nicole Lund
All Rights Reserved

**THE CHANGING ROLE OF
PROFESSIONAL WRITERS
IN THE AGE OF DIGITAL
CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION**

by

Nicole Lund

Approved: _____
Jessica Edwards, Ph.D.
Professor in charge of thesis on behalf of the Advisory Committee

Approved: _____
Candice Welhausen, Ph.D.
Committee member from the Department of English

Approved: _____
Siobhan Carroll, Ph.D.
Committee member from the Board of Senior Thesis Readers

Approved: _____
Michael Arnold, Ph.D.
Director, University Honors Program

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank my director, Dr. Jessica Edwards; my second reader and Summer Scholars director Dr. Candice Welhausen; my third reader Siobhan Carroll; my Summer Scholars advisor Aimee Pearsall; my former teachers Deanna Baird and Gry Brøndum for sparking my interest in this topic; my family for their unending support; and especially Julianne Speck and Rachel Travis, who encouraged and pushed me throughout the entire thesis process.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	v
1 INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW	1
2 CULTURE AND RHETORIC	9
3 EXAMINATION OF MODERN AMERICAN AND IMMIGRANT MEDIA	16
4 THE FUTURE OF PROFESSIONAL WRITING IN THE NEW MEDIA LANDSCAPE.....	27
5 TOWARD A USEFUL METHOD.....	31
6 CONCLUSION.....	38
REFERENCES	41

ABSTRACT

In the United States' increasingly global society, miscommunication is a nearly unavoidable occurrence between members of different cultural groups, particularly new immigrants who are not yet acclimated to American communication norms. The purpose of this research is to explore these misunderstandings and the role that professional writers can play in minimizing them. This thesis aims to provide a framework for establishing connections rather than differences, specifically through the perspective of African immigrants living in the United States. By referencing texts on cross-cultural communication, global journalism, and participatory media for background information, this project examines blogs and websites created and written by African immigrants and how their content compares to articles published by CNN, one of the most popular mainstream American news sources. The results of this research demonstrate a disconnect between the two platforms, both in terms of content and methods of reporting, that could likely contribute to deeper miscommunication issues between the immigrant group and general American society. This project applies these results to professional writing in general and journalism in particular, examining the evolution of modern media and how professional writers can use these findings as a foundation from which to research their audiences and become more effective at written cross-cultural communication.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

For professional writers all over the world and particularly in the United States, working with a global audience in mind is growing vitally important. Professional writers include journalists, editors, technical writers, business writers, multimedia writers, and a variety of other titles that encompass writing as a profession. As the world opens up online, professional writers need to familiarize themselves with both broad and specific cultural differences seen across the globe. Every culture has its own unique way of communicating, and when different cultures come into contact with one another, misunderstandings can easily occur. Here I define culture as a specific set of beliefs, norms, and values of a group of people that are constantly being produced and reproduced (Liu et al). Culture should not be confused with nation or nationality, as every country is home to a variety of cultural groups that differ in beliefs. For example, the United States is home to a dizzying number of cultures, including socially conservative evangelical Christians in the South and the Navajo Nation of Native Americans in the Southwest. These groups are rich in cultural variety, posing a challenge for professional writers who are trying to reach as wide an audience as possible and must be aware of possible communication differences. In a country like the United States, it is impossible to pinpoint every single cultural group within the country and write with each special communication method in mind. Maintaining an accepting attitude toward communication differences, however, can go a long way in

bridging the gap between cultural groups. My study examines the changing media landscape and the unique role of journalists within it by highlighting the prevalence of citizen and global journalism, particularly focusing on the lived experiences of African immigrants; I ultimately offer a heuristic for professional writers as a reference for effective cross-cultural communication.

Research in cross-cultural communication suggests that looking outside of one's own culture is necessary in order to fully understand communication gaps. For the purposes of my study, I focused on gaining firsthand experience with one specific group: recent African immigrants living in the United States. To accomplish this mission, I conducted an interview with a young African immigrant and researched blogs and websites written by and for African immigrants. I chose this cultural group mainly because there are several African countries that list English as an official language, easing the burden of a language gap. Furthermore, according to the United States Census Bureau, the African immigrant population is doubling every decade, making it an increasingly significant cultural group in the United States. Finally, I found it interesting that very little research has already been conducted on the relationship between African immigrants and communication issues in the United States, while other cultural groups such as Chinese and Mexican immigrants have been studied much more extensively. It is because of all these reasons that I chose to focus on African immigrants and not another cultural group. By narrowing my focus to this group, I gained valuable insight into the many communication issues faced by minority cultures in the United States through mainstream media platforms. This research allowed me to better understand how professional writers can tailor their

work to be more aware of cultural differences, allowing their written pieces to appeal to a wider audience and bridge gaps in communication.

While there is very little research on the communication practices of African immigrants, the general field of cultural rhetoric and cross-cultural and intercultural communication provides useful background for my topic. Anthropologists Ivo Strecker and Stephen Tyler, founders of the International Rhetoric Culture Project, offer insights into the intertwined relationship between culture and rhetoric. They argue in their anthology *Culture and Rhetoric* (2009) that rhetoric “is the decisive factor in the emergence of cultural diversity past and present,” (1) connecting rhetoric and the field of anthropology in a way that has not been previously explored. While it may seem unusual to connect anthropological studies with communication theory, acknowledging this relationship is important for writers everywhere, as it demonstrates the seemingly endless variations of communication styles among different cultural groups. Christian Meyer’s essay in this work, titled “Precursors of Rhetoric Culture Theory,” makes the point that every society has developed its own unique rhetoric based on its particular history. Therefore, when people emigrate from one country to another, they are confronted with a totally different rhetorical history that is grounded in a past that they are not a part of. Thus, language can be considered restricting in a way, as one constructs herself through communication within the birth culture and the cultural narratives that are instilled in that language (Oesterreich). Every person’s communication style is informed by the culture one is raised in, so moving beyond the boundaries of cultural rhetoric is especially difficult. Professional writers, despite years of practice, will naturally gravitate toward the communication

practices of their own culture (Ting-Toomey), making effective cross-cultural communication not altogether impossible, but endlessly challenging.

In addition, according to researcher and author Stella Ting-Toomey, the United States is an individualistic, low-context society, meaning that communication is grounded in the individual's perspective and in writing that is explicit in meaning. African countries, on the other hand, are collectivistic, high-context societies, and value more of a group perspective and face-saving, nuanced communication (Ting-Toomey). To be exact, in low-context communication "the mass of the information is vested in the explicit code," while in high-context communication "most of the information is either in the physical context or internalized in the person, while very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message" (Hall 91). Therefore, the average American will be direct and detailed in writing, perhaps appearing harsh and even rude to an African immigrant not used to such a blunt writing style. Conversely, the average African immigrant will write in a more roundabout, unspecific fashion, assuming that the reader will pick up on the hidden meanings ingrained within the messages. There is little doubt that a low-context reader will find this style of communication to be frustrating. Because of the significance of the high-context vs. low-context debate, communication researchers frequently utilize this dynamic to understand contrasts in communication styles across cultures, making it a strong baseline for writers to develop their professional styles. Simply determining whether or not to write in a straight-forward or indirect manner is a valuable first step in helping a writer achieve clearer cross-cultural communication.

These works were supplemented by further research attained through peer-reviewed journal articles and scholarly books, including publications written by such

seminal researchers as Kenneth Burke and Edward Hall. After extensively researching the field of cross-cultural communication, I looked to apply my research to other forms of writing related to African immigrants in the United States. To start, I read various African immigrant blogs, including *The Displaced African*, *Africa on the Blog*, and *Life of an African Immigrant*, that allowed me to identify themes important to an African audience, such as community, belongingness, and status. The sites were chosen due to the range of immigrant blogs they represented: *The Displaced African* is an informational site for immigrant questions and anxieties; *Africa on the Blog* is a participatory news source; and *Life of an African Immigrant* is a personal blog about the day-to-day life of a young African immigrant. I decided to go further and compare the content from these blogs with what was being reported on CNN's website, which was chosen because of its popularity in American society. I found that CNN mostly reported the negative news coming from Africa, and only that which was important to the general American public. I could find virtually nothing on the topic of African immigrants living in the United States. On the other hand, all of the blogs I read were more positive, and focused on the aspects of African life not often reported in the mainstream American media. The African immigrant bloggers voiced their frustrations with what they perceived as a false portrayal of their birthplace and culture in the average media source.

Taking note of the stark differences between blogs and journalistic news sources, I examined Mshale, a newspaper and accompanying website that specifically targets the African community in America. While the content on this site is engaging and of high quality, it is limited by its status as a niche website and thus cannot contribute effectively to closing the communication gap. Finally, I interviewed a

college student at the University of Delaware who moved to the United States from Ghana when she was a teenager. I decided to conduct this interview in order to gain a firsthand account of communication contrasts between African immigrants and the average American citizen, as well as problems that arise due to these dissimilarities. My interviewee was found through a campus organization devoted to African students, and our conversation lasted for 20 minutes. I found that her answers correlated with my prior research, demonstrating the prevalence of culturally-fueled miscommunication and the importance of social media.

These issues reflect a greater problem in modern American media, which is still adjusting to the emergence of Web 2.0, or the second generation of the Internet that introduced participatory social media to the world. Michael Brüggemann and Harmut Wessler note the unwillingness of the American media to look beyond separations of national and foreign news and adopt what Peter Berglez describes as global journalism, which is grounded in how people and events around the world are interrelated. Before the dawn of social media and a more participatory Internet, news could be categorized and distributed by professional journalists in easily contained print form. Now, the line between the local and the global is increasingly blurred, as people can virtually interact with citizens of other nations from thousands of miles away in the comfort of their own home. This interconnectedness therefore cannot be ignored, as the Internet has dramatically altered the way the entire world produces and distributes news. Berglez, Guy Berger, and Alfred Hermida have all examined the rise of citizen journalism, in which “the individuals perform some of the institutionalized communication functions of the professional journalist, often providing the first accounts, images or video of a news event,” through blogs and social media (Hermida

299). Nowadays anyone can call herself a writer or amateur journalist simply by producing Internet content and sharing it with others. As I have already mentioned, the immigrant population has taken advantage of this change by creating blogs in order to take back control of their collective narrative. While this initiative is positive and empowering for frequently ignored groups, it also poses a challenge for professional journalists who want to remain relevant in a society that no longer holds traditional journalism in high esteem.

In order to adapt to this changing news landscape of citizen journalism and unclear categorical boundaries, professional writers, especially journalists, must pay close attention to the importance of cross-cultural communication and global journalism. It is important to note, however, that adaptation is a two-way street, according to Cynthia Gallois and Victor Callan, authors of *Communication and Culture* (1997). Both the producers and readers of news in all of its forms need to be responsible for recognizing the various differences in communication in order for effective cross-cultural communication to take place. Professional writers may not be able to control their audience, but they can practice accountability for themselves. In my study I will highlight the various methods journalists as well as all professional writers can apply to cater to a global audience without sacrificing their own communication styles, providing in depth analysis of the connection between culture and rhetoric and how exactly media is evolving. Furthermore, the rules that govern our communication patterns are changing all the time as technology and media evolve, so keeping track of various cultural differences can be highly overwhelming. With this point in mind, I offer a heuristic for cross-cultural communication, one that will allow

writers to communicate effectively without compromising their cultural values or diminishing another's cultural practices.

In Chapter 2 I will expand on the relationship between culture and rhetoric, illustrating relevant theories and research and how they relate to written communication. In Chapter 3 I will examine the state of current media practices in the Internet Age, comparing and contrasting traditional news sources with modern mediums like blogs. In Chapter 4 I will apply my research of blogs and immigrant interviews to the future of professional writing, surveying the rise of global and citizen journalism. Finally, in Chapter 5 I will present my heuristic.

Chapter 2

CULTURE AND RHETORIC

When one thinks of the key differences among societies across the world, aspects such as customs, history, and government may come to mind as explanations for divergent cultural norms. It is a surprise to many, then, that language plays what is possibly the most fundamental part of cultural development in any society (Strecker & Tyler). How people communicate with one another is essential to unique cultural growth, meaning that culture and rhetoric shape one another to a great degree. The key to understanding this relationship can be found in the basics of socialization. Each culture has its own distinctive method of communication, which is learned through experience and observation. Anyone who has traveled to a foreign nation, or even to a different region within one's own country, can attest to the sometimes subtle, other times glaring, social and communication differences compared to home. These changes create identity dissonance (Ting-Toomey), meaning that one questions her own cultural identity when confronted with the Other, leading to discomfort and a tendency to view the changes as not simply different, but bad. Human beings tend to cling to their cultural identity when in a foreign place or among foreign people, making cross-cultural communication highly difficult (Ting-Toomey). When confronted with the Other, one's own sense of self is called into question, as there is a powerful link between cultural values and self-conception. According to the identity-negotiation theory (Ting-Toomey), people bring their self-identity to any social interaction, which is acquired through lifelong conditioning by the home culture.

Professional writers will naturally stick to their own culturally-learned communication practices, often unwilling to alter their methods to suit a different audience.

Kenneth Burke pioneered the concept of identification, which assumes that rhetoric is about the process by which people identify with one another (Strecker & Tyler). A person identifies with those who share one's cultural ties and rhetorical norms, and is naturally wary of anyone different. The paradox of identity is that it can only exist when differences exist. According to Burke, "identification is affirmed with earnestness precisely because there is division" (22). If all humans were of the same culture and background, then communication would be easy and identity would not be important. We only know who we are because we can compare ourselves to others and find the various contrasts. Burke explains that "rhetoric...is not rooted in any past condition of human society. It is rooted in an essential function of language itself, a function that is wholly realistic and is continually born anew" (43). Rhetoric, and by extension culture, is always evolving with society. For writers this constant state of growth means that the rules of communication are constantly changing. Dennis Tedlock and Bruce Mannheim reinforce this notion, saying that "cultures are constantly produced, reproduced, and revised in dialogues among members" (2). The link here between culture and rhetoric is clearly defined, as both inform the other and are subject to never-ending evolution. Professional writers need to be actively engaged in this relationship, constantly studying the changing dynamics between rhetoric and culture and applying it to their own writing methods. This task can be daunting, as it requires vigorous research and detailed planning, but it is the only way to ensure effective communication with few misunderstandings.

Before the rise of the Internet and social media, culturally-fueled rhetorical differences would only be met through face-to-face interaction, usually through international travel or in the workplace. Today, however, anytime a person logs onto the Internet she is almost guaranteed to come into contact with someone very culturally different from herself. Anything posted online can be seen by someone in a faraway country, which implies that unintentional cross-cultural misunderstandings are flourishing. For professional writers, this problem is especially challenging. Journalists especially can no longer write with one specific audience in mind; the ease of knowing that the only people reading one's work must hold a physical copy to do so has been dashed. Other professional writers, such as technical or grant writers, confront the same problems but not to the same scale as journalists, because their work is generally geared toward a very specific audience to begin with. For journalists, the prospect of almost unlimited readership is exciting, but it is also overwhelming and requires a deep awareness of cultural and rhetorical differences, as mentioned above. While it is impossible to cater to every possible cultural background of each reader, professional writers can adopt a more open-minded approach that requires one to decenter the self (Strecker & Tyler) and act as objectively as possible. This tactic suggests that one could enter a writing task with the mindset that cultural differences are guaranteed, but can be researched and utilized. The goal is not to conquer these contrasts and write in a perfectly neutral way, but to practice mindfulness and grow aware of how the vast members of one's audience may perceive the text. Approaching cultural differences, acknowledging them, and ultimately respecting them can go a long way in easing cross-cultural tensions.

Of course, the adoption of this mind frame is much easier said than done. Decentering the self requires a vast store of self-awareness and a wide knowledge of one's communication methods and their cultural significance. This process is true for anyone who engages in cross-cultural communication, not just professional writers. According to Boris Wiseman in his article "Chiastic Thought and Culture," included in Strecker & Tyler's anthology, the paradox of anthropology is: "if the other remains other, I have no way of understanding him/her; but if I understand him/her, he/she is no longer other" (99). Like the decentering of the self, this paradox applies to any cross-cultural interaction. Choosing to not look beyond one's self and understand the other only leads to miscommunication and confusion; however, fully understanding the other means abandoning one's own viewpoint completely. In this case a tenuous balance is necessary to achieve just enough understanding to facilitate a cross-cultural relationship, but not enough that the unique cultural differences disappear. One should never strive to fully assimilate into another's culture; losing one's sense of identity in the process is not a successful cross-cultural communication practice. Balance, again, should be considered; understanding and respecting differences does not mean declaring one superior to another.

When journalists actively engage in cross-cultural communication practices, both the writers and the audience benefit. More frequently than not in modern media writing, a foreign country is seen mainly in relation to how it affects the United States (Berger). This tendency is an indicator of the ethnocentrism inherent in Western media, which breeds stereotypes and bias. Ethnocentrism is the judgment of others based on one's own group values (Ting-Toomey); basically, an ethnocentric attitude leads to the belief that one's own norms are right compared to others', instead of just

different. This idea is fundamental to the in-group favoritism principle, defined as a “positive attachment to and predisposition for norms that are related to in-group categories” (Ting-Toomey). Human beings naturally gravitate to this kind of social comparison as a way to enhance their social and personal identities, whether they are conscious of this practice or not. It is natural to write from a specific, first person perspective, looking at the world through one’s own eyes and comparing what one knows with what one sees. This individualistic perspective is highly American, and is a fundamental aspect of the low-context society that describes the United States. While there is in general nothing wrong with this method, professional writers risk alienating a large portion of their audience when they write from a centralized, personal viewpoint rather than a more group-oriented, less specific angle. Doing so clearly sends an unwelcome message to readers in the out-group, who will be inclined to act defensively in order to protect their own social identities and cultural perspectives.

Furthermore, a willingness to acknowledge and adapt to another culture’s norms indicates respect (Ting-Toomey). Even if miscommunication still occurs, at least an effort was made that can lead to a lesson learned. Oftentimes a lack of understanding leads to intercultural conflict, or the “perceived or actual incompatibility of values, norms, processes, or goals” (Ting-Toomey 194). When issues do arise, individuals tend to act defensively and adopt an ethnocentric attitude to the cause and result of the problem. Anyone can benefit from conflict management skills, especially writers when their work is criticized for being insensitive to cultural differences (Ting-Toomey):

- Mindful listening: acknowledge the criticism, considering context and personal bias; be aware of multiple perspectives;
- Mindful reframing: read from the other's point of view; translate messages to fit the appropriate cultural framework;
- Face-management: do not attempt to lower the other's social standing or perspective;
- Collaborative dialogue: suspend personal assumptions in order to engage in a respectful inquiry process; trust that meaning changes across cultures and there is always much to be learned;
- Uncover common ground: instead of focusing on the differences, consider where similarities exist;
- Communication adaptability: open-mindedness and flexibility is key to ensuring that both parties benefit from conflict.

By consciously utilizing these skills, communication conflicts across cultures can be more quickly resolved. Of course, conflict resolution is a two-way street, and ensuring that both parties are on the same wavelength can be the greatest hindrance to problem-solving.

Possibly the most fulfilling result of effective cross-cultural communication is a greater understanding of one's own culture and communication methods (Ting-Toomey). Defensive and angry reactions to cultural differences come from a place of fear and confusion, and can be diminished if one has a strong grasp of her own personal and group identities (Ting-Toomey). Being sure of one's self allows for greater freedom to explore and attempt to understand another culture, which leads to negotiated shared meanings. When one is confident in her own understanding, she can

let go of preconceived cultural notions and pick apart the multiple layers inherent in every message, seeking out similarities rather than differences.

Chapter 3

EXAMINATION OF MODERN AMERICAN AND IMMIGRANT MEDIA

Modern media tends to skew in favor of Western, particularly American, values and perspectives, even in non-Western parts of the world. This fact is unsurprising, considering how omnipresent Western culture and news is throughout the entire world. This Western bias (Thussu) sets the agenda for communication networks that wrongly believe in the homogeneity of their audiences. Researcher Ulrika Olausson considers this tendency to be a part of the nation-state paradigm of media, which illustrates the nationally-focused, us vs. them perspective of modern media. This mentality makes more sense when viewed through the channels of the old media (such as newspapers), which could only be accessed locally. Thanks to the Internet and other channels of the new media, Western news can easily be distributed around the world (Berger), making geographic borders more permeable than ever before. Most websites and other communication channels cater to the majority audience of the host nation, without realizing that citizens of countries lacking in online content turn to Western media (Berger). Naturally, this ease of access leads to the spreading of negative stereotypes and biased perspectives, affecting those readers who may have a very different cultural perception of world news. Those writing for the modern media are probably unaware that 1/3 of traffic to American news sites comes from outside the local distribution area (Berger). The notion that journalists have a very real responsibility for balanced and sensitive reporting is an

understatement, especially when considering the diversity of one's audience and the limitless possibilities for distribution.

In order to fully understand modern media, one must understand the norms of Internet usage, as the two go hand in hand. The ways in which people use the Internet vary greatly, especially from nation to nation. In the Western world, particularly in the United States, most people use the Internet locally, meaning that they digest news and websites created in the United States and catered toward the cultural majority (Olausson). Simply having access to the vast information trove of the Internet does not mean that everyone will take advantage of it (Berger). While the number of opportunities for valuable cross-cultural exchanges and interactions online is dizzying, very few Westerners leave the comfort zone of familiar web pages. Furthermore, there is the idea of hyperlocalism (Berger), which marks local news as the core value of newspapers. Everything in an average newspaper comes back to home, even foreign affairs happening hundreds of miles away. This tendency is illustrated in two other methods: the domestication of foreign events (Olausson) and the spectatorship of suffering (Chouliaraki). The domestication of foreign events refers to the tendency of modern media to relate foreign occurrences back to home in order to grab readers' attention and make them care about foreign events. The spectatorship of suffering is the inability of the media to look away from horrific events like war, violence, and disease. This type of news functions similarly to domestication of foreign events, as it is meant to attract attention and inspire emotion. This coverage is prioritized over more optimistic news stories, leaving the audience with a skewed view of what life is like in other areas of the world.

Additionally, the Internet is catered almost exclusively to English speakers (Danet & Herring). Those who do not know the language will have trouble accessing most of the Internet, but English speakers exploring foreign websites will almost always find English translations of every page. Of course, it would be impossible to have translations of every web page into every single language, but the might of the English language is not to be underestimated. Many people learn English as a second language for this very reason; it is more and more frequently becoming the common language between people from different, non-English speaking countries (Callahan & Herring). While these facts may seem obvious, the implications of this English domination are not quite as clear but still highly significant. It is important to remember that just because English is an increasingly common language does not mean that every person speaks it the same way. As language spreads, it is naturally co-opted by the different regions that adopt it (Callahan & Herring). Therefore, websites written in English in Nigeria will almost certainly utilize different writing styles and language patterns than English websites of the United Kingdom. Similarly, understanding context is key to unlocking any communication exchange, but in the digital world that context is greatly diminished, especially when contrasting dialects and language norms are considered. This fact leads to the conclusion that simply understanding English is not enough to fully comprehend online content. One must also be familiar with the cultural communication norms inherent on the site, as well as those of the writer, a task nearly impossible for foreign users.

It is clear, then, that modern media is not yet in sync with the needs and habits of Internet users. The language and cultural barriers inherent on the Internet unsurprisingly lead to the creation of niche websites within the mainstream media

catered toward certain groups of people, particularly immigrants. Every Internet user is a part of a greater offline speech community with shared expectations (Danet & Herring), so this group mentality when it comes to the Internet makes sense. It is simply easier for immigrants new to the United States to find an online community, especially when they are lacking that sense of social bonding in their new physical environment. This type of situation is what leads to rich social media networks consisting of personal blogs, Facebook groups, and Twitter communities, to name a few. Nowadays it is incredibly common for people to learn news and create connections in the digital world, changing the media landscape drastically. In this participation-heavy, user-friendly online sphere, everyone has a voice and no one has to feel alone. Gone are the days when Internet users would go online solely to seek information; now the Internet is a destination for social interaction and the search for belongingness. To professional writers this rapidly changing environment can be overwhelming with all of its possibilities, yet also offers a limitless audience reach unseen in past decades that, when utilized effectively, can be a tremendous source for bringing people together.

These types of digital connections can be called transnational diasporic networks (Karim), in which members share a common ethnic or cultural identity but not a common geographic location. These networks, whether they take the form of a website, blog, or Twitter hashtag, act as virtual public spaces that can always be joined with Internet access, altogether changing the face of immigration. Moving to a new country no longer has the guarantee of isolation, as immigrants can easily log onto their transnational diasporic networks and connect with others in their cultural community. Whether or not these virtual networks will influence physical integration

in the long run remains to be seen. Furthermore, producing the content on these websites is a form of media activism (Karim), as the writers are actively creating a place for themselves in the vast media framework and ensuring that their views are illustrated. The challenge then becomes forcing the rest of society to take notice, not just members of the respective cultural network.

Unfortunately, many journalists seem ignorant of the scope of their potential readership. When examining the headlines and articles of CNN, the most popular news source in the United States, I found inherent biases and stereotypes being projected, possibly without the conscious knowledge of the authors. For example, the majority of the storylines pertaining to Africa from the week of July 6, 2015, focused on violence, war, or a connection to the United States. Headlines included:

“Tunisia scrambles to seal border against ISIS” (Lister 2015)

“Two Ugandan presidential aspirants arrested” (Ntale & Botelho 2015)

“At least 33 killed in 3 attacks in northeast Nigeria” (Botelho & Abubakar 2015)

“Barack Obama returns to Kenya. What would you show him?” (Said-Moorhouse 2015)

These events are obviously noteworthy, but surely they are not indicative of all the news coming out of such a vast continent. CNN readers are inundated with these types of negative headlines, however, and are bound to be influenced by them. Examining my long list of headlines should make me think that Africa is full of terror and corruption, as nothing positive is generally reported. Upon further investigation, CNN does have a redeeming section on its website: Inside Africa, a “half hour current affairs weekly program which provides viewers with an inside look at political,

economic, social, and cultural affairs and trends in Africa” (CNN). This program highlights short videos and articles about specific African topics, with headlines like:

“Senegalese artists capture the culture of a nation” (CNN 2015)

“The smallest national park in the world” (CNN 2015)

“African tourism’s big boom” (CNN 2015)

These stories, while not breaking news, provide viewers with another, more positive perspective on Africa that is not often seen in the mainstream media. This effort on CNN’s part is a start, but cannot be truly effective in reversing negative associations and stereotypes because Inside Africa is not part of their general news sections. Users have to actively seek it out on the website, as well as find out the times it is broadcast. Its Facebook page only has 95,000 likes, compared to over 2 million on CNN’s page, showing that it could certainly benefit from more exposure in the mainstream.

Considerations of Blogs: Hearing Stories from African Immigrants

To counter the problem of perpetuating stereotypes in the mainstream media, many African immigrants have resorted to creating blogs devoted to their own perspectives on African news and issues. One such blog is *Life of an African Immigrant*, written by a young Ghanaian female living in Portland. She uses her blog to chronicle her experiences in the United States, focusing less on current events and more on her efforts to adapt to a new culture. After examining her posts, I uncovered certain themes underlying the blog, including family, community, status, belonging, and relationships. She writes about the cultural differences between Ghana and the United States, interacting with commenters and bonding about their shared culture shock. This blogger created a community of African immigrants, especially young single

females, in which to vent about certain frustrations and reach out to other struggling immigrants. Although I could not relate to her posts, they challenged me to reexamine the preconceived notions I held about Ghana and Africa in general. If this blogger or others like her decided to expand their scope and reach out to a broader audience of young female Americans, there would be created a real example of cross-cultural exchange in the digital sphere.

Another such example is *Africa on the Blog*, which is more of a news source rather than a personal blog. Instead of featuring posts written by one person, this blog accepts submissions from anyone, so long as writers have an interest in and knowledge of Africa. The stories on this site are more serious compared to *Life of an African Immigrant*, and do not focus solely on immigration issues. Rather, *Africa on the Blog* is concerned with Africa's image in mainstream media, and actively tries to change the message. On its About page, the site proclaims that the number one reason to read its posts is: "You might be interested in the Africa that the popular media will not write about." Additionally, they state: "Since it is unlikely that we will be invited on CNN or the BBC to tell the world about the Africa we know and love, *Africa on the Blog* is about telling the world about Africa in our own words." This blog was clearly designed out of a need to fill a hole in the mainstream media pertaining to international news, and is only possible because of social media resources like blogging. This isn't to say that *Africa on the Blog* posts only positive articles; in fact, quite the opposite is true. The bloggers on this site simply post firsthand accounts rather than rely on foreign journalists for coverage of African news, as well as include the types of news stories that many media outlets would ignore. Examples of recent articles include:

- “Malawi: government condemns and ignores corruption” (Kainja 2015)
- “Is Post-Apartheid South Africa racist?” (Mpisi 2016)
- “Zimbabwean drought and politics of food aid” (NqabaM 2016)

These types of articles are more thoughtful and emotional than those one would find of similar topics on popular media channels. The downside to these blog posts, however, is that they generally lack good editing. Grammar mistakes and style issues take away from the content, thereby restricting their credibility in the modern media sphere.

Comparing these blog posts to high profile news articles reveals just how powerful subtle language choices can be. In July 2015 the European immigration crisis was just beginning, and news outlets across the board were reporting on it. CNN generally employed bold, overwhelming words for their headlines. Examples include:

- “Immigration nightmare is only beginning” (Koser 2015)
- “Patrolling the ‘Sea of Death’” (Pleitgen 2015)
- “What is the place of outsiders in European society?” (Albahari 2013)

These headlines serve a very clear purpose: attract as many readers as possible by sparking panic and fear. It is a tried and true method, and works very well for big news sources that need high numbers of traffic on their websites. Alternately, *Africa on the Blog* posted stories with headlines like:

- “Irregular immigration to Europe: the role of European and African Union” (Horner 2015)
- “Terrorism in Africa: a global war takes on localized manifestations” (Maina 2015)

Instead of instilling fear, these articles encourage reflection on the greater causes of the immigration crisis. It is also worth noting that rather than use the word “illegal,” this post uses “irregular” and immediately takes some of the fear away.

Of course, one must consider the differences in these two platforms when comparing headlines. CNN’s articles are generally short and straight-forward, attracting visitors who simply want the most vital information as it breaks. The writers are concerned primarily with getting as much information out as quickly as possible, and must entice the busy readers to click on their stories. These visitors won’t stick around for long, so keeping the information brief is key. On the other hand, *Africa on the Blog* is not a breaking news source. Its articles are written after the writers have taken the time to reflect on their topic and choose a clear angle, and are less focused on information than on analysis. Its visitors are looking to take their time and read thoughtful content, taking pressure off of the headlines to attract time-strapped readers. Perhaps most importantly, CNN readers are bombarded with so much information that they must carefully select just what to care about; *Africa on the Blog* readers are all united by their interest in African affairs and will thus care about everything the blog posts.

Considerations from an African Immigrant Student: Millie’s Story

Millie (name has been changed), a 21-year-old University of Delaware senior, was born in Ghana and moved to the United States when she was 14. I was able to interview her about her experiences adjusting to American communication patterns, as well as her social media usage. She is an active social media user whose favorite platforms include Facebook, Instagram, and Tumblr. When she first arrived in the

United States, she utilized social media mostly “to keep in touch with friends.” Several years later, however, “it’s more of a strictly social platform for me to see what the news is and just have fun.” Upon her arrival in a new country, Millie relied on social media to keep in contact with the people she left behind. As social media has evolved and she has grown more comfortable in her new home, however, she likes to get her news from these platforms as well. In fact, when asked about her main news source, Millie sheepishly admitted that it was Facebook rather than a more traditional medium. In terms of communication differences, Millie points to the lack of face-to-face communication in the United States.

“Over here in America you can text, you can call someone, you can email them. This might change in Ghana because technology’s always growing, but in general you have to go to the person you want to talk to. It’s more personal than staying behind a screen, which I think makes a big difference because you know who you’re talking to and what you’re saying.”

This emphasis on personal communication could point to the prevalence of blogs and social media platforms followed by African immigrants when they arrive in the United States. Rather than keeping up-to-date with news sites, this population could feel more comfortable utilizing a more social, interactive platform reminiscent of home. Millie continues:

“When I moved here I got my first phone. In Ghana I didn’t need a cell phone because I was used to just going to my friends’ houses when I wanted to talk to them outside of school. Eventually I started to pick up on my new friends’ hints that they wanted me to call or text them if I needed to talk to them.”

In the absence of such a familiar, personal community, it makes sense that an online space would be a natural replacement. A more casual medium for news and entertainment appears necessary to help immigrants who are used to such a contrasting communication style get acclimated. Again, the move from traditional, information-based mediums to modern, participatory platforms is an understandable transition. Furthermore, Millie sees self-censorship as a way of life in the United States.

“Over in Ghana it’s more like a free space, like you can say whatever you want as long as you’re respectful. Over here you have to really think about what you say because people can get easily offended by it. Depending on what you’re talking about you might come off as offensive even if you don’t mean to be. So I’m constantly critically thinking about what I’m saying to people and how I’m saying it, because everything here can be used against you or for you. In Ghana it was much easier; I could just say what I like.”

This problem of self-censorship is one that is faced by all engaged citizens, especially journalists. With so many cultural differences and wide-ranging backgrounds among the United States population, the likelihood of saying something offensive or inappropriate, even unknowingly, is high. This issue highlights another reason why the immigrant population would want to interact with fellow immigrants. Having similar values and beliefs makes communication much simpler, so looking to blogs and social media accounts for online content can decrease the risk of miscommunication.

Chapter 4

THE FUTURE OF PROFESSIONAL WRITING IN THE NEW MEDIA LANDSCAPE

It's not just immigrants taking advantage of social media and blogging to share news. Nowadays anyone can contribute news content in under 140 characters thanks to Twitter, the premiere site for instant information sharing. This type of amateur reporting is called citizen journalism (Hermida), and instills fear in professional journalists everywhere who are starting to feel their prestige slide. Indeed, many reporters are utilizing Twitter alongside their standard reporting methods to supplement their articles and interact with readers and possible sources (Hermida). For all of its perks, Twitter does have several negative attributes that ensure that it can't fully replace traditional journalism. First, there is no real way to confirm the validity of tweets. Any person can claim that she is at the site of a breaking news story or that she witnessed something spectacular, so users can never trust what is being posted. Second, and along the same vein, Twitter can usually only provide unofficial sources. Real reporters reaching out to Twitter users can never be sure who they are talking to; computer screens make for an effective disguise. Third, users can pick and choose who to follow, in effect creating a customized newspaper (Johnson) that does not always provide a wide range of content. Twitter users can easily filter through all the content the platform provides by customizing their feed to only follow those who share the same opinions and interests as them. While this ensures a comfortable online

experience, it does not guarantee a sweeping overview of the news and various perspectives of the day.

According to Peter Berglez, whose book *Global Journalism: Theory and Practice* (2013) is a comprehensive manual for those interested in the history and fundamental aspects of this modern journalistic approach, there are three types of global journalism. The first focuses on relationships and involvement, or how events in one country are clearly connected to events in another. This type of global journalism operates from the idea that the same story can be told from multiple perspectives, allowing different people to identify with one another through their involvement in the same global affairs. The second type focuses on inescapability, or the idea that distant global mechanisms have the ability to threaten the rest of the world. The third has to do with concreteness, and relates a seemingly vast global story to the everyday. All of these forms can be boiled down to the same basic principle: every person and place in the world is connected in some way, and every global event can produce effects beyond their geographic boundaries. Rather than write for content, reporters utilizing global journalism write to forge connections. This frame of mind is beneficial to a multicultural society, as both majority and minority groups are forced to come to terms with the global connections binding them together. For a marginalized group like African immigrants, global journalism can help them feel more involved in the affairs of their adopted nations while still being connected to their homelands. For American-born citizens, global journalism allows one to look beyond geographic boundaries and escape the local “bubble” of a narrow worldview.

With the rise of new media, immigrant newspapers have had to readjust and evolve. Today, 1 in 4 people in the United States gets their news from so-called ethnic

media (Montgomery), which encompasses 3,000 news outlets, including 1,200 newspapers. The vast majority of these are Spanish-language platforms (Montgomery), and while there are hundreds of African-American outlets, very few are specifically geared toward recent African immigrants. The largest is Mshale, a newspaper based in Minneapolis that serves the African immigrant community in the United States. It is available in print and digital, with a comprehensive website that covers African immigrant news and events. Sections on the website include News, Entertainment, Business, Sports, Lifestyle, and Opinion, and the organization itself is highly active in the African immigrant community, hosting events and creating awards that foster engagement and participation. With such a large digital presence, Mshale is able to reach a broader audience. Its print edition is only available in certain major cities, which in the past would have excluded a large portion of the African immigrant population from accessing its content. Now, anyone with Internet access can scroll through Mshale's online articles and interact with the African immigrant community at large. There is even a Blog section of the site, allowing people to write short posts about any topic and immediately gain an increased reach compared to a personal blog. This platform is a strong presence in the immigrant community, and provides both an information hub and a cultural haven for African immigrants.

Naturally, the articles published on this platform are strictly geared toward an African immigrant readership, just as CNN and other mainstream news sources target a majority audience. Mshale appears to be the marriage between a major news source like CNN and a personal, user-generated news blog like *Africa on the Blog*. In many ways this observation is true, but Mshale does not have the reach of a major news platform. This lack is natural considering that Mshale is part of the "ethnic" media,

and generally only serves the audience that it is geared toward. While Mshale is a viable news source and it is undeniably important for cultural groups to maintain an online community through websites, blogs, and social media, that shouldn't be the only option. Professional writers are perfectly positioned to fix this problem and bridge cultural groups together by creating shared writing spaces. By writing with a global-minded openness, professional writers can connect people together through common interests and experiences. This written work could be established through a global news site, blog, or other wide-reaching platform, or even through an existing digital source. The medium does not matter so much as long as the need for a cross-cultural information and social source is fulfilled. Based on my research of cross-cultural communication, I have created a method for professional writers who wish to be a part of cross-cultural content creation, or simply want to be more effective at communicating across cultures.

Chapter 5

TOWARD A USEFUL METHOD

Here I will provide guidelines, separated into two stages, for how professional writers and journalists can apply cross-cultural methods into their work. I will illustrate these stages using specific examples, offering suggestions for how participatory media such as blogs and Twitter can be utilized as a way to reassess professional communication habits.

Research Stage

When first setting out to write an article, manual, or other piece of professional writing, the initial research stage may be the most important. This is the time to truly gain an understanding of the audience and relevant groups. Exactly who or what is being addressed? Is anyone or anything being indirectly affected? What themes are being illustrated? Developing a wide, diverse perspective is fundamental to effective communication, so professional writers should consider all possible points of view that are represented or affected by whatever project they are working on. The easiest way to develop a comprehensive understanding of a different culture, background, or opinion is to simply talk to people. The first immigrant newspaper was founded by Benjamin Franklin, and it failed very quickly because he did not give the publishing reigns to German immigrants (Montgomery). In this situation, one of the reasons the German population did not take advantage of this publication was because Franklin chose an unfamiliar font to German immigrants. This story illustrates the importance

of extensive, and at times tedious, research. Even the smallest, seemingly insignificant details can contribute to the impact of a written piece, so interviewing as many people as possible is vital.

This phase benefits greatly from digital media. Writers can look to social media accounts and blogs to gain a deeper understanding of an event, person, or group without ever talking directly to anyone. Writers must be careful of the possible pitfalls mentioned earlier with using these platforms as sources. Further research should be done to confirm facts, especially when journalists use social media posts to investigate first-hand accounts of relevant events. Users could lie or exaggerate, even if they are actually witnesses. Contacting the owners of a social media account is therefore important when researching sources. On the other hand, social media offers writers an uncensored look at a variety of perspectives and opinions. Unconstrained by a formal, face-to-face setting, users can post exactly what is on their minds, providing a wealth of information for professional writers who truly want to gain inside access into the thoughts of another person. Twitter is a social media platform that is especially beneficial, but Facebook, Instagram, Tumblr, and YouTube are powerful tools when researching and making connections. These platforms are also valuable because they can be used to alert professional writers, especially journalists, of up-and-coming trends and possible stories (Hermida). Furthermore, professional writers can use it to piece together a cohesive narrative from a cacophony of digital voices. As Berglez (2013) says, “Professional communicative practices are needed (in the form of journalism) to ‘put together’ disconnected pieces of information (on events, actions, processes, places, struggles, ideas, etc) in an illustrative and meaningful manner” (77).

Essentially, people seeking news from social media need someone to filter through all the information and connect it together in an understandable and useful way. This task can be accomplished by savvy journalists, who are able to elevate short and simple posts to a more engaging and dynamic text.

When talking to people, writers should try to get a sense of both general and broad topics. Get to know the subject's opinions on the specifics of the content being produced, but also aim to explore the fundamental values and background information that contribute to unique perspectives. Especially when writing for or about foreign nations or cultures, understanding the norms and historical influences that develop a certain point of view is essential. Basically, writers should strive to place themselves in another's shoes as much as possible. This practice can only be done when judgment is suspended and the writer remains an impartial observer, listening and researching with a clear mind. It is much easier said than done, and takes a great deal of practice, especially when one feels personally invested or emotionally connected to the piece. Once the research is substantially conducted, the writer can then put the pieces together and make connections. Notice that this whole process involves no writing at all, but rather gathering information and then building a solid framework for the piece. Identifying the themes and implications for one's written work are necessary for creating a writing strategy and developing core goals that can be referred back to throughout the writing and editing process.

Writing Stage

All writers need to be aware of their rhetorical choices, especially in this digital age in which one's audience is unpredictable and guaranteed to be diverse and multicultural. It is impossible to please every individual member of one's audience from a rhetorical standpoint, because the rules of rhetoric change from one culture to the next. Even different regions of the United States have developed separate language norms in the form of dialects. Therefore, extra care must be taken when choosing each word. Following are cross-cultural writing goals and examples of each that professional writers should strive for.

Effectiveness: the degree to which the communicator achieves shared meaning and desired cross-cultural outcomes. How one's work is received by the audience can be determined through comment sections, social media reactions, and response e-mails, among other sources. It is important to think of written communication as less one-sided and more conversational. This method may seem unnatural, as the audience is invisible during the writing process, but professional writers need to constantly put their audience first. Try to discern what the audience will want out of your text and the questions they may ask; these core goals should set a framework for the entire text that can be referred to throughout the writing process. Putting one's self in the other's shoes is a valuable way to anticipate the audience's interpretations and expectations of the exchange; however, this is only truly possible if extensive research has been conducted first.

Example: An American journalist is writing a piece on the discrimination faced by Muslim women for wearing the hijab. She personally believes that the hijab is a symbol of misogyny and fear, but realizes that her perspective is informed by the Western society she has grown up in. She also knows that her audience will consist of both average American readers who will probably agree with her, and Muslims who are directly affected by the discrimination she is reporting on who will most likely not agree with her. In order to understand the other point of view, she researches the history of the hijab in Muslim culture and studies recent cases of discrimination in places where Muslims are a minority. She then supplements these facts with firsthand accounts from hijab-wearing Muslim women, finding sources to speak with face-to-face as well as online. She searches for relevant blogs and social media accounts, finding hijab fashion blogs and Instagram pages like *Hijab Revival* and *Hipster Hijabis*. She reads the comment sections of these platforms, reaches out to community members, and poses questions relating to hijabs on her own social media accounts. By allowing her audience participate in the discussion before she writes anything, she is better able to anticipate her readers' perspectives and questions or concerns they may have. When she finally does write, her conversational and balanced point of view will be demonstrated through the effectiveness of her argument. She has taken steps to avoid possible miscommunication by placing high value on her audience's perception of the topic.

Satisfaction: how well the relevant identities of the writer and reader have been addressed and sensitively dealt with. The writer's duty is to communicate as impartially as possible, withholding judgment and moving forward with the

acceptance that she will not be able to truly understand the point of view of another. By addressing and respecting these differences, the writer's work can open up a dialogue and be perceived as less threatening. In a perfect world the audience would approach the content in the same fashion; however, this possibility is highly unlikely due to the diverse nature of the audience as a whole. The best that the writer can do is be sensitive to the possible reactions of her audience and respect the differences in opinion that will almost surely unfold.

Example: Let us check back in with our journalist who is writing about hijabs and discrimination. After conducting her research, including talking to hijab-wearing Muslim women, she realizes that the issue is not as black and white as she originally thought. In fact, many of the women she has talked to do not agree with her assertions that the hijab is a patriarchal symbol, causing her to rethink her entire argument. She understands that she must include these viewpoints in order to produce a well-rounded article. Even though she still doesn't fully agree with these contrasting opinions, she respects them, and writes with deep consideration of the differences in identities and acceptance that she can never truly understand.

Mindfulness: the writer's ability to tune into her own assumptions while also attending to the readers' assumptions. As stated before, cross-cultural communication is meant to be collaborative, not individualized. The writer should not suspend her own cultural values for the sake of catering to another's; rather, she should relate her own perspective to the other's and find common ground. This criterion can be tricky to achieve at times, as it relies on balancing an unbiased writing style with retaining

one's own unique point of view. The writer shouldn't feel obligated to write exactly according to another cultural standard, as this will not foster conversation and greater cross-cultural understanding.

Example: Our journalist has accepted that she cannot fully grasp the cultural differences playing out in her article about hijabs and discrimination. Equally as important, she has not let a separate outlook completely alter her own perspective. She has not abandoned her own cultural identity and personal beliefs in order to understand another; rather, she has allowed her opinion to expand and be informed by another's. Nothing was sacrificed in the process; only more knowledge was gained. She even discovered some common ground between herself and the Muslim women she investigated: a desire to explore individuality through fashion, in whatever form one chooses. This sense of commonality is expressed through her writing, as she places value on both her own viewpoint and that of the Other.

Chapter 6

CONCLUSION

The core duty of the professional writer is to make clear that which is murky; to impart information in a way that is both engaging and straight-forward. In order to accomplish this task, professional writers have no choice but to participate in the broader global world, moving forward with eyes and ears open to the various degrees of difference between cultures. Now more than ever, an awareness of how to communicate across cultures is exceedingly important, as the scope of a writer's audience is no longer tangible thanks to the limitless boundaries of the Internet. In this modern digital sphere, context is contested and miscommunication is a certainty as readers representative of countless cultural groups, backgrounds, and therefore communication patterns come together online to analyze the same content. At the center of this cacophony of voices are professional writers, who must attempt to bridge all of these separate perspectives together in order to establish a cross-cultural connection through text.

Through my research I have highlighted the relationship between culture and rhetoric and how it relates to the progression of modern media and professional writing. One major caveat of this project is its durability throughout time; at this moment in the spring of 2016 my research is relevant, but the same might not be true in a year from now. The media landscape is constantly changing with digital innovations and evolving Internet norms. A large portion of my research is dedicated to the importance of Twitter, which is already decreasing in importance and popularity in the social media world. The newest social platform could be just around the corner, making my research seem outdated in just a few short months. Aware of this drawback

from the beginning, I sought to make my final heuristic easily adaptable to a multitude of online writing mediums. There can be no doubt that the future of the media and professional writing is online; how that evolution manifests itself remains to be seen.

Another drawback of my research is the sheer depth of possible sources. I couldn't examine every single African immigrant blog or news platform, so I focused my attention on a select few and analyzed them in deeper detail. The chosen sites were representative of different types of immigrant social/news platforms, so while my scope wasn't as broad, it was still symbolic. The beauty of the Internet lies in its enormity; it is entirely possible that I missed important sources in my research. While this possibility poses an underlying flaw in my study, it does prove my point about the significance of niche websites and online communities. Truly anyone can find a digital home on the Internet, and the main method of connecting all of these disparate groups is through effective communication. Professional writers, again, are uniquely equipped to illustrate the grounding similarities between online factions, making them appear not so different after all.

Future research can never cease on this topic, as the rules of media and communication are constantly changing. How different groups and individuals interact online will continue to evolve with technology and globalism, requiring diligent observation and analysis on the part of researchers and professional writers alike. Special attention should be focused on the growing presence of social media, which today includes Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, YouTube, etc., as these platforms inspire cultural communities to flourish and interact. More and more people are receiving information via these mediums, making traditional Internet sites pay attention and react accordingly. The field of journalism especially needs to work with these media

platforms or else risk being made insignificant. If journalists can work together with multimedia writers, utilizing both traditional and modern methods of communication and cross-cultural outreach, then the role of the professional writer in encouraging effective cross-cultural communication will be made that much easier.

REFERENCES

- "African Tourism's Big Boom - CNN Video." *CNN*. Cable News Network, 13 July 2015. Web. 23 July 2015.
- "Africa on the Blog-The Voice of Africa, from All over the World." *Africa on the Blog*. N.p., n.d. Web. 06 July 2015.
- Albahari, Maurizio. "What Is the Place of Outsiders in European Society?" *CNN*. Cable News Network, 30 Oct. 2013. Web. 15 July 2015.
- Berger, Guy. "HOW THE INTERNET IMPACTS ON INTERNATIONAL NEWS: Exploring Paradoxes of the Most Global Medium in a Time of 'Hyperlocalism'." *The International Communication Gazette* 71.5 (2009): 355-71. *Academic OneFile [Gale]*. Web. 2 Oct. 2015.
- Berglez, Peter. *Global Journalism: Theory and Practice*. N.p.: Peter Lang, 2013. Print.
- Berglez, Peter. "WHAT IS GLOBAL JOURNALISM? Theoretical and Empirical Conceptualisations." *Journalism Studies* 9.6 (2008): 845-58. *Academic OneFile*. Web. 2 Oct. 2015.
- Bierstadt, Edward Hale. *Aspects of Americanization*. Cincinnati: Stewart Kidd, 1922. Print.
- Botelho, Greg, and Aminu Abubakar. "At Least 33 Killed in Three Attacks in Northeast Nigeria." *CNN*. Cable News Network, 15 July 2015. Web. 15 July 2015.
- "Breaking News, U.S., World, Weather, Entertainment & Video News-CNN.com." *CNN*. Cable News Network, n.d. Web. 06 July 2015.

- Brüggemann, Michael, and Harmut Wessler. "Transnational Communication as Deliberation, Ritual, and Strategy." *Communication Theory* 24 (2014): 394-414. *Academic OneFile [Gale]*. Web. 2 Oct. 2015.
- Callahan, Ewa, and Susan C. Herring. "Language choice on university websites: longitudinal trends." *International Journal of Communication* [Online] (2012): 322+. *Academic OneFile*. Web. 2 Oct. 2015.
- Chouliaraki, Lilie. *The Spectatorship of Suffering*. London: SAGE Publications, 2006. Print.
- Clausen, Lisbeth. "Localizing the Global: 'domestication' Processes in International News Production." *Media, Culture and Society* 26.1 (2004): 25-44. *SAGE Publications*. Web. 15 Nov. 2015.
- Danet, Brenda, and Susan C. Herring. *The Multilingual Internet: Language, Culture, and Communication Online*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2007. Print.
- "English Speaking African Countries." *Africa Ranking*. Africa Ranking, n.d. Web. 23 July 2015.
- Gallois, Cynthia, and Victor J. Callan. *Communication and Culture: A Guide for Practice*. Chichester, England: Wiley, 1997. Print.
- Golan, Guy J., Thomas Johnson, and Wayne Wanta. *International Media Communication in a Global Age*. New York: Routledge, 2010. N. pag. Print.
- Hall, Edward T. *Beyond Culture*. Garden City, NY: Anchor, 1976. Print.
- Hermida, Alfred. "TWITTERING THE NEWS: The Emergence of Ambient Journalism." *Journalism Practice* 4.3 (2010): 297-308. *Academic OneFile [Gale]*. Web. 2 Oct. 2015.

- Horner, Ida. "Irregular Immigration to Europe: The Role of European and African Union." Web blog post. *Africa on the Blog*. N.p., 28 May 2015. Web. 7 July 2015.
- Ingram, Mathew. "Yes, Twitter Is a Source of Journalism." Mathewingramcomwork. N.p., 26 Nov. 2008. Web. 20 Jan. 2016.
- Johnson, Steven. "How Twitter Will Change the Way We Live." *Time*. Time Inc., 05 June 2009. Web. 23 Jan. 2016.
- Kainja, Jimmy. "Malawi: Government Condemns and Ignores Corruption." *Africa on the Blog*. N.p., 30 Dec. 2015. Web. 23 Jan. 2016.
- Karim, Karim H. *The Media of Diaspora*. London: Routledge, 2003. Print.
- Knickmeyer, Ellen. "Darfur Fits Into a Pattern of Reporting Neglect." *Nieman Reports*. Harvard College, n.d. Web. 27 Nov. 2015.
- Koser, Khalid. "Why Europe's Immigration Nightmare Is Only Beginning." *CNN*. Cable News Network, 30 Oct. 2013. Web. 14 July 2015.
- Kuwabara, Kazuhiro, Takumi Watanabe, Takeshi Ohguro, Yoshihiro Itoh, and Yuji Maeda. "Connectedness Oriented Communication: Fostering a Sense of Connectedness to Augment Social Relationships." Proc. of 2002 Symposium on Applications and the Internet, Nara, Japan. N.p.: n.p., n.d. N. pag. *ResearchGate*. Web. 21 Jan. 2016.
- "Life of an African Immigrant." *Life of an African Immigrant*. N.p., n.d. Web. 06 July 2015.
- Lister, Tim. "Tunisia Scrambles to Seal Border amid Growing ISIS Threat." *CNN*. Cable News Network, 13 July 2015. Web. 14 July 2015.

- Liu, Shuang, Zala Volčič, and Cynthia Gallois. *Introducing Intercultural Communication: Global Cultures and Contexts*. London: SAGE Publications, 2015. Print.
- Maina, Andrew. "Terrorism in Africa: A Global War Takes on Localized Manifestations." *Africa on the Blog*. N.p., 10 Apr. 2015. Web. 7 July 2015.
- Meyer, Christian. "Precursors of Rhetoric Culture Theory." *Culture & Rhetoric*. New York: Berghahn, 2009. 38-39. Print.
- "Millie." Personal interview. 28 Oct. 2015.
- Mpisi, Stella. "Is Post-Apartheid South Africa Racist?" *Africa on the Blog*. N.p., 28 Jan. 2016. Web. 28 Jan. 2016.
- "Mshale." *Mshale*. Mshale, n.d. Web. 15 Jan. 2016.
- NqabaM. "The Zimbabwean Drought and Politics of Food Aid." *Africa on the Blog*. N.p., 09 Feb. 2016. Web. 13 Feb. 2016.
- Ntale, Samson, and Greg Botelho. "2 Ugandan Presidential Aspirants Arrested." *CNN*. Cable News Network, 9 July 2015. Web. 23 July 2015.
- Olausson, Ulrika. "Theorizing global media as global discourse." *International journal of communication* [Online] (2013): 1281+. Academic OneFile. Web. 2 Oct. 2015.
- Pleitgen, Frederik. "'Sea of Death': On Patrol with Europe's Border Agency in the Mediterranean." *CNN*. Cable News Network, 30 Oct. 2013. Web. 15 July 2015.
- Said-Moorhouse, Lauren. "Barack Obama Returns to Kenya. What Would You Show Him?" *CNN*. Cable News Network, 17 July 2015. Web. 23 July 2015.

- "Senegalese Artists Captures the Culture of a Nation - CNN Video." *CNN*. Cable News Network, 13 July 2015. Web. 23 July 2015.
- Strecker, Ivo A., and Stephen A. Tyler, eds. *Culture & Rhetoric*. New York: Berghahn, 2009. Print.
- Tedlock, Dennis, and Bruce Mannheim. *The Dialogic Emergence of Culture*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995. Print.
- "The Displaced African." *The Displaced African RSS*. N.p., n.d. Web. 06 July 2015.
- "The Smallest National Park in the World - CNN Video." *CNN*. Cable News Network, 13 July 2015. Web. 23 July 2015.
- Thussu, Daya Kishan. "Live TV and Bloodless Deaths: War, Infotainment and 24/7 News." *War and the Media: Reporting Conflict 24/7*. London: SAGE, 2003. 117-32. Print.
- Ting-Toomey, Stella. *Communication Across Cultures*. New York: Guilford, 1999. Print.
- United States Census Bureau. *African-Born Population in U.S. Roughly Doubled Every Decade Since 1970, Census Bureau Reports*. United Census Bureau. N.p., 1 Oct. 2014. Web. 22 July 2015.
- Wiseman, Boris. "Chiastic Thought and Culture: A Reading of Claude Lévi-Strauss." *Culture and Rhetoric*. New York: Berghahn, 2009. 85-103. Print.
- Zong, Jie, and Jeanne Batalova. "Frequently Requested Statistics on Immigrants and Immigration in the United States." *Migration Policy Institute*. Migration Policy Institute, 26 Feb. 2015. Web. 23 July 2015.