Foreword

Over several decades, we have seen revolutionary changes in our digital culture that have created boundless potential for how we produce and share information. The promise of a connected world has allowed us to collectively create new knowledge, however, the same network has been leveraged by proprietary and partisan interests to break the trust of participants in these spaces. In social media environments, for instance, user data has been sold and shared without permission, misinformation is routinely distributed by unreliable and unfiltered sources, and the meaning of truth is intentionally blurred and distorted. The *post-truth world* as foretold by Steve Tesich in his 1992 essay, "The Watergate Syndrome: A Government of Lies," is exemplified today by well-orchestrated disinformation campaigns, state-sponsored hacking, and seamless deepfake videos that create alternate realities to diminish both truth and trust. In a post-truth era, everyone creates their own reality and believes what they want to believe based on personal and political beliefs, rather than objective and unbiased reasoning.

In the early days of the Web, the potential for global connectivity offered tremendous hope for innovative teaching and learning. The ongoing shifts in the information environment allowed us to rethink pedagogical strategies to develop learners as ethical participants in interactive learning communities. Doing so illuminated the value of contributing to digital environments while combining competencies for both consuming and producing information that reflected the responsibilities of content creation. The digital world challenged teachers and learners to consider the relationships among visual, textual, auditory, and virtual information to create meaning. As the static Web evolved into an interactive Web 2.0, blogs and wikis further emphasized the value of learner as producer and the need for building collaborative learning communities. Open learning and open educational resources (OER) in particular expanded knowledge creation to a global audience while making

it easier for individuals to access quality academic content as part of their personal learning environments.

Valerie Hill has written an engaging and forward-thinking book that examines digital culture through the lenses of both metamodernism and metaliteracy. By exploring metamodernism as introduced by Timotheus Vermeulen and Robin van den Akker (2010) in *Notes on Metamodernism*, Hill theorizes about what follows postmodernism, or what comes after the end of a modern era, or as Fukuyama (1989) argued, "the end of history.*"* While modernism embodied the creation of beautiful objects through individualized and often privileged perspectives, postmodernism challenged historical assumptions and the conventions of traditional narratives. In many ways, the end is the beginning in Hill's book, which is filled with hope and promise. This work is especially relevant in a post-truth world where it is easy to teeter from hope to despair from one minute to the next. As part of her inquiry into metamodernism, Hill provides a compelling exploration of relevant issues for our digital world. This book investigates the impact of digital technologies on our conception of literacy, the positive and negative dimensions of digital culture, the archival preservation of digital formats, the implications of augmented and virtual reality, and the ever-changing digital learning environments.

At the heart of this book is a central question: What does it mean to be a metaliterate digital citizen in a metamodern culture after postmodernism? Hill provides a fascinating exploration of metamodernism through the perspective of metaliteracy. This intersection between both theories is vital to our understanding of the relationship between digital culture and literacy. The radical changes in our digital world, for instance, called for a comprehensive pedagogical framework that moved beyond the bounds of skills-based definitions of information literacy (ACRL, 2000). Metaliteracy is a reframing and reinvention of information literacy that supports the production and sharing of information and associated responsibilities such as informed research and ethical participation in collaborative spaces (Mackey & Jacobson, 2011, Mackey & Jacobson, 2014). Initially, information literacy was envisioned *as* a metaliteracy that built on decades of research in this area to emphasize the core components of critical thinking and lifelong learning (Mackey & Jacobson, 2011). As the idea evolved, metaliteracy expanded the development of active metaliterate learner roles such as producer, publisher, researcher, translator, and even teacher (Mackey & Jacobson, 2014). Rather than acquire a discrete set of skills, metaliterate learners envision themselves in these multifaceted roles that are supported by four domains of metaliterate learning: affective,

behavioral, cognitive, and metacognitive. This unified approach looks at the whole person who understands the relationship among the four domains and works toward the characteristics of metaliterate learning, including being informed, collaborative, participatory, reflective, adaptable, and civic-minded (Mackey, 2019). This holistic approach encourages individuals to continuously reflect on their own learning, and to be purposeful in the contributions they make in a wide range of information environments.

Metaliteracy reinforces collaborative learning and the adaptation to emerging technologies, while building communities of trust by civic-minded participants. The *meta* in metaliteracy intentionally invokes the Greek origins of the prefix meaning *after*, suggesting that metaliteracy is developed *after* the reading and writing associated with literacy, and *after* the search and retrieval integral to most conceptions of information literacy. This metaliterate approach encompasses the interrelated competencies needed to participate in a media-enhanced digital world. Metaliteracy supports the ethical production of new knowledge and the effective participation in social spaces. The prefix *meta* purposefully refers to Flavell's (1979) conception of metacognition, or the ability to think about one's own thinking and to regulate one's own learning and literacy. Metacognition is empowering because it provides essential insights to individuals about how and what is learned while emphasizing their central role to make decisions about learning. Metaliteracy is especially relevant in a post-truth world where it is critical to reexamine individual bias and the biases found in content and information sources, and to encourage the rethinking of fixed mindsets (Mackey, 2019).

From Hill's perspective, metaliteracy supports digital citizenship in a metamodern world of polarities that organically spiral to inspire creative thought in digital culture. This work references to noted scholars, innovative artists, and pop culture favorites such as *The Brady Bunch* and *Black Mirror,* all interrelated coils in a thoughtful and creative scholarly argument. Metamodernism is similar to metaliteracy in that it builds on the past while moving into new theoretical terrain offering promise for how we see ourselves and our world. After reading this book it is possible that "the end of history" was overstated and that the end of truth may be transitory, perhaps limited to the polarity of the current political moment. At the same time, it is very likely that these complex intersections between truth and untruth; trust and fear, will always play out in one form or another. By examining metamodernism through metaliteracy, readers will be better prepared to participate in a digital culture that will always challenge us to be reflective and critical in our thinking. Valerie Hill's pioneering and optimistic book suggests that the

future of the metaliterate learning communities we design and build together, in a metamodern world, will be radiant.

Thomas P. Mackey
Empire State College, State University of New York, USA

Thomas P. Mackey, *Ph.D., is Professor in the Department of Arts and Media, School of Arts and Humanities at SUNY Empire State College. His research examines metaliteracy, a model he originated with Trudi E. Jacobson, as an empowering pedagogical framework for reflective teaching and learning. Tom authored the framing chapter "Empowering Metaliterate Learners for the Post-Truth World" for their third metaliteracy book entitled Metaliterate Learning for the Post-Truth World. He has been invited to keynote on metaliteracy both nationally and internationally and has published several books, peer-reviewed articles, and conference proceedings about his research in this area. Tom teaches Information Design, History and Theory of New Media, Digital Storytelling, and Educational Planning. He developed and taught the blended study Ethics of Digital Art and Design for the 2019 Cyprus Residency. Through his work with the Metaliteracy Learning Collaborative he has developed several grant-funded Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) including Empowering Yourself in a Post-Truth World. Tom served as an administrator at SUNY Empire State College for ten years as Associate Dean and Dean of the Center for Distance Learning (CDL), and in senior management roles as Vice Provost for Academic Programs and Interim Provost. Previously, he was a faculty member in the Department of Information Studies, at The University at Albany, SUNY. Tom serves on the Board of Directors for the Mohawk Hudson Humane Society in the Capital Region of New York.*

REFERENCES

Association of College & Research Libraries. (2000). *Information literacy competency standards for higher education*. http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/informationliteracycompetency

Flavell, J. H. (1979). Metacognition and Cognitive Monitoring: A New Area of Cognitive-Developmental Inquiry. *The American Psychologist*, *34*(10), 906–911. doi:10.1037/0003-066X.34.10.906

Fukuyama, F. (1990). The end of history? *Politicka misao*, *27*(2), 171–171. https://www.lexico.com/definition/meta-

Mackey, T. P. (2019). Empowering Metaliterate Learners for the Post-Truth World. In *Metaliterate Learning for the Post-Truth World*. Chicago: ALA/Neal-Schuman Publishing, Inc.

Mackey, T. P., & Jacobson, T. E. (2011). Reframing Information Literacy as a Metaliteracy. *College & Research Libraries*, *72*, 62–78. doi:10.5860/crl-76r1

Mackey, T. P., & Jacobson, T. E. (2014). *Metaliteracy: Reinventing Information Literacy to Empower Learners*. Chicago: ALA/Neal-Schuman Publishing.

Tesich, S. (1992, Jan.). The Watergate Syndrome: A Government of Lies. *Nation*, 12–14.

Vermeulen, T., & van den Akker, R. (2010). Notes on metamodernism. *Journal of Aesthetics & Culture*, *2*(1), 1. doi:10.3402/jac.v2i0.5677